



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting
david.w.potts@att.net www.oregoncomputer.com 503.659.5588
Volume 1 Number 2 July-August, 2012



Welcome to the second edition of the David W. Potts Consulting *DWPC Technology Newsletter*. I hope you find this information helpful. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please send me an email, indicating such. If you received this newsletter from a friend and wish to be added to the mailing list, please email me at the address above and indicate your desire to receive the newsletter.

The “Flame” malware recently used faked Microsoft “digital certificates” to potentially infect computers with fake updates through what would appear to be the Microsoft [Windows] Update service. Infected computers could allow hackers to control the computer and the hackers could potentially “see” what the computer was doing, among other things. ALL currently supported Microsoft Windows operating systems, including Microsoft Windows Server, could be affected by this malware. “Digital certificates” are used to ensure the validity of the source of computer code, so users and IT personnel can better determine if the code is “safe” and truly distributed by the “signer”. “Digital certificates” are supposed to be “signed” through a “Certificate Authority”, which will guarantee the certificate’s authenticity. By faking the “digital certificates”, the “Flame” malware circumvented the security provided by such certificates. Microsoft moved quickly and released a Microsoft [Windows] Update to invalidate the bogus [3] certificates [used by the “Flame” malware], in addition to other “unauthorized digital certificates” (indicating this is not the first time a “digital certificate” has been faked). If your computer is not set to automatically install critical Windows Updates, you should update your computer as soon as possible. Here is a link to an article from Microsoft: <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/security/advisory/2718704>. From that link, you will also find instructions to find if the bogus certificates have been “untrusted” (in the “Frequently Asked Questions” section) and to manually install the update (in the “Suggested Actions” section), if needed.

The DNSChanger malware has infected over 500,000 computers, worldwide. The FBI implemented servers to allow infected computers to continue to function . . . and has had these servers in place for months. **The U.S. Government will pull the plug on these servers in July (2012). When the plug is pulled, computers still infected will be unable to use the Internet.** There is an easy test to find if your computer(s) is infected, by visiting the following FBI Web site and selecting the top link (URL) in the list (“maintained by the DNS Changer Working Group”): <https://forms.fbi.gov/check-to-see-if-your-computer-is-using-rogue-DNS>. You should be immediately directed to a Web site where you will be informed if your computer is infected by the “DNSChanger” malware. Here is a link to the issue from CBS in L.A.: <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2012/04/23/fbi-dns-changer-victims-could-lose-internet-access-in-july/>. The FBI has more information on the issue at this link: http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2011/november/malware_110911/DNS-changer-malware.pdf. If you use your computer in multiple locations, you should run the test while connected to each network. *[Please excuse this reprint from the last issue . . . as the “plug” is pulled in July, I felt the need to warn people, again]*

Do you need an iPad? Let’s face it, the iPad is cool. The *original* iPad was (and still is) cool! The iPad 3 is the fastest iPad yet and has the highest resolution display of a portable device to date. Apple claims you get 8 hours of battery life (in all models). There are high resolution front- and rear-facing cameras. Please keep in mind, an iPad is not a “computer” in the conventional sense. It has severe limitations in some areas, including not being able to play Adobe Flash animations. This may not seem like that much of a limitation, until you really need to access a Web site that requires Flash. Only specific printers support printing from the iPad (although this will likely change . . . and, if you have an iMac, you can print to attached printers) and only specific apps allow printing. Do I have an iPad? Yes . . . I had the original iPad the first week it was out. **If you have an original iPad or iPad 2, do you need to upgrade?** Some of this depends on how you wish to use your iPad. The original iPad had no cameras. The iPad 2 included front- and rear-facing cameras and a faster processor [than the original iPad]. The iPad 3 has the highest resolution display of any tablet, higher resolution cameras and an even faster processor than earlier iPads. **Which iPad 3 should you buy?** So you have decided the iPad 3 is right for you. Now you need to select which

model. All iPad 3 devices have the same [processor] speed, Apple “Retina” display and cameras. The options are the amount of memory (which cannot be upgraded) and its connectivity options (WiFi only or WiFi with 3G/4G (cellular)). To use the iPad with the 3G/4G service, you will need to subscribe to a carrier . . . and pay monthly for the service. Before considering a 3G/4G iPad, please review the article about Personal Hot Spots in this issue. All iPads to date have been available with 16GB, 32GB or 64GB of memory. I use my [original, 32GB, WiFi only] iPad mainly for browsing the Internet and streaming video . . . and it does these tasks very well. I have well over a day of music, a bunch of video (including a full length feature film) and gobs of photos, and I am only using about half the memory. If the iPad 3 supported Siri, I would consider it, but that is just the geek in me.

Personal Hot Spots are pretty hot! Most of us have many wireless devices that use “WiFi” to connect. These connections are great when an available WiFi network is available . . . with sufficient signal strength . . . and you have a key to connect, if needed. Hotels often offer WiFi in the rooms . . . but can charge large amounts to use the service. Welcome Personal Hot Spots. A Personal Hot Spot is a device that uses “3G” or “4G” service to connect through a cellular data system to provide Internet access . . . and allows you to broadcast WiFi to [usually] a limited number of devices . . . simultaneously. **You may be carrying a Personal Hot Spot and don’t even know it!** Many cellular phones allow “tethering”, which will allow you to connect [a] WiFi (or BlueTooth) device(s) to your 3G or 4G cellular data service. Your phone, carrier and plan will determine if your phone can be used to “tether”. Some applications are available to allow tethering, without incurring an extra charge from your cellular carrier (depending on your phone, carrier and data plan). A number of cellular companies offer battery-operated Personal Hot Spots, with data plans at various speeds and data caps (how much data you can transfer in your plan and what happens when you reach your cap). In addition to the selecting the speed and amount of data, you will also want to consider the coverage of the carrier, to ensure the service should be available where you need it.

How do I . . . Please submit questions to me via email. Questions may be answered in future issues of this newsletter, or may be addressed individually. I often have clients who exclaim, after my correcting their issue, how they have been frustrated by working on the issue for weeks before calling me. Often the problem takes less than an hour to correct. Many mention how, next time, they will call me first to avoid the frustration!

David W. Potts Consulting will be happy to assist you with your hardware, software and network selection, purchase, integration, troubleshooting and training. We specialize in Microsoft Windows computers and networking and can also assist you with other electronics consulting.

The information in this newsletter is provided at no cost. David W. Potts Consulting provides no warranty, express or implied, for this information and the user assumes all liability for any issues arising out of using information contained herein.