



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting

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Welcome to the fourth 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 holidays are upon us . . . with lots of new toys! Just in time for Christmas, Microsoft has released Windows 8 and its Surface tablet computer. Unlike the iPad, the Microsoft Surface tablet (with a slightly larger screen than the iPad) runs Windows, so it acts more like a real "computer". The Microsoft Surface tablet computer also includes an integrated [fold down] keyboard. There are also lots of new cell phones and Android tablets, along with many other electronics (and the third generation iPad still sports the highest resolution screen of any tablet). David W. Potts Consulting can help you integrate your new technologies into your life. Let us help you so you don't need to read the manuals and pull your hair out!

So you now have Windows 8 . . . Windows 8 sports the largest departure in the Windows User Interface since Windows 95. Why change the User Interface we know and love (or at least tolerate)? The "tiles" and actions in Microsoft Windows 8 are similar to those for the Microsoft Windows Phone, Microsoft Surface tablet computer and Microsoft Xbox 360 game console. Notice all the aforementioned items are from one manufacturer? With the popularity of portable devices and game consoles, having a unified User Interface may make the other Microsoft devices more desirable to the consumer. I expect many "basic" users will transition [to Microsoft Windows 8] with few problems. I expect the more advanced Windows users to have a more difficult time navigating around the new User Interface (which I have been playing with for the last 6 months or so). I expect lots of people will miss the "Start button" and will desire significant configuration to make their Microsoft Windows 8 computer more user friendly. David W. Potts Consulting can help make Windows 8 act similarly to Windows 7 and will be happy to help you transition to a new Microsoft Windows 8 computer, helping you avoid hours of frustration!

I WANT Windows 8! Alright--I have explained how the User Interface of Microsoft Windows 8 is the greatest departure since Windows 95, but you want to tell your buddies you have mastered Windows 8. Computers running Microsoft Windows Vista or Microsoft Windows 7 should be able to run Microsoft Windows 8. Most of the hardware and software that works with Microsoft Windows 7 should work with Microsoft Windows 8. Microsoft offers upgrade paths from Microsoft Windows Vista and Microsoft Windows 7, so you should be able to keep your programs and files. Microsoft offers an upgrade path from Microsoft Windows XP (but you need to make a fresh install of Microsoft Windows 8, then reinstall programs, etc.), but, if the target computer is more than a few years old, I would suggest considering replacing the computer with a new Windows 8 machine (you will benefit from today's faster RAM, hard disks and processors . . . and have a computer that will be faster, and more viable, longer). If you are transitioning from Windows XP to Windows 8, you will want to check the Microsoft Windows 8 Compatibility Web site to check on the compatibility of your existing hardware and software with Windows 8. At the time of publishing, the Microsoft Windows 8 Compatibility Web site was not yet available . . . so I suggest using your favorite Web search engine to search for "Windows 8 compatibility", then select the link to the Microsoft Windows 8 Compatibility Web site. If you are planning to upgrade your existing computer to Windows 8, Microsoft should also be offering a utility to scan your computer hardware and software to help you determine if there are any known issues. If you want to be the first on your block to have Windows 8 and would like some help getting things up and running, please consider David W. Potts Consulting.

I DON'T WANT Windows 8! If you've seen Windows 8 and decided you really don't want to take the plunge, at least for a while, although it may be difficult to find new Windows 7 computers in our local "brick and mortar stores", Windows 7 can still be ordered on machines that are custom built (by manufacturers like Dell).

Is it time to consider a new printer? I run into clients all the time who own older inkjet printers. They often complain about the price of the ink and issues like feeding paper or noises. Many people don't know they can get a new inkjet multifunction peripheral (MFP--a printer, scanner and copier . . . some including fax) for well under \$100 . . . and a GOOD one for around \$150. Many of the new MFPs have built-in networking. With a networked MFP, all your computers can print to and scan with the MFP, when on your network (and properly configured, of course). Some of the new MFPs use less ink, so they have a lower cost per page. Some of the new MFPs print very fast. Many MFPs will automatically print double-sided and some will scan and copy double-sided. I have an Epson WorkForce MFP that I love . . . it scans and copies double-sided, prints black text very fast, includes built-in wired and wireless networking and only cost me around \$150. For people who print mainly or large amounts in monochrome, a laser printer (or MFP) may be a better choice. Although laser printers generally cost more initially, they generally provide a lower cost per page than inkjet printers. Some smaller laser printers (as well as inkjet printers) are more expensive to operate . . . so you may want to research the cost per page while shopping. If you print large amounts in color, you may want to consider a color laser printer or MFP. Laser "toner" won't "run" like some inkjet inks (some inkjet inks are quick-drying and do not run). David W. Potts Consulting will be happy to help you select and implement your new MFP or other peripheral.

I REFUSE TO USE 5 REMOTE CONTROLS! "Universal" remote controls have come a long way . . . and are much more "universal" than those of years gone by. There are a multitude of intelligent universal learning remote controls that can be programmed to control virtually all your equipment. Many of these devices support "macros" so a single button can automatically select the monitor input, receiver input, turn on the Blu-Ray player and place the remote control into the mode to control the Blu-Ray player (and dim the house lights, if you wish!). Some models even include "RF" (Radio Frequency . . . the type of remote control signal that penetrates walls), as well as the more common "IR" (InfraRed . . . an invisible light beam). Many models can be programmed easily, using a Web-based application (such as the Logitech Harmony remote controls), although some final adjusting can be tricky. David W. Potts Consulting has experience programming advanced remote controls from multiple manufacturers and will be happy to assist you in the selection and integration of an intelligent universal remote control into your audiovisual system. I can also assist with integrating remote control lighting for a more dramatic theatre startup and IR repeaters that will allow you to hide your equipment behind cabinet doors, and more!

I can do *what* with BlueTooth?! (or "more gift ideas for geeks") We have all heard of the BlueTooth technology and see (or are) people who walk around with the silly appendage hanging off an ear, blinking (and making us look like we are talking to ourselves . . . even when we aren't!). BlueTooth is a short range (30 feet maximum) wireless technology. BlueTooth devices "pair" to allow them to securely connect (so your headset doesn't answer the phone of the guy riding the train, next to you). Yes, there are lots of cool, small, BlueTooth headsets for your cell phone, but there is far more you can do with BlueTooth. Some cell phones can use BlueTooth to share their 3G/4G connection with a tablet (or notebook computer) . . . without paying for a WiFi HotSpot option. I can back up, copy and paste information (songs, pictures, etc.) between my desktop or notebook computer and my cell phone, via BlueTooth. My newest BlueTooth device of choice is my RocketFish rechargeable BlueTooth stereo headset. With this device, I can be listening to a song on my cell phone, then, if I receive a call, my music is paused so I can take the call (and the headset's microphone kicks in for the call). Many tablets, notebooks and cell phones support BlueTooth keyboards. There are many other BlueTooth devices available . . . and many ways to use the BlueTooth devices you already have. If you would like assistance selecting or using your BlueTooth devices, David W. Potts Consulting will be happy to help you.

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 an 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! I have helped people do things from selecting and programming a high-tech remote control to setting up a company's network infrastructure.

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.

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