



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting

david.w.potts@att.net www.oregoncomputer.com 503.659.5588

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Welcome to the fifteenth 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.

More Identity Theft is being reported. POS (Point of Sale) terminals continue to be infected with malware to steal credit and debit card information from multiple stores and Russian hackers stole 1.2 billion records with personal login information in August, 2014. More and more crooks are using more advanced methods to steal identity information for profit. As such, consumers must do what they can to protect their personal information. Using a complex password (at least 8 characters long with at least one upper and one lower case character, at least one number or special character), changing your passwords often, not reusing passwords and using different passwords for each account (especially financial accounts) can help you keep your accounts more secure. Using a credit card for transactions, rather than a debit card, can also limit your exposure, at both brick and mortar and online stores, as well as provide you with the ability to use your credit card company to dispute charges.

Comcast "X1" Platform update. When I wrote my last newsletter, I had not yet had much time to evaluate my Comcast X1 upgrade. Now that I have used the X1 Platform for a while, I have found a number of things the X1 Platform will do. The Comcast X1 Platform supports a single X1 DVR and will allow up to 4 additional devices to connect to that DVR, for a total of 5 devices. The X1 Platform also allows recording or playback, from not only the X1 DVR, but also the remote Comcast boxes that are connected to the X1 DVR. Although pausing or rewinding *live* TV can only be accomplished on the TV connected to the main X1 DVR, you can begin recording a show on one of your remote X1 cable boxes then immediately start watching the recording, which will allow you to pause or rewind the [recording] program. In addition, I found my subscription includes the "StreamPix" (advertised as a \$4.99/month option). With StreamPix, you are able to "stream" movies and TV shows, as well as to have the option to save content, locally, to your iOS or Android device, to watch, on your phone or tablet, even when you have no Internet access. Although I have experienced a few minor glitches through my initial X1 experiences, these have been far outweighed by the ability to watch my recorded content in different rooms and to schedule recordings from any of the devices connected through the X1 DVR (or tablet or smart phone).

Samsung Galaxy S5 vs. iPhone 5S. Samsung has really done a phenomenal job with its Galaxy devices. My favorite 7" tablet is my Galaxy Tab 3. Samsung has made a home run with its Galaxy S5 phone. Although Apple has plans to release a new iPhone with a larger screen, the Samsung Galaxy S5 phone, with its 5.1", full HD screen provides over 25% more space and higher resolution (1920x1080 as opposed to 1136x640) than the 4" display on the iPhone 5S. Although both devices have high resolution cameras, the camera on the Galaxy S5 is higher resolution than that of the iPhone 5S (16MP main and 2MP [HD] front vs. 8MP main and 1.2MP front) and supports 4K video recording (3840x2160), at 30 FPS (the iPhone 5S supports full HD, 1920x1080, at 30 FPS). One thing I love about the Samsung Galaxy devices is the on-screen keyboard. The Galaxy devices are the only ones I have seen that include numbers on the alpha screen, which I find very handy. Three of my biggest issues with the iPhones are their limited battery life, no memory expansion and having batteries that are not user-replaceable. The Galaxy S5 has power saving modes that can significantly extend the battery, far past one day (depending on use). Like all Android devices I have encountered, the Galaxy S5 includes a micro-SDHC card slot (and can handle up to 128GB micro-SDHC cards). The Galaxy S5 is "dust and water-resistant", and there is a version (the Galaxy S5 Sport) that is "waterproof" (up to 30 minutes at no more than 3 feet), but that version is currently only available to Sprint customers. Both devices have loads of apps available through Android stores (Galaxy S5) or the Apple App Store (iPhone). Unless you believe you *must* have an iOS device, the Galaxy S5 is a big winner! Please let David W. Potts Consulting assist you with your Android and iOS smart phone and tablet needs.

Tips to decrease your electric bill. Along with the obvious things like keeping the thermostat in a reasonable range, insulating your home, properly adjusting your heat and A/C by room, etc., there are other things that can be done to help reduce your consumption of energy (we will focus on electricity). Alternative energy companies can install solar panels on your roof to help offset your bill. Some of these companies will install the units at little or no cost to you, then sell you the electricity, at less than the going "grid" rate. I was always disappointed with CF (compact florescent) lamps. Along with the required warm-up time before they reach full brightness, my experience has always been they seem to fail much sooner than incandescent bulbs. On top of that, we need to bring them to a recycling center to dispose of them. I recently replaced nearly all the lamps in my home (including our landscape lightning) with LED lamps. These lamps take about 1/2 the power of a CF (about 1/5 the power of an incandescent lamp), are "instant on", many are "dimmable", can last 20 years or longer (or so they claim) and be disposed of with your regular garbage. Although the LED lamps are expensive, they have come down in price, significantly, over the last couple of years. I find sales on LED lamps, often, at Costco. These lamps can pay for themselves over a period a few years . . . and help to reduce your "carbon footprint".

What do I do with my old electronics? With restrictions on what we can dispose of in landfills, Oregon offers an electronics recycling program for computers, monitors and televisions, at no charge (beginning January 1, 2015, mice, keyboards and printers will also be accepted). **Hard disk drives should be removed or securely erased before recycling!** Please visit the Oregon DEQ "E-Cycles" Web site at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/ecycle> for details about the quantities and items accepted, as well as the locations that participate in the program. Please let David W. Potts Consulting assist you with securely erasing your hard disk drives or assisting you with data recovery or transfer before recycling computers.

Scam and Fraud Resources are available through the office of the Oregon Attorney General. As scammers are quickly creating elaborate ways to separate you from your money, I strongly suggest you visit their Web site at www.oregonconsumer.gov, to keep abreast of newer scams and help learn ways to keep you and your family safer. You can also contact Ellen Klem of the Oregon Attorney General's office at ellen.klem@state.or.us or 503.507.1061.

Java Security Alert! As Oracle's Java continues to be a security risk, I am continuing to include warnings in my newsletters. Oracle has published a Web page that details how to disable the Java program. Please visit the page at: http://www.java.com/en/download/help/disable_browser.xml. If you do need to run Java, ensure you are using the latest release and remove any old versions. If you have any questions about this or other security issues (or any other computer questions), please feel free to contact David W. Potts Consulting and we will be happy to help you.

Windows XP End-of-Life IS PAST OK . . . you've heard this enough times. You know you are vulnerable if you are still running Windows XP. 'Nuff said.

How do I . . . Please submit questions to me via email to the address at the top of page 1. 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 home theatre and other electronics and technology consulting.

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