



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting

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Welcome to the nineteenth edition of the *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.

Microsoft announced Windows 10 will be available as a free upgrade to users of Windows 7 and 8[.1], including users of Windows Phone V. 8.1. Once Windows 10 is released (likely toward the first of 2016), Microsoft will allow users of [legitimate licenses of] Windows 7 and Windows 8.1 the opportunity to upgrade those computers (or phones) to Windows 10, at no charge, as long as the user upgrades the device within 1 year of the release of Windows 10. Windows 10 should work on the same hardware as Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8[.1]. As I mentioned in a previous article, I have been using the Windows 10 Technical Preview for a number of months, and am fairly impressed with it. I must give Microsoft huge kudos for not only offering the free Windows 10 upgrade to users of the failed Windows 8.1, but also offering the free upgrade to the users of the widely-popular Windows 7. Along with the free upgrade comes the standard support for Windows 10, for the life of the product, potentially extending the usable life of your device. This move represents a large investment by Microsoft, as well as their commitment to satisfying their customers.

"Microsoft" support scams seem to be on the rise. These usually begin with an unsolicited phone call, usually from a foreigner, who will often [mis]represent themselves as being affiliated with Microsoft. They may try to convince you that they have been informed by Microsoft that your computer has been infected and that it is **imperative** that you **immediately** allow them to remotely connect to your computer so they can "resolve" the issues . . . **for a price**. They often stress that, if things are left as they are, terrible things will happen. You should always question when someone wants you to do something immediately, without providing any time to make an intelligent decision. If the scammer is allowed access to your computer, they will often open the Event Viewer and show you all the "problems" your computer has. Nearly all Windows machines will have some warnings or errors in the Event Viewer . . . and they often don't constitute a "problem". Sometimes, these scammers will try to sell you "support packages" that are charged, annually. Once they have control of your computer, they have the same level of access as whoever is logged into the computer . . . so they can, likely, install malicious software or harvest information to use for identity theft. If you feel you have malicious software on your computer, David W. Potts Consulting will be happy to evaluate your computer and help eradicate it for you.

Are YOU your computer's worst enemy? People with malicious intentions are getting more and more sophisticated in orchestrating scams to try to infect your computer and steal your identity. As such, you, the end user, must be the first line of defense for your computer. All currently-supported versions of Microsoft Windows (Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8[.1]) include something called "User Account Control", or UAC. By default, Windows is configured for UAC to warn you if programs try to make changes to your computer (such as installing a new program). According to Microsoft, UAC can help keep a computer 30% safer than without it. Unfortunately, in this busy world, many of us have been conditioned to simply click on "Yes", "I agree" and "Install", without reading the prompts. UAC can only help if you reply appropriately to its prompts. Some general rules are to be wary of items where UAC indicates they are from an unidentified publisher or when UAC prompts when you are not doing tasks such as installing, updating or removing software--especially when browsing the Internet. It is necessary to read dialogs when installing software, as software installers will often automatically opt you into additional software that is undesired, unless expressly deselected during the software installation process.

Posting while vacationing is a common practice. It's fun to let your friends and family know where you are and what you're doing. Unfortunately, thieves can use this information to consider your home a target. As such, it is important to ensure you don't post such information anywhere it may be viewed by criminals. Have you ever wondered why you receive so many Friend Requests from people you don't know? "Just say 'no!'"

Microsoft is introducing a new Web browser to replace Internet Explorer in Microsoft Windows 10. Of course, they will continue to support Internet Explorer on earlier Operating Systems. The new Microsoft Web browser, code-named "Spartan" will support things such as drawing and typing on a Web page. Microsoft Cortana (a "Siri-like" "personal assistant") is built into Spartan. Evaluators of the Windows 10 Technical Preview can download the latest version of the code, which includes an introductory Spartan browser engine.

Windows 10 Technical Preview update-- The Windows 10 Technical Preview Build 9926 is available to users who joined the Technical Preview program. Microsoft Cortana, a "Siri-like" "personal assistant", is built into Build 9926. Although the full Spartan Web browser is not included in Build 9926, they have included Spartan's engine, which can be enabled in Internet Explorer. I have installed this new build of Windows 10 Technical Preview and, although there are some items that need additional work, Microsoft is getting closer to a good successor to Windows 7 (you notice I didn't mention Windows 8[.1]!).

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 use complex passwords, that you change often, and visit the Oregon Attorney General's 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.

How do I . . . Please submit questions to me via email to the email 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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