



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting

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Welcome to the twentieth 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. Please feel free to share this newsletter with your friends.

Windows 10 launches July 28, 2015! Microsoft is now accepting "reservations" for Microsoft Windows 10 upgrades, on qualifying Windows devices. If you open Windows Update [from a qualified computer], you will likely see a new option . . . a section indicating "Windows 10 is coming soon", with a button labeled "Reserve". If you select the "Reserve" button, you should receive a message, indicating you will be alerted when the upgrade is available to be installed on your computer, at no charge! As outlined in my last newsletter, Microsoft will be introducing a new Web browser in Windows 10. The new browser, codenamed Spartan, has now been named . . . Microsoft Edge. We should be seeing new devices sporting Windows 10, soon.

What's this about curved TVs? For years, we have been striving for the flattest and thinnest television. Now that recent models have accomplished this, we are being told that what we *really* want is a curved screen! Is the curved screen just a gimmick? Reportedly, the curved screens can reduce reflections (such as from lamps in the room) and may help make viewing from the side ("off axis") less distorted. Reports, however, indicate reflections are "stretched" and can cause more distraction and off axis viewing can cause distortion, obscure some of the image as you move further to the side (where viewing a flat screen would be much more acceptable) and even cause fatigue. Manufacturers of the curved screens also claim the devices "improve immersion" and "enhance depth". The sets can also provide better contrast and appear clearer at the edges. The curve can also make the TV appear to be wider than it actually is. To receive the maximum benefit from the curved TV, you really need to be in the "sweet spot", watching the set nearly straight on (and at the correct distance for the specific screen). Larger curved screens have a greater "sweet spot", affording more viewers a better experience. Although the curved screens can look cool when sitting on a stand, they can look rather odd when mounted on a wall. For my money, I won't be converting [to a curved screen] any time soon. Unless you are one of those people who wants to be the first on the block to sport the latest technology, I suggest waiting until the sizes are larger, prices come down, and you need a new set.

So . . . what about the Samsung Galaxy s6? Samsung has released their latest smart phones, with their flagship being the Galaxy s6. From previous articles, you know I am a fan of the Samsung Galaxy s5. Unlike the Galaxy s5, the Galaxy s6 does not have a user-replaceable battery, has slightly less battery life than the Galaxy s5, **and does not have expandable storage** (like the MicroSDHC slot inside the Galaxy s5). The non-replaceable battery and lack of expandable storage are two of the few reasons I dislike the iPhones. Unlike the Galaxy s5, the Galaxy s6 is not water resistant (the Galaxy s6 **Active** (Sprint), available from AT&T, like the Galaxy s5 **Sport**, is submersible for short periods (up to 1.5 meters for 30 minutes; 1.5 times as deep as the Galaxy S5 Sport)!). The Galaxy s6 is about the same size as the Galaxy s5, but it sports an aluminum alloy and Gorilla Glass 4 case, making it slightly thinner and 5g lighter than the Galaxy s5. Both devices have a 5.1" screen (measured diagonally), with the Galaxy S5 having a 1920X1080 resolution vs. the Galaxy s6's 2560X1440. Both devices have 16MP rear cameras, capable of capturing UHD video (2840x2160) at 30fps. The front-facing camera of the Galaxy s6 has 2.5 times the resolution of the Galaxy S5 (5MP vs. 2MP). The fingerprint reader has been improved and only requires resting your finger on the device, as opposed to dragging your finger across the screen. The Galaxy s6 supports wireless (proximity) charging. For those who want something different, the Galaxy s6 **Edge** wraps the screen around both sides of the phone. In summary, I'm sticking with my Galaxy s5, as I prefer a user-replaceable battery and water-resistance, like the option to expand the memory, and don't care about the higher resolution of the front-facing camera (how good do your "selfies" need to be?) and display (how much resolution do you need for a 5.1" screen?).

What updates should I install? Periodic updates are needed to plug security vulnerabilities, fix problems and increase functionality. Due to the safety and stability afforded by ensuring your software is up-to-date, legitimate updates should be applied to your computer. Some items that are important to update are your operating system (Microsoft Windows, Mac OS or LINUX (including Android)), Web browsers (e.g. Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, etc.), Adobe Flash Player, Adobe Reader, Java (only have Java on your computer if you use programs that require it) and drivers. Updates from the manufacturer of your computer or peripherals can also be important. It is very important to ensure updates come from a legitimate source. All currently supported versions of Microsoft Windows should automatically prompt for critical updates to Microsoft software and, when installing other updates, should prompt to allow installation. Optional updates from Microsoft must be selected, manually. Be careful if the User Account Control prompt indicates the software is from an unknown or questionable source. Be careful to not install items that are offered via pop-ups on the Internet, even if they claim to be "recommended by Microsoft". Many Web sites sell ad space or allow pop-ups that are used to display banners to try to convince you that you should install specific products, available through their links. Some of these pop-ups try to convince the user it is urgent they install and run their software. Don't fall for these ploys. David W. Potts Consulting offers a service where we can remotely connect to your computer(s), on a scheduled basis (I suggest semi-annually) and "tune up" your computer(s), including performing updates to software, removing temporary files and scanning for malicious software. Please let me know if you are interested in this service and I will be happy to discuss it with you.

Hacker Alert! Hackers are using a new method to try to break into your accounts. Many accounts allow changing passwords by texting a code to the account owner's cell phone, used to reset the password. The hacker will try to access an account, for which they know the user's cell phone number, and select to change the password by sending a code via text message. The hacker will then call you back on your cell phone, stating they are from security for the site, and they need you to identify yourself by reading them the text message. Once you provide the text message, they can change the password for that account, and have unrestricted access. If it is your main email account, they can then try to break into additional accounts by using your email account for authentication.

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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