



# DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting

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**Welcome to the twenty-first 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.

**Microsoft Windows 10 is here!** Microsoft released Windows 10 on July 28th. As expected, it has proven to be a great improvement over Windows 8[.1]! I have been advising users to wait at least a month before installing it on their computers (I recommend always waiting a while after the initial release of any new OS or Service Pack, to help ensure surprises encountered when releasing to the public have addressed). As you likely know, the upgrade is free for qualifying (most all) users of Windows 7 and Windows 8.1, offered through Microsoft as a download. If you want to upgrade to the new operating system, I strongly suggest backing up your computer before performing the upgrade. Luckily, both Windows 7 and Windows 8.1 include image backup utilities, to allow you to back up your computer to external media (such as a USB hard disk drive). If you would like any assistance migrating to Windows 10 or selecting a new Windows 10 computer, please let David W. Potts Consulting help.

**New (BAD) twist to "Microsoft Support" Phone Scam:** I have warned about accepting phone calls from people who claim to be from Microsoft, calling due to a "report that your computer sent, informing Microsoft it has issues that require immediate attention", and they need to connect, remotely, to fix the issues. **Microsoft doesn't call users to warn them of an impending computer failure.** A client recently brought me a computer that was "locked" due to malicious locking software installed when he refused to pay \$199 for their telephone support. Users need to realize that, once they allow someone remote access to their computer, the person at the other end will have the same capabilities on the computer that they have, likely including the ability to install software. Although I was able to recover the computer, the malicious software the remote user installed could have done much worse. He also guaranteed me he would purchase a USB hard disk drive and create image backups of his computer!

**An Adobe Flash Player vulnerability**, discovered in a recent update to Flash Player, could allow malicious entities to take control of a computer. Adobe has released an update to Flash Player that corrects this vulnerability. Update Flash Player in both Internet Explorer (for Windows Vista and 7; Adobe Flash Player is automatically updated in Internet Explorer in Windows 8, 8.1 and 10 and in Google Chrome) *and* Mozilla Firefox. **Always update software directly from the software manufacturer's Website (not from links from other Websites or pop-ups).** To update Adobe Flash Player, open Mozilla Firefox, navigate to [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com), select "Menu" (toward the top right), select Adobe Flash Player (toward the bottom left of the window), then follow the on-screen instructions. If you are using Windows Vista or Windows 7, you will want to follow the same steps within Microsoft Internet Explorer.

**Don't Let Microsoft Outlook Files Get Too Large!** When Microsoft Office Outlook data files get large, they can cause Outlook to slow down and, if too large, can lead to Outlook instability and data loss. To check the size of your Microsoft Office Outlook files, Open Microsoft Office Outlook, RIGHT-click on your Outlook Personal Storage File (the top level folders, e.g. "Personal Folders") then select "Properties". Select the button labeled <Folder Size...>, and check the "Total size (including subfolders)". If this size is over 2000000 KB for Outlook 2003, 4000000 KB for Outlook 2007 or 5000000 KB for newer versions of Outlook, you should consider taking steps to reduce the size of the file(s). First, you can "compact" the file, by closing the "Folder Size" window, selecting the <Advanced...> button, then selecting <Compact Now> (the compact utility can take quite a while to complete . . . especially with large files). Do this with all your Outlook data files (e.g. "Personal Folders 2" and "Archive Folders"). Restart Outlook, then find the total folder size, again. If the folders are still larger than the aforementioned sizes, further measures are warranted. David W. Potts Consulting will be happy to help with this.

**What are SSDs?** Hard disk drives have been around for many years. They house spinning disks that record data, magnetically, like a videotape, but in concentric circles, written or read by a moving "head". An SSD, or Solid State Drive, is like a large Flash drive (aka "thumb" drive or "SD card"). As an SSD has no moving parts, it can access data much faster than a hard disk drive. As such, an SSD can allow a computer to boot and operate much faster than a conventional "spinning" disk. There are also "hybrid hard disk drives" that use an SSD to "cache" data from a "spinning" hard disk drive, making them operate significantly faster than conventional hard disk drives.

**Comcast Apps for Smartphones and Tablets** to allow access to Comcast services can be downloaded from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store. The Xfinity "**TV Remote**" app can be used to change the channel on many Comcast cable boxes and schedule recordings with Comcast DVRs. I use this, often, when out with my wife and she exclaims she needs to get home to record a program. This app is really convenient! The Xfinity "**TV**" app can be used to stream (watch) live TV, while you are connected to your home wireless network. The Xfinity "**TV Go**" app can be used to watch content, even when you are away from your own WiFi network. The Xfinity "**Connect**" app can be used to read your Comcast email or make phone calls, send text messages or receive Caller ID information from your phone or tablet. Settings for all the aforementioned apps can be accessed from the three horizontal bars in the upper-left corner of your screen. By default, the Xfinity "Connect" app will inform you of incoming Comcast voice calls, with an audible alert and their Caller ID displayed on your device. I found this intrusive, so turned off the notifications from the settings, as described, earlier.

**Holographic Computing?** Microsoft is developing a technology they call HoloLens, that, in conjunction with Windows 10, will "blend" 3D digital content with your physical environment, using a special headset with goggles, speakers and a microphone. HoloLens will superimpose digital content that will "stay" where you put it, as you move your view around your physical environment, as well as many other cool things. You can find more out about the Microsoft HoloLens project at <http://www.microsoft.com/microsoft-hololens/en-us>.

**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](http://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](mailto: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](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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