



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting

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Welcome to the twenty-third 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 update Microsoft released Windows 10 over 5 months ago. As expected, it has proven to be a great improvement over Windows 8[.1], including a new “Start Menu”, Cortana (a limited, Siri-like, digital assistant) and the new Microsoft Edge Web browser. As you likely know, the upgrade is free for qualifying (most all) users of Windows 7 and Windows 8.1, and is 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, that allow you to back up your computer to external media (such as a USB hard disk drive). To date, my experiences upgrading to Windows 10 continue to be good, so I feel comfortable recommending upgrading to Windows 10, after performing a Windows Image Backup—especially if you are running Windows 8.1. If you would like any assistance migrating to Windows 10 or selecting a new Windows 10 computer, David W. Potts Consulting will be happy to help.

Did you receive a technology gift and need help getting it to work? Why spend hours mulling over manuals or banging your head against the wall. David W. Potts Consulting will be happy to help you use your new technology or help you integrate it with your existing equipment. Let us help you start your new year without frustration!

Comcast X1, the next generation! I have been using the Comcast X1 “operating system” for well over a year. The X1 platform includes Comcast’s “whole house DVR”, allowing access to recorded content on up to 5 TVs. I recently upgraded to the newest generation of the X1 platform, which also allows pausing or rewinding live TV on up to 4 TVs (the last X1 platform only allowed pausing or rewinding live TV with the TV connected directly to the DVR). Comcast may tell you the new X1 platform can only provide DVR access to four X1 boxes (the DVR and 3 additional boxes), but I have one of my older X1 boxes that allows viewing DVR content from a 5th TV, although the older box won’t allow pausing or rewinding live TV. The new X1 platform introduces many other new options.

Streaming devices—Amazon Fire TV will allow you to stream content, such as NetFlix (with the appropriate subscription) to your HDTV, using its HDMI port and your WiFi connection. This is a good option if you don’t want to use a streaming Blu-Ray player with your HDTV. The Amazon Fire TV device comes with a basic remote control.

Streaming devices—Google ChromeCast will allow you to stream content, displayed in a Google Chrome Web browser, from your computer, tablet or smart phone, to your HDTV, using its HDMI port and your WiFi connection. Check your device for compatibility.

Streaming devices—display the output from your computer to your HDTV using the ActionTec ScreenBeam 2 device. The ScreenBeam 2 connects to your HDTV’s HDMI port and uses your WiFi connection. Unlike the Google ChromeCast device (that will only show the content within a Google Chrome Web browser), the ScreenBeam 2 can duplicate your computer’s full screen, or can be used to “extend” your computer’s Desktop. Check the ActionTec Website to see if your computer is compatible.

My cell phone can do *what*? There are many new devices that can be controlled by or interfaced with your cell phone (or tablet). These devices can range from your TV to your exterior door locks to your HVAC system. These technologies use WiFi and BlueTooth technologies (as well as others). Many door locks are available with combinations or fingerprint readers, but there are many that can open when your cell phone (or a “key fob”) is close to the lock, or through a smartphone app. Your television provider may offer apps to allow you to program your DVR, change TV channels or even stream live (or on-demand) TV. Many alarm services provide apps that allow arming or disarming your alarm, and can provide information about who armed or disarmed—and when [monitored] doors or windows are opened or closed. Lights and appliances can be controlled. There are also thermostats that will allow you to heat or cool your home (or hot tub), remotely, from any Internet-connected device. Many apps allow access to be controlled, with different settings for multiple users, to allow things like access for temporary guests at your home. If you are ready to embrace the Internet of Things, please let us help you through your journey!

What is Microsoft Office 365? Along with the outright purchase of Microsoft Office, Microsoft offers its Microsoft Office suite as a service, with a monthly or annual subscription. Unlike the outright purchases of Microsoft Office, [most version] allowing installation on only one PC or Mac, some versions of Microsoft Office 365 allow installation on up to 5 PCs or Macs—and tablets and phones. The Office 365 license includes free upgrades to the product (recently, Microsoft Office 2016 was released . . . users of Microsoft Office 365, that were using the V. 2013 Office applications, can upgrade to the V. 2016 applications, at no additional cost). There are also business offerings for Microsoft Office 365 that include online options. If you are still using Microsoft Office 2003 or earlier, which are no longer supported by Microsoft (so vulnerabilities will not be addressed), you will want to strongly consider upgrading to a newer version of Microsoft Office. After Microsoft Office 2003, Microsoft, in their infinite wisdom, decided to no longer include Microsoft Outlook in the lower-end versions of Microsoft Office. As such, if you want to continue using Microsoft Office Outlook, you will want to ensure you purchase the appropriate version of Microsoft Office. We can also transition you to a free email client, to replace Microsoft Outlook.

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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