



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting, LLC

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Welcome to the thirty-first edition of the *DWPC Technology Newsletter*. We hope you find this information helpful. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please send us an email, indicating such. If you received this newsletter from a friend and wish to be added to the mailing list, please send an email to the address above and indicate your desire to receive the newsletter. Please feel free to share this newsletter with your friends.

Do you need a new computer? Technology advances, and computers continue to get faster and less expensive. If your computer can keep up with you while you use it, you are likely fine, for now (as long as you are running Windows 7, Windows 8.1 or Windows 10 or a supported version of Mac OS X). If, however, you find yourself waiting for your computer, often, you may need consulting to resolve performance problems with your existing computer or to help you decide to consider its replacement. Clients often want me to repair a computer I find to be over 5 years old. Depending on the problem(s) and the speed and configuration of the computer, I often suggest, rather than fixing the older computer, the client consider replacing it (although I don't provide Mac support, Apple Macs can last 2-4 years longer). I often have clients who, after I have transitioned them to a new computer, exclaim how they wish they would have transitioned sooner. Unless you require a specialty device, basic desktop and notebook computers are both inexpensive. David W. Potts Consulting can assist you with troubleshooting performance issues with your Windows computer(s) and make recommendations. If you decide to replace your computer, we can assist with selecting a new computer and transitioning data from your old computer to your new computer. We will also be happy to help configure your computer(s) (old or new) to be safer.

How can I speed up my computer? Assuming your computer has no hardware problems and is running a currently-supported operating system, there are ways to possibly squeeze some additional life out of your slower computer. Adding RAM memory can often speed up your computer, and RAM memory can be inexpensive and easy to install. You will need to know the type and speed of the RAM used by your computer, if memory must be installed in pairs and how many RAM sockets are available. Removing unwanted and undesired software can also help to speed up your computer. Make sure you know what any software is, before you choose to remove it! Research items you don't recognize, before choosing to remove them. Remove undesired Browser add-ons and search providers. Remove temporary files, including temporary Internet files. DWPC can perform preventative maintenance on your Microsoft Windows computer(s), and do so remotely, if you prefer. Keep in mind that, if the computer is over 6 years old, the best solution may be replacement, as good inexpensive machines are available.

Microsoft Office licensing has become very confusing. Not only are there subscriptions (Office 365) and perpetual "retail" and "OEM" licenses, but some licenses are for noncommercial use only. **I am not a lawyer, and the intent of this article is to provide only very basic licensing guidelines for the current Microsoft Office products. Please refer to the entire license for the appropriate product, for full details.** Microsoft Office Home, Microsoft Office Personal and Microsoft Office Home and Student are licensed for noncommercial use only. Microsoft Office Home and Business, Microsoft Office Professional, and any of the Microsoft Office 365 Business products are licensed for commercial use. Microsoft Office 365 Home can be installed on up to 5 computers, 5 tablets and 5 phones, used by multiple people, *for noncommercial use*. Microsoft Office 365 Business and Microsoft Office 365 Business Premium are licensed for commercial use, on up to 5 computers, 5 phones and 5 tablets, **by a single user** (with the latter product including a 50GB Microsoft-hosted Exchange mailbox). Microsoft Office Home and Business and Microsoft Office Professional are licensed for commercial use on a single computer. All versions of Office 365 are subscriptions services. The other (non-Office 365) Microsoft Office products are "perpetual" licenses, although the OEM versions are not transferrable [to another computer]. There are also free Microsoft Office-compatible programs, such as LibreOffice (www.libreoffice.org), that provide very similar functionality to Microsoft Office, although their menu systems are different and some [advanced] features may not be supported.

Password reminder! With all the “bad hombres” (is that politically-correct?) out there, trying to steal our identities and information, it’s more important than ever to use strong passwords (at least 8 characters, using upper- and lower-case characters and at least one number or special character). With some technologically savvy bad guys “breaching” servers to “harvest” passwords, it is also important to change our passwords, on a regular basis (especially if you use the same or similar passwords for multiple sites). The more complex the password, the more difficult it is to break. This leads us to password management issues. Maybe I’m paranoid, but I don’t trust some entity to save my passwords for me (although there are many such utilities available). I strongly suggest you keep your passwords in an accurate list . . . and keep them somewhere safe (under your keyboard isn’t safe!). By the way . . . I strongly suggest you use a unique [strong] password for each of your financial sites . . . banks, credit cards, retirement, investments, etc. I can teach you ways that you can record your passwords, but not knowing the simple “keys”, others would be unlikely to decipher them. Please don’t take your security for granted. Thieves count on your being lax!

Encourage your daughters and granddaughters to get involved with STEM! Women are underrepresented in the fields of science and technology—although those fields have many very desirable (and lucrative) jobs. STEM encourages women to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Of course, I also encourage boys and young men to pursue such careers, as well! Please check out the STEM program at the US Department of Education Website: <https://www.ed.gov/stem>.

Wireless surround sound options: Many people, me included, receive nearly as much enjoyment from a home theater’s audio system as from its video component. Many people, however, don’t like the idea of cables running between the front and rear of the room. There are many options available that will allow you to easily “cut the cord” with your surround sound components. Options range from soundbars with a wireless subwoofer with wired surround speakers to systems with all the speakers wireless. Options further range from fairly inexpensive to very expensive (as well as “adequate” to “great” sound quality). Let us help you better enjoy your content!

Windows Vista support ended, April 11, 2017! If you are still using a computer running Windows Vista, I strongly suggest replacing it, as it is no longer supported by Microsoft, as of April 11, 2017. Please let David W. Potts Consulting, LLC help you transition your programs and data to a new computer.

Java and QuickTime security alerts! As Oracle's Java and Apple’s QuickTime continue to be security risks, I am continuing to include warnings in my newsletters. You can view the alert from Homeland Security about QuickTime, here: <https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/alerts/TA16-105A>. Oracle has published a Web page that details how to disable the Java program, at: http://www.java.com/en/download/help/disable_browser.xml. Either program can be uninstalled from the Programs and Features Control Panel. 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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