



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting, LLC

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Welcome to the thirty-second 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.

The “WannaCry” ransomware virus was discovered, May 12, 2017 and quickly infected hundreds of thousands of computers in over 150 countries. Like many malware infections, the initial program was delivered in traditional ways, such as infected email attachments or Web links. Unlike traditional ransomware we have seen in the past, “WannaCry” is also a worm virus. A worm is a special type of virus that can affect other computers on the same network, without anything being done by a user on the other (previously uninfected) network computer [bringing down entire enterprises, such as hospitals in the UK]. Although Microsoft had released a patch [for all currently-supported versions of Windows, that would have inhibited the spread of the virus over a network,] there were many unpatched computers that were affected. Unfortunately, without a backup or paying the ransom, many pieces of ransomware truly make the users’ files unusable. What we need to take from this is that we need to keep backups of our data, allow Windows to automatically apply critical updates (all currently-supported versions of Windows are set to automatically apply critical updates, by default), restart our computers shortly after being informed a restart is required to apply updates, and practice “safe computing” (don’t open unexpected attachments, be careful of which Websites you visit and links you click, read “User Access Control” messages, etc.). Please let us help you secure and protect your computer(s).

Microsoft releases patch for Windows XP SP3 for the “WannaCry” ransomware virus!

Generally, Microsoft does not release patches for an operating system they no longer support. **Microsoft acknowledges the Windows vulnerability that is used by the “WannaCry” ransomware virus is severe enough where they have created and published a patch that closes the vulnerability on computers running Windows XP with Service Pack 3, KB4012598.** You can find this patch at the following URL: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/confirmation.aspx?id=55245>. Although I strongly discourage people from using unsupported operating systems, there are some specialized software and hardware/software combinations that are not supported with any version of Windows past Windows XP, forcing the users of these systems to continue to run Windows XP. Please keep in mind that, if these computers fail, they may not be able to be resurrected. David W. Potts Consulting may be able to help you create an image backup of your Windows XP computer, so, in the event it experiences a failure, you have a better chance of recovery.

Use your notebook computer as a desktop replacement

Many newer notebook and UltraBook computers (newer “laptops” (“laptop” is an antiquated term)) are powerful enough to meet most, if not all, your computing needs. Many people, however, prefer using a full-size keyboard, mouse and large monitor, especially for longer computing sessions. Luckily, notebook and UltraBook computers provide at least one video port that can be used to connect a full-sized monitor and will likely provide multiple options for an external keyboard and mouse. Most modern notebook and UltraBook computers include BlueTooth, which can allow you to add a wireless [BlueTooth] keyboard and mouse, without needing to use an external adapter. Even if your notebook or UltraBook does not [natively] support BlueTooth, USB BlueTooth adapters are available. Beside BlueTooth, users have the option for either wired or [non-BlueTooth] wireless keyboards and mice. The computer can also be configured to not turn off or sleep when the display panel is closed (or nearly-closed . . . many portable machines use air circulation through the keyboard for part of their cooling . . . so I generally suggest people do not run their portable computer with the display panel fully closed). Please let us help you outfit your home or office with the appropriate equipment to turn your notebook or UltraBook into a desktop replacement.

The Samsung Galaxy S8 is here! Samsung has released the next in its line of cellular phones, the Galaxy S8. The Galaxy S8 and larger Galaxy S8+ both offer an edge-to-edge display and water-resistance and can be upgraded with up to 256GB of MicroSD memory (they come with 64GB internal memory). Like the Galaxy S6 and Galaxy S7, the Galaxy S8 does not have a user-replaceable battery (the only fault I found with the phone). Like the Galaxy S7, the Galaxy S8 supports fast wireless charging. The Galaxy S8 sports a 5.8” display and the Galaxy S8+ has a 6.2” display—both with a 2960 x 1440 (“quad HD”) resolution—and have no physical button(s) on the front. Both have a 80%+ screen to body ratio (compared with 64% with the 5.1” screen on the Galaxy S7). Both devices introduce Samsung’s “Bixby” assistant (similar to Siri, Alexa, etc.). These new phones sport an 8MP front camera and a 12MP rear camera, with a flash. Am I going to rush out and replace my Galaxy S7? No! If I was using a Galaxy S5 or Galaxy S6 (or a 2+ year old phone), I would *seriously* consider upgrading to the Galaxy S8.

What happens to my email if I leave Comcast or Frontier? Luckily, both Comcast and Frontier allow customers to continue to use their email, even after closing their ISP account. There are terms and conditions, such as requirements to log into the Webmail with a minimum frequency. Make sure you read these terms and conditions and follow them to ensure your account isn’t deleted!

LED lighting update In earlier newsletters, I outlined ways to help decrease your utility bills. One of these was to replace your incandescent or compact florescent (CF) lamps with their LED counterparts (I even have LED headlamps in my car). I have found great deals on these LED replacement lamps at Costco . . . often with an “instant rebate” (I have seen lamps for about \$1.00 each, in a pack of 10). Not only have I replaced most all my lamps with LED lamps from Costco, but have also purchased their LED replacements for 4 foot florescent tubes . . . direct replacements, without needing to rewire your florescent fixture—and they are brighter than the florescent lamps they replaced (I have found these with a Costco instant rebate, as well)! I have also replaced my landscape lighting with LED lamps (also using some cool LED RGB floodlights, creating neat color-changing effects). In addition to the LED lamps being more efficient, LED lamps are “instant on” (unlike the florescent lamps), do not generate much heat and can be disposed of in the regular trash (unlike the florescent lamps, which must be disposed of at an appropriate disposal center). My experience has shown the LED lamps to far outlast most florescent or incandescent lamps. Many LED lamps are “dimmable”, but some “dimmable” LED lamps require a dimmer that is rated for LED use.

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 the US Computer Emergency Readiness Team about QuickTime, at <https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/alerts/TA16-105A>. Oracle has a Web page that details how to disable Java, 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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