



# DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting, LLC

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**Welcome to the thirty-ninth 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.

**‘NET NEUTRALITY GONE!** The FCC has completed its ruling, repealing the Obama-era ‘Net Neutrality laws, greatly deregulating the Internet, allowing ISPs (Internet service providers) to choose what content they will provide and allowing them to throttle back content delivery. We will now see how the ISPs behave . . .

**What is “Windows 10 in S mode?”** Microsoft has released a new version of Windows 10, labeled “Windows 10 in S mode.” According to Microsoft, “Windows 10 in S mode is a specific mode of Windows 10 that offers a familiar, productive Windows experience that’s streamlined for security and performance. By exclusively using apps from the Microsoft Store and browsing safely with Microsoft Edge, Windows 10 in S mode keeps you running fast and more secure day in and day out.” This means you cannot install standard Windows programs, [that are not available through the Microsoft Store]. Microsoft introduced a similar version of Windows 8; “Windows 8 RT,” that [runs on ARM processors and] only runs “touch apps designed for Windows RT.” Microsoft does allow a one time switch from Windows 10 in S mode to Windows 10 Home (which runs standard Windows programs as well as apps available through the Microsoft Store—unlike Windows 8 RT, that cannot be upgraded). Once switching out of Windows 10 with S mode to Windows 10 Home, you cannot switch back to Windows 10 in S mode.

**Crystal ball for your USPS deliveries!** The United States Postal Service is offering a free service, named “Informed Delivery,” that will allow you to use your email or an app to see photos of your mail (and packages), arriving soon. Not all addresses are supported, with this service. You can see if your address is supported and sign up for free at [informeddelivery.usps.com](http://informeddelivery.usps.com).

**What audio system is right for my TV and movie viewing?** There are a multitude of audio solutions available, anywhere from the small speaker(s) in your flat panel TV to a high-power discrete system with 8 or more speakers, including multiple subwoofers, for deep bass. The option that is right for you depends on a number of factors. Sound bars are one option, providing either stereo or 3 channel sound (left, center and right front channels). Some sound bars include a subwoofer, that is usually wireless. There are newer options that will allow the use of a 3 channel sound bar (providing left, center and right front channels) that incorporate a wireless subwoofer and [right and left rear] surround speakers that are wired into the subwoofer. The advantage of these systems is their small size and ease of placement, without wires between the front and rear of the room (assuming you place the subwoofer in the rear of the room). These can be connected directly to your TV’s audio output or many of them allow switching sources (TV, Blu-Ray, etc.) that are connected directly to the sound bar (then an HDMI cable connects the video output of the sound bar to the monitor or TV). Sound bar solutions may work for you if you have a smaller room or if you do not desire loud listening volume. If you have a large room, you may want to consider a discrete system with 8 or more speakers (7.1 systems generally provide the front right, center and left, side left and right and rear left and right speakers, with a subwoofer). Unless your room is rather long, you likely don’t need more than a 5.1 system (front left, right, center, rear left and right, with a subwoofer). Generally, larger speakers have been replaced by smaller speakers to provide the midrange and high frequencies, in conjunction with a subwoofer to provide the low bass. With a larger, discrete, system, a high quality center speaker and good subwoofer are very important.

**New email scam exposes passwords to attempt to provide legitimacy** In late July, email scammers used potentially old passwords, exposed by previous security breaches, in an attempt to prove the legitimacy of the scam. The email indicates the user's computer was compromised and the hacker recorded video from the user's Webcam of the user performing acts while viewing pornography. This type of scam is called "sextortion" . . . extorting ransom from users, threatening to expose their activities to others. In this scam, the scammer indicates they have the user's email contacts, and will send the "evidence" to the user's contacts, if they fail to pay the ransom. Reportedly, this scam raised \$250,000 for the scammers. Always contact the authorities if you are approached by a scammer!

**Should I lease or purchase my modem or gateway?** Consumers generally have the option to either lease a modem or gateway from their ISP (Internet Service Provider) or to purchase the device [potentially from the ISP]. A "gateway" is a modem with a router built in. A "wireless gateway" also provides [a] WiFi network[s]. There are a number of benefits from leasing your modem or gateway from your ISP. One is that you are guaranteed compatibility with the ISP's other equipment. Another is that, as technology changes, many ISPs will replace the older equipment with its newer version, at no additional cost to the customer. Yet another is that, if the equipment fails, the ISP will replace the equipment, which should also be at no additional charge. If you purchase your modem or gateway, you can avoid the monthly lease fee for the device, charged by your ISP. If you purchase your modem or gateway from an entity other than your ISP, your ISP may be unwilling to provide you with support. I have experienced multiple instances when an ISP told me they would not troubleshoot issues [preventing connectivity to their Internet service], because the client's modem or gateway was not provided by them, stating that I needed to contact the manufacturer of the device, for support. Unfortunately, this can result in the equipment manufacturer pointing to the ISP as the problem and the ISP pointing to the equipment manufacturer, leaving the customer in the middle. Many ISPs allow customers to purchase a modem or gateway from them, allowing the customer to avoid the monthly lease fee, but, as the device was purchased from the ISP, there should be no issues with the ISP supporting the equipment.

**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 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](http://www.java.com/en/download/help/disable_browser.xml). Either program can be uninstalled from the Windows 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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