



DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting, LLC



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Welcome to the forty-sixth 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.

Security settings are being arbitrarily disabled! I have recently noticed many machines where the Microsoft Windows Defender on-access scanner (the piece that scans data for viruses in real time, as it comes across your computer) or the Windows System Restore utility (which takes snapshots of critical Windows files to assist in recovery in the event of problems), were disabled, although these were both enabled, previously. It is a good idea to periodically look at your antivirus icon in the System Tray (in the lower-right corner of the Desktop, by default), to ensure it indicates there is no problem with the antivirus software. The [Windows 10] Windows Defender icon should

appear like this: , when operating properly. When there are issues, the green circle with the white check will be replaced with something like a yellow triangle or red circle. If you do not see the icon for your antivirus software, you may need to first click on the chevron (^), to the left of the System Tray, to display the hidden icons. If your antivirus software indicates an issue, you should generally be able to have the software repair itself by opening the software and selecting the appropriate option to turn on scanning, etc. To find if your Microsoft Windows System Restore is enabled, click on the Windows 10 Start Charm () , enter the word “recovery”, select the “Recovery Control Panel” option from the list, then select “Configure System Restore” and ensure Windows System Restore is turned on for your Windows drive (usually C:). Please let us assist you with the security for your computer and network.

It’s nearing the holidays, again—tech gift suggestions It’s hard to believe another year has come and gone! They seem to pass more quickly, each year! If you are looking for tech gifts for someone special . . . or for yourself (*have you been good, this year?*), you have many options . . . there are a number of good cell phone options, as well as the potential to switch your phone carrier or plan. Tablets, drones, 3D printers and MFPs (multifunction peripherals—printer/scanner/copier/[fax]) remain hot commodities. Large LED monitors continue to come down in price and their size and resolution continues to increase (a large monitor is great for older eyes!). 4K (UHD) TVs offer 4x the resolution of 1080p displays, producing displays that mimic nature—and many are now reasonably priced. If your techie friend has a UHD monitor, they may want a UHD Blu-Ray player or disks . . . (players can “upscale” older content, like DVDs or Blu-Rays, to UHD), which are becoming much more affordable. I still consider curved screens and 8K to be more hype than benefit. OLED (organic light-emitting diode) monitors continue to come down in price. If you want a HUGE screen, many projection options, including 3D and UHD models, can provide a cost-effective solution. Sound bars and Surround Sound systems can augment the sound of a TV, and some include wireless subwoofers that connect to wired surround (rear) speakers. Universal remote controls are also a good gift (I continue to like the Logitech Harmony series). Desktop, notebook, UltraBook, tablet and convertible computers continue to get faster and less expensive—and may be a needed item, with Windows 7 being phased out, January 14, 2020. USB hard disk drives for backup (or a subscription to an online (Cloud-based) backup service) are also great gifts.

Keep your backup drive safe from ransomware! One of the best ways to protect against ransomware is to keep a recent backup of your data. Unfortunately, some ransomware can encrypt the data on all drives connected to the computer . . . including network shares and USB hard disk drives. As such, keeping your backup hard disk drive disconnected, when it is not being used for a backup, can help avoid the potential of ransomware encrypting the data on your backup drive. Other ways to help keep safe from ransomware are to not open unexpected attachments, be careful of links you select to open and restrict network data to only those that need access to it. Remember to use the System Tray icon to safely remove the USB drive before removing it!

Microsoft releases Windows 10 V. 1903 Microsoft has released its latest updates to Windows 10 with Windows 10 V. 1903. Although I have heard reports of some experiencing issues with this update, I have found it to be rather stable. If you want to see if you are running Windows 10 V. 1903, open your Settings, open System Settings, then select “About”, at the bottom of the left sidebar. The current version of Windows being run on the computer should be listed under the “Windows specifications” section as “Version.” If you are not running Windows 10 V. 1903 [but are running Windows 10], you can attempt to manually upgrade to it, through Windows Update. I have experienced where the upgrade (done through Windows Update) is unsuccessful, requiring the upgrade to be done from a Windows 10 V. 1903 installation DVD. Please let us assist you if you would like help upgrading your computer to Windows 10 V. 1903 or with any of your other technology needs.

Less than 3 months before the Windows 7 end-of-life, January, 14, 2020 Microsoft will stop supporting Windows 7, January 14, 2020. Once an operating system has reached its end-of-life, its manufacturer no longer offers updates. Updates are often to close security holes and increase stability, so, once an operating system is unsupported, vulnerabilities and other issues will not be addressed. If you are running a computer with Windows 7, you will want to consider upgrading to a new computer, before 2020. As so many computers are still running Windows 7, I will continue to provide reminders, in my first 2020 newsletters. As reported in my newsletter from July-August, 2018 (Volume 7, Number 4), there is a possibility your Windows 7 computer has a “reservation” for Windows 10. If your computer keeps up with you, it may be worth trying the Windows 10 Upgrade, to see if your computer has a Windows 10 reservation. I strongly suggest backing up your computer, before any major upgrade. Please let us help you see if your computer can be upgraded to Windows 10 or help migrate you to a new computer.

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, and report potential scams. You can also contact Ellen Klem of the Oregon Attorney General's office at 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. 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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