



It's Time to Move On if You're Still Using Windows XP

SUPPORT FOR WINDOWS XP ENDS ON APRIL 8, 2014. NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU LIKE XP, AND IT WAS A WELL-CRAFTED OPERATING SYSTEM, IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO UPGRADE TO SOMETHING MORE MODERN.

XP is a 12-year-old operating system and security threats have changed considerably since 2001. The operating system is already far less secure than Windows 7 or Windows 8 and with the end of support, it's only going to be worse.

Even if you have the latest updates, Service Pack 3 (SP3), Microsoft will no longer provide security updates, hot-fixes, support of any sort, or online technical content updates. New vulnerabilities will not be addressed, which is one of the reasons crooks are hoping that many will continue to use XP after support ends.

Waiting is no longer an alternative because it's about more than just the operating system. Only about 1% of XP systems sold had the 64-bit version if the operating system, so 32-bit systems are running outdated, outmoded 32-bit applications. Many of these applications are no longer being maintained.

Security Is Only One Problem

SECURITY SHOULD BE THE MAJOR CONCERN FOR USERS OF WINDOWS XP, BUT WINDOWS 7 AND WINDOWS 8 OFFER MANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS.

- Finding files is far easier on later versions of Windows. XP's search function was painfully slow, but now Microsoft has improved background disk indexing. When you search for a file after the index has been built, the Windows Explorer will start returning file names almost immediately.

MALWARE:
Increased from **1,000** in 1996 to **millions** in 2012.

HACKTIVISM:
Threat to business increased nearly **70%** in 1H2012 as opposed to 1H2011.

VULNERABILITY:
Windows® XP with SP3 is **3 times** more vulnerable than Windows 7 SP1.

FAKE VIRUS ALERTS:
Includes rogue software in the form of pop ups which can infect computers if clicked and can spoof the Microsoft® security update process.

SECURITY RISK:
Without critical security updates, PRC is vulnerable to harmful viruses, spyware and other malicious software which can steal or damage business data.

DOWNTIME:
The risk of system failure and business disruption could increase because of End of Support.

NO GUIDANCE:
Online and phone-based technical support will no longer be available to you or your IT partner.

SOFTWARE ISSUES:
Many software and hardware vendors will no longer support products that are running Windows® XP.

- Those who prefer to use Internet Explorer will be able to use IE 9 on Windows 7 and IE 10 on Windows 8. Besides providing more browsing safeguards, these newer versions are also faster.
- The built-in disc burning function has been considerably improved and a DVD Maker application makes it possible to gather a bunch of photos and then burn a slide show to disc.

The illustration shows some of the problems that XP users face now and that they will face increasingly after April 8. Although the graphic was provided by Lenovo, who wants to sell new computers, the concerns are valid.

- Despite a lot of silly whining about the Windows 8 interface, anyone who spends an hour or two learning how the new system works will probably realize that most of the changes really are improvements.

- Many improvements make the Task Bar much more useful. Hover over an application's icon and you'll see one or more thumbnail images so that you can jump directly to the program of your choice.

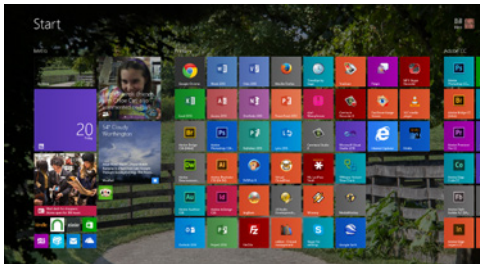
New OS or New Computer?

WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO UPDATE JUST THE OPERATING SYSTEM OR TO BUY A NEW COMPUTER WILL DEPEND ON THE AGE OF THE COMPUTER, BUT IN MOST CASES THE RIGHT CHOICE WILL BE A NEW COMPUTER.

Any computer purchased prior to 2010 has is at or beyond the end of its warranty period. And if the computer dates to 2005 or earlier, you've coaxed more than two lifetimes of use from the system.

Trying to upgrade only the operating system on an older machine has two challenges: Application compatibility and hardware compatibility.

Some applications that were designed for XP won't run on a Windows 7 or Windows 8 system, or they won't run well. Hardware problems typically occur with video cards, scanners, printers, and external USB devices. Sometimes new drivers are available, but you may find that replacing the device is the only solution. The problems are less likely with newer devices.

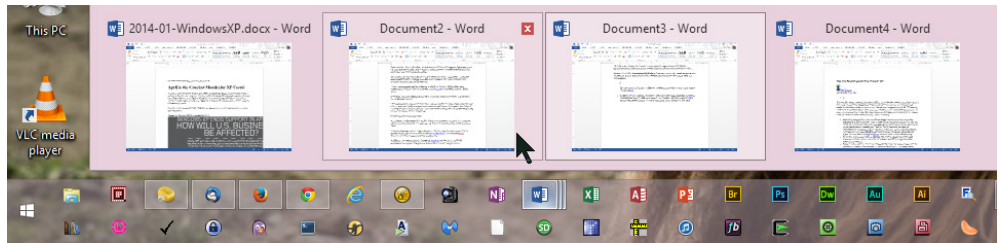


What's Causing the Delay?

SO WHAT'S HOLDING UP THE MIGRATIONS?

Research by VMWare shows that 64% of large companies are still using XP. And midsize firms aren't doing much better at just 52%. Small businesses lead with 61% of users migrated from XP to a new operating system.

These delays can be costly. Old hardware, old operating systems, and old applications are more likely to system failures that might entail data loss. Granted, cost is a concern with the cost of buying new systems and migrating users' data at \$1200 to \$2000 per system. But what's the cost of having an important system fail? Ω



As the Year of the Tablet Ends ...

2013 WAS THE YEAR THAT SMALL PORTABLE DEVICES FINALLY OUTSOLD DESKTOPS AND NOTEBOOKS.

This is only the beginning.

The numbers seem to suggest that tablets are about to sweep regular computers from the face of the planet. Gartner, one of the two primary high tech research firms has revised its predictions to show tablet sales growing by more than 53% this year while PC sales will decline more than 11%. Previously, Gartner had suggested a 43% hike for tablets and a 7% decline for computers.

There's no question that tablets are selling well, probably because they're new and people who own notebook and desktop computers see value in the smaller devices. Taking myself as an example, this year I have purchased a "full-size" tablet (one that's about 10 inches across) and a mini tablet (one that's about 7 inches across). Both are useful, but for different things. And I have also replaced a notebook computer even though I spend most of my time working on desktop systems.

So a lot of people have bought tablets instead of replacing a notebook or desktop system. Some of those people will find that they can do everything they need to do with a tablet or some combination of devices that might include tablets and phones, but many will undoubtedly realize, when an existing notebook or desktop computer finally expires that it will need to be replaced with a like unit.

The most seriously threatened computers now are large desktop systems because today's notebooks are powerful enough to do what desktop systems used to do. Those who perform high-end video, audio, and photo editing will continue to need desktop systems with lots of storage and big monitors. And businesses are likely to continue buying desktop systems because they're more

cost effective for employees who don't need the portability that notebooks provide. I would expect to see at least a small surge in desktop systems within the next year or two.


Nonetheless, Gartner's numbers are breathtaking, particularly if you're a manufacturer. As recently as April, Gartner's predictions suggested significantly smaller gains for tablets and not as large a fall-off for desktops.

Next year, Gartner says, tablet shipments will continue to rise and desktop sales will continue to fall. The prediction is that desktop sales in 2014 will exceed tablets by only about 18,000 units.

Smaller tablets are placing pressure on both larger and smaller devices. Instead of smart phones, many buyers will probably opt for 7-inch tablets this year.

Android systems account for 38% of the tablet and smart phone market in 2013 and may reach 45% next year. Apple's IOS devices are expected to increase a bit from this year's 12% to 14%. Research In Motion will drop from about 1% to 0.8%. Windows-powered tablets and phones will be on pace with Apple's devices, increasing from about 14% to 15% while the share for all other type of devices will drop from 35% to 26%.

At least that's what Gartner's crystal ball suggests. Ω



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