
Using a Personal Computer to Work From Home

Introduction

In the current circumstances caused by Covid19, you may now be connecting to your companies remote access system from your home PC or laptop. Although this is necessary in many cases it does through up a couple of issues:

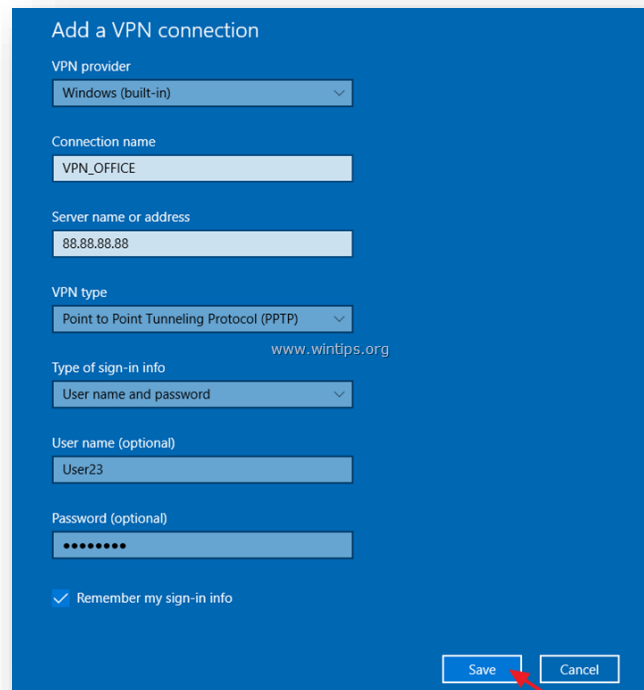
1. Home PCs are harder for us to support. They aren't built to our configuration and they don't have our tools. Sometimes they are in a terrible state! We will try our best to get people working, but sometimes we will have to prioritise effort. Additionally, internet connections and WiFi can be variable. Previously our guidelines were that we wouldn't make changes to home PCs as part of a support call. We are revising this to "help people as best you can", but it can be challenging.
2. Home PCs are potentially insecure. Again, we don't manage them or have our tools installed (e.g. Antivirus). It's possible they already have malicious software installed and no one knows.

Guidance

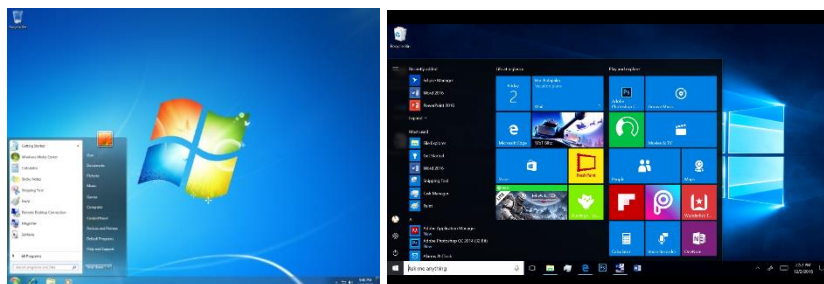
With these 2 issues in mind here are our guidelines for avoiding issues when using personal equipment:

1. **Connect at home using a network cable.** Wired connections are more reliable than WIFI. This is particularly true if you are using Remote Desktop. So, if possible, take a network cable home and plug it into your Home Hub and then into your PC/Laptop.
2. **Make sure your home internet is up to speed.** Once you've connected to your home hub run a speed-test to make sure you are getting a decent broadband connection. You can do this at www.fast.com If you have less than 5Mb download and 0.8Mb upload then you may have a connection issue. The speed-test will also give you a Latency figure, the lower this is the better. Things will start to slow down over 50ms and start to have usability issues above 100ms.
3. **Connection problems.** If you do have issues with your connection, then:
 - a. Make sure you are **Plugged in** with a network cable in and retest
 - b. Try a **Reboot** of your home hub
 - c. Check if others in your house are using the internet for **video streaming** or **downloading large files**. You might need to prioritise usage especially if schools close.
 - d. If after these steps you still have poor connection speed then you will need to call your **Internet Service Provider** (BT, SKY, TalkTalk etc)
4. **Don't save files locally.** Files saved on your personal device are not be backed up, if you have an issue with a locally saved file support will not be able to restore them. Make sure you keep all files on your company systems.

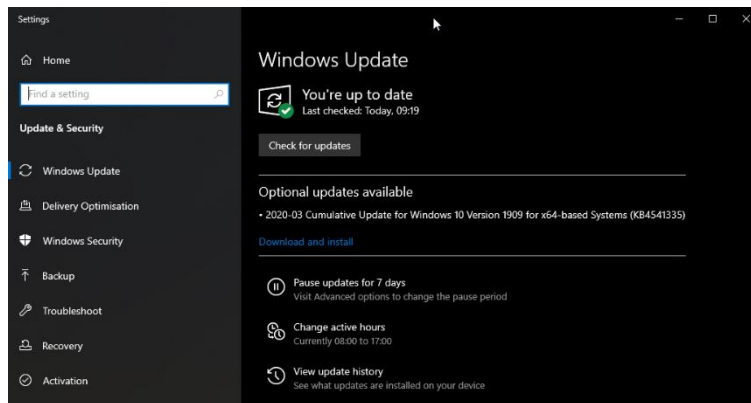
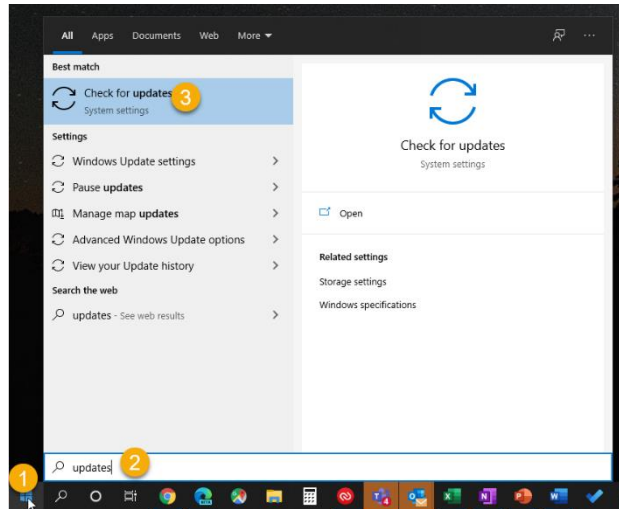
5. **Don't use "Save Password"** on your remote connections. Since the security of any personal PC's is not guaranteed we advise you not to save passwords that allow you to access company systems. This will reduce the chances of the password being available on your local PC to be stolen and then subsequently used to infiltrate your systems.



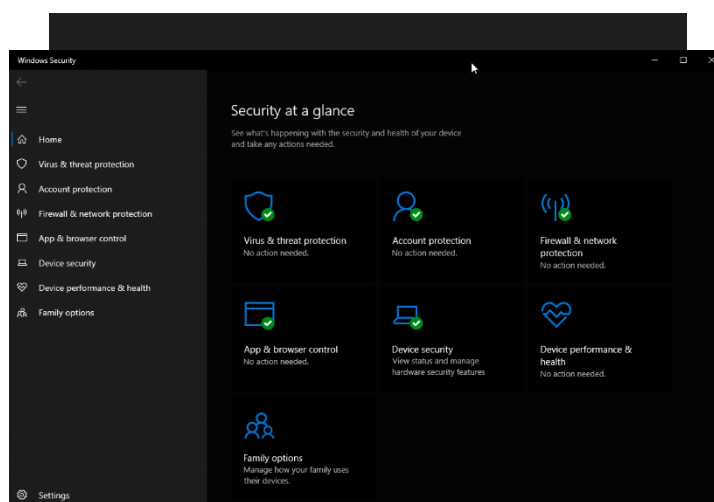
6. **Supported operating system.** All devices that are used to connect to your company systems should be actively supported by the producer. For Microsoft this means **Windows 10**. You should avoid using a Windows 7 machine but upgrading it to Windows 10 right now is probably a bad idea – if it fails it is hard to get someone out right now. Options are limited.



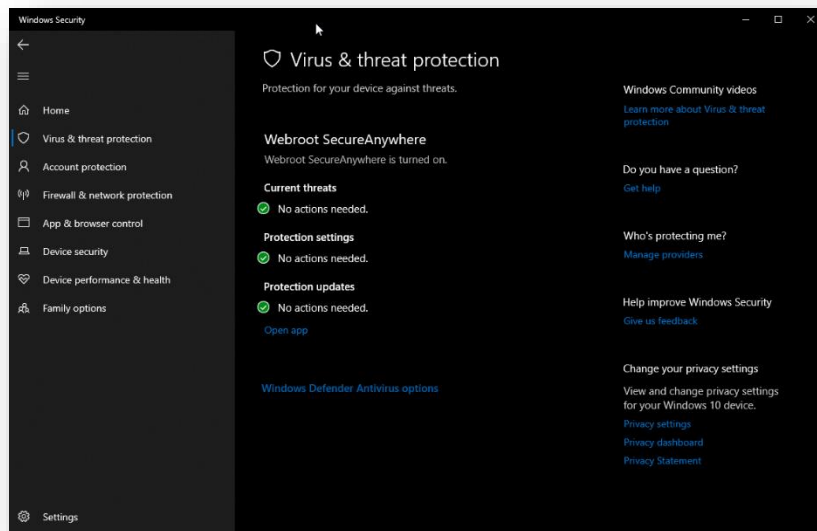
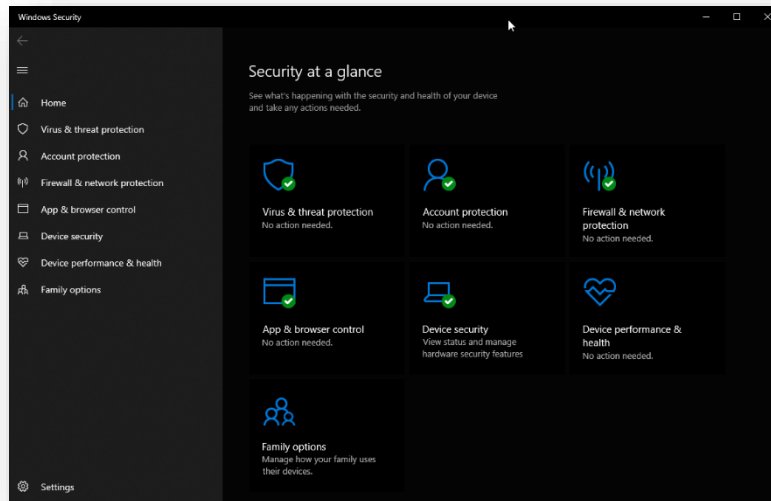
7. **Run Updates.** People should make sure they are applying all Windows Updates or Mac OSX updates as they become available (we recommend that they are applied within 1 week of them prompting for update)



- 8. Windows security check.** If you have a windows computer, then you should check that Windows Security is showing no issues. You can do that by finding the white shield icon near the clock. If it has a green tick, you are all good. Otherwise click on it to find and resolve any issues.

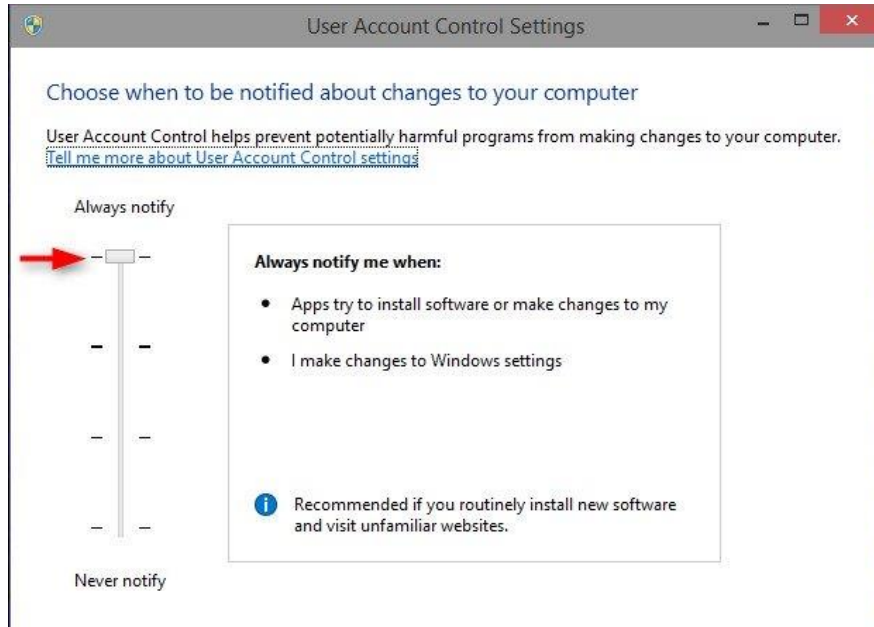


9. **Anti-virus** If your using Windows 10 then the built-in antivirus “Windows Defender” is sufficient to protect your home pc. There is nothing you need to do to make this work, it is preinstalled and configured. We do not recommend any third-party security tools or anti-virus. Users are often tricked into installing free tools that do more harm or may in fact be malicious themselves.



10. **Turn off computer when note in use.** Cyber-attacks are on the increase. Your computer can't be attacked whilst not in use! Also, you are not around to see anything odd going on over night.

11. **User Account security.** Turn on “User Account Control” and set it to its highest setting. You do this by pressing the Windows Key and then typing "User Account Control". Set the slider to the top “**Always notify me when** – Programs try to install software or make changes to my computer and when I make changes to Windows settings.”



12. **Ask a Colleague.** If you find remote connection is slow, we recommend that you contact other colleagues to see if they are having issues before calling Vermont. Having accurate information about whether you are having a local problem with your PC, or a wider issue with the company system helps us to get to the source of the issue quicker.