HAPPY NEW YEAR

TECHNOLOGY TIMES

"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably"

Upgrading To Windows 10? Avoid Headaches, Downtime & Frustrations By Following This Advice

by Joanna Sobran

For the past few months, we've been swamped with questions about Windows 10.

If you're wondering whether now is the best time to upgrade your system, here's what you need to know:

First and foremost, if your organization relies on your computers in any way to make money or save lives, consider the risks carefully. As with any software upgrade – but especially your computer's operating system – you've got to weigh the advantages of upgrading now against potential downtime if there are problems with the new code.

A good rule of thumb regarding any operating-system upgrade is to wait six months after the product release before deploying it into any system or group of systems that your business depends on. Since January 29 marks six months since the Windows 10 official release date, it's a good time to look at whether it's wiser to upgrade now or wait for further fixes and improvements. That being said, here are a few of the key questions we've been fielding – and pitfalls to avoid:

Q. It's free for a "limited time" – don't I have to act now?
A. No. You have until July 2016 to take advantage of the free upgrade. And, if your system hasn't prompted you to upgrade yet, you'll need to wait. If and when your system is deemed capable of adapting to the upgrade, your current Windows OS will notify you. Either way, you have until July 28, 2016. If you do plan to upgrade, we strongly advise that you get it done well before that date, in order to avoid any last-minute scrambling.

Q. It's better and/or faster, right?
A. Maybe… It depends. Here's what we're seeing:
➢ Windows 10 radically changes how your system operates, compared to Windows 7. While some computers make the change with no problem at all, it can cause older systems to lose key hardware drivers (like networking or printing), rendering them an "instant brick."

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"

Joanna Sobran
President/CEO, MXOtech

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It couldn't be easier! Be the first to email **brainbuster@mxotech.com** with the correct answer to the question below & win a $25 gift card.

According to our article on upgrading Windows 10, what is the biggest factor in determining if your computer will work with Windows 10?

in this issue:

Do you have a funny story or resource to share with other subscribers? Send it to us! Submit your content to kburmeister@mxotech.com.

Passion Is Powerful | By Guest Author, Robert Steveson

A few months ago I had the pleasure of working with Germania Insurance at their annual sales conference. The night before, at dinner, I was fortunate to sit at the table with Matt Sodolak. I use the word "fortunate" because I was about to witness what I would best describe as TRUE PASSION for your profession.

I asked a question of Matt that I have asked countless times, "How do you like being in the insurance business?" His response surprised me. Without any hesitation he said, "I love it. It's my job for life."

In all my years of interviewing people, I have never had anyone say, "This is my job for life." The passion, sincerity and conviction in his voice just knocked me over. He sat forward in his chair and followed his statement with, "I love helping people, and I get to do it every day."

There was NO DOUBT in my mind the passion Matt felt for his job, career and the company he worked for. I felt that anyone who had Matt as their agent was so fortunate. He never mentioned commissions … he talked the whole time about protecting his clients and how people counted on him to make sure they had the proper coverage in case something disastrous happened.

Unfortunately, something disastrous did happen; Texas has been slammed this year with enormous floods destroying millions of dollars in property and causing havoc to people's lives. I heard from Matt last week and he shared a quick story about one of the people who works in their claims department. She said, "Being in the insurance business, all of our customers' problems become our problems and we have to be here to help them through it… that's why they do business with us and that's what keeps our lights on; you gotta love it or you are at the wrong place!"

It doesn't surprise me that anyone who works with Matt would also have a passion for their job; he would attract other people who would want to do, help and care for others. Let me share a few anonymous quotes with you about the Power of Passion:

Maybe the one thing that is keeping your career from taking off … is that you aren't looking at it as a career; it is simply a job to you; and your customers, associates, managers and boss can sense that.

There is always going to be frustration, toil, hassles, problems, glitches, hitches and difficulties in any job (that is why they call it work). But, if you look at it from a different perspective … that what you are doing is helping people in some way … then it all becomes worthwhile.

Galileo, the great Italian astronomer, physicist, engineer, philosopher and mathematician, once said: "Passion is the genesis of genius." So, let your passion become the start of something great for your career.

About the Author
Robert Stevenson is a highly sought after, internationally known speaker and best-selling author. He has owned several companies and has international sales experience. His client list reads like a Who's Who in Business. Learn more at www.robertstevenson.org

Upgrading to Windows 10

…continued from page 1

➢ Some systems, even those certified as "Windows 10 ready," start misbehaving after being upgraded. That means undue downtime while you reinstall or upgrade MS Office or other software – or even revert back to your older OS.

➢ Some older systems actually run slower on Windows 10 than on Windows 7 or 8.1.

Q. Will my computer work with Windows 10?
A. Age is likely the biggest factor for any Windows-based device. Anything older than 3 years is not worth upgrading as your machine is nearing the end of its life. You are better off leaving the old operating system in place and waiting for Windows 10 until you upgrade to a new computer.

Q. I've heard Windows 10 transmits all of your personal information to Microsoft. Is this true?
A. Yes, unless you opt out of some of the features, such as the MS Store and Cortana, the voice-controlled virtual assistant. According to Windows 10 terms of service, Microsoft can: "access, disclose and preserve personal data, including your content (such as the content of your emails, other private communications or files in private folders), when we have a good faith belief that doing so is necessary to protect our customers or enforce the terms governing the use of the services." If you decide that giving control of your personal and business data to Microsoft is not in your best interest, you can still install Windows 10; just call us and we'll help you adjust the settings to keep all your information from being sent to Microsoft.

Q. Will custom software run on Windows 10?
A. Until your custom software vendor blesses Windows 10 for that program, the answer is no. In all cases, we advise against upgrading to Windows 10 until your custom programs are 100% vetted, compatible and supported for it.

Deciding when to upgrade to Windows 10 isn't as simple as Microsoft would like you to believe. But if you know the pitfalls we've laid out for you here in advance, you've at least got a fighting chance for a smooth, headache-free transition.

Want help upgrading to Windows 10? Call us at 312.554.5699 to schedule a free Windows 10 Readiness Assessment.

I suspect one of my employees is looking for jobs online at work. Is there a way to see how much time he is spending on job search sites like monster.com?

Yes. There's nothing quite as devastating as losing a key employee, especially if they give you no warning or notice. Often they'll give subtle signs, such as lackadaisical approach to work, not putting in extra effort, long lunches, or suddenly having numerous "doctor" appointments. However, one of the biggest giveaways someone is considering leaving their position is their internet behavior at work.

We already know that employees spend personal time at work on Facebook and other social media sites; but you know for sure something is going on if they've added Monster.com, Craigslist, LinkedIn, and other local job sites to the web pages they frequently visit.

That is one of the reasons we recommend our clients install an Internet monitoring software for their network. Not only will it reveal when employees are looking for work elsewhere, but it will also alert you of employees who are wasting hours on social media, gambling, shopping and other non-work related websites. It will also prevent employees from accessing adult and file sharing sites that could bring on a lawsuit or nasty cyber attack.

While some people fear this is too invasive, keep in mind that you are paying those employee to perform a job with company-owned devices and company-paid internet. We're not suggesting you monitor their personal devices or what they do after hours on their own time. But it's perfectly reasonable to expect an employee to put in a full 8 hours when you're paying them.

Of course, you should provide notice that their computers are being monitored and set the expectation that you want them working during company hours. And you should detail what employees can and cannot do with company-owned devices in your Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). If you want to give them the ability to check personal email and social media sites during work hours, you can limit it to 30 minutes a day during their lunch or break. Again, we don't recommend this since this can be an easy gateway for viruses and hackers – but these options are available.

Need help designing an internet monitoring system on your network? **Give us a call at 312.554.5699.** We can help you put together an Acceptable Use Policy and install the right software to enforce your policy.

Missing Just One Of These Could Instantly Open Up Your Computer Network To A Cyber Attack

Welcome to the brave new world of cyber-warfare.

Gone are the days when software patches were just for nifty little feature add-ons or updates. Today, a software update notice could mean your whole computer network is suddenly at risk. Dangers include data theft, crippling malware attacks and mischief you may not discover for months, or even years.

As with graffiti on your garage door, if you don't pay attention and clamp down on bad behavior, your problems have likely just begun. Like those who hire a professional security firm to keep thieves out of the warehouse, thousands of CEOs and business owners are now waking up to the fact that it's absolutely imperative to hire a pro when it comes to securing your data network.

Here's why you need a professional handling this:

#1: Speed is of the essence.
"If you didn't update to version 7.32 within seven hours, you should assume you've been hacked." That's what software maker Drupal told millions of its customers around the world last year. It's just one example of what can happen if you don't respond with lightning speed.

Once a security breach has been identified, hackers rush in. On "Day Zero," cyber-crooks around the world go after at-risk targets. You've got to be quick to patch the gap, or else you risk a system compromise.

Unless you have the time, knowledge, experience and tool set to respond instantly, you are far better off leaving this to a professional IT firm you can trust.

#2: It's not just the big boys they're after.
Sure, the top news stories are about the attacks on companies like Target, Home Depot and Sony…

Yet your business is just as vulnerable, if not more so. Chances are, you simply do not have the resources that giant corporations have to manage a data disaster. The statistics bearing this out are shocking: more than 60% of small businesses close their doors following a serious data breach.

The threat is not confined to giant corporations. Small and medium businesses are being attacked every day, and, unfortunately, your business is no exception.

Read the rest our of advice at *www.mxotech.com/resources/mxotech-university*

This technology tip is brought to you by:
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The Chicago Business Owners' Guide to IT Support Services and Fees

IT BUYERS GUIDE
What Every Business Owner MUST Know About IT Support Services And Fees

What You Should Expect To Pay For IT Support For Your Business And How To Get Exactly What You Need

✓ The 3 most common ways IT services companies charge for their services, & the pros & cons of each approach.
✓ A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you, the customer, when buying IT services; you'll learn what it is & why you need to avoid agreeing to it.
✓ Exclusions, hidden fees & other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.
✓ How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration & added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.

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Client Spotlight

There are some SWEET PERKS to having a candy company as a client.

Who doesn't love gourmet chocolate covered confections, barks, brittles, peanut butter cups and pretzels? How about home-made apple pies baked with an extra crispy crust? And don't forget the famous chocolate covered caramel pecan patties (MYRTLES) and roasted nuts! These are just some of the delicious treats produced batch by batch at Long Grove Confectionery (owned by Arway Confections). The company has three locations: Long Grove, Buffalo Grove and Chicago and offers branded and private labeled packages, as well as bulk product.

Recently, we had the chance to catch up with our long-time client and Arway/ Long Grove Confectionery President & Owner, Craig Leva. He shared some interesting facts about Arway and Long Grove. The family-owned business was started in 1950 and has been manufacturing in the Chicago area ever since. The products can be found in specialty shops, high end grocery stores and some department stores under the Long Grove brand name as well as other private brand name labels. According to Craig, people would be very surprised to know how much candy actually is produced by the company. Arway is the "behind the scenes manufacturers" of many candy brands and products sold at familiar stores such as Crate and Barrel and Jewel-Osco. Even if you do not know about Arway or Long Grove, chances are you've had their products in a tin, tub, bag, or as a fund raising program item - just labelled under another brand name.
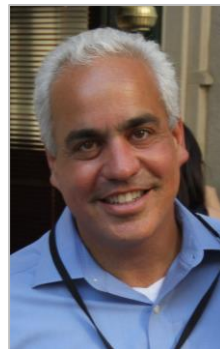
Craig Leva
President & Owner
Arway/Long Grove

Arway/Long Grove has built a great team with great service, great products, and a great reputation which has made them unique. Craig explained that as a mid-size company, their focus is on high quality, as opposed to products manufactured by the commodity-driven huge candy companies like Hershey's, Mars or Nestle.   There is a big difference in the caliber of a Long Grove product found in a specialty store versus the common candy bars found at a Walmart type store. At this time of year, meeting seasonal candy demands is challenging for a mid-size company. To accommodate the high demand for butter toffee and chocolate covered goodness, the company hires an additional 300 employees to meet its seasonal production needs. However, according to Craig, "it's always Christmas here."

In order to manage the many moving pieces, products, and increasing information, Arway/Long Grove had to embrace technology. Although there was a time when Craig was "afraid" of a server's environment, MXOtech stepped in ten years ago to facilitate this important strategic move for the company. Working with MXOtech has enabled Arway/Long Grove to hire many more people, add more work stations, and better manage its business information and products. In short, they now rely on technology for the process of how its business works. Both MXOtech and Arway/Long Grove have grown successfully over the past ten years, learning together. At MXOtech, we are proud that our managed IT services and computer support have played a big role in the company's ability to manufacture and deliver high quality products and outstanding customer service.

Watch our factory tour at http://tinyurl.com/candytour

Have you met MXO Help Desk Administrator, Estuardo?

Estuardo Ambrocio
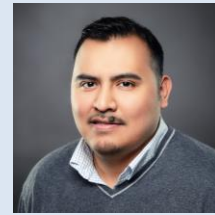
Estuardo is a key member of MXO's Network Operations Center (NOC) team. Estuardo brings 5 years of experience doing internal IT Support for a global market research company as well as remote IT Support for Support.com. Ready for the challenge of the consulting world, Estuardo fields phone calls and skillfully handles on site client visits using his impeccable technology and troubleshooting skills. He enjoys being a part of the NOC team and the challenge of learning the individual nuances of our clients' technology systems.

Favorite Food:
Steak

Favorite Movie:
Moneyball

Favorite Quote:
"Never let the fear of striking out get in your way." – Babe Ruth

Role at MXO:
NOCturnal Tech Extraordinaire

DropBox & Google Docs:
Are They Secure For Your Business?

A question that we often get around here is whether or not file sharing services such as DropBox, YouSendIt and GoogleDocs are secure enough for business. If you use any of these services for business, here is what you should know:

Treat DropBox (and the other sites mentioned above) as a public, shared environment. These file sharing sites are designed to easily share very large files – ones that are not optimal for email because they're so large. Examples include videos, audio files, graphic files, and so on. These services are typically free (or very cheap) and you should NOT have the expectation of great security for this price.

However, an increasing use of these tools, even for legitimate reasons, are putting a lot of private information at risk. According to a recent Ponemon study, 60% of organizations have employees that frequently put confidential files on sharing sites like these without permission. In fact, companies such as IBM have banned the use of these services completely.

When DOES or DOESN'T it make sense?

When you have a file that doesn't need to be secured, and simply needs to quickly and easily get from point A to point B, then file sharing sites such as DropBox are a viable solution. On the other hand, when you have files that contain sensitive information, such as contracts or financial statements, you would not want to store or share them on DropBox or Google Docs. It is especially important to note that these services should never be used to store or send any files subject to government compliance regulations such as PCI, HIPAA, SOX, Sarbanes-Oxley or HITECH. These file sharing are NOT compliant.

What should be used instead?

If you need to transfer files outside of your network and need to do so securely, some options to consider are:

- Creating a secure FTP site
- Use 2-factor authentication rules
- Be sure to have audit logs involved to monitor the security of your data
- Discuss your compliance requirements with your IT Consultant to find solutions that preserve security and deliver the functionality you need.

If you have questions about DropBox or any other file sharing services, call us at 312.554.5699 or email sales@mxotech.com.

Innovation Inspiration

"Today is the first blank page of a 365 page book. Write a good one."

– Brad Paisley

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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