



Tech chronicle

End of Life for Windows Server and Windows 7

Did you know that Microsoft will no longer be offering support for Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 after January 2020? This means that all security updates will no longer be offered and support will not be provided after this date.

Make plans soon! Contact us at (843)234-9980 for more information and we will ensure that the upgrade runs smoothly!



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Bill Hinson, CEO of Creative Consultants Group, Inc.

Our Mission

To build a community of successful minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.



Are YOU Prepared For The End Of Windows 7?

On January 14, 2020, the world will bid a fond farewell to the beloved Windows 7 operating system. Well, sort of. Microsoft has declared that, after that date, it will no longer update or support the system. It's the final nail in the coffin for a trustworthy, oft-touted software package that's been running on fumes since newer versions hit the scene. And, as with any funeral, there are some arrangements to be made for the millions of businesses that have stuck it out to the end. Here's everything you need to know about the coming changes – and what you should do now to prepare.

The End Of An Era

The news of Microsoft closing down Windows 7 support may come as a surprise to some of us, but the

operating system has been on its last legs for a while. In fact, Microsoft stopped adding new features and honoring warranties for the platform back in 2015. When 2020 comes, it will cease releasing patches and updates for good.

This doesn't mean that Windows 7 PCs will suddenly stop working in January; you'll still be able to boot up in the operating system if you keep it installed. But if you value your privacy, your data and your sanity, it's time to upgrade.

Those Microsoft updates that pop up from time to time don't exist just to annoy you; they patch security vulnerabilities and protect you against new viruses and malware. Without that ongoing support, Windows 7 users will become fish in a

continued on page 2

barrel to sophisticated cybercriminals looking for a quick buck. That's why it's essential that you call in the professionals to prepare your business for the switch to Windows 10 – or an alternative operating system – now, not later.

It's A Requirement, Not A Choice

Upgrading your operating system well in advance of the Windows 7 end-of-life date may seem like a decision you should make for your peace of mind, but it's even more critical than that. Of course, as time leaves Windows 7 behind, it's certain that pieces of software will steadily become incompatible with the OS. Programs your company uses day-to-day suddenly becoming unusable will present serious headaches, but the real problem lies in the security of your network.

Windows developers are in a constant arms race with cybercriminals looking to exploit vulnerabilities in their platform. Each patch brings a host of bug fixes and security upgrades, but cybercriminals almost always find a new way in. Thus, the developers hastily put

“Like maggots drawn to rotting meat, they flock to the abandoned platform and dig into the networks of those stubbornly clinging to the outdated OS.”

together a new patch, and the cycle continues.

When an operating system loses support from these developers, its users are left completely vulnerable to hackers. Like maggots drawn to rotting meat, they flock to the abandoned platform and dig into the networks of those stubbornly clinging to the outdated OS. This process is expected to be especially nasty after Windows 7's end of life, since so many businesses still use the OS and likely will forget (or refuse) to upgrade.

If you value your business at all, it's not a choice. You need to upgrade before time runs out.

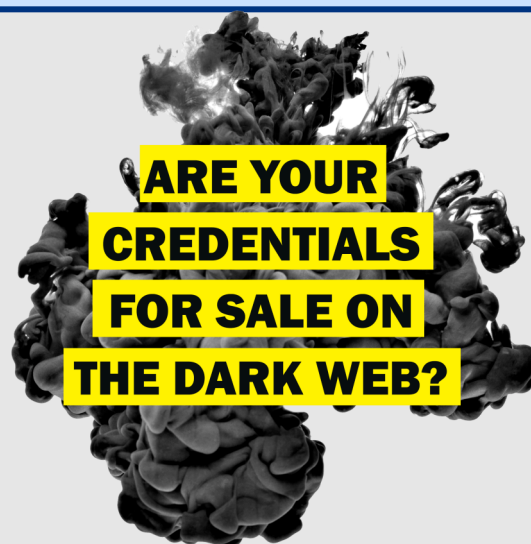
Avoid The Crunch

Not only should you enlist your IT experts to facilitate the upgrade, but you should do it ASAP. As the clock ticks down on Windows 7, tech companies are expecting a flood of upgrade requests as businesses scramble to leave the OS behind before it's too late. Many of these IT providers will have a lot on their plate later in the year as they hurry to upgrade hundreds, if not thousands, of individual PCs. If you wait it out, you're likely to find yourself at the back of a long, long line, potentially to the point that you breeze past January 14 without a solution. If you do, you're almost certain to regret it.

Every day, the need for an upgrade becomes more urgent. Give the task the ample time required, and avoid needless stress. Reach out to your IT provider and ask them to start the upgrade process today or call us for assistance at (843)234-9980.

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Expect, Inspect, Correct

It's no coincidence that we have so many ways to say we made a mistake: botched, flubbed, mishandled, misjudged, mucked, messed, screwed or goofed up – just to name a few.

As a leader, you'll hear each of these (some more than others, and likely some more explicit than the ones I've named here) pretty often. When you do, it's important to first try to remember that whoever made the mistake probably didn't mean to.

Put yourself in their shoes. Ask yourself if you have ever made a mistake. A bad decision? Have you ever said something you regret? Ever disappointed your boss? Jumped to the wrong conclusion? Done something foolish or outright stupid? Everyone has. Sometimes a simple reminder of our past failings enables us to be a little more tolerant of others' missteps.

Mistakes don't have to be the end of the world. Mistakes are inevitable and are often essential to learning and progress. They should guide you, not define you, on you and your employees' journey to success. Mistakes show

effort, and if you learn from them, they can be some of the best tools for growth.

I've heard it said before that the only people who don't make mistakes are those who do nothing at all. To me, the most interesting part about errors is the gradual evolution in how they're classified. First, they start as mistakes. Then they turn into lessons, followed by experiences and finally as gifts that help us succeed.

Therefore, the only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing. Keep that in mind as you're dealing with your employees or considering your own shortcomings. It's one thing to recognize that mistakes are learning opportunities – it's another to actually implement that concept in your organization.

Robert Stevenson is one of the most widely recognized professional speakers in the world. Author of the books How To Soar Like An Eagle In A World Full Of Turkeys and 52 Essential Habits For Success, he's shared the podium with esteemed figures from across the country, including former President George H.W. Bush, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Anthony Robbins, Tom Peters and Steven Covey. Today, he travels the world, sharing powerful ideas for achieving excellence, both personally and professionally.

SHINY NEW GADGET THE MONTH VIZR Hopes To Revolutionize Your Dashboard

When it comes to driving, the forces that aim to keep us safe seem to be in constant battle with the pull of convenience. We're supposed to keep our eyes glued to the road while trying to navigate through Google Maps without missing a single turn. It's an inherently dangerous combination.

With their new VIZR tool, FIXD automotive hopes to fix that. After selecting the feature you want, you connect the device to your phone and place it on your dashboard, where it creates a transparent display. This way, FIXD says, you can seamlessly navigate without ever glancing at your phone and putting your life in jeopardy.

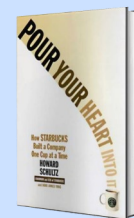
Though VIZR is a great idea, the reviews indicate it might not be all it's cracked up to be. You might want to wait until all the bugs are sorted out. For now, just keep your eyes on the road the old-fashioned way.



Pour Your Heart Into It By Howard Schultz

Today, Starbucks is one of the most successful companies of all time, with a horde of loyal customers worldwide and one of the most recognizable identities in the history of branding, but it wasn't always that way. Before it became extremely popular, it was just a humble coffee shop on a Seattle street corner.

In *Pour Your Heart Into It*, Howard Schultz outlines exactly how this transformation occurred, shifting the coffee shop from another ignorable storefront to a worldwide phenomenon. Few of us may be able to replicate Starbucks' success, but we certainly can learn a thing or two from the man who made it happen.



Technology Tips To Increase Efficiency

Successful businesses make technology work for them, not the other way round. When used correctly, technology can make every task much faster to execute. So, if you're looking to increase staff efficiency, consider the following methods to implement technology into your day-to-day business operations.

Change office communication

To increase efficiency, set up instant messaging software such as Slack or Microsoft Teams. This allows employees to communicate anytime, anywhere instead of having to get up from their desks to see whether the person is available.

Of course, if you need to discuss big projects or issues, face-to-face communication is likely the best choice. But you can simply send a quick message for more trivial conversations, saving precious minutes and allowing you to get more work done.

Install video conferencing

Traveling to offsite meetings and training sessions takes time. Rather than commuting for hours outside your office, opt for a networked phone solution that offers video calls and conferencing. This way, you can hold a video conference to discuss business matters from the comfort and convenience of your office. You can also take things up a notch and equip the conference room with tools to pull up documents and have them displayed on a big screen so that everyone in the meeting can follow the conversation with ease.

Upgrade workstations

Outdated technologies and workstations limit your business's progress and are a hindrance to developing clued-up, efficient employees. Aging systems and slow networks can frustrate your team and bring productivity to a standstill. That's why it's important to take the time to assess your current workstations, applications, hardware, and tools. This doesn't mean that you have to buy a set of entirely new workstations. But you should replace obsolete equipment with more up-to-date machines. In addition, make sure all software and applications are up-to-date to ensure maximum efficiency and employee satisfaction.

Implement ERP software

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is a business process management software that allows organizations to automate processes and centralize data in order for employees to collaborate more efficiently. ERP software provides employees with up-to-date business information that they can easily access and use. What's more, ERP also eliminates redundant data entry and reduces the number of spreadsheets that are used to record critical business data, by storing information in a centralized database.

To get the maximum return on your technology investment, it's also important to partner with a knowledgeable and reliable service provider. Get in touch with our tech experts today to find out how we can implement technology to help your employees become more efficient and productive.

CCG Monthly Trivia -Win \$250 Gift Card!

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Michelle Ward of South Atlantic Bank, whose name was randomly chosen among those that correctly answered my quiz question from last month: According to historians, in what position did Michelangelo paint the Sistine Chapel's ceiling?

The answer was (surprisingly) c) Standing.



Now, for our May trivia question. Email your answer to: swoollums@creativeconsultants.net.

Which of the following Avengers from the comics is NOT in "The Avengers" movie?

a) Black Widow b) Captain America c) Hawkeye d) The Wasp



"OK, went to maps, clicked 'home,' and specified walking directions. We're good to go."