Integration Technology Times

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

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What's New

This monthly newsletter is provided courtesy of Kevin Bowling, CEO of Integration.

"As a business owner, I know 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!"

Are YOU Prepared For The End Of Windows 7?

If you're one of the estimated 40%+ of businesses still on the outdated Windows 7 platform, consider this your wake-up call: time is nearly up for your trusty, tried-and-true operating system. On January 14, 2020, Microsoft will end support for Windows 7. That means no more updates, security or otherwise, will be offered by the company from that date forward.

The clock's been ticking on Windows 7 ever since Microsoft ended mainstream support back in 2015, and its time will soon be up. While it's important to note that Windows 7 will still technically be usable after next January, this upcoming shift will spell trouble for users who've stuck it out to the platform's bitter end. Not only will Windows 7 become progressively more unstable as modern hardware outpaces the software, but cybercriminals are certain to flock to the operating system after support shuts down, eager to pick off easy targets left vulnerable by the lack of ongoing security updates.

If you're running a business, this is a risk you can't afford. It's time to contact your IT provider and make preparations to upgrade, preferably well in advance of the January 14 deadline. Whether you're planning on seamlessly transitioning to Windows 10 or moving on to an alternative operating system, this is a task that needs to be at the top of your list.

Don't Leave Yourself Vulnerable

Since Windows 7 will continue to work after January 14, you may wonder why you can't just stick it out and keep using the platform. The answer is you can – but you absolutely shouldn't. In fact, the risks and problems this decision would pose to your business make an upgrade less of a decision and more of an eventuality.

Modern software is no longer designed with Windows 7 in mind. This includes old software that's been upgraded since the world moved on from the operating system. As technological progress continues at breakneck speed, more and more key programs will become unusable in Windows 7.

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The same goes for hardware. Tech equipment advances exponentially year by year. In order to take advantage of these massive improvements, you need an operating system equipped to handle these new capabilities and features. What's more, as the hardware progresses, it may become incompatible with Windows 7 altogether.

However, these are small concerns when compared to the future security of your network. As time goes on, new vulnerabilities are discovered in even the most well-designed operating systems. To fight against hackers, developers continuously search for ways to remove these security gaps and release them in the form of patches. With every annoying update you're forced to install on your machine, you're staving off would-be opportunists on the hunt for their next victim.

After Windows 7's end of life, these updates will dry up. That means that any users still on the platform – and there will be a lot of them – will be exposed to the increasingly crafty exploits used by hackers. Cybercriminals, attracted to the lowest-hanging fruit, will come in droves for Windows 7 users, eager to pick at the scraps.

Staying on an operating system after it's no longer supported is like leaving the digital door open on your business. Don't do it.

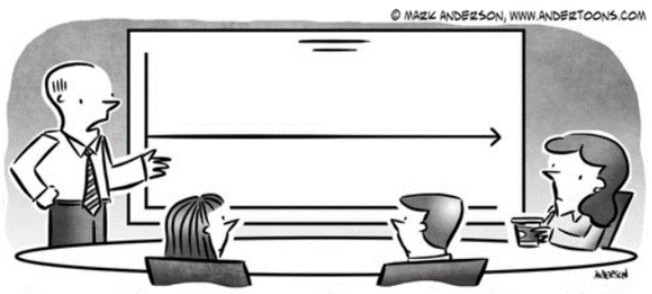
TIME IS RUNNING OUT

Of course, we're still at least six months out from the Windows 7 end-of-life date. That may seem like a lot of time. When it comes time to actually make the transition, though, you'll need all the time you can get. Upgrading dozens, hundreds or even thousands of PCs is more laborious than you probably realize. And with so many other companies scrambling to do the same toward the end of the year, IT providers are likely to get bogged down with service requests.

> **"Cybercriminals are certain to flock to the operating system after support shuts down, eager to pick off easy targets left vulnerable by the lack of ongoing security updates ..."**

Instead of putting it off to the last minute and potentially leaving yourself vulnerable, contact your IT provider as soon as possible to initiate the upgrade process. You'll leave yourself ample time to iron out any issues as they arise without the added pressure of an imminent deadline.

When your business is on the line, it just doesn't make sense to delay. Don't risk losing everything you've worked so hard to build. Make preparations to leave Windows 7 behind today!



"I mean it's got to do something sooner or later, right?"

Funny Quotes and Jokes

3 Ways To Protect Your Remote Employees From Being Hacked

Remote work is a staple of any truly modern office, but it opens your employees up to some unique security risks. To minimize the vulnerability of your team and the precious data of your organization, it's essential that you implement a few simple guidelines.

First, avoid using public, unsecured WiFi. Tons of people work from the comfort of a coffee shop, but this is actually a pretty big security risk. Hackers can spoof free WiFi networks to boost company data or spread malware throughout unprotected networks. It's hard to ban this one outright, but it's important to at least be aware of the risks, and at the very least, never log in to a network that isn't password-protected.

As always, the weakest link in any security plan is the people behind it. Teach your team about the warning signs of malicious cyber-tactics, like phishing, and the importance of implementing tech best practices while they work, such as strong passwords. With a little foresight, you can reduce your employees' exposure and teach them to be responsible with company data out in the wild. *Inc.com, 2/12/2019*

Don't Use These E-mail Accounts for Business

Here's an opinion that's sure to be unpopular: you shouldn't be using Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail or any other popular free email service for your business accounts. Without a proprietary e-mail address specific to your business to lend your e-mails legitimacy, prospects are likely to ignore them outright or even assume they're spam. What's more, cloud-based e-mail platforms can be quite vulnerable. It's pretty easy to set up a company e-mail, and once you do, you'll never look back. *ConversionPipeline.com*

Exciting News...

SFC, Inc. has merged with Integration.

As of June 1, 2019, Joe Carton and Jason Waters will join Integration. Joe started SFC in 1986 in Decatur, Alabama. Providing fully outsourced network management, IP telephony and VOIP.

Jason has been with SFC for 6 years and will be a great asset to our Technical—Engineering staff.

Integration is honored to be a part of this transaction and to gain the experience of both Joe and Jason. In the days ahead, please be patient as they learn our ticketing system, and then you will find with our combined team fast response with quality service which is always our goal.

We are also exited to share that our Help Desk has grown to over 40 team members.

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How would you like the security of knowing that your data is safe and protected?

How would you like a VOIP phone system that is cost effective, saves you money, and you can take it home or vacation and work as in the office?