

Technology Times



Solutions Unlimited, LLC



XP and Office 2003 are on their way to the technology graveyard, are you ready?

It's sad to say, but Windows XP and Office 2003's lifecycle is coming to an end. It's no secret, April 8th, 2014 is the final day for support on XP machines and Office 2003 products. Is your company ready?

Take action before your stuck in a lurch! Look around your office, are there any machines still running XP or utilizing Office 2003? If so, it's time to change these workstations over to something new. You only have about six months to migrate your systems and make sure everything is working just right for your business.

The end is near for XP and Office 2003. Microsoft isn't going to be looking out for these products anymore. There won't be any updates or patches released after April 2014. This means they will become vulnerable to outside attacks which ends their useful life for businesses.



Valid concerns about security and compliance. You may think, "So what if they don't update the programs, they will still work, right?" Yes, the programs will work but, your work will be unprotected from emerging threats. Serious security and compliance issues arise when using outdated operating systems and software to support your company's vital functions. The risks to your sensitive customer and company information will increase once Microsoft shuts down their support of these products.

Not the manufacturers too! Yep, early industry reports show a lack of interest from Independent Software Vendors or ISV's as well. Many say, they will not keep up support for programs and applications that currently run on XP. In addition, new computers being made will no

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Halloween history and myths

Halloween is one of the sweetest holidays of the year, but also comes with a trail of myths to keep us on our toes.

Halloween began as a celebration for the end of summer. The roots of Halloween come from Samhain which celebrated the end of summer or the lighter half of the year and the beginning of the darker half. In England, October 31st is known as the Eve of All Saint's Day hence the name All Hallow's Eve later developed into Halloween.

This holiday has developed into a creative and fun celebration in which we all indulge in parties and sweet treats. Don't believe everything you hear about Halloween. Superstitions and myths are just part of the fun.

Myth #1: Evildoers use Halloween as an opportunity to scare little ones. Ok, I won't lie, some adults are just tickled when they can scare the pants off of a youngster. However, this sweet holiday wasn't created just to instill fear in our youth.

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Tickle your bones

Never underestimate the bandwidth of a child with a treat bag full of sugar barreling down the street.

Spooky... computers allow us to make more mistakes faster than any other invention in human history.

Q: Why are monsters huge, hairy and scary?
A: Because if they were small, bald and sweet they'd be M&M's.

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Don't let ghouls, ghosts and beasts take hold...

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longer have the option of coming with XP or Office 2003.

Windows 7 is a step in the right direction. Vista is next on the chopping block and Windows 8 isn't really business ready yet. As a general rule of thumb, new software and operating systems are not created perfect. Allow time for technicians to review hiccups and the manufacturers to issue their first service pack or updates before integrating them into your primary business functions.

A little friendly advice... Change your company over to Office 2013 as soon as possible to take advantage of the advanced functionality, productivity and security without a huge learning curve. This new Office suite of programs will give you the most bang for your buck and you will have Microsoft support for the next ten years.

Server compatibility considerations. If your company uses an exchange e-mail

server, it may require an upgrade to work with Office 2013. This new Office suite requires an update to Server 2007 or newer to work with Office 2013. Otherwise, when you get all of your new Office products in place, your Outlook e-mail won't be able to connect with the exchange e-mail server.

April 8th, 2014 Windows XP machines will be left hanging with security concerns and vulnerabilities. Are you ready?

Computer requirements.

Don't forget to check the requirements for each new program you want to employ. All of your workstations must meet specific requirements to function properly with Windows 7 and Office 2013.

Assess your needs before you upgrade. No matter what versions you choose, run a full assessment of your current systems and operations to ensure your new selections are fully compatible with your current tools and processes. Also, always backup your network and workstations before making any changes so you don't lose any of your company data during the transition.

It doesn't take a potion to find dream clients

You and your company probably have a dream client in mind. To land a big account, remember what America is looking for.

Something different. They already have good suppliers. If you are different in some way, you've got a chance.

Specificity. Be specific about what you have to offer. Big companies have many product lines, focus on one area and show your prospect what you can do.

A good reputation. Corporations want to buy from companies that have a good reputation. Tell them about your company history and present capabilities. They are not only buying in on your product but your company as well.

Preparation. Know about your prospects, how they operate and how you can help. Be realistic

Global strategy. Changing vendors can be very expensive. Experts say, quoted in INC., "...companies want a long-term relationship with a supplier that has thought about working within the company's strategies."

Finding good clients doesn't take a special potion. Focus inward on the quality of your products, services, and your overall strategy to land great clients. Remember...

"Sometimes when you innovate, you make mistakes. It is best to admit them quickly and get on with improving your other innovations. "

~Steve Jobs

Be yourself and thrive

All of us have our own special qualities and eccentricities but, this is what makes us truly unique.

Embracing our own uniqueness could give you an edge on your competition. There is nothing worse than bringing a proposition to your clients with some fake facial expressions and a withdrawn nervous demeanor.

Feel free to express yourself.

Be confident in every aspect of your position. Build your business personality up as your Unique Selling Proposition (USP).

In the end, clients worth keeping are investing in your products and services as well as your ability to work with them in the long-term. So, be yourself.



Halloween tips...

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Myth #2: Halloween is nearly as costly as Christmas!

Really, the only expenses to Halloween are candy, costumes and sometimes party expense. This holiday is hardly an economy booster. Candy makers may thrive and costume designers enjoy an increase in sales, but overall, Christmas, Fathers Day, and Mothers Day will gather the most spent dollars. Even Valentines day brings in roughly double the dollars year after year.

Myth #3: Halloween is riddled with criminal activities.

No matter what you've heard in the media, rates of animal cruelty, harmful items in apples or candy, and abduction are not outrageously higher on Halloween. Sure, neighborhood kids dare each other to toilet paper a house, smash a few pumpkins or put shaving cream on a friends face. However, the pranks are just that, pranks.

It can't hurt to be smart about your activities though.

Consider keeping your pets inside on busy evenings like Halloween, community activity days (parades or festivals), and the 4th of July. This will keep them in a positive mood and away from harm. When you walk the street at night, be cautious of strangers that could be a danger to you or your family. Carry a flashlight for visibility and bring a communication device along to call for help if necessary. If you indulge in treats for any occasion, don't take anything from someone you don't know or trust and teach young ones to check with an adult before diving into those sweet treats too.

Happy Halloween!

Section 179 deduction limits for 2013: New computers, software and equipment, oh my!

For years now, Section 179 has allowed business owners to take advantage of sweet deductions, but you have to act fast! 2013 is coming to a close and your savings on new business projects will disappear on December 31st.

Happy New Year! It's amazing, we are already into the 4th quarter of the year. As soon as Labor Day comes we see Halloween costumes, Christmas decorations, and New Year's party hats spring up in stores. By then, we are all settling into the end of the year swing of things planning holiday events and preparing for vacations.

Conduct a year-end review and plan for 2014 early. How is your business doing? Take time to look at your current standing and plan for the coming year. After all, there are really only three working weeks in November and two in December. If you are going to implement any new changes, now is the time.

Check in on your core activities.

Business operations like how you serve your clients, the products you offer, your sales and marketing duties, and even business finances need to be reviewed semi-annually at the very least. This type of audit will help you make informed decisions for the future. You will be able to clearly define new goals for the coming year and identify areas for improvement.

How can Section 179 help me?

This section of the tax code was created to help businesses by allowing them to deduct the full amount of equipment purchases this year (with specific limits, of course). Things like new computers, "off-the-shelf" software products, printers and office furniture are all part of the deal. Even if you need a new laptop and it is split between your personal use and busi-

ness, you can deduct a percentage of the expense.

Every business is different but, we all love extra money! Don't miss this chance to save. According to www.section179.org,

"Section 179 limits for the year 2013 were increased by the 'American Taxpayer Relief Act' which allows businesses to write-off up to \$500,000 of qualified capital expenditures subject to a dollar-for-dollar phase out once these expenditures exceed \$2,000,000 in the 2013 tax year."

Keep in mind, to qualify, your purchases must be made and installed by December 31st, 2013. That only gives us about 6 weeks to get your project rolling and completed! Don't hesitate. If you've been considering an upgrade, software purchase, or equipment improvements there is truly no better time.

Give us a call for your FREE Section 179 Network Audit. No pushy sales guys! We will work with you every step of the way to construct a custom upgrade solution for your business needs.

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Wicked keyboard tricks for a more productive workday

- ◆ Ctrl + C = Copy
- ◆ Ctrl + X = Cut
- ◆ Ctrl + V = Paste
- ◆ Ctrl + Z = Undo action
- ◆ Ctrl + Y = Redo action
- ◆ Ctrl + A = Select everything
- ◆ Ctrl + P = Print
- ◆ Alt + Tab = Switch between windows
- ◆ Windows Key + D = Clear everything and show desktop
- ◆ Windows Key + Down Arrow = Minimize window
- ◆ Windows Key + Up Arrow = Maximize the window
- ◆ Ctrl + Plus or Minus Key = Zoom in our out
- ◆ Windows Key + F1 = Help
- ◆ Ctrl + Shift + Esc = Open Task Manager
- ◆ Windows Key + L = Lock Your Computer

“We make all of your computer problems go away without the cost of a full-time I.T. staff!”

Ask about our fixed price service agreements.

— Computer support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for, just like rent!

Inquiring Minds...

5 dangers of unsecured Wifi networks.

Hackers are everywhere! They look for unsecured points to capture company and personal data. Is your network secure at the office and at home? If you don't know, it's time to check your network!

Unsecured Wifi networks are don't have any type of encryption or network key (password) to protect users from dangers lurking in the background. Here are the 5 most dangerous results from unsecured Wifi networks:

#1 Evil eyes on your logins. Some of your user accounts don't require encryption. All of your login information is sent as clear text over the network. When using an unsecured connection, anyone peering in can see your information.

#2 Stocking your every move. On unsecured wireless networks, it is very easy for onlookers to monitor and capture all of your e-mail traffic and instant messages. Attackers will save and review this information and use it to create believable scams just for you.

#3 File swiping. Have you ever turned off file sharing when you've connected to a network? Chances are, it is still on. Hackers can use this as a resource to plug themselves into your computer and retrieve your data.



#4 Piggyback into your office. If you use an unsecured Wifi connection to login to your company network, anyone who is attached to your computer or Wifi network has access too.

#5 Infection connection. While logging into an unsecured point may be your only option, you may be leaving yourself wide open for an infection. Hackers can easily use unsecured networks as a launch point for SPAM, viruses, and monitoring tools.

Keep yourself safe online. Only connect to networks you know are secure. If you aren't sure what settings you need for

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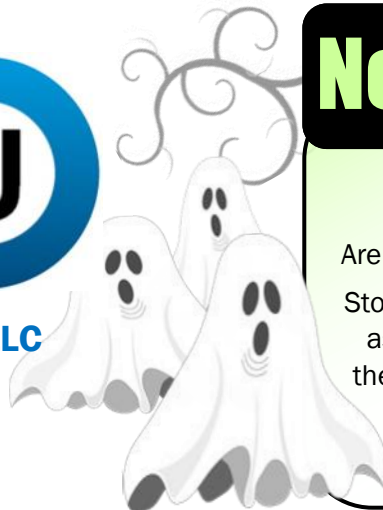
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Need a ghost hunter!

Suspicious about activities on your network?

Do your icons keep disappearing?

Are you going crazy looking for files that just aren't there?

Stop the insanity!!! Call a ghost hunter who can run a full assessment of you current systems, present you with the culprit, provide a custom solution to resolve current issues and plan for the future of your company.

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