

JULY TECH NEWS

630-236-6625

Issue: 7



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Microsoft to Cease Windows XP Support in 2014

If you still use Window XP, it might just be the time for you to upgrade (or at least start planning to upgrade) as Microsoft plans to pull the plug on Windows XP support in 2014.

Part of using any sort of software is the inevitable need to upgrade. Most if not all software needs to either be replaced and upgraded as the demands of the market entail more efficient processing of the various data and information a business handles.

Such is the case with Windows XP. While many continue to use this proven straightforward operating system, Microsoft has decided to stop support by the year 2014. Microsoft further recommends upgrading to its latest OS, Windows 7, in order for users to continue to receive OS support.

While there are some lines of business applications that have not been upgraded to work with Windows 7, most have - and there are alternative approaches. Also, your business needs the security and protection that only a current, up-to-date operating system can provide.

We understand that changing your OS will entail some expense, including new licenses, hardware, and some training. Fortunately, these things are designed to help you operate more efficiently and increase your productivity in the long run. But such change will take time, and if you are interested in starting to plan for an upgrade now, we'll be happy to sit down with you and develop an upgrade process that meets your specific needs.

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Are You Monitoring and Managing Your Reputation Online? Here's How.

The proliferation of websites and social media tools is making the job of monitoring what's being said about you online increasingly difficult to do. But you need to somehow make sense of the sea of information available in these online tools, because depending on what's being said-it can have either a helpful or a damaging effect on your reputation or your business. Here are some tools to help you.

Besides your own eyes and ears, there are plenty of tools-for free or for a price-available to help you monitor your presence online. The simplest of these is your familiar search engines such as Google or Bing. By simply searching online, you can find where your name or your company's name appears in various websites. With Google in particular, you can set up "alerts" which will email you when a specific word or term appears in their website index.

What words or terms should you use? Start with your name, or your company name, then try the name of your products and/or services, and maybe even the names of your employees, directors, and other stakeholders. It might also be helpful to search for the competition as well. As results come in you can refine your search by expanding or narrowing the scope of terms you would like to search or be alerted on. If you want to be able to search across all different search engines and not just one or two, you can use Monitor This.

Next you can use specialized website or social media monitoring tools to search only specific sites or services as opposed to the entire Internet. One example is Greplin, which allows you to search all of your accounts or accounts that you own. This is very helpful to be able to execute highly filtered searches on specific information in your Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn accounts, or your blog. Another option is Rollyo, which allows you to set up your own specialized search engines that cull content from public or open websites of your choosing.

Other more generalized tools include RSS feed readers-which allow you to consume news or information feeds from news

First person to submit the correct answers by email to anorton@osgusa.com will receive a \$25 Starbuck gift card!

Entries are judged by date/time received and correctness. Include your name and phone number, the question number and the answer.

- 1) Which three Presidents died on the 4th of July?
- 2) How many people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4th?
- 3) What other countries celebrate the 4th of July?
- 4) What pitcher threw a no hitter on the 4th of July?

sites or blogs. Examples include Newsgator.com, Bloglines.com, Google Reader or Pluck.com. Other generalized tools include those that monitor specific newsgroups or message boards like BoardReader.com, ForumFind.com, Big-Boards.com, BoardTracker.com, iVillage, Yahoo Message Boards, and MSN Money. Still others track changes to content of specific sites (Copernic Tracker, Website Watcher and WatchThatPage.com), as well as their domain information (DomainTools.com and BetterWhois.com).

The really interesting new services actually give you an explicit idea of the status of your reputation-especially if you are a relatively well known name or your business has an established brand. In this category are sites like Amplicate, which monitors general feelings or impressions about brands, businesses, or services; Klout, which tries to measure the influence of individuals based on their social interactions; and SendLove.to, which focuses on celebrities and media personalities.

There are literally dozens more tools you can use to monitor and manage your reputation online. To find out more, a great resource is here at the Duct Tape Marketing blog. If you have any additional suggestions, feel free to let us know! 630-236-6625

Use Your Android Phone Like a USB Key

If you own an Android phone, you can use it as a substitute for an external drive or a USB key. You can load files into your phone simply by plugging it in to a PC with a USB cable, then tapping on "Mount" when you are prompted by the system.

This mounts the internal storage of the device as an external drive relative to the PC, and you can easily drag and drop files or create folders on the device as you see fit. Of course, it is recommended you do this on the SDCard that likely came with the device, or one that you buy for your phone.

Passwords that Put You at Risk

If you are in the habit of using passwords like 'password', 'qwerty' or '123456', you may be helping hackers and online

thieves steal your data. Security experts have compiled a list of the 25 most common passwords - passwords that you should avoid. If you think using 'password' as your password is no big deal, then it's time to rethink.

Security experts have recently compiled a list of the worst passwords users can choose, and 'password' is at the very top of the list. Weak passwords make your information more vulnerable simply because hackers can guess them. It may be easier to pick a password that you don't have to think about, but it's a choice that you may come to regret.

25 worst passwords to use:

1. password
2. 123456
3. 12345678
4. qwerty
5. abc123
6. monkey
7. 1234567
8. letmein
9. trustno1
10. dragon
11. baseball
12. 111111
13. iloveyou
14. master
15. sunshine
16. ashley
17. bailey
18. passw0rd
19. shadow
20. 123123
21. 654321
22. superman
23. qazwsx
24. michael
25. football

Make a smart password choice Experts advise using a combination of letters and numbers when creating your passwords, and to avoid things that anyone might be able to guess, such as birthdays and anniversary dates.

Use a password manager to help you keep track of all of your passwords if you're finding it difficult to remember them all.

No matter how sophisticated your security system is, a weak password gives hackers and online thieves an advantage. Helping all the users in your organization understand the importance of password strength will help you secure the IT systems in your organization.

If you're interested in learning more, please contact us so we can develop a comprehensive and custom security blueprint that meets your specific needs. 630-236-6625

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Outsource Solutions Group, Inc.
Phone: 630-236-6625
Toll Free: 1-888-236-6625
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