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Windows 10 – Microsoft Pushes The Upgrade

For something that they are giving away, Microsoft seems determined to push people to upgrade in less than subtle ways. Initially, there was a notice that users of Windows 7 & Windows 8 could reserve their free copy of Windows 10. Those notices became more frequent as time went on and some people went ahead and upgraded just to stop the notifications. For those that do not want to do this, you can click on the Notification arrow on the bottom right of your screen and select "Customize" to change some options. From there locate the item GWX and select "Hide Icon and Notifications" to turn off the constant reminders.

Most recently Microsoft has taken a different tact. A Pop-Up screen asks users to "Upgrade Now" or "Upgrade Later". If you select "Upgrade Later" it will just go ahead and upgrade when the computer is idle at some point without asking. You must just click the little red "X" and close down this prompt if you prefer to stick with Windows 7 or 8 as the case may be.

While one wonders why they are pushing a free product with such intensity, Windows 10 is not a bad product and has some nice features along with some less than intuitive menu options. If you do want to upgrade, make sure that all of your software and critical interfaces are Windows 10 compatible otherwise you may experience a little grief sorting out the incompatibilities as we had to do with Libra.

That being said, Microsoft does provide a recovery option that allows users to revert back to their previous Windows version for a period of 30 days after the upgrade is applied. Beyond that you would need to do a full reinstallation of your old Windows version.

Connecting Computers to Your TV

Even if you have a "Smart TV" the options are limited as to what you can do on the Internet. A simple solutions is to use a computer or laptop and connect that to one of the HDMI ports on your Television. Then a long HDMI cable or a wireless keyboard and mouse, such as I use, can convert your television into a large computer screen. Useful for anything that you would do on the Internet as well as looking at pictures or videos that you downloaded from your phone or camera. Some video adapters may be required to do this.

Ransom / Crypto Viruses

In the last year or two there have been a large number of people hit by a category of Virus known as a Ransom Virus. In its most simple form, it locks up your computer and demands money to unlock it. For people with Windows 7 the usual fix is to power off, start up in Safe Mode and use System Restore to take Windows back a day in time to remove the nuisance virus. Users of Windows 8 and Windows 10 will require a recovery CD / DVD to do this, due to enhanced boot routines.

The next wave of these sort of viruses will go through your computer and encrypt all of your critical files. Typically, they go after Word & Excel files, PDF files and JPG or picture files. Again there is often a message stating that if you pay the asking fee that they will fix your files for you. This almost never happens even if you do give the crooks your money or credit card information. These viruses can hit you regardless of the type of anti-virus you have installed. They usually reside on the web in poisoned web-sites and in links within unsolicited e-mails that promise something that curiosity draws people to click on.

Some form of encrypted and off-site backups are your best defence against the sort of damage these viruses can inflict as there is almost no way to un-encrypt these files without hiring the CIA and a bank of Super Computers to do the work. A product like Crash Plan is cheap insurance to protect you from these file losses.

Outlook Problems

A few years back there was a slate of problems that occurred when people that originally had Microsoft Office 2000/2002 installed, experienced when the size of their Outlook.pst file reached 2gb in size. Without warning Outlook would crash and often lose e-mails and have to be converted manually up to the newer 2003 file format. This new file format was good up to 20gb but now people are running into that upper limit as well and problems are arising for those that do not Archive and Compact their Outlook Files.

If you are having trouble with Outlook this may be why and even if you don't, you should monitor the size of the file to avoid future problems. You can do this by searching for the file Outlook.pst under your user profile and taking action if it is getting close to 20gb.