

BRIEF:

The Sky Isn't Falling, but Risks Are Rising For All XP Users

Microsoft Windows XP End-of-Life is here. Businesses that choose to do nothing are putting their companies at risk. The case for upgrading continues to grow overtime due to the fast pace of change in today's technology-centric workplace. Minimize downtime, system failures, data loss and more with an update migration plan now.

Windows XP: The Situation

Microsoft officially ended support for all versions of Windows XP on April 8, 2014. What does this mean for all businesses and consumers still running this operating system? It means you no longer receive any automatic security updates and other improvements from Microsoft, which leaves your computers and data vulnerable to intrusions, phishing attacks, and more.

Does this mean that your XP computers will no longer work?

Actually, the answer is no. Everything will work the way it has been. However, moving forward Microsoft will not be developing security updates which over time will expose your computer to viruses, malware, and general security intrusions. And, other patches that fix problems and enhance the user experience will also not be performed. *This exposure will increase over time for two key reasons:*

- Your computer will be less current on security protection and other updates as, over time, the number of these items will only increase
- Hackers will target XP computers or will make available threats that will not be protected against XP machines.

Considerations for Upgrading from Windows XP

According to PC World, “Security is arguably the best reason for a Windows XP user to make the switch.” Newer versions of Windows, like Windows 7 and Windows 8, have built-in security features to protect them from today’s security threats. User Account Control automatically prevents programs from making unwanted changes to your computer, Data Execution Prevention wards off programs seeking to corrupt and steal system files, and some versions of Windows 7 and up even include BitLocker and BitLocker-to-Go encryption to keep your files safe and secure, even on a portable storage device! In addition, Windows 8 includes its own antivirus program, Windows Defender (formerly Microsoft Security Essentials), right out of the box to keep your computers safe and secure.

A Little History

Windows XP came to market in 2001, based on developments that had been going on since Windows NT 4.0 came to market in 1996. Regardless of the complexity of security, Windows XP will be a security nightmare as the core Operating System Software was not developed for the type of security threats we have today. Additionally the direction to move more data over the Internet creates additional security exposures in XP driven in part by browser restrictions.

Consider these key points:

- **Hackers will focus on XP.**
 - Most XP users also use an older version of Internet Explorer which is also vulnerable to hacker activities

- **Windows XP limits browser options.**
 - Anyone on Windows XP has to accept that what they now have as web browsing capability is all they will ever have. There will be no Internet Explorer 9 (Windows XP does not support anything beyond Internet Explorer 8), although other, more modern third party browsers such as Firefox and Chrome can be deployed.
 - If the business wants to access the latest websites, running technology such as HTML5, the choice is to go to the expense of installing a third-party browser on the existing platform, or upgrade the operating system itself.
 - Migrating to Windows 8 affords the opportunity to review how desktops and laptops are configured. A comprehensive assessment and migration will surely uncover other related issues and exposures in hardware and related infrastructure.
- **Application Compatibility.**
 - When Windows Vista was introduced, over 20% of existing applications did not work natively on the platform. Applications providers were forced to rewrite their applications or not provide support for Vista. Considering the time that Microsoft has alerted the market to stop support for XP and the fact that Windows 7 and 8 have been in the market for a fairly long time, we expect fewer application compatibility issues. We do suggest that a thorough assessment is in order to understand both hardware and software compatibility issues and detailed requirements to upgrade or change out hardware and software.

Windows 8 is far easier to use and maintain than Windows XP. The new Action Center helps users troubleshoot and solve problems with their computer and can often fix simple problems without user interaction. More devices and technologies are supported right out of the box, including high-speed SATA hard drives, hardware-accelerated graphics rendering with DirectX 10, and more. Windows 8 performs updates, defragments hard drives, and analyzes hardware to optimize performance in the background with no user interaction!

Ease of Use

While many users are comfortable with the familiarity of the Windows XP operating system's interface, new versions of Windows work similarly and often take very little time to get accustomed to. Windows 7 still includes a traditional Start menu which is still customizable to fit a user's needs while offering a wider variety of tools and features that come with a newer operating system. While you may have heard that Windows 8 is difficult to use and works better with a touch screen, the new Start screen offers more information at a glance and operates smoother than older versions of Windows. The new interface becomes as easy to use as old versions with just a few minutes of use, and the most current version, Windows 8.1, adds more of the look and feel of older Windows versions with the refinements of the Windows 8 platform.

Speed

The majority of processors made after 2006 support a newer instruction set, known as 64-bit. This instruction set allows processors to handle larger numbers and multiple cores (like those found on Intel Core 2 Duo and newer processors), unlocking the full potential of your computer with no hardware upgrade necessary! Windows XP does not support 64-bit technology, instead running older 32-bit software.

Upgrading to a 64-bit version of Windows 7 or newer will speed up your computer, allow you to run more programs at once, and let your computer use more than 4 GB of memory, or RAM, allowing you to upgrade it later. In addition, newer versions of Windows are designed to take full advantage of higher end computers while adapting to run quickly on older systems, as well.

Features

Windows XP no longer receives updates to keep it up to date with current technology. Things like USB Super Speed (3.0) flash drives and accessories, 802.11ac Wi-Fi, and other emerging technologies will not work with a computer running Windows XP, leaving your office outdated and unable to work with newer systems correctly. Upgrading to a newer version of Windows will ensure your office stays up to date and compatible with the latest technologies to ensure seamless, worry-free operation down the road.

Why Upgrade Now?

Upgrading now will minimize downtime and headaches for you and your employees. Why wait until the last minute to upgrade if a backup doesn't complete as expected, or a system takes longer to upgrade than expected? What if your software is not supported on newer versions of Windows and you need time to find a replacement or workaround? Avoid headaches and downtime and upgrade today!

For additional Information, visit Microsoft's XP website:

<http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/endsupport.aspx>

For help with an XP upgrade migration plan, contact your local TeamLogic IT office.

TeamLogic IT is a national provider of advanced IT management services for businesses. With locations across the U.S., TeamLogic IT provides managed services, computer consulting and support services focused on helping companies minimize downtime and improve productivity. TeamLogic IT helps businesses compete better through the effective use of information technology.