January 2016 Newsletter

Happy New Year! *I can't believe that this starts the "5th" year of my newsletter, and if you look back you'll see how far we've come with technology. This year will bring even more surprises and big changes, so let's look at what's new right now……The Good and the Bad!*

First and most important…a warning has come out to remove Adobe Flash Player from all machines. Now, even Adobe is hinting that Flash is too riddled with security risks for it to live on. Adobe has been advising developers "to build with new Web standards." YouTube, for one, has dropped Adobe Flash and is now using HTML 5 programming to run their website. Even Browsers like Chrome and Firefox are disabling the Adobe Flash add-on to protect you. If you're using Windows 7 or 8, go to the Control Panel and look for "Programs and Features". Open it up and find Adobe Flash Player (you might see two versions). Highlight Adobe Flash Player and uninstall it. In Windows 10 click on the Windows icon

start button, All Apps, right-click on Adobe Flash, and Uninstall. Adobe Reader isn't affected so you don't need to uninstall that.

The other big news is Windows 10! Above is the latest message that a lot of people are seeing now!

Ok, so they're giving it away for "free" but what if you don't want it? Makes no difference, Microsoft is determined that everyone upgrade. I've had two machines come in that were a disaster. One upgraded on its own….you heard me….no one ok'd it, it just started up with a new operating system on it. The worst news? It trashed the machine and it had to be replaced. Another machine came in where all the information was removed on the machine during the upgrade. After a call to Microsoft they offered as compensation to just reinstall Windows for them. It's a choice only we should make, and this is what bothers me.

The latest news is that they've installed all the installation information on your machine already and as many as 300-400 files are in place for the upgrade. Did you ask for this? NO!

The time is close to when they'll send a message to you saying "Upgrade Now" or We'll Upgrade at 8:00 P.M. (time is different depending on when your Windows Updates are automatically installed)

Downside of Windows 10? I'll give you 9 reasons to think things through before you click on install!

- ***Bad Installs*** *- If you're present machine is having any kind of problems when you install Windows 10 you'll be in for a nasty surprise. It's just not going to work right at all, and possibly even crash. If you intend to upgrade, you need to make sure there are no hardware issues, and that your computer is virus and malware free.*

- ***Missing Features*** *- If you love Windows Media Center, there's bad news. Microsoft doesn't care. You're in the minority, apparently, and so you'll have to find an alternative as the software giant won't be offering its media center in this new build -- not even as a free app. And that's not all that's being taken away. You'll also lose games like Solitaire, Minesweeper, and Hearts. Windows 7 users will have to say goodbye to Gadgets too.*

- ***Not All Software/Hardware Will Work as Intended*** *According to Microsoft, "some printers and other hardware might not work, and some software might not install or work correctly, including antivirus or security programs. Users might also have trouble connecting to home or corporate networks". Who needs that hassle?*

- ***The Start Menu*** *- Many of Windows users hate the tiled interface so much that this could -- as was the case with Windows 8.x -- be something of a deal breaker. Sure, you can remove the tiles, but then you end up with a bland, ugly menu. Plenty of Windows 7 users will see no real reason to switch to a Start menu that's simply more cumbersome.*

- ***Ongoing privacy concerns*** *- While you may reasonably argue that Microsoft needs access to all kinds of data to give you the services you demand -- Cortana has to be able to look inside your email and calendar, for example -- the trade-offs between privacy and features is not a simple black-and-white decision. Microsoft, to its credit, makes no bones about the information it's collecting in Win 10. (Did you*

know that Windows 8 has an "Advertising ID" that follows you around?) Of course, if you've been using Google search, Gmail, or Google Drive on a free account, or Chrome, you've already been examined 10 ways from Tuesday. Microsoft is entering the Google league, and if you decide to take the plunge, you should do so with your eyes open.

- *Windows 10 update may cause an annoying Word problem* – The latest update ("Windows 10 Cumulative Update KB3124200") and it's making some people very angry. An unknown number of people who opened Word 2016 (and some reports indicate other versions of Word) after installing the last Windows Update were shocked to find that all their preferences and customizations, including macros and autocorrect dictionary tweaks, were gone. The Windows 10 update contains a patch for Office that for some reason overwrites the normal.dot template file that Word uses to record your preferences, so everything goes back to the factory defaults.

- *Microsoft may be putting the privacy of millions of users at risk*. The built-in disk encryption feature in Windows 10, the latest desktop operating system from the company, is set to automatically upload your recovery key to Microsoft's servers, making it vulnerable in an event of a security breach.

- *Windows Updates are Forced* – You have no choice but to let Windows update your machine, which means you are subject to any update they want to put on the machine. Not always good, especially when you might not want something installed on your machine. The same way they've already installed all those installation files on your machine to switch you to the Windows 10.

- *Learning Curve* – The biggest thing to be concerned about is that it's "different". If you're happy with Windows 7 or even Windows 8, stick with it for now. Anything new can be frustrating and time consuming to master. Sooner or later you'll have no choice but to go with Windows 10, but right now you have a choice!

Now let me say one LAST thing about Windows 10. In my last newsletter I gave you information on how to remove the nag screen for Windows 10 and

remove the files that they've already installed to complete the switch. If you ran the tool, they're telling us that you have to do it again. Microsoft has added on another update that will enable the upgrade. Now you have two choices http://win10wiwi.com/ or GWX Control Panel. Both will remove the installation files. http://ultimateoutsider.com/downloads/

If you have upgraded to Windows 10 and are having a good experience, I'd love to hear from you. It's nice to report something good to everyone, but unfortunately I've not had any positive feedback from anyone who has the new operating system.

Windows 10 isn't the only news to be aware of!

 ### Fake Adobe Flash update hides malware

Have you gone to a website lately and a popup appears telling you that your Adobe Flash Player needs to be updated? If you're one of the people who needs Adobe Flash Player (until a new programming update is available) you might think this is necessary and click on the update. Never just click on a link presented to you on the Internet. If it says that Adobe needs to be updated, go to www.Adobe.com and update from there. These links are used by scammers to trick you so that they can download malware onto your machines.

MORE SCAMS & SECURITY WARNINGS!

Most people believe they can trust whatever comes up on a Google search, but you can't and you shouldn't, especially when there's breaking news. Malicious groups routinely target breaking news stories with fake news sites, often times claiming to have exclusive pictures of the event. Google does its best to police this activity, but it's nearly impossible to catch everything that gets thrown at them. The best way to avoid this type of scam is to stick to your trusted news sources. All those "interest stories" listed on a website could be culprits!

Bible Apps – The cyber criminals will stop at nothing! Now they're using Bible Apps to download malware, steal your personal information and take over your device. iOS and Android users are the ones affected. This link will show you a list of infected apps. It came out in September, BUT if you don't update your apps on a regular basis, you could have one of the apps that carry malware. Check the list and see if you have any of these, and then update!! http://bgr.com/2015/09/21/app-store-hack-iphone-malware-apps-list/

We trust our security programs - One popular antivirus software program has been reported to have a security flaw. It's never good when software that's designed to keep you safe puts you at risk instead. That's what happened with a free Chrome plug-in produced by AVG Antivirus. Turns out, AVG's security software "Web TuneUp" actually had a big security flaw. You can remove the plug-in from your Chrome browser, and they claim that as of today things have been corrected. I used AVG for years and gave up on them when they flagged by files as infected and they weren't. That's when I switched to Avast.

 13 million Mac users hit by data breach

If you're one of the millions of Mac users who are coming to the slow realization that Apple devices aren't much safer than any other digital device, you'll want to hear this. A major breach has occurred on a software program designed to protect you against malware and viruses, and optimize how well your Mac works. User names, passwords and personal information have been stolen through a flaw in their software. MacKeeper is a buggy system, and one day I found that it was installed on my machine when I downloaded another program. It was almost impossible to remove it, and ads for it came up constantly on my iMac. Be careful as to what you download! If your Mac is running slow after putting this on the machine, read the article at the link below.

http://www.imore.com/avoid-mackeeper

 Now for some simple tips….

Clean a scratched CD/DVD with toothpaste. Rub gently on the scratch and then wide off with a soft damp cloth. Toothpaste can also be used on a scratched screen. Again, rub gently on the scratch and wipe off with a damp cloth.

I just went into our cabinet and looked at all the CD's we have. With streaming music now from iTunes or Amazon (to name a few), I wonder if we'll ever listen to the discs again. So here's a tip on how to Recycle! Try out Amazon's Music Trade-in service. It'll take some time because you'll need to search Amazon to see which of your CDs are available for trade-in, but shipping is free and you'll receive payment in the form of an Amazon gift card. You could also see what return you'd get from an online buyer

such as http://www.secondspin.com/ and http://www.cashforcds.com/ These places not only take CDs, but also DVDs and games.

Save money on hotel rooms that you already booked - If you like to hunt for a bargain, you know there are dozens or hundreds of travel sites to find great deals on hotels. It can take a while, but you search and search, and finally find a good price on a nice hotel. If you book it through TripRebel, the site will continually search for lower prices on that room, until the day you check in. If it finds a lower rate after you book it, it will cancel your current booking, then rebook your room at the lower price. Plus, if TripRebel finds a great deal on an upgraded room or a better hotel, it'll alert you to it. If you like that upgrade, just let TripRebel know, and it'll set it up for you. Almost makes you want to go on vacation, doesn't it!

TripRebel

Find the top song on the day you were born

Just for fun, go to this website and type in your birthday. Mine came back as Peg'o My Heart. ☺ http://playback.fm/birthday-song

Computer Term of the Month –Spider (from Computer Hope.com)

Alternatively referred to as a web crawler or web robot, a spider is a program or script written to browse the World Wide Web in a systematic manner for the purpose of indexing websites. For example, spiders are often used to gather keywords from web pages that are then sorted so users can locate said pages through an Internet search engine.

HAPPY 2016!

Warm Regards,
Shirl

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