

I'm Staying With Windows XP

and Here's Why!

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You know I've never been one to follow the pack. In fact, some obtuse characteristic in me prevents me from doing that. It's actually quite hard or in fact very hard to do this. It's much more comforting to be a sheep in a pack of sheep, even though the pack may be flinging themselves over the cliff. That's probably an extreme example in the context of this article, as I'm sure there will be lot of readers who would infer that is I who is actually in the process of throwing myself over the cliff. But take the subprime madness of the last few years which led to an almighty financial crash. Every dog and his bone was on the bandwagon but how many had the gumption to bet against the flock? A pitiful handful and they made

colossal fortunes. This is just by way of example. Yes, it's really tough not to join the pack. This would mean I should rush out tomorrow to my local PC store and joining the throng who are busy lashing out ladles of cash on new hardware and software to ensure that their PC's are oh so protected against the dark forces that are rallying out there to sabotage their systems, data and lives. Yes, your credit cards are going to get hacked, your identities are going to get stolen, your address list will get stolen and it's all because Microsoft has ended support for Windows XP.

Now, this is a very profitable strategy for Microsoft isn't it? All those lovely upgrades to Windows 7 or 8, plus maybe new purchases of Office. And for the PC shops and dealers what a godsend! If only Microsoft would do this more often! Its virtually guaranteed money in the bank. Loot, by any meaning of the word!

Well, like all XP users I've had to consider my options. I've been using my Windows XP system for years, in fact it's only been on Service Pack 2 until recently. I had realized I was facing a decision point because my system was getting slower and slower, browsers were crashing every few minutes (how I hated the time wasted for that that egg timer to end , more later) and I was needing to reboot twice a day to get the speed up. Eventually I had a disk crash which meant I couldn't reboot the system, so what to do now? In fact the disk crash timed itself quite neatly with the ending of Microsoft's XP support. So what to do now? If ever there was a point to upgrade and modernize, this was it. But should I? I had Windows 7 and Office 2007 in my business and there wasn't a day when I wasn't irritated by the different presentation of Excel or what seemed to be unnecessary introduction of complexity compared to Windows XP. Yes, I realized I was very comfortable with XP, I knew it back to front, Word and Excel were easy to understand and use, I knew where everything was, etc. Did I now want to go a major upgrade path and all that entailed? To help me decide, the first thing I wanted to find out was does Windows 7 or Windows 8 crash? I did a Google search and came up with these page 1 and 2 (of 30 million search results) Google search headings:

Search Results

How to solve Windows 7 crashes in minutes - Network World

Fixing the Windows Explorer crash or freeze in Windows 7 ...

Windows 8.1, Windows 8 or Windows 7 hangs or freezes

How to fix problems when Windows 7 hangs, freezes, or crashes.

Picking up the pieces after a computer crash - Windows

Windows 7 Crashes - Learn How to Fix Instantly! - YouTube

Introduction: Windows 7 may crash due to several ...

Microsoft Windows 7 Crashes, Restarts or a Blue Screen ...

Resolving a Windows 7 crash or freeze

When a Windows 7 crash or freeze occurs, use this FAQ to answer commonly asked questions that will help you troubleshoot Windows 7 problems.

Why Does Windows Crash? The Top 10 Reasons

I have Windows 7 crashing on a weekly basis

Windows Explorer Keeps Crashing Windows 7
Windows 7 crashed cant boot
Windows 7 crashing on start up
64-bit Windows 7 Professional; Intel Core i7; 8 GB RAM; Nvidia ... It crashes almost immediately (after a few seconds) after start-up
Windows 7: system CRASH due to windows 7 critical
SKYPE KEEPS CRASHING AFTER LOGIN, WINDOWS 7
How to solve Windows 8 crashes in less than a minute ...
How to Fix Common Windows 8 and 8.1 Problems, Speed ...
Like any new OS, Windows 8 and 8.1 have suffered from a variety of bugs ... make your system feel sluggish, and may even cause it to crash.
How to solve Windows 8 crashes | ITworld
How to solve Windows 8 crashes. Luckily, there is an easy way to diagnose the cause of most crashes. By Dirk A.D. Smith, Network World.
Windows 8.1 Issues. PC Crashed. Please help ...
I tried to update windows 8 to windows 8.1. During the ... During this installation, the computer completely crashed.
Bluescreen / Crash on new Windows 8 computer..
Windows 8 Freezes - Fix It Here - YouTube
windows 8 freezes up
Windows 8 crashes all the time. Please help
Windows 8 crashes all the timeWindows 8 photo app keeps crashing
Windows 8 Explorer Crashing
Movie Maker keeps crashing on Windows 8 all the time!
windows 8 keeps crashing
Windows 8 fresh install. Explorer crashes and reloads every few ...
I have installed Windows 8 Pro x64 as a clean install. Every few minutes the explorer shell will crash and reload. The reliability report monitor is filled with ...
Windows 8 Random crashing
Windows 8 Crash
Windows 8 Desktop keeps crashing
Windows 8 Movie maker keeps crashing
Windows 8 crash and restart after sleep or upon reboot - Windows 8 ...
Solved Win8 x64 explorer keeps crashing and restarting ...
Solved win 8 crashing and slow down
Solved Windows 8 Constantly Crashing recently

To be fair, I had endured years of Windows XP browser crashes, all of which I could live with except that blasted egg timer which took ages to end its egg timing operations Microsoft even though I always clicked “don’t send”. If I add up all the time I’ve spent fretting away at the keyboard waiting for that interminable timer to end it must come to weeks of my life. Then something occurred to me? How could I eliminate this in the first place? This would make my XP system much more stable in the first place and would be an important factor in my consideration of whether to upgrade or not. A simple Google search and within seconds I had a

solution. Maybe you are smarter than me and applied this years ago but if not here is the golden 4 step solution to a million times better XP experience:

- 1 Right click on "My Computer" and click on "Properties"**
- 2 Click on the advanced tab in "Properties".**
- 3 Select "Error Reporting" in "Advanced Tab".**
- 4 Select "Disable Error Reporting".**

All done! No more egg timers!

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Having found a solution to fix my XP crashes and now armed with the knowledge that Windows 7 and 8 also crash I now had to establish what exactly I would get extra by upgrading to Windows 7 or 8. This on Windows 7 from HelpDeskGeeg.com

“If you skipped over Windows Vista like so many others have, you may be in for a shock when you upgrade from Windows XP to Windows 7. Microsoft’s newest operating system is a major shift in usability, convenience, and overall computing from previous versions of Windows.

Although not all are earth-shattering changes, listed below are the Top 10 differences between Windows XP and Windows 7. Many of these changes may seem like a big deal because you’ve gotten so used to how things work in XP. If you are considering upgrading from XP to Windows 7, be prepared for these changes.

1. No e-mail Client

Outlook Express (OE) has been a trusted friend since Windows 95, so much so that many people have never used another e-mail client. OE was removed from Windows Vista but was replaced with Windows Mail. Strangely, Windows does not ship with any e-mail client at all. Users must either purchase an e-mail client such as Outlook, use a free service such as Windows Live Mail, or download an open source e-mail client such as Thunderbird.

(No thanks)

2. 32-bit vs. 64-bit

Although Windows XP did have a 64-bit version (Windows XP x64), many people are unaware that it even existed. When upgrading from XP to Windows 7, you will have to decide whether you want the 32-bit version (x86) or the 64-bit version (x64). Which you choose largely depends on your computer’s hardware and the availability of drivers and other software to make everything work in your PC.

(Shrug)

3. Aero Desktop

The Aero Desktop is really nothing more than a collection of window and desktop behaviors that make Windows 7 the prettiest version of the operating system to date. Features such as Aero Snap let you quickly organize open windows

and transparency makes it easy to see what's underneath other windows. With Windows XP think opaque, with Windows 7, think translucent.

(Shrug)

4. Documents and Settings

The Documents and Settings folder, the location for all protected personal files and folders, has been replaced with simple Users folders. Not a big deal, but many tech support personnel have spent hundreds of hours answering the simple question of where the Documents and Settings folder went in Windows 7.

(No thanks)

5. Start Menu

The Start menu in Windows 7 has been completely reworked and has been met with several criticisms. No longer does the Start menu use fly-outs and scroll-outs to show you what shortcuts to programs and folders you have on your computer.

Now you must use a more conservative folder system that forces you to use a scroll bar to access shortcuts that can't be displayed because you've reached the maximum number that can be shown at one time. Luckily, if you really like the Windows XP Start menu, there is a way to make the Windows 7 Start menu behave like XP.

(No thanks)

6. Ribbon

Introduced in Office 2007, it is clear that Microsoft will continue to push the Ribbon interface over the more familiar drop-down menu and toolbar approach to using programs. If you want to get a taste of the Ribbon, start up Microsoft Paint or WordPad on a computer running Windows 7 and you can see for yourself whether the Ribbon is going to be useful or just another technology forced upon you.

(No thanks)

7. Libraries

Windows 7 Libraries are nothing more than collections of files that are similar. Similar content that is located in multiple areas of your computer are brought together into the Library system to make finding files easier.

Of course, you can choose to use or not use Libraries depending on whether you find them useful. However, if you store a lot of media on your computer such as music or video and you want access to them without having to physically move them the same location or folder, Libraries may be for you.

(Maybe)

8. DirectX 11

If you are a gamer, you know that you must keep up with advances in both hardware and software technology to get the most from your games. Windows XP will not support DirectX versions beyond 9.0c so if your games require a higher version such as 10 or 11, you have no choice but to move a more recent version of Windows.

As more and more people make the switch to Windows 7, the game developers and publishers are likely to take full advantage of more recent DirectX versions. Stick with XP too long, and you may be shut out of the newest games.

(I don't play games)

9. HomeGroup

Whether you have a simple or complicated home network, you know that any help you can get to make administration easier is always welcomed. HomeGroup is a major shift in home networking simplicity that makes older paradigms seem archaic.

Not much has changed in setting up a home network since Windows NT 4, an operating system from before Windows 95 that you may never have heard of. Marrying simplicity, easy setup, and stable connections, HomeGroup takes the guesswork and troubleshooting out of home networking on any scale.

(Shrug)

10. Touch Support

Although touch interfaces have been around for a better part of a decade, touch has not yet replaced the familiar keyboard/mouse combination of navigating personal computers. Still, Windows 7 is the first operating system from the software giant to natively support touch as a computer interface.

If you think that you would like to be on the frontier of this emerging interface paradigm, Windows 7 is your only real choice if you want to run a Microsoft operating system.

(No thanks)

Conclusion

Some people have become so comfortable working with Windows XP that they have avoided upgrading to Microsoft's newest operating system. The Windows Vista fiasco didn't help matters, forcing some diehard fans of XP to downgrade to make their PCs functional again."

If you are considering upgrading from Windows XP to Windows 7, be prepared for some new things, some missing things, and a few things in between. Still, the stability and usability of Windows 7 has been more or less established so you can rest assured that you are taking a step in the right direction by leaving XP behind."

I guess I'm completely underwhelmed. For all that, I am going to get a pile of upgrade, compatibility, conversion and learning issues. I've got better things to do.

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How about Windows 8 then?

Well here's a comparison of Windows 8 vs. Windows 7 from iTPro:

Windows XP has come to the end of its life on 8 April 2014. Consumers and business using the operating system have a choice to soldier on with the legacy OS and risk a security breach or switch to a supported version.

The upgrade candidates are Windows 7 and Windows 8. But what is the difference between Microsoft's operating systems? Which is better? IT Pro breaks down the key features to help you decide (fast forward to our verdict). Or if you've had enough of Windows like our Technical Editor, you could switch to Apple's OS X Mavericks.

1 - Boot time

Windows 8 machines boot up in 10 - 15 seconds, some even faster depending on the SSD. Gone are the days when you have to go and make a cup of tea while your system wakes up.

How has this been achieved? Microsoft engineers combined the hibernation and shutdown modes into one. Windows 8.1 uses a hybrid boot mode to start up in seconds. It hibernates the kernel instead of shutting it down completely and uses all cores to startup as fast as possible.

Winner - Windows 8 - The quicker the machine starts, the more time you can spend being productive. Over the multiple year lifespan of a machine this can add up to hours.

(Yes please)

2 - Enterprise features

Windows 8.1 offers more enterprise features than 7. The Enterprise edition of 8.1 has a feature called Windows To Go, allowing users to boot a personalised version of Windows from a USB on any other Windows 7/8 machine.

IT admins can run Windows virtually without any third-party software. Add in the optional Hyper-V support for your copy of 8.1 and you can connect to a server.

Windows 8.1 includes better support for mobile device management, tap-to-print support via NFC, as well as enhanced biometrics, malware resistance and encryption.

However, IT departments across the world have given Windows 8.1 the cold shoulder in favor of its older brother. HP told IT Pro that Windows 7 is the most popular enterprise choice for companies upgrading from XP.

“Businesses are ignoring Windows 8,” said HP project manager Jeff Wood.

Enterprises want stability; Windows 7 has the advantage of time, familiarity, extensive testing, and total peripheral compatibility.

Upgrading from Windows 8 to 8.1 hasn't been a plain sailing either with users complaining that the update broke simple things like the ability to print.

Winner - Draw - Although Windows 8 has more enterprise features as default, Windows 7 is tried and tested. Forthcoming Service Packs are unlikely to give IT admins as many headaches as Windows 8.x updates.

(Shrug)

3 - Performance

Microsoft revamped the engine under the hood of Windows 8. The result is a faster system which consumes fewer resources than Windows 7, making it a good choice for low-end PCs.

The new OS redesign uses simple colors and fewer visual effects, drawing fewer resources than Windows 7's Aero Glass effect.

Windows 8.1 performs better than 7 in everyday use and benchmarks. Extensive testing has revealed improvements in tests like PCMark Vantage and Sunspider but the differences are minimal.

Winner - Windows 8 - It's faster and less resource intensive.

(OK)

4 - Interface

Microsoft saved its most radical changes for the front-facing user interface. Windows 8 is a redesign and feels like two operating systems meshed together.

Turn on the computer and you're greeted by the new Start screen, a page of apps and live tiles. The Metro interface puts everything into a Metro app, even the old desktop mode. Apps like IE 11 are great for touch screen web browsing - but not much else.

Even the old desktop looks different. Windows 8.1 has a start button, but it just takes you back to the between screens.

The revised interface has been polarizing. There are a lot of users who dislike Metro, saying an interface designed for touch shouldn't be used on a desktop computer.

However, spend a little time setting up 8.1 and you can get a comparable, if not better experience. 8.1 lets you boot to desktop and avoid Metro.

There are real UI improvements in 8.1. You can add Start bars to dual monitors and keep a separate wallpaper on each. There's also fast universal search on the Start screen. Just hit the Windows key and start typing to search local files, OneDrive files, apps, settings, and the internet. You can even browse OneDrive files through File Explorer (a.k.a. Windows Explorer).

Winner - Windows 7 - The familiar desktop wins the day. Windows 8 tries to do too much. The 8.1 update allows users to boot straight to the desktop, but Metro still has a habit of popping up and isn't useful in a business environment.

(No thanks)

5 - Security

Keeping a PC secure is vital for individuals and businesses. As the most popular desktop operating system, Windows is the primary target for malware and viruses.

Windows 7 and 8.1 share security features. Both use BitLocker Drive encryption, but 8.1 enables it automatically. You can download Microsoft Security Essentials free for Windows 7, but its younger brother has it built into the system.

8.1 also includes support for secure booting on UEFI systems, making it harder for rogue malware to infect the bootloader. PCs running 8.1 can also automatically connect to VPNs.

Winner - Windows 8 - It's got more security features set as default.

(OK)

Well, guess what, I'm underwhelmed again!

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Of course this topic is grist for the bloggers mill which is now pumping dire warnings 24/7 to the remaining Windows XP stalwarts.

E.g. from **Newsplex.com** :

"The Windows XP retirement is being called a "hacker's heaven."

On April 8, Microsoft will stop producing the monthly updates to the system that users have come to expect for the last dozen years.

"That means no more phone support for the operating system, no more security updates for it, no more enhancements," said Phil Jaderborg, president of PJ Networks.

Jaderborg says about a third of the computers in the world are still running XP.

Its retirement gives hackers an opportunity to release code that will never be patched.

"The next thing you know, somebody could potentially have access to their banking account information. If they're doing online shopping they may potentially get their credit card numbers. If they're doing anything using their social security information, all of that information will be up for grabs," he said. **(Yawn)**

And it's not just personal computers that could be vulnerable. Several companies and large organizations are Windows XP users, giving cyber criminals another path to your information.

"Once a hacker gets their hands on it, they're never going to let go of it. It's not like you can click a button and it deletes it," said Jaderborg. **(Yawn)**

Jaderborg's store has seen a massive uptick in business since Microsoft announced the retirement. He's even hired three new employees to meet the demand for upgrades and replacements.

He says there are a few things you can do if you or your business are still utilizing Windows XP:

- Switch over to a newer operating system like Vista, Windows 7 or Windows 8
- Move on to a Macintosh or Linux system

Computer users aren't required to do anything, but if that's the choice, Jaderborg says make sure you know the risk.

"Just because you have Windows XP on April 9 doesn't mean you're doing to get infected. It doesn't mean you're going to get hacked any more than running into a rainstorm or thunderstorm means you're going to get struck by lightning," he said, "But if you're on Windows XP after April 8, you're kind of running around in a thunderstorm with a golf club in your hand, waving it around in the air." (Come on, Mr Jaderborg, that's a bit of a push isn't it?)

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Well what do I do? Do I run off to Mr Jaderborg;s store and probably end up with \$1000 of new hardware, software and operating systems to protect myself against some unmanned future threat? Plus spend another \$5000 of my dwindling supply of time learning a whole lot of new kit and debugging endless compatibility issues? Not to mention a new breed of Windows crashes.

No, I simply balk at all the hassles, learning, incompatibilities, new crashes and general messing around it will take to just get back to where I presently am, never mind the cost and I've got much better things to spend my money on. The US is still operating underground nuclear missile silos using software and systems that are 50 years old. They are even using 8 inch floppy discs still and I've had plenty

of experience using these. In fact I've used magazines of them, 10 to the magazine and they worked just great. Once a pile of floppies fell out of a magazine into the road and got driven over by a car, yet the computer was still able to read them. Yes, I'm tired of paying endless sums of money for planned obsolescence and the **guaranteed** resulting inroads these "improvements" make on my time.

The perceived XP threat reminds of another "threat" built up to huge proportions by the world press. It was called Y2K Here's what Wikipedia has to say:

"Others have claimed that there were no, or very few, critical problems to begin with, and that correcting the few minor mistakes as they occurred, the "fix on failure" approach, would have been the most efficient and cost-effective way to solve the problem. Editorial writing in The Wall Street Journal called Y2K an "end-of-the-world cult" and the "hoax of the century". This opposing view was bolstered by a number of observations.

The lack of Y2K-related problems in schools, many of which undertook little or no remediation effort. By 1 September 1999, only 28% of U.S. schools had achieved compliance for mission critical systems, and a government report predicted that "Y2K failures could very well plague the computers used by schools to manage payrolls, student records, online curricula, and building safety systems".

The lack of Y2K-related problems in an estimated 1.5 million small businesses that undertook no remediation effort. On 3 January 2000 (the first weekday of the year), the Small Business Administration received an estimated 40 calls from businesses with computer problems, similar to the average. None of the problems were critical.

The lack of Y2K-related problems in countries such as Italy, which undertook a far more limited remediation effort than the United States. In a 22 October 1999 report, a US Senate Committee expressed concern about safe travel outside of the United States. The report stated that overseas public transit systems were considered vulnerable because many did not have an aggressive response plan in place for any problems. Internationally, the report singled out Italy, China and Russia as poorly prepared. The Australian government evacuated all but three embassy staff from Russia. None of these countries experienced any Y2K problems regarded as worth reporting.

The absence of Y2K-related problems occurring before 1 January 2000, even though the 2000 financial year commenced in 1999 in many jurisdictions, and a wide range of forward-looking calculations involved dates in 2000 and later years. Estimates undertaken in the lead up to 2000 suggested that around 25% of all problems should have occurred before 2000. Critics of large-scale remediation argued, during 1999, that the absence of significant problems, even in systems that had not been rendered compliant, suggested that the scale of the problem had been severely overestimated."

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I spent a few days mulling this whole lot over and came to a decision. I was going to keep my PC with Windows XP but I would concede that I needed to make

a few improvements. Firstly, I would have my PC, which was covered in dust opened up and get all the dust inside vacuumed out with a special vacuum cleaner. That would be a good start. I would get the guy in the local PC shop to first back up all my data, replace any disks necessary, reformat the drives, and reinstall Windows XP and my data. I would then invest in an external 1000 GB disk drive which I could plug into a USB port (storage is cheap) and also switch from Norton AntiVirus to Norton 360 which I would then configure to automatically back up all my data as necessary. Finally I would upgrade to Service Pack 3, switch on Automatic Updates, set the more stable Google Chrome as my default browser and disable Windows error reporting as described above. I would rely on Norton 360 to catch any of the nasty stuff. In fact, protection of the Windows XP market is now a major business opportunity for Symantec as users who are determined to stay on the XP platform as long as possible realize they do need to up the ante a notch or two.

And what if the very worst happens and my system becomes unusable? Well, I'll just trot off to my trusted guy at the corner shop and pay him \$40 to reinstall Windows XP Service Pack 3. Then it's a breeze to restore all my data....just a click of a button. In fact I will probably do this once a year to purge any accumulated detritus on the disk. It's a great way to ramp up performance as well. It's like the Roman Catholic Church. Just go to the confession box, say "Father I have Sinned", recount your sins, say a few Hail Mary's and whoosh! You are now sinless! Of course with my methodology, it will take maybe 24 hours compared with an estimated sin cancellation time of only 2 to 3 hours in the RCC.

Yes, I'm pleased to report that my newly reinstalled system is working beautifully, is backed up automatically and is protected by the best antivirus software there is.

Plus I don't have to learn anything new.
