

Computer Corner

New Beginnings; Exciting Times Ahead With Windows 10

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Introducing Windows 10

Your FREE upgrade
is waiting

For a limited time you can still upgrade
to Windows 10 for FREE. [Learn more](#)

There is a line delivered by actress Sandra Bullock in the movie *Hope Floats* that goes like this: "Beginnings are usually scary, endings are usually sad, but it's what's in the middle that counts. So when you find yourself at the beginning, just give hope a chance to float up. And it will."

As silly and crazy as Hollywood can be, sometimes they get it right.

For us, the folks at Thoroughbred Systems, there have been some weighty endings and beginnings lately, most notably the loss of my mother-in-law who so many of our customers remember most as the nice lady that brought out the lemonade during computer software classes. She needed our help twenty-four hours a day in her last years of life. She passed June 19, 2015.

Now our focus has shifted back to self-improvement and business. We have just returned from Florida after attending a conference that is held every three years on changing technology for software developers. We are brimming with new information to share with staff, customers, and our readers. My mind is racing with new ideas and thoughts of how I might incorporate some of these

The loss of a parent is something most of us go through at one time or another. We have several customers dealing with that same sorrow at this time so I thought I might share a short poem my wife wrote to her mom on the 13th anniversary of Linda's father's death, only three days before her mother, Lucile Edson, passed away:

My Mommy's Hands

Memories of my Mom and I, live in my heart so clearly,
She means the world and all to me, I love her, oh so dearly.
And when I travel back in time, I see her sitting there,
Her open arms, her smiling face, framed by her dark brown hair.
My tiny self climbs up and snuggles her so tight,
I love her squishy softness, I love her eyes so bright.
But most of all her hands I see, much bigger they were than mine,
with interesting marks and spots and veins that roam and vine and twine.
Oh the work and strife and toil that pair of hands went through,
the joy, the bliss, the love they'd known, hands so strong and true.
My little hands, so different, but as the years have flown,
I see my Mommy's hands again, when I look down upon my own.

— Linda Kay (Edson) Windler
June 16th, 2015

new technologies to improve our software products to put new tools in customers' hands enhancing their productivity while making the job easier.

At the conference, I saw some exciting new computerized mini-GPS guided flying drones, some with high definition cameras and others capable of carrying payloads of cargo up to 10 to 15 pounds. Some of the more expensive models can fly to a designated GPS location, delicately deliver payload items and return safely to the original launch location. I laughed when the representative told me one of the drone models on display was actually being used for Pizza delivery in Russia. For water systems, I could envision a drone delivering needed tools or parts cross country from the office to a water service location, perhaps dispatched cross country with an onboard HD camera to make visual recordings of a particular GPS location suspected of having a leak or other problem, saving water system staff a trip to the far end of the water system. Some of the less expensive HD Camera models with limited range were surprisingly less than \$1,000; those are sure to only get better and cheaper with the passing of time.... just like my Windows tablet that was nearly a \$1,000 a year ago, now a new better model sells for \$100.

I saw new Segway type devices capable of carrying a person and cargo with a combined weight up to 200 pounds for up to ten hours on a charge, depending on terrain. These new units start at only \$500 and more. I can see possible uses for some by cities. There was even a device called ReWalk that reminded me of the movie character "RoboCop". It was a mechanical/electronic leg that strapped onto the leg of a person with lower limb paralysis due to spinal cord injuries providing the person with a computerized mechanical ability to walk.

While those things might provide some exciting new possibilities for a segment of the industry, one very popular subject for discussion that will affect us all was the new Windows 10. Among the topics discussed were new web apps, tablets and other mobile data technologies. Other topics included improvements and changes in programming languages and Web security technologies, online credit card transactions, security issues of concern on the web and the latest technology aimed at thwarting the bad guys attempts to hack and steal data stored on the web.

Let's talk Windows 10

The program menu and desktop that we became accustomed to in Windows 7 and so many users complained was missing in Windows 8, is back! Microsoft finally realized that most people preferred the more traditional menu. Many who purchased Windows 8 were downloading the free, for personal and nonprofit use, Windows 7 impersonator, "StartMenu8 from Download.com.

Everyone with a computer that has a licensed version of Windows 7, 8 or 8.1 installed should be receiving regular reminders on Windows Start Up each day..."Your FREE upgrade is Waiting..." All qualified computers will have until July 29, 2016 to upgrade free, after which, Windows 10 will need to be purchased at the full retail upgrade price.

So, should we all rush to take advantage of this offer? Let's not leap before we look! DO NOT upgrade to Windows 10 until completing the proper steps to PREPARE in advance for the upgrade...

First rule of computer operation: Make a BACKUP!

Second rule of computer operation: Make a BACKUP!

Third rule of computer operation: Duh, ...Go back to rule of computer operation number one. And, make sure it's a good backup.

So, just to be clear, first: BEFORE upgrading to Windows 10 – BACKUP all data. A common occurrence is for the Windows 10 upgrade process to go awry and cause the Windows operating system to become corrupted resulting in a complete loss of data and requiring a total re-install. Windows 10 is a rather large download, approximately three gigabytes, that can take quite a while especially with slower Internet service. There is an option to save the installation to a USB drive to allow installation on multiple computers without needing to do the same download over and over. Such a large install combined with less than stellar Internet service is a recipe for disaster. Again, make SURE to follow the First, Second, and Third Rules of Computer Operation.

While our software programs and many other software programs will function properly in Windows 10, there are those that do not! Before upgrading to Windows 10, check that critical software packages you use will continue to

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function correctly in Windows 10. Many electronic meter reading systems, meter reading equipment, printers, scanners and other devices do NOT support Windows 10 as of yet. Some never will and will require upgrade or replacement. Don't upgrade to Windows 10 without verifying, in advance, that all your critical software and hardware is going to work properly with it. It would be a disaster to find out after the fact that an electronic meter reading system that likely cost many thousands of dollars won't work with the new operating system AFTER your computer or computers have been converted. That said, there is a limited time option to revert back to the previous a operating system. However, before attempting this option, follow Rules of Computer Operation One through Three mentioned previously, in case reverting to the previous operating system causes a problem.

Find out the costs associated with any necessary upgrades in meter reading hardware, new printers or other hardware that may need to be purchased. It might be necessary to stick with whichever operating system is doing the job at present until there is money in the budget to purchase all the necessary hardware and software to be compatible with Windows 10.

There has been some concern that the FREE Windows 10 may be a case of "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts," i.e., a marketing ploy to trick users into a free upgrade that would later transition to an annual subscription fee in

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order to continue leasing the right to use the software. Although annual subscription fees seem to be a fast growing trend in the computer software industry, at least at this time, Microsoft is not making known any intentions to change to an annual use fee with Windows 10.

Windows 10 is free for now, however, it is noteworthy that Windows 10 is designed to make purchase of application add-ons at the Microsoft (online) Store, very convenient. It is very similar to the

Apple Store add-on apps, on an iPhone. Microsoft is, of course, offering additional online storage, add-on applications, and plenty of other temptations to allow you to voluntarily make regular payments of subscriptions for software and services.

Several things to know before upgrading to Windows 10 are:

- The user will no longer have control of whether or not updates would be installed. Only the Pro and Enterprise editions will have an option to defer update installations to a later time
- The little card game called "Hearts" will no longer be included (what a terrible blow!)
- Windows Media Center, that plays slideshows, video and music files, will no longer be included. To look at slideshows of the kids, listen to music or watch videos the user would need to download and install new software like VLC Media Player, a popular free player at www.download.cnet.com/.

For those with the computer savvy to do so, if compatibility is a concern, a solution could be to download the free upgrade while it is free to a separate drive or set up a dual boot system, or Virtual Machine, and then continue running Windows 7 (or 8) that everything is currently working with now until all concerns about Windows 10 are satisfied.

Meanwhile if the daily reminders to upgrade to Windows 10 are becoming annoying, the least dangerous way to put a stop to that is to click on an empty space on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen and choose Properties, then pick customize from the notification area, then select GWX (Get Windows 10 icon) and



Amazing new features of Windows 10

Windows 10 offers some amazing features. If the user wants to share data on the Web, upgrading to Windows 10 will add the ability to use up to 15 GB of free Microsoft online storage called OneDrive that comes with creation of a Microsoft User Account. Data can then be stored on the Web and accessed it from anywhere with any device that has web access. Of course, there is still the choice to save files locally on one's own hard drive and only choose certain files to save online. Data stored on OneDrive may be setup to be shared with specific people or groups of people rather easily. Additional storage, up to one (1) TB, may be purchased from \$2 to \$7 per month.

As a trend, the industry is moving toward more and more online Web-based data. The rule still remains valid: despite new security technologies, anything put on the Web should be considered subject to compromise. Just think about WHAT it is that is being stored on the World Wide Web and consider the possible repercussions of the data falling into the hands of a criminal. Then, make the decisions about what data should be allowed to be on the Web accordingly. Only data that is not considered sensitive, and that needs to be readily accessible for other users, should be put on the Web for access from multiple locations and devices.

The logging in feature called "Hello" allows special infrared cameras from Intel to allow logging in with automatic facial recognition instead of a password. Ordinary Web cameras do not work, as it currently only supports Intel's RealSense 3D camera that only comes with a few new computers, or can be purchased separately for less than \$100 dollars. A user can still type in a password as before but in addition now there is also an option to login using a supported fingerprint scanner rather than the facial recognition technology or typed password.

The voice recognition feature "Cortana" is causing a great deal of excitement because it is so much more than mere voice recognition search option like one might have in a new car. It really is an impressive new leap in technology that is just the beginning.

Cortana can serve as a personal assistant that listens to one's voice and searches the Internet to answer questions, and more:

- It can do math calculations and unit of measure conversions by voice command
- It can do fun things like identifying the name of a song playing in the background
- It can give directions, manage one's calendar, send emails and still more

Some are concerned about what is perhaps a downside to the new feature Cortana, the feeling that "Big Brother is watching" as one discovers Cortana has a long memory that tracks the users interests much as Facebook and Google have done for years. The marketing data obtained may result in advertisements from vendors providing products or services recently researched.

Some of the more interesting features for me are the reminder functions that can not only work based on a date and time, but on the physical location of the user, so, if a person is driving down the road they can be reminded when they reach a particular location that they are to do something like a reminder to pick up a new hammer when at the hardware store.

There is also the ability to set it to reveal some piece of information whenever the user is contacting a particular person by phone or text or what ever. For example if the user places a call to a best friend, the user can be reminded to not say anything that might give away the upcoming surprise party. Pretty cool huh?

select Hide Icon and Notifications. Make sure that the Always Show All Icons and Notifications checkbox at the bottom of the screen is not checked and click OK.

Only after good backups and thorough research have been accomplished should upgrading commence. If, after switching to Windows 10 the user pines for the old days of Windows 7, with a little effort it is possible to disable some of the new features and setup menus and functions to be very similar to Windows 7. Keep in mind, the FREE upgrade offer is only currently extended to be valid until July 29, 2016. Support for Windows 7 is currently scheduled to continue until 2020 and Windows 8 until 2023.

I keep thinking of the 1986 Star Trek movie "The Voyage Home" where the crew of the Starship Enterprise is on a mission that has them traveling from the twenty-third century to the past, (In a smelly old captured Klingon Bird-of-Prey starship) the 1980s. The ships chief engineer known to all as "Scotty" is invited to demonstrate something on a 1980's computer. Scotty speaks his commands directly to the computer as he would a person. When the computer doesn't respond, Scotty's fellow crewmate hands him the mouse which Scotty then holds as though it is a microphone and speaks into it. His 1980's host is perplexed and suggests he try the keyboard to which Scotty replies "A keyboard, how quaint". The smart voice recognition computers of Star Trek are now becoming a reality for those willing to take the journey and boldly go where only science fiction characters have gone before.

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