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WEBLINKS



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lexology.com

This service emails you a daily list of blog posts and legal articles discussing new court rulings in your jurisdiction and areas of law, which you designate when signing up. The articles are high quality and help me stay current in my area of practice.

blogs.wsj.com/law

This blog provides excellent legal commentary on the most publicized legal controversies and helps me stay up-to-date on topics of interest to the general public.

goodreads.com

When I am not writing my blog or helping clients, I use this website to quickly find new books based on other readers' recommendations.

corporette.com

This blog discusses a variety of practical topics—such as appropriate work attire, business etiquette, and relationships with co-workers—and is often driven by readers' questions, which ensures that the topics are relevant.

dmagazine.com

This publication's website is a great source of business and real estate news in the Dallas area, which allows me to keep track of what the city's movers and shakers are up to.



No Support

Lawyers, don't be an April fool for Windows XP.

BY JIM CALLOWAY

Here's an item to mark on your calendar for April 1, 2014: Confirm that none of your computers at home or at work are using Windows XP.

Be aware that the "end of life" for Windows XP is coming in April. (OK, the true date is April 8, but you might have trouble getting any IT help at all that week, and isn't April 1 easier to remember?) April Fools' Day may seem to be a long time off as you read this, but running Windows XP after Microsoft ceases Windows XP support means that you are behaving like a fool.

So for those of you who have used XP all these years, avoiding the pain of Microsoft Vista, why would I call you a fool for keeping on keeping on? Because the end of support means no security upgrades. The official notification page from Microsoft (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/end-support-help>) notes that no one will be able to download Microsoft Security Essentials for Windows XP after that date.

Many commentators are predicting a huge malware spike in the days following April 8. It makes sense,

doesn't it? A malware designer who has developed some atrocious thing to steal credit card numbers, hijack your computer, or just make it inoperable would normally be stymied by a fix released by Microsoft on its customary "Patch Tuesday." But after April 8, it will be clear sailing for these viruses.

Cynics may claim Microsoft is warning people about this to increase sales of new Windows versions and computers. Well, there could be something to that. But I have to give Microsoft credit for supporting XP since its release almost 12 years ago. They had planned several times to end XP support but were deterred by public reaction. Other cynics observe that if Microsoft really cared about PC sales, it would not have released Windows 8, which combined with the growing popularity of tablets to crater PC sales in 2013.

Nonetheless, no law firm today can afford to have its PCs gummed up by malware. Law firms depend on their computer systems. Downtime leads to lost revenue and lost data is even more serious. Protecting a client's confidential information is extremely important. Lawyers have a duty to do this. But there is a lot of other information on office computer systems that needs protecting as well. This includes the lawyer's personal credit card information or other information about employees. If your personnel records have your employees' names, dates of birth, and social security numbers, this could be a perfect target for identity theft.

The aforementioned Microsoft webpage says that you have two options to avoid this danger: Either upgrade to Windows 8.1 or buy a new computer with Windows 8.1 installed. That webpage has a link where you can download and run the Windows Upgrade Assistant to see if your computer can support a newer version of Windows. Frankly, it is extremely unlikely that an upgrade will be possible on an old com-

puter given the greater requirements of the newer operating systems. Buying a new computer will likely be the only option for the vast majority of XP users. I recognize that someone who is using Windows XP in 2014 is likely averse to spending money on a new computer. But just as an old car at some point becomes too expensive to maintain, running an old computer on its last legs is not a good business proposition.



There actually are other options. A firm can disconnect the Windows XP computer from its network and the Internet. That means if your firm has some old legacy software that will not run with the latest versions of Windows, you can still utilize the program. (I have heard some lawyers talk of an old legal description-plotting program that will not run on Windows at all; the manufacturer has gone out of business, and it is probably time to consider replacing that software.) That also means that backup of any data will have to be done by making copies to a flash drive or portable hard drive. But because security threats come via the Internet, disconnecting the computer will prevent attacks.

In my opinion, a slightly different option would be to buy a new computer, but downgrade it from Windows 8.1 to Windows 7. It certainly would be quite a change to go from XP to Windows 8.1. A transition to Windows 7 may be slightly easier

because Windows 8 was a major shift in the way users interact with their computers. I still prefer Windows 7, personally. I also note that most law offices do not have the touch-screen monitors needed to make full use of the features of Windows 8. Of course, there are differences of opinion. Thankfully, many office staff members will have experience with Windows 7 on their home computers.

The end of Windows XP support is, as we lawyers like to say, a "drop dead" deadline. April 8 = No XP. If you are reading this on an XP operating system, you can make a note on your calendar, but the best option is to just bite the bullet and buy that new computer today. **TBJ**

JIM CALLOWAY

is the director of the Oklahoma Bar Association Management Assistance Program. Read his blog at lawpractice.tipsblog.com.

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