

Science Translations

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**PC Updater
News**

Is Your Office Old?



For those of you running Windows 7, you've probably already seen this:

Windows (Not Responding)



After 10 years, support for Windows 7 is nearing the end.

January 14, 2020 is the last day Microsoft will offer security updates and technical support for computers running Windows 7. We know change can be difficult, that's why we're reaching out early to help you back up your files and prepare for what's next.

[Learn more](#)

microsoft.com/windows7

Do not remind me again

So, from the Department of Redundant Reminders Department, yet again: Windows 7 End of Extended Support is on January 14th of 2020. Next week. That's the last scheduled security patch release; bug fixes for Windows 7 ended in 2015. And that's the real problem.

Those bug fixes also included some feature updates. In the five years since Mainstream Support ended, some things have happened to the Internet. Let's just say 'Edward Snowden' and the Google reaction to what Snowden revealed, that the US Government is doing to Internet traffic: They capture it on the cables at high-traffic internet connections, and store it in massive servers for data mining. They claim they're hunting terrorists, but anything the US Government can do, private industry and other governments will do for evil or commercial reasons. As in terror, or money, and sometimes both, such as ransomware.

So the Google reaction was to encrypt absolutely all mail passing between Google servers, and to require encryption of web pages as a factor in getting web sites listed in search results. So http (HyperText Transfer Protocol) was mostly replaced in web sites by https (the S is for Secure), and our computers and web sites had to start warning us when a web site was not encrypted. The result was an organization called "Let's Encrypt" which made it free and, eventually, easy to encrypt every website. Some technical glitches occurred, and were dealt with, and Windows 10 was updated to cope with the fixes.

Back to Old Software

As of right now, I'm seeing mail software that fails to send mail under Windows 7 without a lot of tweaking and extra steps to install and turn on the 'new' encryption.

TLS version 1.2 is the encryption we're calling secure right now. It will change to version 1.3 soon, but for the most part, you won't have to make any changes to use it, so long as you're running software that still gets patches and updates. So making Windows 7 play nicely in the post-Snowden world is no longer routine, and it's going to become more difficult when the security patches end next week.

Office

But it's not just Windows 7 that's an issue. Microsoft Office 2010 will reach end of Extended Support on October 13th, 2020, but it's already becoming difficult to make Outlook 2010 connect to an encrypted mail server. And unencrypted mail servers are going away. Gmail only supports encrypted mail, and other mail account providers have started turning off choices to use old encryption or no encryption. So Outlook 2010, and all older versions, should be retired now.

Do I care about the rest of Office? Well, if you use Excel 2007, it still works, and as long as you don't have it connecting to the Internet, which is something not done by nearly anyone, it isn't a problem. Outlook, however, continuously deals with Internet connections and evil hoax mail; more than half of all malware and exploits arrive as email. Unpatched email software isn't safe.



Windows 10 End of Support?

Yes, Windows 10 has semi-annual releases. We're currently at '1909' for September 2019, and versions 1809 and 1903 are still OK to use, but 1803 (March 2018) no longer receives security patches and should be upgraded through Windows Update. Some systems cannot be updated, due to age, or not having a matching hardware driver available, and there will be a message in Windows Update on those systems, or shown when trying to install a semi-annual update.

In general, each of these semi-annual releases has 18 months until it reaches the end of extended support. For the three current versions of Windows 10, here are the end of support dates:

- 1909, from Fall of 2019, exits support May 11, 2021.
- 1903, from Spring of 2019, December 8, 2020.
- 1809, from Fall of 2018, May 12, 2020.
- More End of Support Dates are on my web site, at <https://pc410.com/calendar>

Again, to check the version of Windows 10 installed, run Winver from the Start menu:



Internet Explorer

Internet Explorer, sometimes known as Exploder, is also obsolete. While it still exists in Windows 10, it's had no feature updates in years, and should no longer be used. Your default browser should be Chrome or Firefox. Microsoft Edge is what replaced Internet Explorer, and while it's not as consistent at running well on a large variety of web sites, it can safely be used as your default web browser.

Updates

Microsoft is selling Office 365 as the fix to all these updates. OK, if you want the subscription route, that's what it is. It runs on Windows 10, ONLY, as of the end of January 2020. Subscriptions to '365' are always the current version of Office, so it will automatically get the new Office and Outlook versions the next time they have a major upgrade, probably in 2022.

Or you can get a new version of Office, currently the 2019 version, to replace Windows 2010, as long as you're on Windows 10, as Office 2019 won't install in Windows 7, and older versions are no longer sold by Microsoft. As usual, call me if you aren't sure if you need an upgrade.

Finally, if it's just Outlook that's an issue, Thunderbird is free, from the same company as Firefox, and is always up-to-date, will install in Windows 10 and 7, and it's very stable. If you rely on the calendar built into Outlook, you'll probably want to stay with Outlook, but if not, Thunderbird is an excellent option.



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