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Managed IT Services, PC Service and Sales in Central Maryland

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Telecommuting through the Snow

There are so many good reasons for a business owner to work from home. Snow tops the list, and we're in-season here: February 4th through the 10th is the 5-year anniversary of Snowmageddon, parts 1 and 2. Snow, cold, ice storm in the forecast, all that stuff just screams "Work from home!"



Other reasons to work from home:

- * I don't want to be in that office at night.
- * My car's in the shop.
- * The big event downtown is going to clog traffic tonight.

Or to work from anywhere:

- * I'm visiting a client, and your special software isn't remotely mobile.
- * I'm not going in today, but my help needs me to look at some work.
- * I'm on vacation, and I'm checking that the office party didn't break my PC.

Definitions:

There are three basic types of remote software and services for going to work digitally:

- 1) On-demand: These are temporary-access products, used mostly for tech support. They require someone at the computer being controlled to open a web page, or run a program, and usually type a code to let you in. These aren't for telecommuting.
- 2) Always On: These products are for telecommuting. They are pre-installed on your work computer, and they either run from anywhere through a web page, or require a small 'viewer' program on any PC you'll work from. Costs vary from free to \$99/year right now. Some of the free products are quite good; the paid products add more features, like hearing the sound from your office PC on your home system, or redirecting printing to your home printer.
- 3) Monitored: This is what I use to repair your office computers, monitor antivirus results, keep track of Windows patches, and run cloud backups. Unless you need to setup an office full of computers for remote connections, it's not usually the right tool for telecommuting.

Going back a few years, there was a time when remote control required port forwarding, static web addresses, and a lot of configuration work--all of those complications and expenses are gone. Modern telecommuting is easy enough to set up that we can do it entirely remotely. Or call if you just need to know which product or service matches your office.

Windows 10 Consumer Preview is Available

Microsoft's Windows 10 operating system won't launch until around August or so, but on January 21st, Microsoft announced another preview version for advanced users, and for anyone who needs to pre-test business or specialty software early.

Pricing has been announced. Here's the official text: "A free upgrade for Windows 10 will be made available to customers running Windows 7, Windows 8.1 and Windows Phone 8.1, who upgrade in the first year."

New features in Windows 10 include the return of the 'Start' menu, apps that can run in a window, and Cortana, which is Microsoft's personal assistant that answers spoken questions. There's Xbox game streaming for desktops, and there will be a new Office edition especially for Windows 10 running on desktops, tablets, and phones. There's also a new interface for holographic technology, but it will take software developers a few years to make use of that on even a small scale.



This preview is not suitable for general use; there are features missing, it's still being cleaned up around the edges, and it is not uninstallable.

If you have a spare PC that's fast enough to run Windows Vista (anything dual-core or above, usually), it can probably run the preview, which is available for download at preview.windows.com. Or call us; we have a notebook loaded with the new Windows 10 preview available for tests and previews.

Contact US

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Call us at 410-871-2877, or from Baltimore, at 410-205-9250.

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