

## THE COMPUTER CORNER

### No. 194. The Whole Truth

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Microsoft is not telling the whole truth. Some would say, "Oh well, Microsoft is a large corporation and one cannot trust large corporations to tell the truth, especially if it affects their bottom line". The point is, they have told the public something that will force a lot of people (and companies) to scramble to spend money right now in upgrading their copies of Windows or buying new machines. It could easily be done more gently and without panic. You need not dump your XP machine just yet!

According to their website, "After 12 years, support for Windows XP ended April 8, 2014. There will be no more security updates or technical support for the Windows XP operating system. It is very important that customers and partners migrate to a modern operating system such as Windows 8.1.", and so on. They go on to say that Microsoft Security Essentials will not be available to download on XP machines after 8Apr2014. However, if you already have MSE installed on an XP machine anti-malware signature updates will be available through 14July2015. Antivirus for XP is not really an issue, though; there are so many fine free antivirus packages out there that no one should care about MSE. I personally have already switched over to Avast or Panda on all machines I control.

So what does this "end of support" really mean? It means they have told their programmers not to make any new updates for XP. All of the old updates are available. To prove this, I wiped all software off a laptop on 12Apr2014, repartitioned it and loaded a fresh copy of Windows XP Professional on the hard drive. The next day (13Apr), I used Windows Update to download and install over 150 updates for the machine from the Microsoft servers. It went smoothly and Ed Rate (AA9W) now has a freshly minted XP laptop ready for use. So all the updates dated 8Apr2014 or earlier are there and available for use. Yes, there were updates released on 8Apr, so if you did not update your machine, do it now.

Microsoft has couched their announcements in terms that make you think that your home computer is dangerous and dead, right now. Of course! They want to sell you Windows 8. Or they want a vendor to sell you a new machine with a copy of Windows 8 on it. Either way, they add to their bottom line. By the way, most of the gurus know that Windows 8 is not very good. Windows 7 is much better. Demand 7 if you buy a new machine (as many corporations already have done).

So what to do? Take your time to make a considered decision. Remove MSE right now, and add Avast or Panda antivirus. Both are free, just as MSE was. Google and get a copy of Windows 7 Upgrade Adviser from Microsoft and run it to tell you if your machine can handle Win7. If it can, go looking for a copy. I recently purchased a valid copy with a product key for about \$55, and have subsequently activated it with Microsoft. Be sure to get that key.

Don't panic. Your current XP will continue to serve you well for a while. You need not worry about vulnerabilities for a few months or more. Take your time. Get something new that will satisfy your needs. And never believe everything Microsoft tells you. Happy computing!

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*"Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible." Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society, 1895.*