

## THE COMPUTER CORNER

# No. 195. Strange Happenings with XP

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I think Microsoft is not telling the whole truth, as I said in the last article. Here are a couple of comments I got from XP users recently, which seem to strengthen that belief.

*"Everything was going well with the DELL, until today. Hmmmm - the system suddenly takes forever to log-in and to bring up all the application icons. I brought up the system in SAFE mode and attempted to use a restore point from Monday with no luck ("incomplete restore"). I have never gotten this "deep" into system issues and consequently am LOST! Have you seen this before or can suggest what to look at for this slow/incomplete start? I saw a message about the "Antimalware Service Executable" having an issue and closing. I hope it is not related to the end-of-support as this is a fine machine!"*

*"I think you may be right about Microsoft messing with computers. I turned on the laptop today, and couldn't get past the sign in button. I then cold booted, and went into Safe Mode to try and restore. I could work in Safe Mode, but am still stuck at the sign in, even though it appears the restore took. I might play with it some more or at least go back to Safe Mode to delete files I had stored. However, they are files that I really don't need, as I have links to programs on my other computer."*

*"So a few people early this morning still running Windows XP reported that their machines seemed to have slowed to a crawl, barely responsive and almost as if infected with some sort of virus. At the same time, they noticed an error message stating antimalware service executable has encountered a problem...At first I thought it was just a fluke, but doing some research this evening, it seems that it was caused by an update to Microsoft Security Essentials (and other software packages) that include an antimalware protection component. Unfortunately it is buggy on certain older versions of Windows - including Windows XP. One of the solutions (other than the obvious of upgrading to Windows 7 or Windows 8) while keeping Microsoft Security Essentials installed is to disable the 'behaviour monitoring' feature in MSE. This is based on an official Microsoft suggestion posted in their Microsoft System Center Support forum... it's not the same product, but it does share the same affected antimalware component. Important: do not uninstall MS Security Essentials if you're on Windows XP unless you have another security or antivirus software package, as Microsoft no longer offers it for download from their site!"*

When I got these and other messages with cries for help, I told the users NOT to mess around with disabling the behavior-monitoring feature in Microsoft Security Essentials. There are just too many very fine, FREE antivirus packages out there that are as good as or better than MSE. I told them to rather follow these 4 steps: 1. Download the (free) AVAST antivirus installation file to their desktop. Be careful to get the free version. 2. Using the Control Panel's Add or Remove Programs applet, uninstall Microsoft Security Essentials. 3. Double click that file you downloaded to the desktop to install AVAST. 4. Reboot the computer. In each case, I got a return message something like this one.

*"As suggested, I removed MSE, installed AVAST, rebooted and WOW - the computer (virtually) flies again!"*

Problem fixed.

Now, I ask you. Is it not convenient (for Microsoft) that XP users are having trouble with their machines within hours of the time that Microsoft has stopped support for XP? Is it not peachy keen (for Microsoft) that a large proportion of those users will throw their hands up in disgust and buy a copy of Windows 8, or a new machine with Windows 8 on it? Is it a mere coincidence that these events are surfacing just when Microsoft wants to twist user arms to migrate to their newest operating system? You be the judge. But, if you are an XP user, please don't cave in. Happy computing!

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*"Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value."*

*Marechal Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Ecole Superieure de Guerre, France.*