

Radio Days – 2013-11-23

Tip of the Week – Use The Current Browser

I had a phone call during the week from a client who is still using Windows XP and an old web browser, probably the version of Internet Explorer which came with Windows XP all those years ago. He rang because there were too many sites which he could not access because they stated that he needed a more current browser.

I will be seeing him during the week to update his browser, so can report next week.

I have, on many occasions, spoken of the need to keep your programs up to date. Even if you are using an old version of Windows it is easy to keep your browser up-to-date. Keeping your browser up-to-date is important because it is your first defence against viruses. How can this be so when everybody says that you need a good anti-virus program to keep you safe?

The answer is simple. Protection against anything is a multi-faceted approach. One of my favourite TV programs is *Air Crash Investigations*. Each episode reinforces the fact that every plane crash has a number of causes in a chain, and that the crash could have been avoided if just one of these causes had been prevented or noticed.

In the same way a virus can only take hold of your computer if you fail to notice that there are many steps which need to be taken before that virus has a chance to infect your computer. Take the steps necessary to break the chain of events which are needed for the virus to attack successfully and there is no virus.

This chain starts with keeping the programs on your computer up-to-date.

Upgrading Windows 8

Windows 8.1 has been released. This means that you can now upgrade your copy of Windows 8 to the latest version, Windows 8.1, with ease. This can only be done from within Windows 8 so, if you are using any other version of Windows, it will not work.

Updating Another Windows to Windows 8

If you want to update another version of Windows to Windows 8 you must first buy a copy of Windows 8 on DVD. This update will then update your computer from your current version of Windows to Windows 8. Be aware that, if you are updating from Windows 7, you will be able to keep all your programs and data but, if you updating any other version of Windows, you will lose all your programs and all your data.

This is something to bear in mind if you are thinking of updating to the latest version of Windows. If you are planning this update please remember to check that you have all your program discs available (and readable: many people just keep their CDs in a drawer without any cover so they get very scratched!) and that you have a current (and readable) backup of all your data. Without these requirements your update will be one of the most frustrating moments of your life!

You will also need to remember that a computer which is currently running Windows XP will not be powerful enough to run Windows 8 so this update would be futile.

Upgrading to Windows 8.1

The instructions for upgrading your Windows 8 computer to Windows 8.1 are simple. There is a free tutorial on the Microsoft website: to see it just google *update windows 8 to 8.1* and it was the first entry in the results when I did this search. Read all the warnings because you are warned about some of the things which can go wrong during the upgrade. One of the most important warnings is to keep your laptop or tablet plugged into the power supply while you are performing the upgrade.

I found that this was really necessary when I upgraded my laptop. The reason was simple: the internet connection needed to perform the upgrade continued to stop because the Microsoft website could not cope with the traffic.

This was not what the message on my screen said: that message stated that my internet connection was not working. I could show that this was wrong by browsing to any website and seeing the contents appear on my screen as they normally do. All you have to do if this happens is click (or tap) on the back button then click (or tap) on the *Upgrade* button to continue from where the upgrade left off.

So what will happen? I upgraded during this last week and forgot to make notes about what happened as I did the upgrade, but here are my impressions:

- **It will take some time.** In my case it took about 24 hours because Microsoft's website could not cope with the traffic load. Every time I walked past my laptop it seemed to have the same message: a message which stated that my internet connection was not working. Each time I had to press the back button then the upgrade button to continue. Apart from this the upgrade was painless.
- **It downloads about 3 GB of data.** If your internet plan has a lower limit than this you may well get a rather nasty bill for excessive downloads. If this is your situation it would be better if you were to buy additional data for the period of the download to save you from this expense.
- **It is a simple matter.** This upgrade is as simple as it gets. Microsoft has put a lot of effort into making everything as simple as possible and the results are impressive. If your computer has the power to run Windows 8.1 and enough free disc space (about 3 GB) to run the upgrade then you should have no problems with the upgrade.

What Is The Difference?

I have not noticed any real difference, but then this is my computer for travelling so I do not use it much. I read somewhere that it brings back the *Start* button but this did not happen on my computer. Perhaps this is because I had installed one of the free *Start* button replacement programs. Perhaps I will remove this program then see what happens. Perhaps not.

I am warming to Windows 8 more than I thought that I that I would, but I still believe that it is badly designed for those without a touch screen. With a touch screen, and the swipes and taps that a touch screen encourages, this is an excellent version of Windows. For those who like the large tiles which appear on Windows phones and tablets it is an excellent operating system, but I still prefer my Android mobile phone and will not be swapping it for a Windows phone or an iPhone.

My tablet computer, if I get one, will also have Android because I feel that this operating system is so much better. I prefer the way that the Android screens are laid out: the idea of swiping through all the icons on a screen as iPhone users do is not appealing when, with an Android phone, you can have a small number of screens set up with the icons that you need and not those mandated by Apple or Microsoft.

Further Information

Nothing this week.