

Biztech Newsletter

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The End of Windows 98

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8 years ago, Windows 98 was released upon the world. As an operating system designed for home users, it fulfilled its role well. Today however, Windows 98 is outdated, and should no longer be used in day to day computing.

Windows 98 contains absolutely no security features. Anyone with access to your network can, with minimal computer know-how, copy, modify or delete files running on your Windows 98 computer without even touching it. As you can imagine, this makes it completely impractical for a workplace operating system. Anyone with network access potentially has access to your entire corporate data.

Microsoft no longer supports Windows 98, meaning that there will be no more security updates released for this operating system. A lack of new security patches

makes the operating system very vulnerable to viruses and spyware.

Microsoft is also no longer providing technical support for Windows 98. This means that new applications such as virus scanners, office programs and web browsers may not work on your computer. Many IT companies also no longer support Windows 98.

Upgrading to Windows XP or will greatly improve the stability and security of your computing environment.

For more information please do not hesitate to contact us on (02) 9877 0688

Is Your Laptop Safe Locked in Your Car?

Over a family lunch, my brother-in-law told me he had his laptop stolen.

Sadly, this is nothing unusual these days. What spooked me about his story was that the laptop was out of sight, locked in the boot of his car, in the Sydney Opera House car park.

What made the story interesting was that ONLY the boot was broken into, and that the car-park that day only had 4 thefts; all laptops, all locked in the boot, and not another single car was touched.

Opera House security (that seems a misnomer !) said that these were organised thefts, and that the culprits were able to "scan" for the presence of a laptop in any given car.

Well, that got me thinking....you can scan for a radar detector, as these give off a detectable signal. But a laptop? I went Googling....

It appears this is a common problem all over the world. The world's most famous theme park, Disneyland, for instance, has a massive car park, and its security manages a near-zero car theft rate. It does, however, lose at least half a dozen laptops from cars each day, and these are also a result of laptop "scanning".

The common thread in all these laptop thefts is that the owners did not completely shut-down their laptops, just switching them into "suspend" mode. This means that while the laptop is almost turned-off, it appears that those equipped

with Bluetooth and/or WiFi (and depending on their device settings in Windows) are actually emitting a small signal.

Any competent crim can use either a Bluetooth-equipped mobile phone, or an inexpensive USB WiFi network detector, and confidently detect a laptop.

So the lesson to be learnt here is simple; if you are transporting a current laptop that is equipped with Wi-Fi (which is most of them) or Bluetooth, you should completely shut the thing down, even it takes longer to start-up next time. If you still wish to just hibernate, pay close attention to the Windows settings for these devices, and change then accordingly.

Feature Product



\$1099ex

HP DX7200 + HP17" TFT + **Bonus Officejet 5610**



Intel Dual Core 820 CPU
1GB PC2-4200 (DDR2-533)
160GB SATA 3.0Gb/s HDD
Microsoft Windows XPP

PN: PU818AV520-HP17

Valid until 31st January 2007

For more special and product information visit www.syncretize.net

What is RSS and why would I use it?

RSS is a lightweight XML format that stands for Really Simple Syndication and was primarily designed for syndicating news, the sharing of news headlines, and other web content such as personal weblogs. Although it was primarily designed for the syndication of news, anything that can be broken down, or simplified, into discrete items can be syndicated via RSS.

RSS defines an XML grammar for sharing news and resembles HTML code. Each single RSS text file contains both and static and dynamic information about your site and news stories and are all surrounded by matching, what's called, start and end tags. What this means is the RSS text file will contain information on both your website and subsequent webpages that doesn't change (static information), and your news stories, or what you're broadcasting, is considered your dynamic information because that does change. The start and end tags are only relevant in the code world as they distinguish what is the web-link to the item, what is the title of the item, and the description

etc.

To distribute a news feed, all you really need is the content you want to broadcast, an RSS text file and an RSS format. There are 7 different RSS formats one can use to do so and at the moment the most promising and user-friendly looks to be UserLand v.2.0.

Once the information about each item is in RSS format, an RSS-aware program, called 'news aggregators', basically checks the feed for changes and if any changes are detected they are then subsequently updated. For example, an RSS-aware program monitoring CNN.com would keep you up-to-date with their latest headlines by checking CNN's RSS feeds and accordingly update the headlines on your end as they're detected.

The easiest way to view various RSS feeds would be through your web browser as they have RSS viewing features and the best way would be to take 2 minutes and create a Gmail account at www.google.com.au and start personalising your homepage by selectively adding the many RSS feeds available. For more information on using Google as an RSS reader, please visit: <http://www.google.com.au/support/bin/answer.py?answer=25551&topic=9003>

Hints and Tips

What is the difference between a Virus, Trojan, and Worm?

Basically, they all fall under the generally category of "viruses". However, there are a few distinctions.

Virus - Technically, a virus infects another file (attaches or inserts itself into it). They usually infect program files or MS Office documents. From there, it can replicate, do damage, etc. Unlike a worm, these do not function as a stand alone (except possibly to infect a given file).

Worm - This is almost identical to a "true virus", except that it lives on its own and generally doesn't infect other files (although it can replace them). Usually, these copy themselves using e-mail, networks, disks, etc. Again, these are very close to a true virus, and can do the same kind of damage.

Trojan Horse - This type of program doesn't copy itself but does do damage to your computer. These types of programs rely on people to pass them around and to run them. They do not e-mail themselves. The idea is to make the program look like it's something harmless, like a screen saver or joke, so it gets sent around.

The importance of safe computing and keeping up to date with virus definitions is at the up most importance.

Formatting a disk or removable Hard Drive in Windows XP

When you want to format a floppy disk or removable hard drive in windows you have two options-

1. You can use the default, standard formatting; or you can use Quick Format. Since Quick Format is so much faster than default, some people wonder why you wouldn't use the Quick Format all the time.

Quick formatting is great for when you just want to quickly wipe data off of a disk when you don't care what's on it. A complete format, the default, does two things: it modifies the File Allocation Table (FAT), like a Quick Format; but also does a low-level format, checking each sector on the disk.

The long and short of it is this, if you're sure the disk is OK, and not worried about the security of the data, use Quick Format. If you really don't want anyone to recover any data on the disk and or drive, or if you're not certain if the disk is in good condition, use the standard format option as this is thorough.

