

Experts Update

Brought
to you
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Outdated Operating Systems Combined With Daylight Savings Change May Cause Problems

First of all we have to ask... Do you know about the upcoming change to Daylight Saving Time this year? Most folks we asked said "What change?"

For those of you that don't know there is a change in the start and end dates for Daylight Saving Time this year.

It will start on Sunday, March 11th, 2007 at 2:00am and will end on Sunday, November 4th, 2007. So for 2007 DST starts 3 weeks earlier on the second Sunday of March and ends a week later on the first Sunday of November. This change was made as an attempt to reduce energy consumption.

So what needs to happen this year to facilitate the change in DST on your computer systems, and what will the impact be?

The change is about five weeks away, so the time to start making plans is now. Most every device in your company that keeps time will be affected. We'll address what you need to do to your PC's, servers and other IT equipment.

However, keep in mind that things like VCR's, DVD's, and DVR's may have some problems. They won't realize that the time change takes place three weeks earlier so that show that you thought you were recording may not record at all.

Also, PDA's, fax machines, time clocks, switches, routers, and telephone systems that have programming embedded to change to DST on the first Sunday of April and the last Sunday in October are going to have problems. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Each company will have to look at the impact that this change will have on you.

According to Microsoft these are their products that will be affected by the change:

"If you're still using Windows 95, 98, ME, NT 4 server or workstation, it is time to upgrade. Upgrading may mean buying a new computer - that is the price of progress. Technology continues to change and we just have to change with it. Don't fret - you've definitely gotten your money's worth out of your old 95 or 98 system."

- ♦ Windows Client
- ♦ Windows Server
- ♦ Windows Mobile
- ♦ Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services
- ♦ Microsoft Exchange Server
- ♦ Microsoft Office Outlook
- ♦ Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- ♦ Microsoft SQL

Server Notification Services

- ♦ Microsoft Biztalk Server
- ♦ Microsoft Entourage

Outdated and Legacy Operating Systems Windows 2000 Server and Professional

The news is not good for those companies who are still running Windows 2000, either server or workstation. Windows 2000 is going to require a manual process be done to update the timezone database and the registry keys for the current control set.

Manually editing your registry can potentially cause problems, or even cause your computer or server to stop functioning. It is best to call your technology expert (Tech Experts, perhaps?) to make these changes and updates.

The entire process may take between 15 minutes and a half hour to complete, per machine, so the cost is reasonable compared with updating equipment to a new operating system.

Windows 95/98/ME

NT Server and Workstation

If you're still using Windows 95, 98, ME, NT 4 server or workstation, it is time to upgrade. Upgrading may mean buying a new computer. Sorry about that but that is the price of progress. Technology continues to change and we just have to change with it. Don't fret - you've definitely gotten your money's worth out of your old 95 or 98 system.

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Need help? Call the Tech Experts 24 hour computer emergency hotline at (734) 240-0200!



'Storm' Trojan Hits 1.6 Million Computers; General Virus Activity at an All Time High

It is mission critical that you keep your antivirus subscription current and your software up to date. Many small business owners think that because they purchased the software one time, they're protected.

Most anti-virus software requires an annual subscription. And, if you don't renew, you're not protected. Too many business owners are finding this out the hard way.

For example, the Trojan horse that began spreading during the last week of January has attacked at least 1.6 million PCs, with no signs of stopping. In addition, Windows Vista is also vulnerable to the attack.

Originally dubbed the "Storm worm" because one of the subject heads used by its e-mail touted Europe's recent severe weather, the Trojan's author is now spreading it using subjects such as "Love birds" and "Touched by Love."

The Trojan, meanwhile, piggybacks on the spam as an executable file with names ranging from "postcard.exe" to "Flash Postcard.exe."

If your computer's anti-virus software is out of date, or if you've not renewed your anti-virus subscription, your system could easily get infected by a seemingly innocent e-mail.

By Symantec's estimate, the Storm Worm is the most serious Internet threat in 20 months.

As with most large-scale Trojan attacks, the goal seems to be to acquire a large botnet, or collection of compromised PCs, that can be used to send traditional scam spams or for later identity mining.

Windows 2000 and Windows XP are vulnerable to all of the Storm Worm variations, but Windows Server 2003 is not; the Trojan's creator specifically excluded that edition of Windows from the code. We presume the malware writers didn't have time to test it on this operating system.

New computer viruses are discovered on a daily basis. In order to remain effective, your antivirus software needs to be regularly updated, generally once a week.

Make sure you know how to check your antivirus software for updates, and spot check automatic updates to make sure they are, in fact, updating.

If your version of anti-virus software doesn't automatically update (many free or low cost programs do not), schedule reminders on your computer so updates are performed regularly.

Daylight Savings Change, Continued

Windows XP (SP1) XP Home Edition (SP1)

Here is the information/clarification on these two items. Installing service pack 2 appears to be the answer. Then you fall into the patch available category. When Microsoft talks about XP SP2 it includes Home and Professional.

Windows XP Pro and Home Edition(SP2) Windows 2003

There is a patch available on the Microsoft download site and will be in the Update Patch cycle sometime in early March.

Windows Vista

No updates are needed. It is shipping with the new Timezone Database installed.

Microsoft Exchange, Outlook, Biztalk Server, SQL Server or any of the other items listed in the table above would be advised to check the Microsoft article about what the requirements for them will be.

Now for those of you that say... Ok this is it. We get our Tech Experts in to do our updates, and I'm done with it. Well, maybe not.

Part of the government edict changing DST specifically states that "The Secretary of Energy will report the impact of this change to Congress. Congress retains the right to resume the 2005 Daylight Saving Time schedule once the Department of Energy study is complete."

So, this is a test year. If they don't like it they can change it back. Fortunately, the updates and changes made this year will incorporate an easier mechanism to change back, should Congress decide the change wasn't effective.

An important note for the Daylight Saving Time changes for this year: a lot of software needs updates, not just operating systems. Anything that uses its own prepackaged Java Virtual Machine needs an update, as well as most software that calculates dates (many will read the system time/date, but use internal code for calculating dates after that).

The best bet is to list out any 3rd party software and double check with the vendors. To make matters worse, not all vendors have released patches for their software yet.



Nine Easy Steps To Protect Your Computer From Viruses, Trojans and Infections

Here are some helpful suggestions from the experts at TechExperts on how to protect your computer and network.

Step 1: Protect your personal information.

Be suspicious of any email with urgent requests for personal financial information, and never respond to unsolicited requests for confidential information.

Beware of phishing. Phishing is an Internet scam where a message is sent out via email asking you to provide or verify certain information.

Typically these requests are designed to look like they came from a bank or other service provider. Usually there is a link to the bank's website. But in fact the link doesn't go to the bank; it goes to a computer controlled by fraudsters. Once armed with your data, thieves take out cash advances from your accounts or may try to steal your identity.

Step 2: Use an anti-virus program and take steps minimize computer virus risks.

Make certain that good, commercial-quality anti-virus software has been installed on your computer. New viruses appear constantly and daily virus definition updating decreases the risk of computers becoming infected. Many free anti-virus programs don't provide for automatic updating.

Your anti-virus software should be set to automatically update, and should always be running.

Step 3: Install anti-spyware software and enable Windows Firewall.

Spyware is software that is usually downloaded from the Internet, either intentionally under the guise of a service or utility, or without your knowledge as a result of browsing malicious Web sites. Spyware gathers information about how you use your computer, and poses a threat to your privacy.

A firewall is a piece of software or hardware that helps guard computers against hackers as well as many computer viruses and worms.

Windows XP has a built-in firewall product, but it may not be enabled. Give us a call for more information on how to enable Windows Firewall.

Step 4: Be careful with email attachments.

Attachments are files, such as a document or picture that can be sent along with an email. Viruses spread by hijacking an infected

computer's email address book. The virus sends copies of itself as email attachments to everyone in the victim's email address book. This gives the appearance that your friend is emailing you a joke or a document, but it's really the virus attempting to spread itself.

If you receive an unexpected email attachment, even if you know the sender, do not open the attachment.

Step 5: Use strong passwords, and change them often.

A strong password is one that is not obvious or easy to guess, it should be 8 - 12 characters long and include a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers, and symbols such as punctuation marks and special characters.

Step 6: Stay updated.

As flaws are discovered, software makers such as Microsoft release software updates. To ensure that your computer is secure, install the appropriate updates. There are a few circumstances where you might not want to, but generally, always enable Windows Update to automatically install updates to your system.

Step 7: Be careful about downloading.

Tons of no-cost programs are available with more becoming available each day. If a program is written with malicious intent, the author/intruder will not tell you that it will harm your system.

Many no-cost programs collect data about you and then sell that data to advertisers. These types of programs are called "spyware" (see step 3 above).

Step 8: Backup, backup, backup!

In case of emergencies, such as a hard drive crash, documents and data files stored only on your local hard drive need to be backed up and backups need to be periodically tested. If you are not sure if your files are being backed up, give us a call - we'll be happy to help.

You may also want to consider encrypting and/or password-protecting files so that data will be unusable if stolen. Note that conventional passwords, such as Windows passwords, do not secure your data.

Step 9: Know where to go when you need help with your computer.

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New, Noteworthy or Need-to-know

This Website Can “Name That Tune”

Do you ever find yourself humming a song whose title, to your frustration, you don’t know or can’t remember? New search Web site Midomi (www.midomi.com) is designed to actually identify that song for you in as little as 10 seconds.

Midomi allows people to search for a song by singing, humming or whistling a bit of the tune. The site then offers search results that include commercially recorded tracks or versions of the song recorded by others who have used the site. The technology also lets people listen to the exact section of each of the results that matched their voice sample.

People also can type in a song title or artist to get results. The system recognizes misspelled words.

Melodis, the company behind the site, has licensed 2 million digital tracks that can be purchased and has accumulated about 12,000 more from users. Users, who range from aspiring American Idol contestants to professionals, can create profiles and rate one other’s performances on the ad-supported site.

The underlying speech- and sound-recognition technology, dubbed Multimodal Adaptive Recognition System, or MARS, differs from similar technologies in that it looks at a variety of factors for recognizing samples, including pitch, tempo variation, speech content and location of pauses, said Chief Executive Keyvan Mohajer, who has a Ph.D. in sound- and speech-recognition from Stanford University.

Experimental Xerox Paper Erases Itself

Xerox Corporation scientists have invented a way to make prints whose images last only a day, so that the paper can be used again and again. The technology, which is still in a preliminary state, blurs the line between paper documents and digital displays and could ultimately lead to a significant reduction in paper use.

The experimental printing technology, a collaboration between the Xerox Research Centre of Canada and PARC (Palo Alto Research Center Inc.), could someday replace printed pages that are used for just a brief time before being discarded. Xerox estimates that as many as two out of every five pages printed in the office are for what it calls “daily” use, like e-mails, Web pages and reference materials that have been printed for a single viewing.

Sneakers Answer the Question: “Where Am I?”

Isaac Daniel calls the tiny Global Positioning System chip he’s embedded into a line of sneakers “peace of mind.”

The engineer started working on a prototype of Quantum Satellite Technology, a line of \$325 to \$350 sneakers that should hit shelves in March, after his son was reported missing from school. It turned out it was a misunderstanding, and his son was fine. But, an idea was born.

The shoe maker promises to locate the wearer anywhere in the world with the press of a button. A children’s line will be out this summer.

It’s the latest implementation of satellite-based navigation into everyday life — technology that can be found in everything from cell phones that help keep kids away from sexual predators to fitness watches that track heart rate and distance. Shoes aren’t as easy to lose, unlike phones and watches.

The sneakers work when the wearer presses a button on the shoe to activate the GPS. A wireless alert detailing the location is sent to a 24-hour monitoring service that costs an additional \$19.95 a month.

In some emergencies — such as lost child or Alzheimer’s patient — a parent, spouse or guardian can call the monitoring service, and operators can activate the GPS remotely and alert authorities if the caller can provide the correct password.

Once the button is pressed, the shoe will transmit information until the battery runs out.

While other GPS gadgets often yield spotty results, Daniel says his company has spent millions of dollars and nearly two years of research to guarantee accuracy. The shoe’s 2-inch-by-3-inch chip is tucked into the bottom of the shoe.

Experts say GPS accuracy often depends on how many satellites the system can tap into. Daniel’s shoe and most GPS devices on the market rely on four.

“The technology is improving regularly. It’s to the point where you can get fairly good reflection even in areas with a lot of tree coverage and skyscrapers,” said Jessica Myers, a spokeswoman for Garmin International Inc., a leader in GPS technology based in Kansas. “You still need a pretty clear view of the sky to work effectively.”

The company also has put the technology into military boots and is in talks with Colombia and Ecuador, he said.

More information at: <http://www.isaacdaniel.com/>