Doctor's Notes

Windows 7 - Should You Upgrade?

The short answer is yes but keep reading to find out how it will help you and what the ramifications might be. Windows 7 is the best operating system since XP and has loads of features and security enhancements. Here are a few things to consider before upgrading.

1. If you still have XP - If you still have Windows XP you are two versions behind at this point and there will be a learning curve to deal with. You must wipe out your system and do a fresh reload. There may be issues with drivers for legacy devices so this may be something that you would want to have Computer Doctors help you with.

2. If you have Vista - If you have Vista you can upgrade to Windows 7 but only to the same version you currently have in-

Windows 7 is the the most stable, secure operating system since Windows XP.

stalled. For instance, if you have Vista Home 32-bit you can upgrade to Windows 7 Home 32-bit but not to Windows 7 Home 64-bit or Windows 7 Pro. If you can upgrade then this is something that you can do yourself. Make sure you back up your data first, however. If you cannot upgrade then you will have to wipe and reload your computer from scratch.

3. Features - Stability is the biggest thing. This is by far the most stable operating system from Microsoft. Other features include full 64-bit support, Home Group easy networking for sharing files, improved Windows Search that will search for an item in your files and your email, and an improved taskbar.

4. Price - Prices for Windows 7 range from $159 for the Home Premium to $279 for Ultimate. Home users should get Home Premium and go for the 64-bit.

Is Facebook Safe?

Facebook is an incredible tool that has totally changed the way people communicate with each other. As with any tool it can be used for good or for bad. There will always be people out there who try to abuse a good thing and Facebook, the largest social networking site, is no exception.

Facebook is safe **if** you use it wisely. Wise Facebook users will question anything that has a link in it, even if it comes from someone you know. You are probably NOT in a video so DON'T open. Your friend is NOT out of town with a stolen wallet. Do not fall for these things. They seem so

real but they are pranks. If you think it 'strange don't click on it.

What's New in Internet Explorer 9?

The world's most popular browser is about to get even more features. Here is what you can expect to see in Internet Explorer 9.

Pinned Sites —You will now be able to pin a particular website to your taskbar for quick and easy access..

Download Manager — IE9 will come with a built-in download manager that can keep track of all downloads and let you pause a download to continue later.

Performance Advisor— Ever wonder why your browser is slow to load? IE9 will now tell you what add-ons are consuming all the resources.

Improved Search—Now searches can be done from the address bar so you can type www.nba.com or you can type just NBA and a search will be done for NBA.

Enhanced Tabs—Tabs can now be torn off and dragged into a new window for side by side viewing.

Hardware Acceleration— IE9 now uses the graphics processor for graphics heavy tasks like video to deliver faster performance.

Bottom line is that these features are welcome improvements to go along with IE's already impressive lists of features. One thing to be aware of though is that IE9 is not going to work on Windows XP so to take advantage of these features you will have to upgrade to Windows 7.

IE 9 General Availability is Scheduled for Early 2011

Best Software for Photo Editing

"Photoshop CS5 is hands down the best photo editing software on the market today"

Photos are everywhere these days and almost every cell phone has a camera on it. But once you take these pictures what can you use to edit them? Here are some of the options available to you.

Free—There are several free programs out there but Paint.net seems to be the one to get. You can download it from www.getpaint.net. An-

other option is Photoshop Express, a free online tool from Adobe that can be found at www.photoshop.com.

Amateur—Adobe Photoshop Elements is very good and will run you less than $100. This program will give you many of the features of Photoshop but at a fraction of the cost. You can crop photos, remove red-eye, cover up blemishes, and

much more.

Professional—Photoshop CS5 is hands down the best photo editing software available. This has so many features that you could make a career out of using this tool. If you are a web developer, professional photographer or just a technology junkie this is the "must have" tool for you. Cost for CS5 is around $500.

Is Someone Stealing Your Wi-Fi?

If you use wireless internet form home you may be at risk of someone stealing your wireless signal and hack your computers. If you don't have your wireless connection secured then it is almost a certainty that someone has stolen your signal at one point in time.

You can protect yourself by

setting a password on your wireless router and using encryption. This will keep most people out but you can even go one step further. To run in what I call STEALTH mode you can hide your SSID. This is a setting in the router that will not show your wireless signal as one that is available to

connect to. That way no one will even know it is available to try to hack into. The only issue with this is that you have to remember your SSID so that you can manually type it in when you need to make a new wireless connection on a new computer or for a guest trying to connect to your network.

Google Introduces Instant Search

As of September Google introduced Instant Search, which starts listing search results as you type. For instance, when you go to Google.com and type "C" then results for the most popular pages that begin with "C" will appear. In this case it is Craigslist. When I continue by adding "O" I get Costco.

Try it out and see what comes up for you. The goal is to help you find what you are looking for faster and without having to even finish typing the entire search request. It was meant to speed up searching, but could be slightly distracting to some who become curious about what would come up after each keystroke.

Google's Instant Search doesn't work in all browser, however. It is enabled by default at the Google search page, but because it depends on code that runs on the user's machine. At present it works only on Firefox 3.x, Safari 5.x, and IE 8.x as well as on Chrome. One notable exception is the Opera browser; presumably a feature to come later.

Google's announcement stated that Instant Search will eventually be available on mobile browsers for smart phones and tablets.

What is Facebook Places?

Places is a new feature to Facebook that will allow people to check-in to a specific geographical location and let others know that they are there or that they have been somewhere. Currently this will only work with iPhones and on the iPad. Currently the iPad only works with a downloaded app named Friendly.

Remember that Facebook was originally created just for college kids so to fully understand this you have to think as they do. It is cool to announce where you are to all your friends such as at the best party, concert or restaurant. Using the GPS coordinates from your iPhone, you can check-in at a location and your update will appear on your friend's News Feed letting them know where you're at. You can also tag your friends as being at the same location.

It sounds cool if you are in college but many adults are seeing the potential for abuse in this new feature. Thankfully there is a way to disable these features and set your privacy settings. To find out more about disabling Places on your iPhone go to Google and search for Disable Facebook Places.

How to Boost Your Website on Google

Google is by far the most dominant search engine and if you can get your website listed high on Google it is worth more to you than the best position in the phone book. Here are some ideas that will help you get your website listed higher.

1. **Be Wordy**. Make sure your website has plenty of relevant content. The more text related to the topic of interest that you have the higher your site will appear. This is the number one thing that you can do to improve your placement.

2. **Renew Your Domain**. Google looks at how many years your domain is registered for and boosts your rankings accordingly

3. **Hit the Links**. Links are very important to being ranked high. Get as many websites to link to you as possible.

4. **Be Fresh**. Fresh content will help your position in the search engines. Update your site regularly with new and relevant content.

5. **Titles are Important.** This one is so easy but so many websites fail to do this. Make sure each page has its own title.

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