Windows End of Support Executive Summary

What you need to know about end of support for Microsoft Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008.

Windows 7 Desktop and Windows Server 2008 are some of the most widely deployed operating systems in history. Chances are, your business still has a significant deployment of this software. Many businesses made the smart decision to skip the disaster that was Windows Vista; they simply deployed Windows 7 and skipped Windows 8 altogether.

Ok, good to know, but what's the problem?

Microsoft will stop supporting both Windows 7 (hereafter, Win7) and Server 2008 in January of 2020. The major implications of end-of-support are twofold:

- One, **businesses won't be able to get support** on any issues that arise from the use of Win7 or Server 2008. For a PC, this isn't a huge deal, but your server is the heartbeat of your business. If you find one day that your system won't start, you're going to need the support of the manufacturer to help restore operation because a downed server typically leaves most modern businesses at a standstill.

- Two, and even more important, **Microsoft will stop releasing security improvements and patches for these operating systems**. Without patches, newly discovered security vulnerabilities will be able to attach to your systems with increasing ease, **leaving your business and its data wide open to information theft, ransomware attacks**, or otherwise hindered. You must upgrade or migrate before this deadline.

Estimated cost of ransomware damages in 2017: $5 billion

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I know it's critical, but 2020 is two years away. I have pressing things that are due TODAY that need my attention!

Yeah, we get it, but we're putting this on your radar today for a few reasons. First, we believe that every smart business likes to **plan and budget for IT expenses** and second, no one likes last minute surprises. Whether you have 20, 200, or 2,000 Win7 PCs, there's no time like the present.

Third, your IT staff or support provider will need a significant amount of time to plan, purchase, test, deploy, and upgrade these ubiquitous devices.

Waiting until the last minute means your project may not be completed in time. Starting the planning process too late will open your business up to the issues discussed above. There are still hundreds of millions of PCs running Win7 worldwide. As the deadline approaches, more companies will race to upgrade, the availability of upgrade resources will diminish, and the cost to secure help will likely increase.

Ouch! We definitely will need to look into that. What should we update our systems with?

On the desktop side, **Windows 10 is a fantastic release. It's far and away the most secure and easy to use** system that Microsoft has ever released. It certainly isn't a "dud" like Windows Vista or Windows 8 were. Your employees will find Win10 easy to use with little retraining and its improved security will help keep your business secure from all the bad stuff that's proliferating throughout the world today.

On the server side, Windows Server 2016 provides excellent application compatibility and usability. If you're still on Server 2008, your IT resource or support provider will need to migrate you through Server 2012 to Server 2016.

Time Factors

- **January 14, 2020:** Last date of extended support for Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008

- Time required to execute an in-place Windows 10 upgrade: **two to five hours**, depending on hard drive speed, internet connection and security software

- Time to prepare a new Windows 10 PC with your custom software: **a few hours to a few days**

- Optimal lifecycle of a commercially-deployed PC: **three years**

Sounds like those systems will work for us. Do we upgrade our existing PCs?

Maybe. Systems produced within the last three years should run Win10 just fine. However, because most Win7 systems are at the three-year or older mark, it's possible that **many businesses will choose to deploy Win10 on new PC hardware.**

A three-year lifecycle is generally a good rule of thumb to follow, especially for laptops. **Replacement is the simplest and cheapest way** to ensure you're placing the best tools in front of employees who rely on their PC's performance for productivity. Did you know that several recent surveys showed that a new PC was valued almost as highly as a raise by many employees? There is nothing more frustrating than a slow PC, so the age of your endpoint hardware will be an evaluation point.

Will my existing business applications work with Windows 10 and Server 2016?

Likely, they will, but **compatibility testing is another step that should be done during upgrade planning.** Many third-party software products will work as-is, and others may work with an upgrade or patch from the vendor.

Part of your upgrade planning checklist is to contact each software vendor that your business uses and inquire about Win10 and Server 2016 compatibility. Vendor companies are aware of Win7 and Server 2008 end of support and have been anticipating it for years. In the rare case your business uses software that will not support the new systems, and no updates are available, begin looking at alternatives.

How do I tell which systems can be upgraded and which should be replaced?

If Scantron Technology Solutions already performs IT services for you, **we will run a report** of your entire IT infrastructure and **recommend which systems to replace and which to upgrade.** Critical factors in our assessment include:

- Age
- Warranty status
- Processor speed
- Memory amount
- Disk type

If you have internal IT staff, they can make these recommendations.

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We have a Managed IT Services Agreement with STS. What will you do?

If you're a customer, we will **contact you by mid-2018 to kick off the planning process with your organization** and work with you on a customized plan. You can also contact us and we will begin working with you immediately on this critical planning and budgeting process. We will run the environmental assessment discussed above, make recommendations, and then modify the plan based on your input, delivering a quote and project plan to put your mind at ease.

I don't have a Services Agreement with STS. Can you still help me?

Yes! However, if we aren't managing your systems proactively today, we can't seamlessly run the asset reports we need to help you plan. We can, however, deploy a lightweight scanning agent to your systems to execute an audit. This allows us to produce a report and make recommendations.

We also provide hardware purchasing, software, and professional upgrade services depending on your needs. Many companies that have IT staff ask us to help with resource-intensive projects because their staff is often busy working on other projects.

What are my next steps?

- Visit our web site at www.scantronts.com/upgrade-outreach to learn more. We will post articles and schedule webinars to help everyone educate themselves about the Windows upgrade process and ways to get more value from their IT investment.
- Call us at 800-228-3628 and ask to speak with someone about assessing your environment for a Windows upgrade.

About Scantron Technology Solutions

Keep your company running smoothly with a secure, highly performing and highly available IT environment. STS is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner with competencies in Cloud Productivity, Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions, Messaging and Data Center.

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