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# CCS Technologies

"Local Support • Personal Service • Since 1976"

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## End of Life: Windows Vista

by Andrew Rowe

Windows Vista has been around for about 10 years and officially reaches its End of Life on **April 11, 2017**. After this date Microsoft will not develop or release any new Windows updates to add features or to correct security and performance issues. As time goes by Windows Vista will become increasingly susceptible to malware and hackers.

If you are still using Windows Vista, *CCS Technologies* recommends that you start thinking about how you want to proceed in the coming months. There are a few options available (listed below) and we would be happy to discuss them in more detail if you have any questions about your current situation.

**Purchase a new system** Replacing the system is probably going to be the best option for most people. While it may be possible to upgrade from Windows Vista to a newer version of Windows (like Windows 7), it is not usually recommended due to the cost, system performance and system age. There are multiple benefits to replacing a Windows Vista system such as newer, more powerful hardware, better security, and improved performance. A new PC is going to be running either Windows 7 or Windows 10 which are going to be supported by Microsoft until January 14, 2020 and October 14, 2025 respectively. *CCS Technologies* offers systems running Windows 7 or Windows 10 starting at \$649 that will be faster and more secure than any Windows Vista system.

**Upgrade your system** Upgrading a Windows Vista system to Windows 7 may be possible, but could cost around \$400 for licensing and labor and there is no guarantee that the system will perform correctly after an upgrade. Some devices may not have any software drivers to tell Windows 7 to use that specific hardware. Windows 7 also requires more resources which could cause the system to run slower than it did before upgrading. Most computers are going to last about 5 – 7 years and most Windows Vista systems are going to be about 7 years old or older. This means a major component could fail at any time. Most people cannot justify the cost or the risk just to get a little more out of their current computer.

**Do nothing** If you don't want to replace or upgrade your Windows Vista system you can continue to use it after April 11, 2017. However, you may start encountering more issues as time goes by. Any performance glitches or bugs that you have now will still be there. Programs, websites, and online services will also stop supporting Windows Vista. New malware and viruses will continue to be created and they will be able to exploit security holes that will not get fixed by Microsoft. Even if you have an antivirus program or firewall none of them are perfect and they too will eventually stop supporting Windows Vista.

To reduce the risk of continuing to use Windows Vista after April 11, *CCS* recommends the system be disconnected from the internet. This will limit the possibility of having software and malware issues but it also limits the functionality of the computer. There are some businesses that do need to utilize a Windows Vista machine to run a piece of production equipment. In these cases, we highly recommend you do not use that same computer on the Internet! If you must continue to use Windows Vista to access the Internet it is recommended that you do not access any private information that could be used to steal your identity such as online banking, online shopping, and email.

## Was YOUR DVR or ROUTER hijacked and involved in recent Cyberattacks?!??

by Joe Halstead

Millions of Network Attached smart devices were hijacked by using the default password and then used to attack Dyn (one of the world's largest Internet infrastructure companies) taking out Amazon, Twitter, Netflix and others. This was all done using a large-scale denial of service attack (DDoS), in which the hijacked devices were commanded to request information over and over until the servers could no longer keep up with the requests, thus taking down the server.

We have always stressed the importance of changing the default passwords on any network attached device and it appears to be even more important now than ever.

ISPs (Internet Service Providers; e.g. Comcast, Charter, ATT) have identified the devices involved and are now sending out legitimate emails informing customers that had their devices hacked. They are recommending you do a factory reset on the devices and then make sure you change the passwords.

We highly recommend you follow the instructions provided by your ISP, after you verify that it is a legitimate email from your ISP. Please feel free to reach out to us if you need help in verifying the legitimacy of the email or if you would like us to perform the reset and password change for you.

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