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Remote support help scam

Several have fallen for this – don't be next!



It often starts with an alert like the one above, which sometimes falsely identifies Microsoft as the source.

It can also come as a random telephone call from a person perhaps claiming to be a Microsoft technician, who explains that their online monitoring system has detected a serious problem on your computer.

Those who click the button or agree to let the "technician" proceed can quickly run into big trouble. Typically they'll be directed to an official-looking website that prompts the user to download a diagnostic utility that will supposedly fix everything – but what actually happens is that malware is installed that disables their computer.

The user is then told they must pay a fee "for services rendered" – essentially a ransom of usually a few hundred dollars – to restore their computer. Of course, payment with a credit card then leads to identity theft problems.

We first cautioned about this scam in our October 2012 newsletter. If it all sounds like something you would never fall for, what we're describing has already happened to several of our customers.

In some cases it was possible to restore from a recent system backup and avoid this blatant extortion. However most people don't maintain current backups, and in that case the only solution is usually to reinstall Windows and any other software from scratch, probably losing all personal data.

These scammers typically target the elderly, whom they hope will be more susceptible. Sometimes they claim to represent a computer manufacturer or a major company such as McAfee, Norton, or Microsoft.

The hacker software can also allow them to access everything on the computer, including personal information, online banking accounts, and passwords. And, the malware can be triggered to strike again in the future.

If these scams didn't occasionally work, the perpetrators would stop doing it – so be cautious, and don't hesitate to call us if you're in doubt or something sounds fishy. The best remedy is to ignore any alerts you might see, or simply hang up on any suspicious callers ... don't become a victim!

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Still running Windows XP?

Perhaps surprisingly, many people are still running Windows XP. It was a good operating system for its time, as were others before XP, but times keep changing.

People often say "but XP still works just fine," and they can't or don't want to spend money on a new computer.

But the fact is that Windows XP will stop "working just fine" soon enough. Microsoft has announced the end of support for Windows XP in Spring 2014, which means the patches distributed each month through Windows Update will stop, including security fixes that help protect your computer against malicious online attacks.

So if you haven't been thinking about a new computer, it might be time to start putting some nuts away for the winter when there are always plenty of good sales.

Many people are reluctant about Windows 8 because of the



new user interface. However, behind the curtain Win8 is much more secure than its predecessors, and there are free or inexpensive utilities that can make the interface look and act very much like Windows 7 or even XP.

Other options include new computers that still include Windows 7, such as Dell for example. Macintosh is yet another option.

The important thing is that, come next spring, you should be thinking twice about a computer that's still running Windows XP or older. You'll reduce the risk of being hacked, which could cost a lot more than a new computer – planning ahead now could save you a lot of money and trouble in the future.

This article was extracted in part from a blog at trendmicro.com. Trend Micro provides the global enterprise-scale anti-virus service behind OCS OfficeScan for automatic and transparent overnight updates – call us for more information.

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	Min	Typ	Max			Installation	Equipment Deposit ²	
RESIDENTIAL								
Basic	125K	500K	750K	12GB	5	100.00	100.00	49.95
Premium	250K	1M	1.5M	20GB	5			79.95
BUSINESS								
Business	500K	2.5M	3.5M	40GB	10			129.95
Professional	750K	3.5M	4.5M	50GB	25			159.95
Corporate	1M	4.5M	6M	60GB	30			199.95
Enterprise	1.5M	6.5M	8M	80GB	40			249.95
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