

Radio Days – 2012-03-31

Tip of the Week – Windows 8 Preview

Microsoft is expected to make the next version of Windows available in time for Christmas this year. It has had a mixed reception from the pundits: some saying that it will be the best version of Windows ever and others saying that it will make the Windows Vista look like the best version of Windows ever.

Which of these is correct? There are, of course, both good and bad things about the next version of Windows.

The Good

This next version of Windows will make a dramatic increase in the security of Windows and, in the process, make all old versions of program obsolete. This is both good (Windows will have fewer viruses) and bad (to get this advantage you will have to buy new versions of all your programs).

This need to buy new versions of programs has been going on since the start of computer time. What happens in practice is that people buy a new computer and get new programs to go with it each time an upgrade happens while others get their old computers to last as long as possible. The same thing happens with cars and vacuum cleaners: I recently replaced my old vacuum cleaner because it set off the smoke alarm when I turned it on!

Time will tell how long it takes the number of viruses to drop significantly. With the current arms race between those who write viruses and those who do their best to stop viruses in a virtual stalemate, I am anticipating some inventive viruses taking advantage of the next step in Windows' development.

The Bad

There are many people blogging about Windows 8 who think that it may become another Windows Vista. This is because there is, in their opinion, too much emphasis placed on touch screen devices. For those who use desktop and laptop computers the way to interact with Windows 8, using mouse and keyboard, has now become far too difficult.

The start button, which so many people use to start a program, has now disappeared. If you leave your mouse in the bottom left corner of the screen for long enough you will, apparently, see a start button appear. This is a trick which will leave many people floundering, and will open the floodgates of frustration.

Summary

There seem to be so many things to like about Windows 8 that I hope that Microsoft has the time and will to rectify all these apparent problems in the months before Win 8 gets to RTM (Release To Manufacturing). Personally, I am becoming impatient to see what the final result of Windows 8 will be. I will soon be in the market for a new computer and Windows 8 looks like a good candidate for my next computer.

Modern Scams

Scams seem to be increasing all the time. In the last week I have had a number of emails which tell me that I will be able to get almost untold wealth if I will only make a little effort. I have also received many emails from young women offering me all sorts of adventures: some of which will blow my mind (and, possibly, wallet as well!). So far I have resisted all these blandishments because, in the end, all that I expect is that I will lose my shirt.

This does not appeal!

Willing Women

Honey traps, like the oldest profession, have been around since the beginning of time. I keep receiving emails which purport to be from real live women who want to get to know me for intimate activities. The mere fact that some of these women state that they are from Africa or Russia would, on the face of it, make such intimate activities most unlikely!

There is a possible twist: one person I know has been having both email and Skype contact with a young woman from western Africa. She has sent him some photos of a very attractive young woman: photos which almost make me wish that I was a dirty old man! These photos match her appearance on Skype which almost stops me being suspicious.

So far she has made enough money from him to get her passport so that she can come to Australia.

The next steps are for her to get both a visa and the airfare to visit Australia. The first is an expensive step because, apparently, the Australian government requires visitors from certain countries to prove that they have enough money to support themselves for the duration of their visit. This could be the sting, or it could be a genuine request for her to meet her beloved. Time will tell.

If you get an email from a woman who offers you the world, please make sure that she is not expecting you to give her all your worldly goods in exchange.

Money for Free

Over the last few weeks I have received a number of emails purporting to be from bankers who has discovered that I am due to receive a large inheritance. There are also other reasons for my luck to change so suddenly, but most of them seem so unlikely that I have decided not to pursue these matters further.

The standard way for this scam to work is that, once they have you hooked, they will ask for money for “*expenses*”. These expenses will, if they think that you are gullible enough, keep expanding until they fill your wallet.

There is a famous blog about how a scammer became scammed. It details the complete conversation between the scammer and the potential scammees and, in the end, how the scammees managed to persuade the scammer to deposit some money in his account just to prove that there was the money there to support the scammer’s original statement that they had money to give away.

If you feel like trying your luck please let me know how you went. If things go wrong please do not blame me!

Google Money

The latest scam, which I discovered while researching this article, purports to be a way of making money placing Google ads on a blog site. Yes, people can make money from Google ads, but it does not happen overnight and it takes more work than most people are prepared to do.

The legitimate use of Google ads does provide some income for dedicated bloggers. This means that you need your own blog (either on your website or on a website like blogger) and that it must be good enough to attract many readers so that Google will place interesting ads on your site.

Too much work for the faint-at-heart!

The main way that this scam works is that they ask for money so that they can send you a CD of how this works. The CD is worthless, but you have paid for it. The really ruthless people will also get you to sign up to a monthly expense of \$50 - \$150. Are you willing to pay that each month for the rest of your life?

Computer Support

This is a scam which I experienced late last year. In my December 2011 discussion of what happens when you get a phone call like this, I told you about my experiences with this scam. It is a neat trick and is good enough to fool many people still. I recently received a phone call from a client who had come home to find that her husband was talking to one of the Indian callers who had persuaded him to go through the first stage of the scam. She promptly asked for the telephone number (it started with the country code of +84) and rang me. I was able to assure her that it was a scam but that her computer was safe because her husband had only got to an early stage in the process.

This scam is still running. When I have asked for the phone number I was given an Australian number. When I reported that number to the ACCC I was told that they set up VOIP numbers which, if shut down, would rapidly re-open with another number. This is akin to King Canute asking the tide to stop coming in!

If you would like to see how this scam works in detail please go to the link at the bottom of this document to read my full description. The fact that this scam is still ongoing is proof, if proof is needed, that it works. The end game, as with all scams and stings, is to get money from you as quickly and as painlessly as possible.

Keep being vigilant!

Summary

These inducements to parting you from your money arrive in a number of ways.

- **Email:** this is the favourite way to part you from your money using either a variation of the Nigerian 419 scam or an appealing young honey trapper. The easiest way to get rid of an email approach is to use one of my favourite programs: MailWasher. This program comes in two versions: *free* and *pro*. Both of these versions have been upgraded and improved recently. The pro version (which is the one that I use) is now significantly better than its predecessor because there are so many more ways that you can check each suspicious email. I just bounce these unwanted emails: mostly that gets rid of the otherwise inevitable repeats.

Bouncing an email is the electronic equivalent of writing “*Not at this address: please return to sender*” on an unwanted paper envelope then posting it. The person who receives the returned email can see that the address does not exist so, hopefully, will not send any more to your email address. Mostly bouncing emails works, but there is no guarantee of success.

- **Phone:** *any* unsolicited phone call which states that there is a problem with your computer is a scam. The fact that it is still occurring is proof, if proof is needed, that it works. If you receive one of these calls please be as rude as you can then hang up. If you can remember to blow an umpire’s whistle down the phone line it may encourage your caller not to call again. The more that we can do to discourage these unwanted callers the better in my opinion.

Because these scams have been around for so long more people should be aware of them. It appears that there are still those people who are vulnerable to these scams so please, if you know someone who might fall for either of these tricks, help them avoid the trap.

Further Information

MailWasher Free www.mailwasher.net

MailWasher Pro www.firetrust.com

Blogger www.blogger.com

Computer support www.tobybainbridge.com/rd-2011-12-03.pdf