

BUG-BYTES

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WINDOWS SUPPORT

BE AWARE WHEN YOUR OS SUPPORT ENDS

Generally, Windows offers free support for a minimum of five years after the release of each version of its operating system. However, delays in releasing a new operating system (such as *Vista*) can and does change the endpoint for free support. It also affects the longevity of paid support.

Free support includes product updates, security releases, patches, and fixes. In practice, Microsoft has sometimes extended the support period for some items. For instance, Windows 98 users can still download older updates from the first or second editions and old drivers, but not for long.

Click on the following link for the latest support information for your version of Windows. Some of the information may be changing as we speak.

<http://support.microsoft.com/?pr=life cycle>

Currently, it is expected that mainstream support for Windows XP will end two years after Vista is released.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF UPGRADING TO A NEW (NEWER) OPERATING SYSTEM?

Computing is a moving target. The operating system needs to keep up with the advances in hardware and software so that users can use all of the capabilities that are available. For

instance, *Vista* needs to be able to handle all of the features of dual-core processors and 64 bit computing.

As Windows advanced from Windows 95, 98, and ME to XP, computers became much more stable, and better tools were provided to handle disk maintenance and to troubleshoot problems.

Better driver support has been achieved with each new version of the operating system, and the latest drivers are tested, certified, and are added to handled the newest hardware.

For example, new printers, graphic cards, monitors, SATA hard drives, wireless networks, CD/DVD burners, etc. have been released since XP was released.

As mentioned in earlier issues of Bug-Bytes, Windows XP can automatically search for drivers. However, Microsoft's library is limited mainly to the drivers on hand at the time the OS was released.

New versions of the OS provide new features and services. They sometimes also add and improve on features that were once available only from third-party vendors.

SHOULD EVERYONE UPGRADE TO THE NEW OS?

No! While most users will benefit from and enjoy the latest operating system, some users will find that the latest OS is incompatible with their very old hardware. Therefore, it is important to verify whether their computer meets the minimum requirements for the OS. For

instance, they may not have enough free space on their hard drive, enough random access memory, or a central processing unit that is powerful enough to run the software. They may also have hardware that is not supported. For these reasons, Microsoft provides a compatibility toolkit.

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/pr odtechnol/windows/appcompatibility/default.mspx>

It is a good idea to run the toolkit BEFORE upgrading to identify any problems that you might have with your existing software. For instance the above link tests whether your existing applications will be compatible with XP service pack 2.

I anticipate that Microsoft will offer a similar tool for Vista, the long awaited upgrade from Windows XP.

WHAT WILL BE NEW IN VISTA?

As expected, Vista will push the state of the art in computing. Reputedly it will be easier to find and manage data. Windows will have a new look and feel to it.

See the following link for and advanced look at what the product will offer.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsv ista/default.aspx>

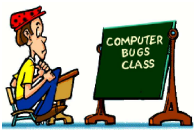
Vista will include Internet Explorer 7 with new security features, and new features such as print-to-fit printing. It will also include new backup and restore options, improved networking support, and a customizable sidebar to access mini applications. **Vista's release is now expected about January**

2007. The delay in releasing Vista may reflect Microsoft's goals to ensure that this OS is as secure as it can possibly make an operating system.

FOR YOUR OWN SANITY AND SAFETY, BACKUP!

DON'T LOSE YOUR PRECIOUS DATA

The "school of hard knocks" is a terrible way to learn that you need to protect your data. You can easily reinstall applications from vendor CDs, but you may not be able to replace any of your data without regenerating it from scratch. Similarly, you may find it difficult, if not impossible, to replace software that you bought via download. Backup your data to protect your investment in time and effort, and any data that cannot be replaced. Protect your digital photo library. Digital libraries are now replacing print photo albums.



HOW TO BACKUP

Is it difficult to backup? No. It is very easy to backup.

However, you need to backup often to provide the level of security that you need. The method that you choose should encourage you to backup often. The more often you backup, the less time there is for files to slip through your safety net. While I am talking about backing up folders, veteran word processor users can attest to how important it is for you to save your work frequently while you are creating documents. If you wait an hour to save your work in an open word processor document, then you could potentially lose up to an hour's work from a power interruption, or if you accidentally close your word

processor without saving. That is the hard way to learn the importance of saving or backing up your work.

Take some simple steps:

- Use backup software such as AKGbackup (donation), Genie Backup Manager (\$49.95), Backup in Windows XP (Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Backup), or other commercial backup software.
- Backup to the media of your choice (floppy, Zip disk, CD, DVD, to a disk partition, to another hard drive, or to tape).
- Decide your backup strategy (Full or incremental backup)
- Backup frequently (manually, or schedule backups on a set schedule using Windows Scheduled Tasks, or from your backup application if it supports scheduled backups).

WHAT ARE THE HALLMARKS OF A GOOD BACKUP PROGRAM?

- Easy to use
- Easy to restore data
- Supports full and incremental backups
- Backs up files and folders
- Backup to removable CD, DVD, Zip disk, etc.
- Works with your particular mail client
- Can verify backup
- Meets your special requirements (check comparative product reviews)

Q AND A . . . ☹

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY A HOAX?

Be really critical of claims made in e-mail messages. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it reasonable that someone will send you vast sums of money if you click their link?
- Did the person mentioned in the article really say what has been attributed to them?
- Legitimate financial institutions do not ask you to click on a link and then provide them with personal data. Check directly with the institution or not at all.
- Is the message fraudulent? Even if a message may be from a trusted source, such as Paypal, or a bank, the chances are that it is fraudulent.
- Is it reasonable to be asked to forward a message to at least ten people in your address book? Probably not.
- Is the virus described a legitimate virus, or are you just being asked to forward a hoax to everyone you know?

Use Google to verify whether the message you have received is a hoax. Use key phrases, or key words, from the message as your search term. For example, type in "Mrs. Field's cookie recipe" without the quotes.

See samples of hoaxes at <http://www.snopes.com/>. Here are some good places to check:

<http://www.truthorfiction.com/>

<http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/>

TEACH YOUR PRINTER NEW TRICKS



SWITCH QUICKLY FROM COLOR TO BLACK AND WHITE AND BACK

Printers are generally set to print in color in normal mode. However, you can force your printer to print in draft mode, in black and white, or set it to print photos in high quality on pre-

mium paper. Use the Windows print settings (Start, Control Panel, Printers and Faxes), to alter your printer's default settings.

However, when you do that, you will have to reverse all of your settings to return to your default settings.

What you see in the Printer dialog varies based upon the print driver you have currently selected. However, **the following method works well for all printers.**

Create separate print drivers for each printing mode you intend to use on a regular basis. Here's how. Open the

Printers and Faxes menu. Click on Add a printer. Add another copy of a printer you use. Give it a distinct name such as Epson Best Photo, Epson (B&W), Epson Normal Color, etc. Customize each of the drivers for the type of printing that you want to do.

Include the type of paper, and the quality of printing that you want for each printer type. See the screen shots below.

Change the default printer to agree with the print job you are about to start. See the third screen shot below

to see how to set a printer as the default printer.

Switching between print drivers, your preferred print settings are already made for you each kind of printing.

It is quick and easy to switch between the kinds of print jobs.

Alternatively, when you click on the print icon, or select print from the file menu, select the destination printer that you want to use.

USE THE CORRECT PAPER FOR THE JOB

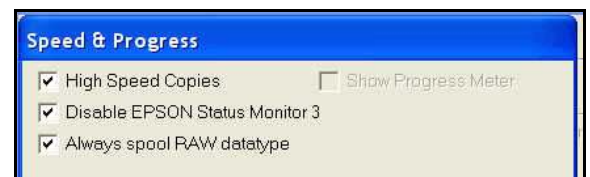
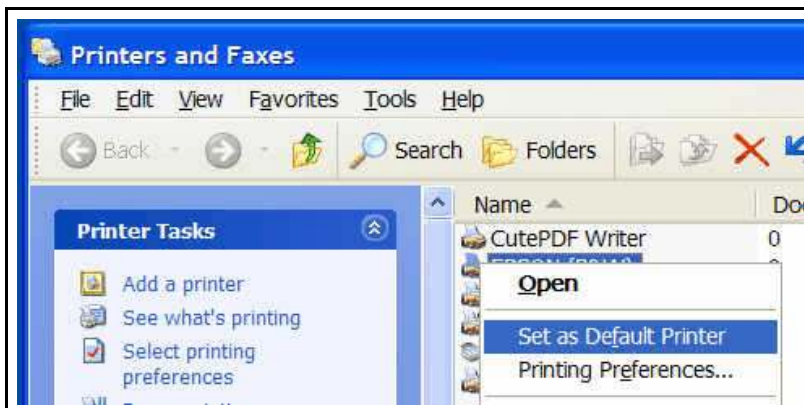
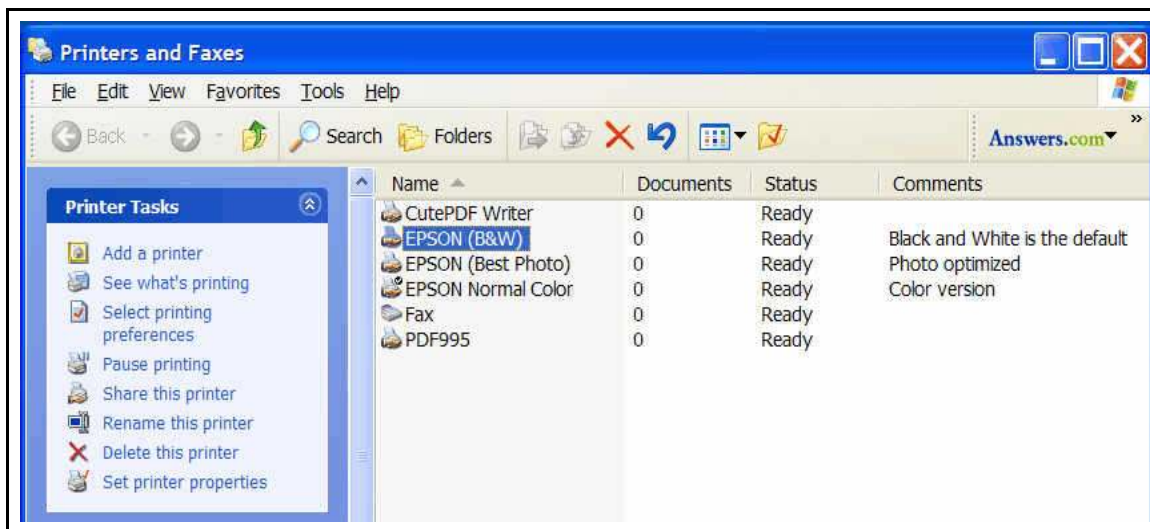
Photos look best when printed on either heavy glossy paper, or on matte finish paper. Glossy paper shows every little detail. Matte paper is more forgiving of minor mistakes.

Explore the many specialty papers and card stocks at your local stationery store. You will be amazed at what is

available, and you'll be prepared for the time when you have a need for a special kind of paper.

Speed up your printer's response. For Epson, open the Printers and Faxes option from the Control Panel. Right-click on your printer. Select Printing Preferences, Maintenance, Speed and

Progress. Choose to spool RAW data. Print a test page.



ARE YOU READY FOR A DOMAIN NAME?

MAKE IT EASY TO CHANGE INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDES



The problem with changing from one Internet Service Provider (ISP) to another is that you have to notify a long list of friends and contacts, and update vendor information for online vendors from whom you frequently purchase. It is analogous to losing your credit card and having to notify a long list of companies. So, how do you prevent that from happening? The answer is buy a domain name for you that offers forwarding services. A domain name is a computer address that identifies the owner of the domain name. For instance, my domain name is alanburt.com and www.domaindirect.com is the site that hosts my information. I use email@alanburt.com as my e-mail address, but my actual address is aburt@charter.net.

Online, you associate your domain name with your current ISP, but you can change that association if at any time. E-mail sent to your domain is automatically forwarded to the ISP address that you specify.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

You buy a domain name from a domain name registrar and choose from one of the types of names that are available. A simple search shows you whether the name you've chosen is already taken. Dot com names are the best known, but there are many other types from which to choose.

For instance, www.domaindirect.com (Division of Tucows, Inc.) offers

.com, .net, .org, .biz, .info, .ca, and .us.

E-mail sent to your domain e-mail account is forwarded to the IP address you specify. If you change your ISP you need change only the address to which your mail is forwarded. Thus, there is no need to send your recipients a change of address notice, nor do you have to modify favorite vendor e-mail information stored on line.

The annual price for a domain name depends on the services that are offered and run from \$2 to \$100 per year. The least expensive services handle just one e-mail address and URL forwarding. See <http://www.regselect.com/> for more information.

ARE YOU REALLY STUCK WITH DIAL-UP SERVICES?

BROADBAND MAY COST LESS THAN YOU THINK

Do you live in an area that offers Internet cable or DSL? If you do so, are you still using a dial-up connection? Do you already subscribe to cable television? If so, you may be paying about the same price for your dial-up service as you would if you upgraded your cable television service to include high speed Internet cable services.

You do not need a separate Internet Service Provider if you already subscribe to Internet cable, nor a separate phone line so that you can surf without tying up your phone line.

Internet cable takes the place of your dial-up ISP. Further more, even the least expensive broadband service is many times faster than your old dial-up connection. Broadband means that it would take a small fraction of the time to download virus updates, Win-

dows updates, and to keep all of your applications up-to-date. Do in minutes what it can take hours to do with dial-up.

Check with your cable television vendor (www.charter.net) for prices and availability. Internet cable uses your existing television cable to transmit both television and data. Your vendor can add an additional outlet near your computer if one is needed.

Broadband cable is on 24 hours a day seven days a week. There is no wait to connect to the Internet as there is with a dial-up connection.

There is a new service in the Medford area called *Clearwire* (www.clearwire.com) It is wireless and does not require running a cable connection to your computer, if one is needed.

Web pages load at least three times faster with DSL or Internet cable.

E-mail messages with large attachments upload and download swiftly.

Typically, broadband upload speeds are not as fast as download speeds, but they may be as much as 60 times faster than dial-up connection speeds.



If you are able to get Internet cable, consider getting more bang for your bucks from broadband.

What you save in cancelling your second phone line and cancelling your ISP service can pay for your broadband connection. Broadband takes the place of your current ISP.

See if broadband is right for you.