

THE 2020 PROBLEM



On 14th January 2020 all of the following software reached End of Life with Microsoft:

- Windows 7
- Windows Server 2008
- Small Business Server 2011
- Exchange 2010



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Most businesses rely on Microsoft software every day. It's the software used regularly for emails, documents and to run your servers and PCs.

But there's a big problem which affects many businesses and organisations. In 2018 Microsoft announced that a number of its much-used software products would reach "End of Life" in 2020.

To be more specific, the following Microsoft software reached the end of extended support on 14th January 2020:

- **Windows 7**
- **Windows Server 2008**
- **Small Business Server 2011**
- **Exchange 2010**

In addition to this, the following software is also due to reach the end of its extended support lifecycle on 13th October 2020:

- **Office 2010**

If this hasn't been brought to your attention by your IT Support company and your business still has any of this software active, then it may be time to think about changing your IT provider!

We estimate that 1 in 4 businesses still rely on this software every day.

So what does “End of Life” actually mean?

Each product in the Microsoft software portfolio has a **Life Cycle Start Date**, a **Mainstream Support End Date** and an **Extended Support End Date**, spanning roughly an 8-10 year period.

Following the end of Extended Support, Microsoft will no longer support, fix or provide security updates and patches for the software. They effectively abandon it in order to focus their teams on supporting newer products.

Point 1

If it breaks... it could stay broken.

Point 2

If you need support with a problem you've not come across before, there will be no support from Microsoft.

Point 3

The ICO states that:

“A key principle of the GDPR is that you process personal data securely by means of appropriate technical and organisational measures.”

Using unsupported software is therefore noncompliant for GDPR.

Point 4

This is the big one:

End of Life software is commonly targeted by hackers. They can exploit old vulnerabilities, safe in the knowledge that Microsoft won't spot what they're doing and fix the problem.

The end of security updates creates huge data security problems.

If yours is one of the many businesses that still rely on this software - you need to start planning to upgrade now.

With approximately 25% of all companies affected, how do you know whether your business is using out of date technology?

Here is a quick guide to help you identify whether you are using any of this un-supported software in your business and therefore, whether you need to upgrade.

If after checking you're still unsure, please contact the Net Technical Service Desk and one of our technicians will be happy to help.

1. Click the Start button.
2. Enter 'Computer' in the search box, right-click 'Computer', and then click 'Properties'.
3. Look under Windows Edition for the version and edition of Windows your PC is running.

Windows 7

Does your Start button look like this?



If it does, you are affected by the 2020 problem.

You can find out which version of Windows you're using by following these instructions:

Outlook

Does your icon look like this?



If it does, you are affected by the 2020 problem.

Depending on who you talk to, the old version is either brown, orange or gold.

All you need to know is that if it's not blue, it's probably the 2010 version which will expire on 13th October 2020.

Office 2010

Does your icon look like this?

If it does, you are affected by the 2020 problem.



Open your 'Word' programme in Office. Create or Open a document. To find out which version of Office you're using, click on the 'File' tab at the top of the document.

1. On the File screen, click 'Help' in the list of items on the left.

2. On the right side of the File screen, you'll see which edition of Office you're using.

3. Under 'About Microsoft Word' the version and build number are listed, along with the software, 32-bit or 64-bit.

4. For even more information, click 'Additional Version and Copyright Information'.

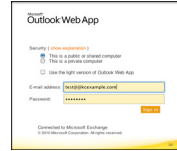
5. You'll see a dialogue box with additional information about the current version of the programme and your Product ID towards the bottom.

6. Click 'OK' to close the dialogue box.

Exchange 2010 WebMail login

Does your login screen look like this?

If it does, you are affected by the 2020 problem.

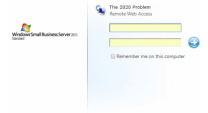


If you are using Webmail, it has now expired. You will still be able to login to get your email but the software will not be supported.

Small Business Server 2011

Does your login screen look like this?

If it does, you are affected by the 2020 problem.



Small Business Server 2011 has a remote web access. This software has reached End of Life and is no longer supported. Again this is a security risk to your business.



I know what you are thinking... if the software still works - why upgrade?

When you've already got a to-do list as long as your arm it's tempting to put jobs like this on hold. After all, if it's not broken why fix it?

The problem is that it's really only a matter of time before you are affected by some form of cyber-threat. Hackers are indiscriminate and will target any business regardless of industry, size or shape.

Updating software takes time and the last thing you want is to leave it until the last minute and then find out that things aren't working properly.

GDPR is a perfect example. A large number of UK firms are still falling short on their data protection responsibilities... nearly two years after the new law came in. Some decided to take their chances but the majority just left it too late and

then went into panic mode. By the time the deadline was upon them they were still left with a mountain of paperwork and regulations to get through and found themselves completely unable to keep up.

Leaving things until the eleventh hour is never a good idea in business. It causes stress and disruption - especially when computers are involved.

The problems are already starting.

Some applications, such as the latest version of Sage Line 50 won't install on these older versions, while others will be sluggish at best.

It might take a while for the effects to show, but don't forget that one of the requirements of the GDPR is that all organisations use fully supported software. Therefore if you choose to continue to use old versions of software, you're putting your business at risk, (especially if it leads to a data breach).

Cyber-crime is a genuine threat that cannot be underestimated. Hackers love it when companies fail to apply patches or get the latest versions of software because it gives them the perfect route in.

If your IT isn't up-to-date, your systems are at risk, leaving you wide open to data loss.

Then there are the financial implications. Outages cost UK businesses dearly, especially in financial terms from the amount of working hours lost due to downtime. That's before we even start thinking about the other repercussions, like unhappy customers and loss of face.

Streamlined systems mean greater productivity.

Upgrading now makes good business sense.

With no disruption to business, you'll be able to keep your staff, customers and your accountants happy.



Microsoft continues its push towards the Cloud. Is this the end for Microsoft Office as we know it?

Buried in a set of confusing announcements last year, Microsoft revealed that it's changing how it supports traditional versions of Office which could spell the end of the traditional Microsoft Office product.

Microsoft really wants all customers to move to a subscription-based Office 365 offering, but we are in a transitional period during which it offers access to traditional, locally installable software in two ways: In **standalone** form, where you buy a version of Office such as 2016 or 2019, or as a **subscription** service where you pay a monthly fee and can download the most up-to-date version at any time.

The standalone versions are what Microsoft calls "Office Perpetual." They are limited in that they can only be installed on a single PC, but they are "perpetual" in that you pay once and can essentially use them forever on the PC on which they are installed.

The support lifecycle for these products is technically 10 years, with 5 years being what Microsoft calls "mainstream support," during which time new features can be added, and 5 years being "extended support," during which time Microsoft will only fix bugs via updates and patches. After that - you're on your own!

Since the advent of Office 365, there's a fear in some quarters that Microsoft will someday simply drop what it calls Office Perpetual. In other words, if you want Office desktop applications such as Word, Excel etc., you would need to subscribe to Office 365.

"It is entirely possible that Office 2019 will be the final version of standalone software which Microsoft produces before pushing users into the Cloud with 365 subscription services."

Microsoft recently released a statement which seems to confirm this by announcing that if you currently use Office 365 for your emails, from October 2020 they will only work if you are either using Office 2016 or Office 2019 or if you have an Office 365 subscription such as 365 ProPlus or 365 Business Premium.

This may impact you in one of two ways: Firstly, if you are using an older version of Microsoft Office such as 2010 or 2013 then you will need to upgrade to Office 2019 to continue to use Office 365. Secondly, if you have users with Exchange Online Plan 1 or 365 Business Essentials subscriptions these will need to be upgraded.

We still have time before this change takes effect which leaves room for planning but it is certainly worth thinking about in conjunction with any other upgrades you may be scheduling in 2020.

Upgrading your End of Life software is a necessity if you want your business to stay operational.

That said, any kind of upgrade should be properly researched and planned. It's not something that you should rush or enter into lightly because IT plays such an integral role in business.

Yes, you need to upgrade and you need to do it quickly, but the choices you make will depend on how your specific organisation works.

Talk to one of our experienced Account Managers here at **Net Technical Solutions** before you take the plunge. We will be able to provide you with honest, impartial advice based on what works for your business rather than trying to sell you things you don't need.

You need a team who knows how to keep your data safe and your systems running like clockwork. Net Technical is here to help.

Should you wish to speak with us please contact our sales team:

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