

Tech Tips: A guide to upgrading, using XP computer

April 7 2014, by Anick Jesdanun



This July 22, 2009 file photo shows a Windows XP logo on a Hewlett Packard Laptop at a Best Buy in Mountain View, Calif. On Tuesday, April 8, 2014, Microsoft will end support for its still popular Windows XP. With an estimated 30 percent of businesses and consumers still using the 12-year-old operating system, the move could put everything from the data of major financial institutions to the identities of everyday people in danger if they don't find a way to upgrade soon. (AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File)

Microsoft [retires its 12-year-old Windows XP](#) operating system on

Tuesday. Even so, there are still millions of XP computers out there. Here's what to do if you own one of them:

What happens Tuesday?

— Microsoft Corp. will issue its final update to fix known [security flaws](#) with XP.

— After that, XP machines will still work, and you can install past [security updates](#). You won't get new ones to address any new security flaws.

— Your machine will face greater security risks. Because hackers know Microsoft will no longer issue updates, they have extra incentive to look for security flaws.

Can I upgrade my [computer](#)?

— Check here to see whether your computer is running Windows XP: [amirunningxp.com](#)

— If it is, run the tool here to see whether your computer is powerful enough to upgrade: [bit.ly/KkZERx](#)

— If you can upgrade, you can buy a DVD version of the latest Windows 8 version for \$120: [bit.ly/1mQBzCe](#)

— You'll need to back up your files and have discs for old programs handy, as an upgrade requires wiping out your hard drive. Microsoft has a step-by-step tutorial: [bit.ly/1mYSYEj](#)

— Keep in mind that it's likely better to use that \$120 toward a new computer. You'll be getting something more powerful.

What if I keep using my XP computer, despite the risks?

— Be sure to run all the previously released updates, plus the last one out on Tuesday.

— If you don't need the Internet connection, unplug it. That will minimize the risk. Be careful about attaching USB storage drives, as that might introduce malicious software.

— If you need the Internet, refrain from using email, Facebook and other communications channels through which [malicious software](#) might travel.

— It's also a good idea to lock down your computer by using a profile that lacks administrative rights and to remove older software you no longer need.

Where can I get more information?

— What end of support means: windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/end-support-help

— Upgrade information: microsoft.com/en-us/windows-8/upgrade-to-windows-8 target="_blank">windows.[microsoft](https://microsoft.com/en-us/windows-8/upgrade-to-windows-8).com/en-u ... upgrade-to-windows-8

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