

Crossing the Digital Divide Volume 17

“Certifiable”

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for the Observer

Did you apply the latest updates that have been flashing on your toolbar for the past week? Is your PC set to receive software updates from Microsoft? Do you use any third party (non-Microsoft) software to run your business? Did you just experience one of those “oh no” moments?

Microsoft launched the ***Microsoft Developers Network*** (MSDN) almost a quarter of a century ago. MSDN was, and is, a resource center for developers (third party) of computer hardware and software applications for use with Windows Operating Systems. MSDN participation is license based, meaning, if you want to play you pay; subscriptions are annual and the least expensive package: two grand. MSDN has everything a developer (or development team) might need to make their hardware or application work with Windows XP through Windows 10, as well as Microsoft’s server operating systems.

Access to this network is a “must” for any organization selling solutions that have to work on a Windows PC. Software patching is the mechanism by which errors in computer code are corrected when a flaw or vulnerability is discovered. Some software patches enhance performance, and are often deemed “optional”. Avoiding software patches on a computer connected to the Internet is ill advised, and somewhat like ignoring an auto manufacturers recall for potentially faulty brakes – there are some things you just don’t want to be without.

So, what happens when, on a Wednesday morning, your business application no longer works? Microsoft updates on Tuesdays. Assuming the “update” wasn’t Windows 10 from Windows 7 or 8 (many third party vendors expressly state if their product is certified to work on a particular Windows version), and you’ve checked for virus and malware infections, your PC is clean, and still, your application will not work, **CALL YOUR SOFTWARE VENDOR** immediately, and escalate to senior management if response is anything less than: “we’re on it, our apologies for the inconvenience.”

There are thousands of software solutions that millions (in some cases) of businesses rely upon for their product/service/solutions. No one vendor is perfect, mistakes will happen. No one vendor intentionally avoids fixing their own software as a consequence of a flaw/bug discovered in someone else’s software (or opensource software that the Internet relies upon). With minor exception, software destined for use on a computer or computer network must work with other software, the entire “Internet” and information systems ecosystem is all about playing in the same playground as others. Not unlike the grade school playground, if someone has the flu, you remove them from the yard until they’re healthy again. Some heal faster than others. Stay up to date with software updates, and make sure your vendors are doing the same.

