By Merle Windler, Thoroughbred Systems, Inc.

Computer Corner

Ten Tips for Windows 10, Part 1 . . .

Ah, Yes, That Means Five for Now, Five Later

By the time this issue of *The Lifeline* is delivered, the announced deadline of June 29, 2016 will have passed for a FREE Windows 10 upgrade for those with qualifying versions of Windows 7, Windows 8, or Windows 8.1. Hopefully the information provided on this subject in an earlier *Computer Corner* article helped readers not only in making up their minds when or if to update within the "FREE UPDATE" period, but also aided those who did so in making those updates go smoothly and without data loss.

Some of Microsoft's customers were taken by surprise at the boldness of that corporate giant. As the deadline date approached, many found Microsoft's tactics to be nothing short of pushy. We received scores of morning phone calls in the past month when municipal and rural water district staff realized that computers left on overnight had automatically begun the Windows 10 upgrade process and they were faced with a screen asking them to continue the Windows 10 upgrade by choosing "Next", or choose to forfeit the Free upgrade by choosing.... "NO, that's not me"... and then selecting "I wish to forfeit my Free upgrade rights" option to stop the upgrade process. Fortunately, only a few of those instances resulted in a total disaster with a no longer functioning Windows operating system and/or data loss.

For those now using Windows 10, we wish to share some tips, tricks and settings that can help make your Windows 10 experience a better one.

Tip 1: Classic Shell Windows XP or Windows 7 Style Menus

First, If you are a "creature of habit" and prefer the "old style" classic Windows Menu style of Windows XP and Windows 7 over the new "Menu and Tiles" and "Metro Style Apps" appearance of Windows 10, don't worry, there's a very popular FREE program called "Classic Shell" that'll fix you right up. Using "Classic Shelf", you can easily do away with the new Windows 10 Style Menu and Active Tiles and select settings for a Windows XP or Windows 7 style Start Menu. Download it at http://www.download.cnet.com/ or http://www.classicshell.net/.

Or, if you decide Windows 10 is just not for you... you have 30 days from the date of upgrade to "Roll Back" your Operating System from Windows 10 to your previous version of Windows 7 or Windows 8/8.1. After a fresh

backup of your data just in case something goes wrong, choose: Start -> Settings -> Update & Security -> Recovery.. then choose the option labeled "Go Back to Windows 7 (8)".

Tip 2: Handy Keyboard Shortcut Commands

Ironically, for those who like things to remain working the "old way", Windows 10 follows Windows 8 in taking a leap back 30 years with Keyboard Shortcuts reminiscent of the early "Wordstar" days of the 1980s.

For those willing to memorize and use them, there are many handy Keyboard Shortcut Commands. Some of the more handy commonly used are: (Windows Key = [W])

[W] + D = Open/Toggle the Desktop View

[W] + S = Open Search Window

[W] + X = Quick Access Window

[W] + C = Open Cortana in listening mode for voice commands

[W] + [Tab] = Open Task View

[W] + A = Open Action Center

[W] + L = LOCK your PC

[Alt] + [Tab] = Switch between Open Applications

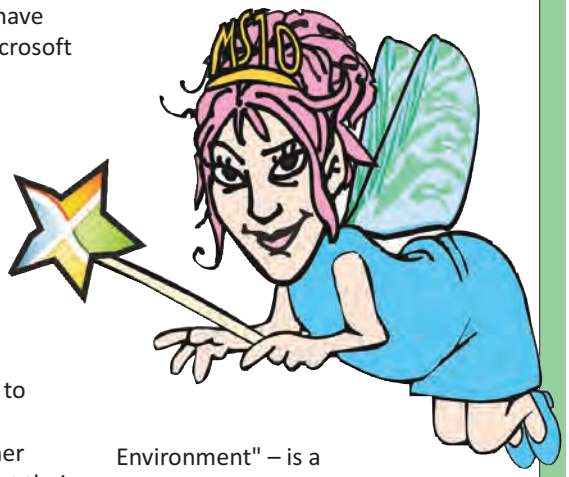
[Alt] + [F4] = Close and Exit the Application or Item

A lot of things are pretty much just as they have been before, but the "look", name, or location where they are found might be slightly different.

Tip 3: Personalize Menus and Desktop to have it "Your Way"

The first thing Thoroughbred Systems always does to any of our computers is to personalize the Desktop Shortcuts, Start Menu and Taskbar items to be "My Way". We usually add the "Sticky Notes" and "Snipping Tool" found, not in the 'Accessories' Menu folder, but now in

For Those In Operating System Limbo . . .



If you are among those who have had a surprise visit from the Microsoft Fairy and now find yourself in a software compatibility crisis with Windows 10, there are several ways to attempt to deal with the problem.

First. contact the hardware/software vendor to ask if there is a simple/affordable update or compatibility emulation setting to resolve the issue.

A Kansas water utility customer contacted us with a problem that their computer had "died" and their electronic meter reading equipment and software would not function with the new Windows Operating System (OS). An upgrade solution was available to them, but the funds needed were not! It is likely that most users finding themselves in this quandary will want to involve a computer 'techie' in choosing and executing the best course of action, as this can be a complicated and daunting undertaking.

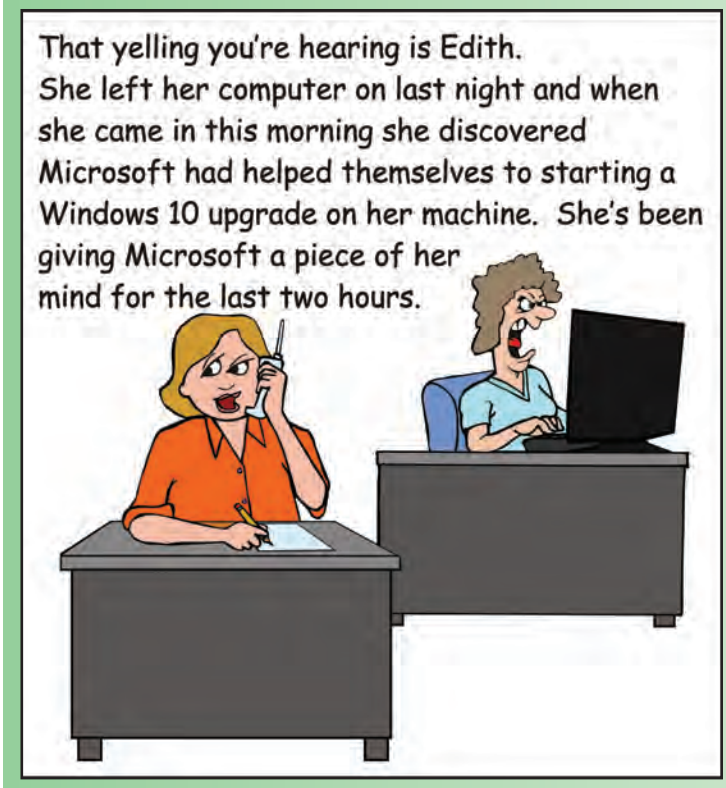
We wanted to give them the ability to "boot" the computer in either the new Windows 10 or the very old XP they were using. This would allow them to continue to use the existing electronic meter reading software when booted in XP, but, would also allow them to connect to the Internet with greater safety by booting up in Windows 10 for that and other tasks better suited to the new OS. There are several ways to accomplish this.

One way is to set up a "dual boot" system in which the computer's hard drive is partitioned to make one hard drive behave as if it were two smaller drives. With this the user is given a choice on startup as to which operating system they wish to run.

The other way – the "Virtual Environment" – is a software trick. Windows 10 would serve as the computer's operating system but, when something must be accomplished in an older OS, an icon would be available that would open the older operating system as though another computer were being turned on and booted up.

After considering the options, we decided on the dual boot menu. This allowed the utility to postpone spending tens of thousands of dollars on an upgrade not presently in their budget.

We installed the old Windows XP Operating System, their existing electronic read equipment and software that it was designed to function with on one partition and Windows 10 on another. They will only use the old operating system once a month when in the electronic read software. Other software, including their utility billing program, their fund accounting program, etc., are Windows 10 ready and will be operated through the new OS. They will simply copy the current readings and new readings file from one to the other once each month at meter reading time. We even made a 'Magic Button' to copy the needed electronic read files semi-automatically.



the "Windows Accessories" Menu Folder, to the Task Bar at the bottom of the Desktop Screen. Do so by "right clicking" on them on the Start Menu or Desktop Shortcut Icon and Selecting "Pin to Taskbar". If desired, instead select "Pin to Start Menu" to have a new "Tile" appear on the Desktop. "Right Click" on any Tile to resize or move it as desired on the Desktop Window.

Tip 4: Quick Access Window

Some things are actually easier and faster to find than before. A good example is the "Quick Access Window". Press the Keyboard Shortcut Command "[W] + X" or click the "Right Mouse Button" on the new Start Button Icon (Four Window Panes Icon lower left corner). A menu appears with some of the most common options for the computer savvy operator. Control Panel, Device Manager, Command Prompt, File Explorer, Event Manager, System, and Search are just some of the options easily at hand with this nice feature.

Tip 5: It is CRUCIAL to turn on "Restore Points"

Windows 10 installs with "Restore Points" turned OFF by Default. It is crucial that you "Turn ON" the Restore Point function for extra protection from "bad things" happening that can't be easily fixed when installing new software, updates, etc. "Pop Up" the "Quick Access Window" as described in Tip 4 above... and choose: System -> System Protection. A list of available drives will appear. Find the System Drive with your Windows 10 Operating System installed (usually the "C: Drive") and select "Configure". Then select "Turn On System Protection". Microsoft suggests you choose ten percent of the size of your hard drive partition or 5 GB, whichever is larger. Click "OK", then "Apply" to save your settings. And last, click the "Create" button to make your first Restore Point to which your computer's Windows Operating System can be Restored should it be needed later.

For more information on this topic and five additional specific Windows 10 Tips, watch for Part 2 of this article in the "Computer Corner" of the next edition of *Kansas Lifeline Magazine*.

Merle Windler and his wife Linda are owners of Thoroughbred Systems, Inc., Topeka. The company specializes in utility billing for cities and rural districts, computer networking and associated training. Contact: merlewindler@yahoo.com

GWA

316-550-6177
Cell 316-734-8567
VINCENTBRAD@HOTMAIL.COM

Ground Water Associates, Inc.

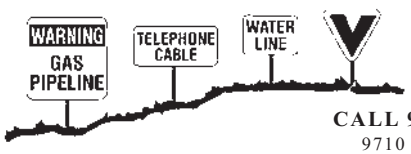
EXPERTISE IN WATER & WELLS

BRAD C. VINCENT, P.G.
GROUND WATER GEOLOGIST

109 W. 1st Avenue
P.O. Box 792
GODDARD, KANSAS 67052

Rural Water Specialty Co.

Signs and Markers
for the Utility & Pipeline Industry



CALL 918-446-1916
9710 W. 65th St. So.
Sapulpa, OK 74066-8852
Fax: 918-446-2770

THOROUGHBRED SYSTEMS

116 S. E. 8th Avenue Topeka, KS. 66603-3905 (785) 232-8160 ThoroughbredSystems.com

HorseCents Utility Manager & Many Other Software Products

Serving Cities & Water Districts for well over 20 years

XP, Vista, Win7/8 Compatible
Email Billing
Intelligent Mail Barcoding
Electronic Read
ACH
Internet Bill Payment
We've Got It All!

Call our Helpful Tech Support Line

(Not a Recent Photo)

No Yearly Fees

Training choices include...

Private, i.e. 'In Person' Instruction
Topeka Classes
Special Arranged Classes Around the Country
Private Instruction Over the Internet
New Internet Classes, i.e. **'Webinars'**

Those with 8 hours private instruction or12 hours class (for as little as $100 total) receive...

5 YEARS FREE UPGRADES, PHONE & INTERNET SUPPORT

with real live human beings to help you!