Windows XP End of Support.
What does this mean for me?

April 8, 2014, marks the End of Support for Windows XP and Office 2003.
We're sure you have questions.

What does "End of Support" actually mean?

After April 8, 2014, there will be no more updates or support for Windows XP and Office 2003. These products were released over 10 years ago, and have had free updates over that decade. We will no longer continue to release these updates, but even if we did, these products were designed for a different era of technology and are now impractical for a modern business. Along with that, the opportunities technology offers your business have changed—for the better! Newer products are designed to take advantage of the massive growth of the Internet and mobility to offer great new ways to work, reach more customers, and grow faster. It's this combination of risk and opportunity that make it the right time to move off Windows XP.

How can "End of Support" affect my business?

We won't sugarcoat it: If you are running Windows XP after April 8, 2014, you are putting your business at risk—and please don't believe anyone who claims that quick fixes can replace a critical OS update. There are genuine and important issues you should be aware of:

Security risk
Without critical updates, your PC will be susceptible to attacks that take advantage of vulnerabilities. These attacks not only cause downtime but can also put your customers' information or your own business data at risk.

Software issues
Most software and hardware vendors will no longer support products that are running on Windows XP, as they are unable to get Windows XP and Office 2003 updates.

Discontinued support
Because our updates often fixed problems before you were aware of them, you may have never needed our tech support. But now that these updates are to stop, new problems may arise—only now there will be no one to contact for tech support.

Downtime
The risks of system failure and business disruption could increase because of the End of Support, lack of supported software, and aging hardware running Windows XP. Even a system running an updated anti-virus or modern browser is not safe from potential issues that may cause downtime.

Office 365   Windows 8 Pro

Windows 8.1 and Office 365:
A safer, better platform for business

We want you to be safer by making sure you aren't running Windows XP and Office 2003 by April 8, 2014. Protecting you and your business is our first priority. It's also important for us to help you make the right IT decision and give your business the best chance at success. Here are four key reasons why small- and mid-sized businesses are choosing Windows 8.1 and Office 365—the modern Microsoft platform:

The way business gets done
Together Windows and Office are the gold standard for business platforms. By joining over one billion users worldwide, your communication with potential customers is less likely to be disrupted, and you'll limit training costs as you upgrade to a familiar environment. Only Windows enables a consistent experience across devices by allowing users to sync personalization settings, apps, and data across tablets, laptops, desktops, and all-in-ones. This means getting work done is easier, no matter where you go.

Enterprise grade security
Currently, Windows 8.1 is already six times more secure than Windows XP. Office 365, likewise, is compliant with world-class industry standards for information security, and includes features like information rights management and data loss prevention that further protect your business.

Offline and online done right
Windows 8.1 and Office 365 combine the proven processing power and local storage of a PC with seamless cloud integration. With Windows 8.1 and Office 365, your important office documents move with you across your devices, while providing online and offline productivity. Office 365 includes 25GB of cloud storage and the ability for each user to install Office apps on up to five of their computers, plus great web apps that run in most browsers and mobile phones—making how and where you work up to you.

Freedom to choose your work style
You can choose to work either on the familiar Windows desktop, which is designed for the keyboard and mouse experience, or on the new touch-friendly Start screen, which can run multiple apps side-by-side. The Microsoft platform offers a large variety of thinner, lighter, and faster desktops, tablets, and laptops. Choose the device that best fits your business need.

What is Office 365?

Office 365 is a newer, better version of the familiar Office applications. What makes Office 365 better?

Always up-to-date: The Office applications are now connected to the cloud and kept up-to-date automatically.

Low up-front cost: Office 365 is available as a low-cost monthly subscription.

Use on all your devices: Each user can install the Office apps on up to five PCs and use mobile applications on his or her smartphone and tablet.

Access your customer and business data from anywhere: Your data can be saved to and stored in the cloud, making it easy to access from anywhere or with any device.

Easy to collaborate: Because your files are saved to the cloud, anyone on your team can work on the same file, keeping one version of the truth and preventing version control issues.

More than just apps: Office 365 also includes a lot more. It provides Exchange Online email, shared calendaring, contacts, cloud storage, and online meetings that work seamlessly together with the Office applications. We have plans to fit the right needs and price points for your organization. Visit Office.com/business for more details.

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You've got questions?
We've got answers!

Can I keep my system safe by changing my web browser or anti-virus?

Updating to a new web browser or anti-virus software is not enough to protect your business and may only give you a false sense of security. An unsupported OS will leave you vulnerable to external threats. In fact, a new browser with apps and extensions can introduce new areas for attacks on your system.

Can I protect myself by permanently disconnecting my device from the Internet?
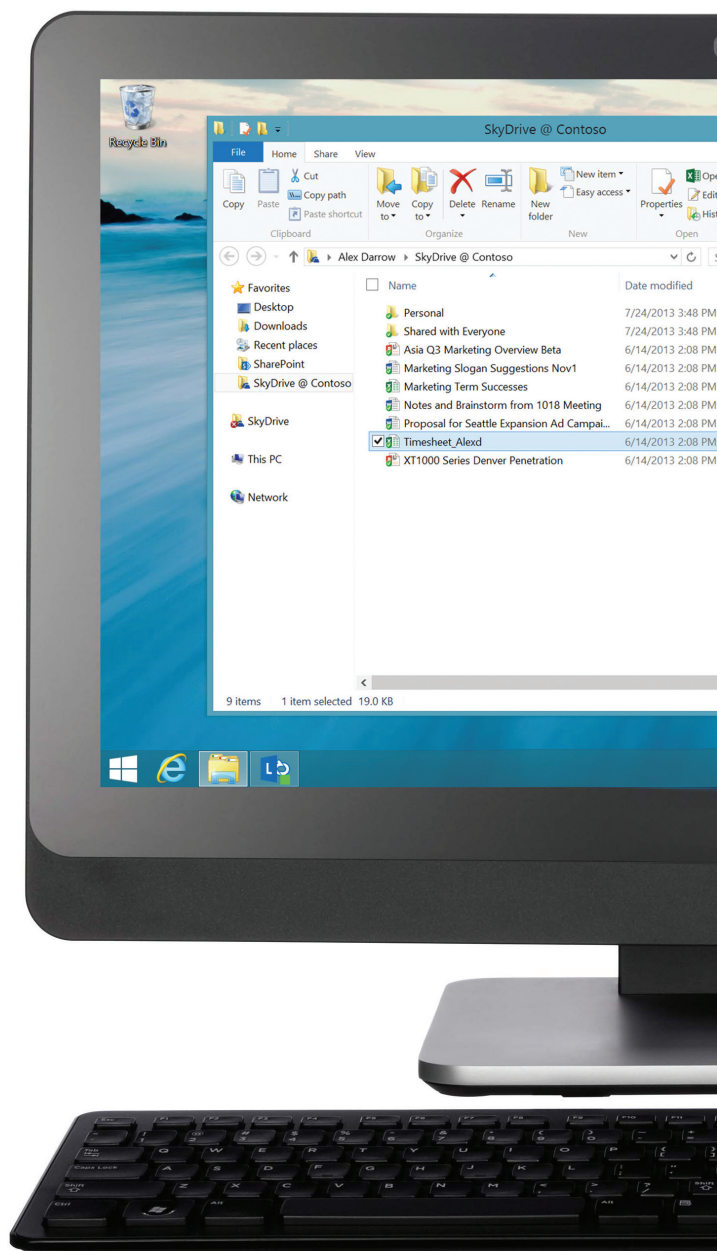
Being disconnected to an internal network, or using a USB or CD to transfer information, may reduce the attack surface but will still leave you vulnerable to several types of attacks once support ends. Aside from a few special situations, keeping your Windows XP machine in a sealed room on its own is not the right choice for your business.

Do I need to buy all new hardware?

Not necessarily. Depending on the age of the device you are using, you may be able to simply update to Windows 8.1 and Office 365. We would recommend at least checking out new hardware though, either because your existing hardware is old (and slow), or because you want the flexibility to work in newer, more mobile ways that new devices enable. You can use the Windows Upgrade Assistant or contact a Microsoft Partner to help make the right decision for your particular situation.
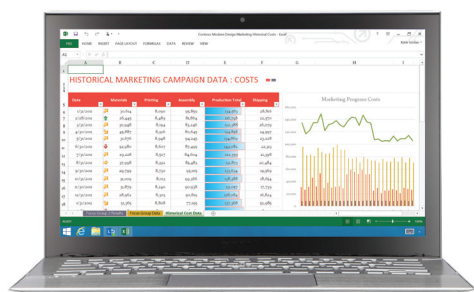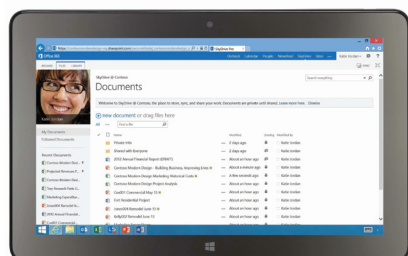
Can I migrate my important applications?

Often, you can. A few old apps may not work on the new Windows. In those cases you can work with the software vendor to get an updated version of the app—which will usually come with additional features and capabilities. In the rare cases where an update is not available, we recommend you work with your Partner or locate a replacement app in the Windows store. Check for app compatibility information in the Windows Compatibility Center.

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It may sound daunting, but the change is worth it.

Whether you're a tech guru or someone who's still learning, Microsoft and its network of partners are committed to helping you get to a modern, safer platform to drive new opportunities in your business with minimal cost and fuss.

Locate a Microsoft Partner who can help you!

You'll want to take these steps (or ask your Microsoft Partner to make the problem go away):

STEP 1
Check if you can upgrade to Windows 8.1 on your old PC(s)
Download the Windows Upgrade Assistant, which will help you determine if your PC can run Windows 8.1. You can buy the latest Windows Pro devices here.

STEP 2
Check the compatibility of your applications
The Windows Upgrade Assistant will also help you check if your programs are compatible with Windows 8.1. You can also check for specific program information in the Windows Compatibility Center.

STEP 3
Remember to back up all your files (you do that anyway—right?)
SkyDrive, Windows Azure backup, or portable hard drives are good options to store your valuable data, both during the migration and afterward.

STEP 4
Get the latest Office with Office 365.
Visit Office.com/business to learn more.

You're done!

But if you want to know more about moving from Windows XP to Windows 8.1, visit the Upgrade Tutorial.