Are you protected?

"If you continue to use Windows XP after support ends, your computer will still work but it might become more vulnerable to security risks and viruses." [1]

As one of the longest standing operating systems, first released to computer manufacturers in August 2001, Windows XP is still the second most popular version of Windows, based on installed user base as of 2013[2]. The name XP is short for eXPerience, highlighting the enhanced user experience.

We have all become familiar with Windows XP over the decade. However, as we have been expecting, XP will soon disappear from our lives. The question to ask is, 'are *you* prepared?'

Can I still buy XP?

Whilst the purchase of Windows XP FeS (For embedded Systems) will still be available until late December 2016, Microsoft will halt all updates and security patches from April 8th 2014. This will leave many potential users vulnerable to attacks.

The exit of Windows XP does not follow the rules; it is not a necessary transition from an obsolete operating system to a better one, as with the move, say, from NT to 2000. Neither is it an improvement from one form of an operating system to an enhanced variant.

In fact, the death of Windows XP represents a complete disconnect from established practice - and this is perhaps why many businesses are either failing or refusing to grasp its impact

With the demise of XP imminent, a recent industry survey in the Register shows that 40 per cent of respondents said their companies had yet to even start migrating from XP, and 20 per cent of respondents were not planning to do so at all.

Where to?

Some see moving to Windows 7 or Windows 8 as an option. Indeed, it is, but as mentioned earlier, the withdrawal of Windows XP is no ordinary migration exercise, and nowhere is this clearer than in the lack of continuity between Windows XP and Windows 7 and 8, in fact they do not support all of the devices that XP supports.

Making the switch to a newer Windows operating system will also have other implications for a company infrastructure and there could be complications in getting all the devices across a business to run on the same platform, particularly in larger businesses where multiple servers and point of sale devices are deployed. Whichever way you look at it, budget looms large in the process.

Go embedded?

Most damaging of all, is the lack of understanding around the options for using embedded software instead of standard Windows XP. Many businesses in this space still think, for

example, that embedded software requires a hardware refresh. Not so, embedded offerings also include XP-based operating systems, such as XPe and WES 2009 that can be delivered via a software services model, with no hardware implications.

Embedded licensing also allows for a longer lifespan of devices, with some embedded products being available or supported for up to 15 years (thus avoiding exactly the kind of disruptive support withdrawal situation that businesses are currently having to deal with!)

The benefits of embedded aren't just limited to prolonging support life, there is also much greater licence discounting, higher levels of efficiency, locked-down functionality and full customisation support, enabling easy integration into a business environment. In addition, there is no shortage of choice for XP users – the embedded variants of XP are abundant.

Embedded is not, by any means, the only choice, and no choice can ever be perfect in every respect, but there is far more to recommend embedded technology as a replacement for the outgoing XP than the industry currently realises.

So where does this leave us?

How can Amplicon help?

Windows 7 appears to be the operating system of choice to replace the ageing Windows XP machines, but some machines will require hardware upgrades, whilst others will need to be scrapped entirely and replaced to support the new OS. Amplicon have the knowledge and skill set to ease the headaches of shifting to either a newer hardware platform or, OS migration. Our product specialist team are on hand to guide and advise you on the next step for your business

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References:

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2. http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_os.asp   Retrieved 20/01/14