

## THE COMPUTER CORNER

# No. 196. Easing Your Transition From XP to Win7

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OK, you've decided to move from XP to Win7 (this is the correct move, since many of the gurus have classed Win8 to be a poorer choice). And, Win7 is a good operating system (OS). What are the ways that you can minimize your losses and maximize the transfer of your "stuff" to the new OS?

First comes the bad news. Forget trying to simply port your programs to the new OS. Don't even try, since you will be unsuccessful. Rather, make a list of them all and do a clean install of each program after the new OS is in place. It is easier, quicker, and your end result will be *much* better. Most programs that run on XP will run very nicely on Win 7 when placed there with a fresh install. Anyway, to emphasize it, the first thing you want to do is to make a list of the programs you want, and download the installation program for each. Make a folder on your thumbdrive, external hard drive or burn a CD. Call the folder PROGRAMS and put the installation programs in that folder. If necessary, rename them so you know what they are. Yes, you can rename an installation file and it will work just fine. Just don't rename the extension (.exe, .msi, etc.). If you do so by accident, just rename it back to .exe or whatever.

Next, back up your address books. In Thunderbird, left click **Address Book**, highlight the book of your choice with a single left click, then left click **Tools, Export**, find a target folder like the desktop, and save the address book as an LDIF file. Don't forget to indicate a file name you will recognize. Repeat that individually with each of your address books, if you have several. Port the resulting files to your thumbdrive or other media. For Hotmail, your addresses are kept on their servers, not on you own computer, and so you should not loose them when moving operating systems. I believe that is also the case with Outlook, if you use that. Don't forget your passwords, or you will not be able to access your account! You have written them down somewhere, right?

Now it is time to back up your Favorites (or Bookmarks). For IE, left click **File**, then **Import and Export**, then **Export to a file**, then **Favorites**, then the folder you want to export from, then where you want the "bookmarks.htm" file to be written to. For Firefox, at the top of the screen left click **Bookmarks**, then **Show All Bookmarks**, then **Import and Backup** in the menu at the top. Now you have a choice. You can save your bookmarks using the built-in backup function (just click it) to save the bookmarks as a .json file. It is easily imported into Firefox, but not very easy to read. Alternatively, choose **Export Bookmarks to HTML**, which will create an .html file that can be read with Firefox (or imported into IE). Either (or both) are good backups. Put 'em on the thumbdrive.

If you do all that, you are in pretty good shape. Be sure you copy all those backups to a thumbdrive or CD, so that they are off the hard drive. Then, go install your copy of Win7. If asked or given the option, let the installation CD reformat the drive. Actually, I let the installation CD re-partition the drive before formatting. That will give you a squeaky clean system to put the new OS in place. Do it and let the new OS do whatever updates it wishes. Only then should you begin to load the programs you have listed by clicking on the installation programs one at a time.

Don't forget an antivirus program (just one). Avast is the current one of choice among the free programs. It is as good or better than all the other free and many of the pay-for programs. It will keep you safe. If you feel that you must pay for a program, Norton (believe it or not!) is the top of the heap as of now. They completely rewrote their software recently and it is currently the best in the world. Download and install (and use) CCleaner (free) as well.

There are many others you might need, but you can always add them later as you become familiar with the new OS. Check out [www.majorgeeks.com](http://www.majorgeeks.com) from time to time, especially the listed ones marked with a green "pick" box. Try one of the Microsoft Office substitutes you find at majorgeeks. You'll be surprised at how good they are. Just look for that "pick" box.

That should get you started. On the other hand, you may elect to delay the switch over, perhaps until after the first of the year, as an arbitrary point. That is OK. You will probably do just fine with XP until at least then. Just make sure your antivirus is current and periodically scanning, as it should. Then again, that applies no matter what OS you have installed. Happy Computing!

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*"If I had thought about it, I wouldn't have done the experiment. The literature was full of examples that said you can't do this."*  
Spencer Silver on the work that led to the unique adhesives for 3-M "Post-It" Notepads.