8 harsh realities of being a Windows 11 user

(Written by David Gewirtz of ZDNET.com | Posted in DIY-IT on December 21, 2021 | Topic: Windows 11)

Serious Windows users have long observed an unfortunate trend: every other release of Windows is disappointing. Windows 95 was pretty good. Windows 98 wasn't, but Windows 98 SE made things better. Windows Me was terrible. Windows XP was legendary. Windows Vista was considered legendarily awful. Windows 7 was nearly perfect. Windows 8... I've probably written thousands of words to describe how wrong-headed some of Microsoft's decisions were with this one.

Windows 10 was pretty good. And that brings us to Windows 11. Look, there are some good reasons for Windows 11. Microsoft did need to do a reset that ups the baseline for system security. But that doesn't mean that Windows 11 is going to be smooth sailing for everyone, that we'll all agree with Microsoft's design decisions, or that some key aspects of Windows 11 won't annoy the crap out of us. In fact, all Windows 11 users have to contend with a bunch of harsh realities. Here (in honor of Windows 8's long litany of mistakes) are eight of them:

#1 Changing your default browser is like a bad game of whack-a-mole

Microsoft wants us all to use Edge. We get it. Edge isn't even all that bad. But Windows is (or was) all about choice. If you don't want to use Microsoft Edge, you shouldn't have to engage in an ugly and unpleasant search for default file types and have to change each one individually.

But that's what Microsoft makes you do. In earlier Windows, you could just search for default apps and make a change. But no. Not in Windows 11. Harsh.

#2 If you want to revert your Windows 11 upgrade, you only have ten days

I discussed this at length last month. Microsoft only gives you ten days to revert your upgrade. To be fair, my colleague Ed Bott did point out that you can extend this period to 60 days if... and only if... you run an obscure shell command, and if... and only if... you run that obscure shell command before the original ten days is up.

So, in other words, you have to know you're probably going to want to revert your install before the ten days are up in order to decide to give yourself 60 days to evaluate it. But if you haven't planned ahead to revert back and discover on Day 12 that you'd like to go back, even Ed's supernatural command-line incantation won't help you. Harsh.

#3 Windows 11 Home won't let you use a local account for initial setup

Let's say you just want to use your computer your way. Maybe you don't want to have to register and login with Microsoft every time you want to use your machine. Maybe you don't want (or can't have) a constant online connection. Maybe you don't want Microsoft cloud-manage your every move (after all, that's why we have Facebook). Well, bucko, you're out of luck.

Windows 11 Home won't let you set up a local account. Windows 10 made it hard, but the ability was there if you knew where to look. But Windows 11? With Windows 11, you have to login with Microsoft before you can get to work.

There are some hacks that will allow a local account on Windows 11. TheWindowsClub says that if you turn off your active Internet connection, the Windows 11 installer will allow you to use a local account. ExtremeTech showcases a technique where you interrupt the install, kill a running process, and allows you to set up a local account. And Digital Citizen shows a technique for switching to a local account once Windows 11 has been installed.

Of course, you can also get around this by spending an extra hundred bucks or so for Windows 11 Pro. But privacy shouldn't have to cost a Franklin or require hunting down hacks, especially when the OS in question is supposed to provide privacy. Harsh.

#4 Open File Location *doesn't*

In Windows 10, there used to be a context menu option called Open File Location. If you needed a file and performed a search, you could then right-click on the found file in the search results field and select Open File Location. This would not only put you in the folder with the file, but it would also select the file as well. It was fast, easy, productive, and very helpful when moving and managing files.

That option is not in Windows 11. There's a long Reddit discussion about how you can sort of get that functionality back by clicking near the file; yada, yada, yada. But the simplicity of selecting the context menu item and having it actually be helpful is gone. Harsh.

#5 Control panel inconsistency is a disgrace

Okay, let's be clear here. Microsoft brought in $46.2 billion in the quarter ending June 30, 2021, which was a 21% increase over the corresponding period the year before. Overall yearly revenues are in excess of $121 billion.

So, with all that money, do you think the company could possibly provide a consistent settings interface for its flagship operating system? No. Still no.

For years, Microsoft has forced users to live with an ugly mashup of the Settings interface and Control Panel interface. But Windows 10 came out in 2015. That's six years (or more than half a trillion dollars) ago. In all that time, do you think Microsoft could clean up their settings act and make a single, consistent interface?

You'd think that, but you'd be wrong. You can set some preferences in Settings and others in Control Panel. That's just harsh on so many levels.

#6 Truncated context menus cut off access to needed capabilities

Choice overload is a real thing. Having too many options on something like a context menu can be a burden for novice users. But Windows 11 is a powerful operating system; burying many of the context menu items under Show More Options can get tedious quickly.

Windows 11 users who want to get around this limitation can do so through a registry hack. In another article, I show how a downloadable piece of software can punch in that registry hack for you, but it's not particularly convenient.

The bottom line is that Microsoft reduced choice and made it harder to get to regularly used capabilities. That's bad news for many long-time Windows users. Harsh.

#7 The search bar is gone

Here's another feature that was a convenience in Windows 10 but which requires extra clicks in Windows 11. The search bar that used to live on the taskbar is gone. This goes completely against the premise that all the Windows 11 user interface changes are intended to improve novice usability. Sure, there's still the magnifying glass icon. But what's easier for novices than a field that says "Type here to search" right next to the Start icon?

In Windows 11, that's gone. Once you hit the Windows icon, a search field is displayed. Doesn't that presuppose that a user knows where to look? For advanced users, it's not a big thing, especially since PowerToys Run offers a nice MacOS Spotlight-style search pane. Then again, to get that feature, you have to know enough to install PowerToys.

Taking away obvious search from new users? Harsh.

#8 The whole hardware compatibility kerfuffle

Since the new OS was announced, we've been down the whole Windows 11 hardware requirement issue numerous times. And while it's possible to bypass Microsoft's minimum hardware requirements, it's not advisable.

I personally don't think Microsoft had much of a choice when it came to setting a more stringent minimum hardware requirement baseline. After all, cybercrime has become a total nightmare. By requiring modern Windows users to use hardware that can help mitigate cyberattacks, Microsoft is helping to harden the PCs across the world.

But that doesn't make the minimum requirements any easier to absorb. Millions of machines will still be using one older OS or another. Since the support windows for those older operating systems have closed or will close soon, those are vulnerable machines that are unlikely ever to get updated with more secure code.

This article talks about the realities of being a Windows 11 user, so technically, if you're already a Windows 11 user, you won't have to deal with the minimum hardware requirements issue. But there are still the hardware compatibility issues that come from running any new OS release. Back in October, Windows 11 had some issues with AMD chips, but that's been subsequently patched. Windows 11 has a problem with SSD NVMe drives, but you can pull down a patch via the Windows Insider program to fix it. And, of course, there is a host of other compatibility and driver problems, many of which Microsoft is aware of and working on.

It's a harsh reality that Microsoft did have to move the baseline forward. It's also a harsh reality that millions of PCs will remain vulnerable. It's also a harsh reality that new OSs tend to have growing pains, but fortunately most of them will be cured in the fullness of time. For now, though, expect to run into snafus that require waiting for a patch, jumping through Insider program hoops, or just creating issues with various hardware configurations. It's harsh, but it's not unexpected.

What about you?

So, what about you? Have you upgraded to Windows 11? Do you plan to? Do you find these harsh realities daunting, or do you just plan to power through them? Do you have other harsh realities you'd like to share?

LINK TO ARTICLE: https://www.zdnet.com/article/8-harsh-realities-of-being-a-windows-11-user/
The article on zdnet.com has links in dozens of spots that expand on some of the topics in the article.

Let's All Have A Great New Year!

Presidents Corner

Dear Members,

Well another month gone and time to start a new month. At this time we have found out that we can once again meet in the party room at Apple Barrel (at Sapp Bros.) in C.B.

If you have ideas for meeting demonstration topics, let us know.
Our January 18, 2022 meeting will be even better if you're all able to attend!
We can't wait to see you there!

Sincerely,
David Ladd

Please check back often at
https://www.mapcc.com
For updates as we have them for our next club meeting.

Thank you for your support.

Meetings – January-November (*usually*)
Apple Barrel (at Sapp Bros.)
2608 S. 24th St.
Council Bluffs, Iowa
MEETING BEGINS: 7 PM (NOT in December)

Minutes of the November 16, 2021 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7pm with David Ladd presiding; there were 7 members present.

First Drawing

The $10 drawing was won by Mariel Kendall.

Minutes and Treasury Report

Minutes and treasury reports were read and approved by the members present.

Old Business

Reminder that the club's 2021 Christmas party is at the normal meeting spot this year on December 21st.

New Business (and Discussions)

Traditionally we've played 'PO-KE-NO', but we currently don't have a 'PO-KE-NO' system, so there was a motion we purchase a 'PO-KE-NO' kit for approximately $15 to $20 each and we can just use pennies for 'chips'. We believe two boxes should be enough at least for now. This was seconded and approved by the members present. We will also need the $1 coins we traditionally give out as 'prizes' for winning the 'PO-KE-NO' games. Kevin will obtain these items.

Some mentioned Windows 11 and that they'd like to know more about it and see a demonstration in 2022.

The new Raspbian Pi OS code named 'Bullseye' is now available. Raspberry Pi 4's with C0T chip can run at 1.8GHz vs 1.5GHz with the new OS version. You most likely want to ensure you have adequate cooling.

Also discussed: Calculators, tank printers, scanners, faxing, modems, Office 365 & MS Word for printing envelopes, Christmas Cards, labels, playing computer games, even Boys Town history and Orphan Train.

Demo

The "demo" was done by Bruce on the new and future computer chips from Intel and AMD with more and or faster (and slower) compute cores. Up to 128 cores within the next few years (for large data centers).

Stick-Around Drawing

The stick around drawing ($4.50) was won by Don Atkinson.

Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm.

Minutes recorded by Bruce 11/16/2021

M.A.P.C.C.

Established 1982

The Metro Area Personal Computer Club Newsletter is published monthly and posted on the club website: http://www.mapcc.com

Meetings:

3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. (*WHEN ALLOWED TO*)

Apple Barrel (party room)

2608 S. 24th St.

Council Bluffs, IA 51501

Elected Officers:

President: David Ladd

Vice President: Kevin Holloway

Secretary: Bruce

Treasurer: Kevin Holloway

Appointed Officers:

Newsletter Editor: Bruce

Annual Membership Dues:

Individual: $15.00 Family: $20.00

Club Motto:

"*Pass It On*"

Contact: (531) 600-8847