

"Insider Tips from Connectability to Make Your Business Run Faster,  
Easier And More Profitably"

# IT Insight

Issue 4: January, 2015



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## Get Ready! Windows 2003 Server End-of-Life is July 14, 2015.

Earlier this year, Microsoft discontinued support for **Windows XP**. Probably the most popular operating system ever created by Microsoft, Windows XP was released in August 2001 and sold nearly one **billion** copies. So it's had an amazing run.

That's one of the reasons that many users are so reluctant to let it go. It's like a pair of beat-up old slippers. Comfortable, maybe, but not necessarily the most functional.

Not surprisingly, shortly after Microsoft discontinued support, many nasty viruses, exploits and hacks began to show up, specifically targeting XP computers. What *is* surprising is that many users are *still* using XP, even with full knowledge of the security risks.

That brings us to **Windows Server 2003**, which was released in April, 2003. At the time, it was a huge step forward from Windows 2000. It offered far greater stability and performance, a much better end-user interface, and numerous new and improved features.

It's no wonder that it very quickly eclipsed Windows 2000. But that was over 11 years ago, and a LOT has changed since then, including the release of both **Windows Server 2008** and, more recently, **Windows Server 2012**.

Those operating systems have continued to bring dramatically improved functionality, reliability and performance. In light of that, Microsoft will be *discontinuing* support for Windows Server 2003 on **July 14, 2015**. This means that Windows 2003 will be just as vulnerable as Windows XP is now.





## Helping keep Premier Medical the Premier name in Rehabilitation



Located near Dufferin and St. Clair in west-central Toronto,

Premier Medical Centre is a multi-disciplinary rehabilitation centre with a focus on natural recovery methods, from massage therapy, physiotherapy, psychological therapy to chiropractic services.

Their team of health care professionals is dedicated to creating a welcoming atmosphere that allows patients to relax and get the most out of their treatment.

When Premier Medical Centre first contacted Connectability in June 2014, they were experiencing severe network connectivity problems. Users were only intermittently able to connect to the Internet and printing was unpredictable. Copying files from one computer to another was painfully slow, when it worked at all.

The very same day our technician was onsite and it took him only a few hours (if that) to get to the root of the problems. *Three* different devices were trying to act as routers on the same network, causing confusion, data collisions and generally slow performance.

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With over 6 months of “breathing space,” **now** is the time to get ahead of the game. Servers are where we all store our most business-critical information: employee records, customer lists, accounts receivable and our other irreplaceable data. All of this lives on your server! But once Microsoft discontinues support for Server 2003, there will be no more security updates or patches.

The next time a hacker finds a hole in Windows 2003 security (and they will because that’s what hackers do), you run the risk of putting **all** your confidential data into the hands of someone who will use it for their own benefit or sell it to the highest bidder.

As devastating as that risk may be, avoiding it is actually very simple: Upgrade your server to Windows 2008 or 2012 before the deadline. If your current hardware is fairly new, you may not even have to purchase a new server - just buy the software. But even if you have an older server, the price of hardware has dropped **dramatically**, and in most cases, the investment is a very modest one.

And here’s another incentive: Windows 2003 is not *nearly* as reliable as later releases. Windows 2003 servers **must** be rebooted regularly or they can develop severe instability. The Windows 2003 print spooler is subject to regular failures and crashes. And Windows 2003 networking performance can be totally unpredictable.

All of those issues were resolved in Windows 2008, and Windows 2012 adds another level of stability and performance. Even if Microsoft was not discontinuing support for Server 2003, those reasons alone should be enough to get you thinking seriously about retiring your old server.

DON’T put your business in danger by depending on out-of-date, unsecure software. With 6 months to go, you have ample time to put a careful migration plan into place. Connectability is ready, willing, and able to help.

To learn more, give us a call at (416) 966-3306 or email us at [info@connectability.com](mailto:info@connectability.com). We promise to be your guide!



Windows Server 2012



Within a couple of hours, Phil had reconfigured the network to use only a single router. At the same time, he diagnosed some additional network issues and made plans to return and resolve them.

Today, Connectability provides Premier Medical Centre with a full complement of **Managed IT Services**. The network issues that we first identified are now long gone and the network is completely stable.

Working with the team at Premier, we recently refreshed their network with new technology (including new computers and a UPS) and, as a result, it's running better than ever.

According to Dr. Nick Simsirir, Premier's Director:

"Connectability was a great discovery. Since they took over, our Information Technology has been totally dependable; up and running when we need it. The monthly cost is very moderate and their staff are a pleasure to work with. I can't recommend them highly enough."

If your IT infrastructure is creating productivity problems for your business and you're looking for a better solution, consider **Managed IT Services** from Connectability.

We'll fix your problems *and* monitor your networks 24x7 to make sure that when you need it most, your technology is ready for you.

## Surviving Another Toronto Winter

Surviving winter is not an easy task, especially in Canada, but with these tips and gadgets winter should be a breeze (no pun intended). Let's look at some gadgets that could make the winter months a little more tolerable.

First, if you're looking for a way to save money on your energy bills, check out the Nest thermostat. This is a "learning" thermostat, meaning it tracks your temperature preferences and learns from them. Better still, it can be controlled from your phone.

If you're going away for the weekend you can turn the thermostat down and a few hours before you get home you can turn it back up using the mobile app. This ensures your house is nice and toasty, while reducing your electrical bill.

And while you're on the road, you should consider upgrading to a highly rated winter tire. Many consumers feel that all-season tires are adequate, and that may be true in a milder climate, but in Canada the winters are too severe and too much snow piles up for an all-season tire to handle.

Developed in Finland, the Nokian Hakkapeliitta is recognized as one of the top winter tires in the world. Or, if you're looking for something more reasonably priced you might consider the Hankook i\*cept, also a very competent, highly recommended option.

And here's a tip to keep your hands from freezing while using your smart phone outdoors (as we all do). The "touchscreen glove" market has taken off. There are several options including the Dots gloves and the more expensive North Face ETip gloves, but the aim is clear, to allow consumers to use their devices in frigid weather.

Finally, here are a few tips for winterizing your home including:

- 1) Making sure all doorways and windows are 100% sealed. That means checking to make sure there is no draft coming in, and if there is, buying or making a "draft snake" to cover the bottom of the doorway.

A "draft snake" can be made simply by rolling up a towel or making some variation with googly eyes or any other funky designs, so long as it gets rid of the draft.

They can also be bought very inexpensively from stores like Bed Bath & Beyond, Walmart and other home stores. Making sure your house is well sealed could help you avoid a hefty energy bill.

- 1) Replace your furnace filters. Considering your furnace filter keeps the air you breathe clean, this should be a consideration year round. Unfortunately, a dirty filter can increase the energy demands of your furnace because it takes more energy to simply get air through the filter.

Checking the filter every month is a good policy, and if there is a fair amount of buildup, replacing them will save you some money!

- 1) Run ceiling fans in reverse. Ceiling fans are fairly common, but a lot of people don't know that these fans often have switches that allow you to run the fan in reverse. By running the fan in reverse you're actually bringing down some of the warm air from the ceiling, resulting in energy savings.

We hope these tips have been helpful! If you have any questions or suggestions for an upcoming article please email us at [info@connectability.com](mailto:info@connectability.com), or call us at 416 966 3306.



## Gadget of the Month: Yubico FIDO Security Key

In this increasingly dangerous and complex world, business security is becoming increasingly critical. All of us have passwords for our online banking, email, computer logins, Google accounts, and our social media.

Unfortunately, given the skill of computer hackers today, passwords offer a relatively small amount of assurance that our information is protected.

That's where the Yubikey FIDO U2F Security Key comes into play. FIDO stands for Fast Identity Online and is an alliance between some of the tech industry leaders including Google, Lenovo, and Microsoft. The goal is to develop specifications for user authentication that are open, interoperable and rely less on passwords.

Alternative forms of authentication include biometrics and U2F. U2F stands for Universal 2<sup>nd</sup> Factor, which means it allows you to use 2 factor authentication instead of one.

Single factor authentication is simply logging into your computer or online account with your password. But two factor authentication requires another step after your password is entered.

In the case of the Yubikey U2F Security Key you need to insert the key into a USB slot on your computer, press the button and voila you now have access to your account. This way there is no concern that your information will be compromised unless the hacker has both your password **and** your security key.

The Yubikey provides an extra layer of security; a necessity nowadays. Best of all, the device costs **only \$18** so it should be easily affordable for anyone with critical private data on their computer or in the cloud.



## Server Audit Offer!

As of July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Microsoft will **discontinue support** for the Windows 2003 Server operating system. If you are like many business owners, you keep a mountain of critical data on your server, data you need to conduct the day-to-day operations of your business.

Your server is likely the most important piece of IT equipment in your office, so leaving its security up to chance is a big risk. Microsoft's announcement means that if you continue using the Server 2003 operating system there is a strong likelihood that a hacker will find some way into your network. These hackers are likely to either steal essential data, or corrupt your systems in some way or another.

Microsoft will no longer issue the necessary patches to fix vulnerabilities, leaving your server open to attackers who could use these weaknesses to take control of your machine.

Upgrading can also offer benefits beyond better security and improved performance. Often it will result in an overall improvement in your IT ecosystem as newer devices and applications will interact more effectively with newer software platforms.

**Don't** leave your server and your entire network vulnerable to attack by relentless hackers! Let us help you make sure you're ready by the time July comes along.

We'll perform a comprehensive, **FREE server audit**. We'll let you know whether your existing server(s) can be upgraded and what you should expect. And if they can't be upgraded, we'll let you know what your options are in clear, plain English with no geek-speak and no upselling. Guaranteed!

Unfortunately, we can't offer this deal indefinitely, but if you call or email us about our offer before **February 28, 2015**, we'll be happy to apply the appropriate discounts.

Please keep an eye out for our next monthly newsletter to find out about tech tips, the gadget of the month, customer stories, and of course a new offer!

And if you want to learn more about our "All-You-Can-Eat" Managed IT Services plans or you'd like us to write about a specific topic please give us a call at **416 966 3306** or email us at [info@connectability.com](mailto:info@connectability.com)

### Connectability's Referral Program Helping us helps you!

At Connectability, we've recently unveiled a new referral program! As many of you know, we get most of our customers through referrals and we're always looking for ways to grow our business.

To entice you to spread the word to friends, family, and business contacts we'd like to offer **\$100** for simply getting us a meeting with a bona fide business prospect, and if they sign up you'll get **\$1,000** as a thank-you for putting us in touch! Simply by helping us you can reduce your IT costs!

For details about what constitutes a business prospect please go to our website at [www.connectability.com/referrals](http://www.connectability.com/referrals)