

Microsoft and April 2014, How Prepared Are You?

According to Microsoft, on the 8th of April 2014, support for Windows XP and Office 2003 will end. This support includes software and security updates. From an Operational Risk perspective, let us analyze the implication and risk involved.

Stage one, identify the risks

Once support for windows XP and office 2003 stops, so will security updates, Anti virus will not fully protect the systems, leaving the systems vulnerable. As a result, harmful software which can steal or damage data and information or can attack complete servers of major organizations, such as Banks, Insurance companies, accounting firms and so on may slip in. Making private information public , outright theft , fraud; which may lead to law suits, major losses of customer funds, disruption of customer services, customer businesses, government funds, loss of jobs, compromise of protected information, alright I am out of breath. This is not a soap opera but we see that it's fully action packed and the implications are endless

For instance, let us preview a bank that has ATM machines, Personal Computers and computer based services running on either platform. We can not even fathom the disruption of business to internal and external customers and the entire transaction home and international that will be affected overnight. It may literally throw a sector or two, even a Nation into chaos depending on the scale of the impact and the level of the transactions affected.

Without hitting the nail on the head we have an idea of the danger involved which leads us to:

Stage two, averting the Tsunami

Great I think I found my hammer,

- Identify all systems, processes and units that are running on terminal operating systems
- Assess the impact of not upgrading to a serviceable version.
- Analyze and come up with alternative programs software and or systems.
- Have an informed analysis on how long and how fast a change must be done without serious impact on business and customer service.
- Outline specific process on what needs to be done how fast, when and in what manner.
- Evaluate specific cost implications of the change and prepare for them
- Set a specific deadline date for a change that gives adequate room for testing
- Meet with all concerned parties and create awareness on what need to be done and how they may be affected
- Through an informed process scrutinize and select the right people to do the job in-house or 3rd party.
- Set transformation process in progress

Hitting the nail on the head is a lot easier with a hammer. Once we have adequate tools in place and the right processes to guide us, transitioning after Microsoft ends support for Windows XP and Office 2003 should be seamless. What are you waiting for? Start the process **Now!**

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