

To Win 10 or Not to Win 10: That was the question

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This is a true story about how a recent upgrade to Windows 10 went on one computer.

The background of this upgrade is about a desktop computer at work. We had purchased three HP Prodesk 405 computers for our office staff. Over the next couple years, they each developed a recurring failure by unexpectedly scrambling the video making them useless. The only fix was to force-power off-restart. After which they would run days or weeks without a problem.

Ultimately all three users became aware that the problem was a common shared problem and brought it to my attention. We tried various 'fixes', looked online for help, reinstalled drivers. Nothing seemed to solve it. And there seemed to be no common activity that caused it like a browser, web page, running application. Gradually two of these were replaced by other, more friendly, units. One administrator began testing a Chromebook which has proven very satisfactory. Another seems to have gotten better (maybe some updates that changed?)

But as a result, I received one system (computer, monitor, keyboard) to dispose of. Being the cheap sort, I had not donated it to a recycler, thinking maybe I could yet find a way to salvage this otherwise very functional, newer than most of our computers, powerful box. Months passed.

Late in November I plugged it in and began experimenting - nothing to lose since it had been basically written off. Since it was a Windows 7 system I thought that perhaps an upgrade to Windows 10 might solve the problem, IF it is a software (drivers?) issue.

So, I began the process of an upgrade. Now note that my decision to start this upgrade began well after the July 2017 cutoff on when Microsoft had provided free upgrades. And purchase of a copy was out of the question. However some of the helpful sites that I subscribe (CNET) to had published an [article in November](#) documenting the fact that Microsoft had extended the offer under certain circumstances. Specifically, systems using [assistive technologies](#), (magnifying, large cursor, text to speech etc.) could still be updated. The cutoff for that program is 31 December 2017. Thought it would be worth a try, and at the very least, an educational experience.

So, I followed the instructions from CNET:

Here's how to get the upgrade at no charge:

From a Windows 7 or 8.1 device, go to the webpage entitled "[Windows 10 free upgrade for customers who use assistive technologies](#)." Click on the Upgrade now button. Run the executable file to install the upgrade.

Now to back up and tell you more of the story. Our (school) network is shared by a lot of users. Sometimes the download time can be rather slow as lots of them (over 100 students, plus teachers and staff, plus Chromecast devices, Wi-Fi thermostats, wireless printers etc.) all compete for the space on the various routers, through the firewall, and out to the ISP. So, experience has taught me that a major download (such as the major updates to Windows 10 that have come out over the last year) can take many hours to succeed. I am patient, and this is not a priority so sure I can just let it run and work on other things. And it runs. Hours. And fails. Multiple attempts, each getting a little farther until it actually starts the upgrade process. Which then fails.

Because this (senior administrator's) computer had been protected by the HP Drive Encryption service the update process would not complete until that was removed. Google that for the solution. It was not easy, again involving multiple steps to Stop the service, shut off the service, unencrypt the drive (again.... hours), uninstall the service. Delete the program. This will not be a problem for most computers, but it was a complication that had to be solved outside of the Microsoft upgrade process.

And again, restart the upgrade. Which went back to the Download the Upgrade process..... Hours!. And when it finally started, it..... Failed! This time with a Windows error message window-10-upgrade-failed-error-c1900208. And again, Internet to the rescue. A search turned up the answer at an [infopackets.com answer](http://infopackets.com/answer)

This suggested a couple solutions, including downloading [the Windows 10 Media Creation Tool](#). Again, hours to download. Optionally it can be loaded to a thumb drive, or run direct from the hard drive. So, I start running it from the hard drive. Again hours. A couple more failed to run, restart, run again. Until at last a successful start and run of the Windows 10. By now it is a week later. And the Windows 10 upgrade, begun about 8:30 completed by 9:45. And it all looks good. Old files still in place, everything looks to be running. Now to let it run a couple days to see if the video crashes. After over two years of frustration maybe I am on the road home to recovering this desktop computer. Only problem now is that no one really wants it. Everybody wants to have one of the new 15-inch Chromebooks.

Oh well. Something new learned. Something good accomplished. Next thing.....?