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We love technology and we love helping people.

Give me a call today for a quick (non-salesy) chat to find out whether my team and I can help you better secure your data and get more out of your existing technology!

- Lee Hewson
Founder and MD

WINDOWS 10 END OF LIFE – WHY IT’S A TICKING TIMEBOMB FOR BUSINESSES

Time is nearly up for Windows 10.

Microsoft has announced that from October 14, 2025, it will no longer provide free security updates or support for Windows 10.

For businesses still running this operating system, that date marks the start of a very real cybersecurity risk.

Here's why it matters, what it means for your business, and what you can do about it.

Why Windows 10 is Becoming a Problem

Right now, around 40% of business PCs are still running Windows 10.

On the surface, everything feels fine. The machines boot up, staff can log in, and the system does what you need it to. But the problem is what's happening in the background.

Without ongoing updates, Windows 10 will quickly become a prime target for hackers.

Cybercriminals actively look for older, unsupported systems because they know they can exploit vulnerabilities without Microsoft patching them.

Think of it like locking your front door but leaving the windows wide open.

The Security Risk Explained

When Microsoft stops sending out security updates, every new virus, ransomware strain, or exploit becomes a direct threat.

Fern Ritchie, Security & Compliance Team Leader here at Your IT, describes it bluntly:

"It's like a ticking timebomb. Businesses that don't make the move are leaving the door wide open for cybercriminals. Hackers are waiting for this."

And she's right. We've seen it happen before when older systems such as Windows 7 went end of life. Attacks surged because businesses were slow to react.

Why Businesses Delay – And Why That's Risky

We get it. If your team is comfortable with Windows 10, and it works, the natural instinct is to keep things as they are. Change feels inconvenient, costly, and disruptive.

But there's a bigger picture. Old systems don't just pose security threats. They create operational risks:

- Compliance problems if your industry requires up-to-date IT security.
- Compatibility issues with newer software and tools.
- Downtime and productivity loss when systems eventually fail.

Continuing to bury their heads in the sand is a gamble businesses can't afford to take.

The Upgrade Options

So, what's the best way forward?

• Upgrade Compatible Machines

If your PCs meet the hardware requirements, moving to Windows 11 is the most straightforward step. It gives you ongoing updates, security patches, and access to the latest Microsoft features.

• Replace Incompatible Devices

For machines that don't support Windows 11, replacement is unavoidable. But this doesn't have to be a headache. Think of it as a chance to modernise your IT infrastructure, improve speed, and tighten security all at once.

• Interim Security Measures

For businesses that genuinely can't make the switch immediately, there are paid options for extended security updates. But these are a sticking plaster, not a long-term fix.

Advice from the Experts

The National Cyber Security Centre is urging all businesses to prioritise the move to Windows 11.

Their advice is simple: don't see hardware replacement as a nuisance, see it as an opportunity to strengthen your defences.

And that's exactly how we see it too. At Your IT Department, we've been helping clients plan and budget for their migration for well over 18 months, believing that the earlier you start, the smoother the process will be.

How We Can Help

We know upgrading an entire operating system across your business can feel daunting.

But you don't need to figure it out alone.

- Audit first – We'll assess which machines are ready for Windows 11 and which need replacing.
- Plan the rollout – A phased migration ensures minimal disruption to your team.
- Add security layers – From backups to multi-factor authentication, we'll make sure your business is protected every step of the way.

The goal isn't just to avoid risk.

It's to give your business a faster, safer, and more reliable IT environment that supports growth.

Time's Almost Up

October 2025 is just around the corner. In fact be the time you're reading this it could be here!!

If you're still on Windows 10, this is the final call.

Waiting any longer risks rushed decisions, higher costs, and leaving your business exposed to cyberattacks.

Act now, get ahead of the deadline, and turn what could be a crisis into an opportunity to strengthen your IT.

FROM APPRENTICE TO LEADER: FERN'S INSPIRING JOURNEY AT YOUR IT

Every business has people who grow with it. For us, one of the best examples is Fern Ritchie.

Five years ago, Fern joined Your IT Department as an apprentice. Fresh-faced, eager to learn, and determined to make her mark.

Today, she's not only a qualified cybersecurity professional but also part of our leadership team.

Fern's rise through the ranks has been nothing short of impressive.

After completing her apprenticeship, she specialised in risk management and compliance, achieving her CompTIA Security+ certification along the way.

She quickly became known for her sharp eye on risk management and her ability to translate complex cybersecurity issues into practical solutions for businesses.

"It's more important than ever for all companies to have a security and compliance voice at leadership level," Fern says. "Part of my role is making sure that cybersecurity isn't an afterthought but a key part of every decision we make as a business."

And she doesn't just talk the talk. Fern has been invited to sit on various panels of industry experts including at the IT Nation Connect Europe, a major event for managed service providers.

Her insights were praised by peers and industry leaders alike.

Back at base, she leads a growing team of specialists dedicated to improving client security.

From advising on compliance and resilience strategies to helping organisations manage risk, Fern plays a hands-on role in safeguarding businesses across the region.

Our Managing Director, Lee Hewson, summed it up perfectly:

"Fern's deep understanding of information security and her passion for safeguarding organisations make her a perfect fit for our leadership team."

Her drive and knowledge are laying the foundations for her future as our Chief Information Security Officer."

For clients, what does this mean?

It means the people looking after your IT aren't just technically skilled, they're passionate about protecting your business.

Fern's journey is a reminder that when we invest in our people, everyone benefits: the team, the company, and most importantly, our clients.

☀️ Fern in the Spotlight

📍 Joined us in 2019 as an apprentice

✅ Completed Level 3 Infrastructure Technician in 2022

🔒 Holds CompTIA Security+ and studying Cyber Security degree

🗣️ Speaker at IT Nation Connect Europe & Channel Futures London

📺 Featured on Notts TV & Guest on BBC Radio Nottingham



MEET THE TEAM ZARA FORD

This month, we're shining the spotlight on our Sales & Marketing Coordinator, Zara.

Zara brings a wealth of experience from her 14 years at Boots UK, where she rose through the ranks to become Commercial Operations Manager.

Her background means she knows exactly what it takes to keep things running smoothly while always putting the customer first.

At Your IT, Zara works closely with our Senior Business Advisor, providing quotes, processing orders, and checking in with clients to make sure everything is on track.

If you've spoken with Zara already, you'll know she's as approachable as she is organised.

Outside of work, Zara is a huge Disney fan. She ticked Disneyland Japan off her bucket list earlier this year, and when this newsletter lands in your inbox, she'll be off on a Disney Cruise!

"Your IT is growing fast, but it's still got that genuinely friendly, supportive vibe," says Zara.

"I've loved my first six months here. No two days are the same, and the variety keeps things interesting. One of the best parts of the role is getting to speak with so many different clients and building those relationships. It's great to be part of a team with such a strong teamwork ethic."



TURNING IT INTO A GROWTH ENGINE

Too many SMEs treat IT as a cost to manage rather than a tool to grow.

Systems creak under pressure, teams invent workarounds, and leaders end up firefighting instead of focusing on strategy.

Sound familiar?

When IT is aligned with business goals, it becomes a driver of growth, not a drag on it.

A clear roadmap, scalable systems, proactive monitoring, and robust security give your team the tools and confidence they need to perform at their best. Instead of reacting to problems, you're preventing them.

Instead of wasting time on fixes, you're free to focus on customers, people, and growth.

We explored this in more detail in a recent blog post, where we show how strategic IT support can transform IT from a "necessary evil" into a genuine business advantage.

Take a look and see what it could mean for your business: <https://zma.to/GRO>

AI AGENTS: A GAME- CHANGER FOR SMES

AI isn't just for the enterprise giants anymore. Today's "agentic AI" tools are stepping in as autonomous digital teammates - capable of planning tasks, integrating with systems, and learning as they go.

Unlike chatbots that wait for prompts, AI agents act on their own.

They can route support tickets, manage stock, chase invoices, or even draft content. For SMEs, that means time back, costs down, and teams free to focus on work that really matters.

We're already seeing small businesses use agents for customer service, finance, marketing, and operations, with impressive results.

Start small, test an agent on one repetitive task, and measure the savings. The impact can be huge.

We explored this in more detail in our latest blog, with practical examples and step-by-step advice for getting started.

You can read the full post here: <https://zma.to/AIA>

DISCOVER MICROSOFT 365 COPILOT IN ACTION

AI is changing the way we all work. But what does that really mean for SMEs?

Join Your IT Department on Wednesday 15th October, 11:00-12:00 BST for a practical introduction to Microsoft 365 Copilot. In just one hour, you'll see how this powerful tool can help you save time, reduce effort, and boost productivity across your business.

We'll cut through the hype and show you:

- What Copilot actually is
- How it works in real-world scenarios
- Where it can make the biggest impact for SMEs

Plus, you'll have the chance to put your questions directly to our guest speaker James Graves, Modern Workplace Specialist at Giacom. With years of experience in Microsoft 365, Teams, and cybersecurity, James knows exactly how SMEs can get the most from digital transformation.

👉 Don't miss this opportunity to see how Copilot can transform the way you work.

Register at <https://zma.to/LMN>

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