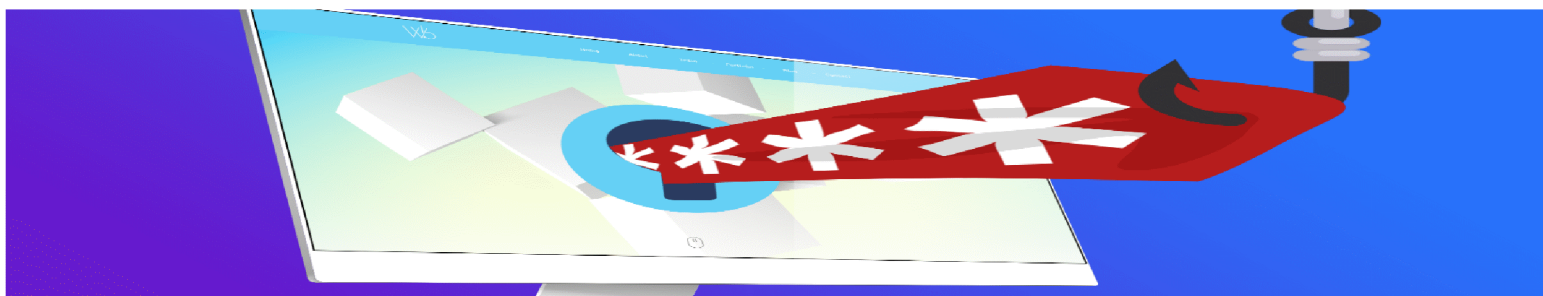




**BWN COMPUTER**  
Repair/Service/Upgrade  
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# NEWSLETTER



## Are Your Passwords Compromised?

News of a big brand suffering a data breach is all too common today. But if you don't get an email from such a company, you could mistakenly be thinking it doesn't affect you.

The thing is, large breaches are happening all the time. Cybercriminals then put access credentials online, and other bad actors buy and exploit those email addresses, usernames, passwords, etc.

Why do the bad guys care to buy these member details? Presumably, the victims of the breach quickly change their passwords to prevent security vulnerabilities. So, what good does that info do?

Take a moment to think about how many unique passwords you actually have. Many of us have dozens of different online accounts but only a handful of distinct passwords. That means a hacker can take that stolen data from, say, LinkedIn and try the same password on your banking site.

Cybercriminals have the capacity to keep on trying. They will take one stolen password and use that data to try and hit other accounts in a massive, brute-force effort.

### What can you do about it?

Stop using the same passwords over and over again. Yes, unique passwords

for every account are difficult to remember, but they are critical.

One solution is to use a password manager. Many browsers have a pop-up window offering to remember a password for a particular site. If you say "yes," the browser automatically populates access credentials on your return to the site.

If you use Google Chrome, you can also check if your passwords have been compromised. Google Safety Check compares your saved usernames and passwords against over 4 billion compromised credentials.

To check for leaked passwords, head to "Settings" in the Chrome browser, then navigate to "Safety Check" and "Check Now." You'll get a report that identifies any compromised passwords, and allows you to review and fix leaks.

MacOS users will be happy to hear that Safari added similar functionality in its latest release, and Mozilla's Firefox browser also has password checking built in.

### Strengthen your passwords

Creating a strong password is challenging; almost as difficult as remembering all your different passwords. You're aiming to come up with something a human or computer can't guess!

Different sites will have different parameters. You need a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. Having a different mix of these helps make the password more difficult to crack. And the longer the better; That's why passwords a browser suggests to you look like a string of gibberish.

Pay attention also to warnings from the site requiring your credentials. If they say your password is weak, believe them. Safari and Chrome suggest stronger passwords when you create a new account.

Change your passwords immediately if you are advised to do so. Password management tools are continuously improving, but there is still the human element, and that's often the weakest link. If you don't practice healthy password hygiene, hackers are ready to take advantage of your ambivalence.

**Need help checking your passwords and setting up a password manager for your home? Our IT experts can help. Contact us today at 940-282-0290!**



## That is So 2010: Why Upgrade Your Office Software

Are you still using Office 2010? It may have served you well over the past decade, but this software reached its end of life in 2020. It's time to upgrade. Here's why and what to consider.

Software has a typical life span, after which the manufacturer turns its resources to supporting a more recent release. Support for Office 2010 ended on October 13, 2020. Microsoft no longer provides tech support, or bug or security fixes. That means there's no protection from harmful viruses, spyware, or other malicious software. The software won't be updated, and there's no more phone or chat support if you run into trouble.

Cybercriminals know that Office 2010 users are on their own. They're on the lookout for both businesses and consumers relying on this legacy software. Without updates, you risk opening a document designed to leverage an unpatched exploit.

### What can you do?

Move your computers to one of the more modern Microsoft software offerings. You can choose to upgrade to the latest version of Office as a one-time purchase, or buy a Microsoft 365 subscription to the latest features, security updates, and other improvements.

The currently available version of Office, Office 2019, is available for PC or Mac. You can install Office only on one

device, and you'll get support and fixes during its lifecycle period only. New features aren't offered.

Tip: Know that Office 2019 came out in September 2018 and is due to be succeeded by Office 2022 in the second half of 2021.

Before deciding to wait until 2021 for the next release, consider Microsoft 365 (MS 365). MS 365 gives you access to Office's cloud-connected features across devices, plus, 1 TB of OneDrive storage, Office mobile apps, Skype minutes, and access to support.

As new MS 365 features become available, all subscribers get access on a monthly basis. And, for those that have a business account, the administrator can control when you are able to see them.

### Is MS 365 for Us?

You may want to keep everything on-premises for compliance or regulatory reasons, or perhaps you feel better with everything where you can see it. You can upgrade to Microsoft 365 and use offline versions of their software.

Still, for many, MS 365 appeals because it's on the cloud, or both on-premises and in the cloud. You can use familiar tools such as Word or Excel installed on desktops, then save files to the cloud. This makes files available anywhere,

from mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and other devices.

Microsoft 365 also adds in Teams. Enjoy video conferencing, screen sharing, group chat, calling and Teams collaboration software.

Then, you always have the latest version of Office, Exchange, SharePoint, and Skype. Your subscription sets you up with the latest version without the need for a major migration.

MS 365 comes in several different consumer and business packages. The Basic version provides free Web and Mobile only, along with Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint, and Teams. If you don't need those four services, save money using the free, web-only Office 365 Online version.

Ignoring Office 2010's end date could be costly. Don't risk a disaster. Upgrade your old-school Office software today.

**If upgrading seems overwhelming, our IT experts can take it on. As a managed service provider, we can suggest the best software for either business or consumer needs and set it up, too.**

**Let us help you take the stress away! Call us now at 940-282-0290.**