



Tips and trends online you need to know about

Meanwhile, other updates

Even as the world debates Internet surveillance and espionage, Net neutrality, copyright and the other great issues of the day, life goes on online. So this issue of the *SWCP Portal* will take a look at other recent notable developments that might have been otherwise missed. First, a few safety announcements.

Windows XP support ending

There are still quite a few people using Windows XP. Though you may be perfectly content with your machine's performance, be aware that Microsoft has announced it will **end support of Windows XP and Office 3 on April 4** of this year.

After that, there will be *no more* security updates for the XP OS. It is thus likely that malicious hackers will unleash *new* attacks aimed at XP after that date, knowing that there will not be any patches coming.

Unfortunately, this could affect everyone. Security expert Bruce Schneier **reports** that most banks' **ATM** systems run on XP. Although they are *not* supposed to be connected to the Net and use a slightly different version of XP that *may* be supported for over another year, this is another thing to watch out for. In the meantime, all XP users should **upgrade their systems**. (See the note at the end of the article.)



Fake FileZilla

Users of the popular open-source FTP client **FileZilla**, which provides an easy way to move files around online, should be extra careful when using the program. There are versions out that have been infected with spyware designed to steal your login info.

A tainted program may not be easy to spot as it will still work. Infected versions are 3.5.3 and 3.7.3, and can be detected by going to **Help > About** and under "Linked against" the entry for SQLite should be 3.7.16.2 or higher. If your copy might be infected, first log in on our **Members Page** and change your password. Then download and install the program direct from the **FileZilla homepage**.

Drive-by downloads

If your FileZilla was bad, chances are you got it through a well-known site like **SourceForge** or **C-Net**. These, and other similar websites, have increasingly allowed dubious programs to be downloaded along with the other, better software they offer.

Many of these programs are "enhancements" to your browser that range from mere annoyances to outright spyware. If you spot the small print you *might* be able opt out before downloading, but the best solution is to get software *only* from its creators.

Domain validation – important

For years, we've been telling members to be careful replying to emails that inform you that your domain must be renewed. We've emphasized that these are often fakes, **phishing attempts** to lock up your domain with another registrar that will make it more expensive and difficult to use, or worse. And since you've listened, these efforts have paid off.

However, thanks to a recent decision by the geniuses that manage the Internet's domain name system, **ICANN**, we must inform you of *one* very important exception to that rule. Since January 1, all new domains, any that get transferred or have any owner or contact information changed, *must* have the domain owner's email address verified – or else.

The domain's administrative contact will be sent an email from the registrar with an activation link to be clicked or **ICANN will disable the domain**. If the

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message is *not* replied to within *15 days*, the site will not be usable until fixed – *even including email*.

This whole procedure violates just about everything we've ever told users to help everyone stay safe online. So we will do all we can to track the process, make it easy, prevent shutdowns, and keep it secure. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience.

We expect that bad guys will try to take advantage of this situation. Remember that **no legitimate message will ever ask for your username or password**. Also, we will be allowed to insert a special **code phrase** in the verification request message that will allow you to easily confirm its legitimacy when you call Tech Support. So if you are concerned, please call us or email help@swcp.com for confirmation. But whatever you do, please **don't ignore it**.

Note that this validation message will be sent *only* to that email address you set up for your domain's "administrative contact," so make sure you still use it. Email Tech Support if you're uncertain or need to have it changed. The new address will then shortly receive a validation notice. You can check your domain's status by logging into our **Members Portal** (<https://members.swcp.com/>) and checking either the **Whois Info** or **Domain Name Renewal** pages.

Highest-priced domains

Another seeming scam is that **Network Solutions**, a major registrar which first ran the Domain Name System, is **automatically raising fees** on some of the biggest domains they manage, from \$40/year to a jaw-dropping \$1,850. Supposedly done to prevent these high-profile names from getting hijacked, it's unlikely any of our customers will be directly affected, but scammers may try to scare some domain owners with this practice, so don't panic.

New Top-Level Domains

Finally, a bit of good news. Each and every website, like swcp.com, is under a larger **Top-Level Domain** (TLD); in this case, **.com** for commercial. There are a lots of these. Some refer to the function of the organization, for instance **.edu** for educational (schools) and **.gov** for US government offices. Many others refer to geographic location or countries, such as **.asia** for that entire continent, **.uk** for Britain, **.tv** for the island nation of Tuvalu, **.ca** for Canada, **.cn** for China, and now you can get names in 95 TLDs.

The **Domain Name System** provides the necessary addresses to find websites, so there has been in the past intense competition, including lawsuits, over certain names within these limited categories. In response, the DNS has been gradually opened up, but different registrars support different TLDs.

Thus, each TLD may have differing conditions that apply as to who can register and use them, dissimilar terms of service and of course, a range of prices. Here are the new, far more descriptive categories that have been added and their anticipated prices:

New Top-Level Domains Available Feb. 2014

TLD	First year	TLD	First year
.bike	\$50	.camera	\$50
.clothing	\$50	.equipment	\$35
.estate	\$50	.gallery	\$35
.graphics	\$35	.guru	\$50
.holdings	\$65	.lighting	\$35
.photography	\$35	.plumbing	\$50
.singles	\$50	.ventures	\$65

Now's your chance to grab some prime Internet real estate in a new, wide-open TLD. Call today to get one.

Making it last longer

American colonists supposedly invented the word **"fix"** but you wouldn't know it from our modern devices. Many gadgets these days are essentially "black boxes;" unopenable, unrepairable, and sometimes not even rechargeable, solidly-packed bricks. With the ever-increasing speed of technological change, all too many perfectly-functioning devices get tossed out when a newer gizmo comes along.

The price in rare materials, waste, and pollution is huge and unsupportable. Fortunately, now there's a "fixer" movement, inspired by the much the same impulse as the "maker" fairs, fighting this trend.

We'll have more about how and where you can repair or recycle your computer in later issues. For now, be aware that SWCP can update or reinstall your machine's operating system, install parts, clean and tune up your machine for very reasonable fees. Call or email **Tech Support** for details. 



Southwest Cyberport

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