

## Newsletter - October 2017 All The Stuff You Don't Need

As time marches onward, we all tend to accumulate... stuff. It might be items for the house you no longer use, the old volleyball net that has 3 inches of dust in the garage, or whatever stuff you are keeping around because you might need it someday. Someday... Have you ever considered the stuff that has accumulated on your computer? Yep, computers get junked up with stuff too. Here are a few things you might consider getting rid of, because you don't need it anymore.

### **Adobe Flash, Adobe Shockwave:**

These two products are the Jekyll and Hyde of computing. Both were created at the dawn of the internet to fill a void in the web page programming code of the day. The void was no provision for icons, graphics, movies, audio, or anything animated in the original code. If you were surfing in those days, web pages were all white backgrounds and black text. Everything looked like a typed white paper page.

Adobe corporation saw the void and filled it with Flash and Shockwave, which gave web pages some life: color, graphics, icons, buttons, animations and... streaming audio/video. Miraculous cure by Dr. Jekyll, but as time went on, the evil Mr. Hyde surfaced: Flash and Shockwave were completely insecure and badly coded. Hackers quickly found this out, and the modern virus plagues were made worse as a result. It was so bad, other products were sullied by association: for example, a large portion of the vulnerabilities in Internet Explorer were actually due to Flash and Shockwave.

**Bottom Line:** if you are using a modern operating system and a modern browser, you don't need either product anymore. Modern web pages use HTML5 which replaces Flash and Shockwave with a secure method to show audio, video, and graphics. If an older site still uses Flash, it is built into Internet Explorer 11 and Edge in Windows 8 or higher, and if you use MAC OS-X Sierra or higher, it is just flat out disabled in Safari. iPads and iPhone have never allowed Flash from the beginning, so no worries there. If you have either on your computer, uninstall it.

### **QuickTime:**

QuickTime was Apple's attempt to fill the same void as Flash and Shockwave, with pretty much the same result: a giant security hole for hackers to exploit. Apple quietly ended support for it in April 2016 after the US Department of Homeland Security [issued a bulletin about how insecure it is](#). If you have QuickTime on your computer, uninstall it. I mean it, stop reading this and go uninstall it. Right Now.

### **Product Of The Month: TP-Link TL-WPA4220KIT Powerline Wireless Extender**

While I take a dim view of most wireless extenders, this particular product works quite well. Utilizing the AC power lines in your home, it carries the signal to the Wireless remote unit which then re-broadcasts a nice strong WiFi signal in whatever area it is weak. Easy to plug into any wall outlet. Caution: do not use these units on a power strip or surge protector: the signal will not pass through a surge protector.

-John Becker