

Newsletter - October 2017, Issue #2 More Stuff You Don't Need

Brief review: in the last issue, I described how modern, updated Operating Systems and newer web page coding techniques have made insecure software like Adobe Flash, Shockwave, and Apple QuickTime obsolete. Following on from Issue #1, here's some more stuff you don't need anymore.

Adobe Reader:

You may think I am picking on Adobe by mentioning three of their products to single out for criticism. Well, I am unapologetic: Adobe has caused so many problems both directly and indirectly, I feel justified in giving back to them what they so richly deserve. Adobe Reader has been the PDF reader of choice for a long time, and even though it has not had the same level of flaws and vulnerabilities as Flash, it has many. Again, modern operating systems and browsers have taken over the task of opening PDF files, and are far more secure. If you have Windows 8 or 10, both Internet Explorer and Edge can open PDFs without any help. Apple's OS-X and Safari have been able to open PDFs since... I'm not sure, but it was a really long time ago, way before anyone else. If you use Chrome as your browser, it has been able to open PDF's since mid-2010.

Bottom Line:

Adobe Reader is no longer necessary, you can un-install it from your computer (provided you are using the operating systems and browsers mentioned above) and not miss it at all. The benefits are many: Adobe Reader is a space hog on your hard disk, a processor hog, runs slowly, and recent versions all seem to lead you to purchasing the expensive "pro" version at every step.

Java:

This is another web technology from the dawn of (internet) time, and like the previously-mentioned products, has also caused many a computer heartache. Java is still needed, because it is a core technology that interfaces webpage front ends that you see with back-end servers (what you don't see behind the curtains). But, you no longer need to install the version that comes from Java.com. The same newer operating systems (Windows 8, 10, Mac OS-X 10 or higher) and modern browsers (Chrome, Opera, Edge, Safari, Internet Explorer 11) all have Java baked into the system. The benefit of baked-in Java is that you no longer need to update it independently of your OS: the work is done for you. (Provided you have your OS set to auto-update).

Product Of The Month #2: AMPED Wireless-N 300 USB Adapter

OK, so I have this old laptop that I really ~~love~~ like a lot. It has one flaw: the built-in wireless adapter is weak and slow. I needed to have a better WiFi adapter for testing signal strength during WiFi installations. The [Amped Wireless-N 300 USB adapter](#) was just the ticket. Installation could not be simpler: plug it into a USB port. If you have Windows 7 or higher, it will not need drivers, and it works on Apple MacBooks with USB ports too. I experienced vastly improved WiFi signal strength, and it even comes with a WiFi signal analyzer that helps find "WiFi dead zones". Secret's out: now you can be a geek too!

-John Becker