Windows 7 is Going Out of Support – How Do I Plan?

Part 1

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Learn how to plan for and execute the migration from Windows 7 to an upgraded software.

With Windows 7 going out of support, there are a lot of questions about how to migrate to a current software. *LCGC* sat down with Ryan O'Boyle, advance informatics support engineer, and Greg Cook, regional manager, Americas informatics support, of Agilent Technologies to discuss migrating from Windows 7, the risks of running outdated software, and the importance of updating CDS software. This three-part series also covers various upgrade options, the capabilities of Agilent's new OpenLab CDS, data migration, resources and support, and more.

LCGC: What is happening with Windows 7, and where can customers go for more information?

O'Boyle: Support for Windows 7 is ending. Microsoft announced after Jan. 14, 2020, they will no longer provide any patches or security updates for its Windows 7 operating system (OS). Likewise, they will no longer support any PCs that are running on Windows 7. If you have any questions or need additional information on the end of Windows 7 support, here are three links to Microsoft's website for commerical, consumer, and general questions: Win7 EOS (commercial); Win7 EOS (consumer); Public FAQ.

LCGC: What are the risks of running outdated software on a laboratory instrument data system?

O'Boyle: Since no new patches or security updates will be released for Windows 7 after Jan. 14, 2020, any new vulnerabilities that could be exploited by viruses or hackers will not be resolved. These can ultimately lead to major security risks such as malware, ransomware attacks, or loss of data.

Most customers running on an out-of-date or unsupported OS will be forced by their IT department to set up an isolated lab network, so any PCs running on the old OS will be cut off and only have access to the instruments they're collecting data from. This can cause issues with workflows and keeping the lab compliant, so it's not an ideal situation.

Cook: The most important thing to understand is all security updates will cease, which puts customers at risk for malware. Customers operating in an FDA-compliant environment need to demonstrate their software is current, with viruses and firewalls in check.

LCGC: Beyond those risks, why is it important to update your CDS software?

O'Boyle: Most users choose to upgrade their CDS software because of OS compatibility. If your CDS software was released prior to 2015 when Windows 10 came out, it's safe to say that your CDS software will not be supported on

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Windows 10. As a result, if you're planning on upgrading to Windows 10, then, most likely, you'll also need to upgrade your CDS software to a version supported on Windows 10. CDS software upgrades are usually bundled with a year-long software maintenance agreement, so you'll also be eligible for any additional upgrades during that entitlement period.

Cook: Planning in advance is very important. When Windows XP went out of support, many people were in a bind because everything needed updated. So now is the best time to plan and talk with your IT department and

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lab manager. It's also a great opportunity to update to the current CDS software, which provides additional features and capabilities, support for third-party instruments, as well as many of the new Agilent instruments that are coming out.

LCGC: What are some questions a lab should ask when upgrading an operating system?

O'Boyle: The first thing that you should ask is: Is my CDS software supported on the OS I'm upgrading to? This information can be found in the CDS Requirements Guide on the installation media or on the Agilent website. The next question is: Does my PC hardware meet the minimum hardware requirements for Windows 10? Additionally, if you are upgrading your CDS application, you need to verify your PC meets the minimum requirements for the upgraded

application. This applies to the instruments in your lab as well—they may, at the very least, need upgraded firmware. But, if you're running an old instrument like a 5890GC, it is no longer supported, so you many need to purchase new instrumentation as well.

Cook: One of the first questions I'm always asked is: Can I reuse my methods and data from the old system to the new? Yes, the upgraded CDS software allows you to bring your data and methods forward. Whether it's an upgrade of ChemStation or if you're moving from ChemStation to OpenLab CDS, our newest CDS package, methods and data can be re-used in a way that's undisruptive to the lab.

LCGC: Where can customers go on the Agilent site to get more information?

O'Boyle: There are pages on the Agilent website that outline clear procedures for upgrading software, such as the Laboratory Software Migrations page and a Software Upgrade Simplified page. You can also visit the Agilent community at community.agilent.com, where we are more than happy to answer any questions.

Cook: If you have any questions, it's really important to reach out to your sales representative—whether you're working in a workstation environment or on a client server.

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A conversation with your sales rep and the services organization can be really helpful in the planning and execution of this upgrade.

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