

Beckett PC Solutions Newsletter, August 2025

Celebrating over 20 years in business!

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Beckett PC Solutions, now in Portugal

It all happened according to plan, we are now living in Tavira Portugal in a small townhouse just outside the center of town (25 minute walk). The equipment arrived a few weeks ago and I have fast internet with all four computers up and running. Have successfully done some remote repairs and took apart a local computer for a client, to recover data from a hard drive which was transferred to a new computer. I am finding the time difference a bit of a challenge for conversations on the phone. It is best to tell me what is going on and leave your computer on so I can access it while you sleep, which is my morning. I am eight hours ahead of California time, called Western European Time. Communication is best done with Text or Email. I am keeping my USA phone numbers except my old land line, so you can use +1831 212 5169 or +1831 219 8757. If you know about or want to use WhatsApp (a standard here because it is free), just use the first phone number to find me or use the following link,



Renewed computers donated

Please consider donating working computers, old or new to [Santa Cruz Welcoming Network](#). If not working then take them to Grey Bears.

Scams, Phishing, Ransomware and more

I guess I should not be surprised but I have received message from Xfinity about fees I owe, even though the accounts were closed. I logged on through my browser, to confirm, I had a zero balance. The messages looked real but it was not and I notified Comcast. Look before you click; that is my most important advice. Just receiving the email will not be an issue, but replying or clicking on a link in the email can be a world of trouble. Most importantly, if you don't have a connection with the company seemingly sending the message, it is likely just phishing. Beware, the logos and messages that seem like they are related to your accounts with that company should be suspect. First see who sent the message. Many times, it will be from a personal email account like [name@gmail.com](#), that would not be coming from a company. If you see [name@companyname.ru](#) this is from someone in Russia. If the from address looks like it might actually be related to the company name but you don't usually get messages from the company, open a browser and go to their web site, log on to your account and see if there are messages there for you. You can hover over the link

in the email message and see what address will open if you were to click on the link. False messages will not have the company name in the web address but just as a rule, never use these links to go to a website.

I was notified that an Instagram message was received by a client with my picture on the message and an email address with my name using google but a long number after the name. Clearly not one of my email addresses. The other clue that it was not me was the message:

“Hi!

How are you doing today?”

Almost any message that begins with Hi, is likely false. Closer inspection showed that this was a new Instagram member with no followers and no other posts, so a brand new account with no activity, just my picture which is available on my web site. The best action is not to reply to the message. You can report them and the account will be shut down. Or you can just delete the message and move on.

Popups from “Microsoft” continue to be an issue with some of my clients. Microsoft will never contact you unless you contact them first, 99% of the time, this is a scam. The warning message that pops up on your screen saying “your computer has been infected, don’t turn off your computer, just call this 800 number.” What do you think you should do? Turn off your computer and the message will vanish when it boots up. A surprising number of my clients do call the phone number and regret having done so. If you get a call and you did not contact them first, hang up or don’t answer. Most of us now will not answer the phone unless they recognize the name on caller ID. City names are almost always a solicitation. This is a good use of voice mail. If I don’t answer a call and they don’t leave voice mail, I assume it was **not** a legitimate phone call. If clients call and there is no name on my caller ID, I will add that name so it comes up the next time they call.

If you have doubts about a message, please feel free to text or email me, I am happy to go over it with you. It is very easy for me to look at it if we have Zoho (my remote access service), installed but I can also talk you through it over the phone if we schedule a time to do this. If your bank calls, get a reference number, hang up, then use the number on your statement to call back. Use the reference number to find out why they are calling. I hope this helps you stay out of trouble, good luck!

2-step Verification

Many of my clients have now added 2-step verification to their accounts. Also, I am noticing the many organizations are now requiring 2-step verification. Be sure it is associated with a cell phone for text messages or an alternate email account to which you have regular access. Check all your accounts because I hear that some clients don’t know their old email address is the only one listed, when they need to change a password or access their account. Keep this information up to date. With 2-step verification you will always know when someone is logging on to your account from another computer. The first few times you log in, you will need to verify the device you are using with a confirmation code triggered by 2-step verification. This is for your protection. Many of my clients have had their accounts hijacked and the easiest way for them to do this is by logging in as you.

Another way, which you cannot control is for them to get into your account by hacking the Comcast, Yahoo or other servers. Yes, it has happened. People on your contact list will call you to find out if you are OK because of the message they received from you. You need to call the provider and tell them about the problem. They will restore your account in most cases and get your contacts back. The faster you take action, the better your chances that no damage will be done.

Improvements to your computer experience

How to make things better? The easiest upgrade is a larger display. The cost is generally low with a large improvement in your computing experience. Many older displays are around 22 inches but new computers systems are now using 27 or 32 inch displays, some curved. With the upgrade is usually an improvement in resolution as well.

Keyboard acting strange? Is it wireless? Have you checked your batteries? Same with your mouse. If you have a wired keyboard and mouse but it is acting odd, there are two possible causes. First, it could just be a Windows update waiting for a restart. Second, try disconnecting and reconnecting or move the keyboard and/or mouse to a different USB port.

Do you use a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Source, battery backup power strip). Be aware that the batteries in these are lead/acid and typically only last for about three years. Just replace the battery unless you need new features on your UPS like more connections or longer power outage time (bigger battery). If you don't have one of these, consider it if you are in an area where the power is likely to go out. They are designed so the computer will stay on long enough to shut it down normally. This can protect your modem and computer parts from damage.

Windows 11

I am sure you are all aware that Microsoft introduced a new Windows operating system in December 2021. Those with Windows 10 have been receiving messages recently about this version, prompting you to check if your computer is eligible. Few older computers will be upgradable. Usually, the CPU is not compatible so only a newer computer will allow you to use Windows 11. Windows 10 will continue to be supported until October 14, 2025 but will continue to work after that date. If your computer indicates it is possible to upgrade to Windows 11, I recommend you do this. I have seen very few issues and find the transition easy enough. The most noticeable difference is the location of the Start button (Windows icon on the lower left), which is now more centered on the task bar. It's an easy menu, and if you need help, just let me know. Updates will still be automatic. These are important to complete due to security changes, so don't put them off for long. Please note that pending updates and restart requests will show up on the taskbar, lower right, near the date and time. Two circle arrows indicate the icon for the Windows updates and you will see a dot over the icon indicating the current status. Green means that all is OK, orange, that an update is pending and red, that a restart is pending. You'll notice pending updates if odd things are happening when you try to use your computer menus won't open or won't respond to your commands. This is the time to check for this icon to see if there is a pending update. The old commands are still available in Windows 11, in the Control Panel which you can access by clicking on the Start button and typing Control Panel.

Antivirus

It turns out that Microsoft has made significant improvements to Windows Security (Defender) and it is now one of the top-rated antivirus applications. It is built into Windows 10 and Windows 11, it just needs to be turned on. In most cases it is turned on automatically if you have no antivirus application installed. This is easy to check however, look at the icons on the lower left of your display in the taskbar, near the date and time display. There will be an icon with a shield (blue or white) and it will sometimes have a circle with some indicator in the circle showing the current status of Windows Security. A green check mark indicates that everything is OK but anything else means that your attention is needed. Double click the icon to open the window and see what is needed. If you wish to start using Windows Security, just uninstall your current antivirus and turn on Windows Security. I have been uninstalling antivirus applications and setting up Windows Security remotely when I am doing remote work for clients.

You can also opt for the paid version of antivirus programs. I now recommend the top-rated Bitdefender, though it is not a program I have used. I am currently using Windows Security. You can also add a VPN which

will give you much better security overall if you have concerns. I am using ExpressVPN which now is also helpful to show me either in the USA or Portugal depending on my computer needs.

In Closing

Much of my business is tuning up computers and helping with minor issues. Most of this work so far is done with my remote application but I have set up a few appointments to talk one-on-one. If you need hardware work done on your computer, I am recommending Aptos Computers but there is a guy in my old neighborhood, Will Aiken (WillDoTech.com), who may become available soon. His parents have had some health issues but recent contact with him suggest that he may be resolving that soon and will be able to get back into computer repair. Remember, clean out those dead files using Disk Cleanup. Check your antivirus status and be sure Windows is up to date.

Thanks for reading. Please let me know if you have any questions. If you find this information helpful, please forward this email to friends and family.

- Will



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