



## Microsoft Blinks!

### ... And Takes A Step Back Concerning Windows 10



We've been encouraging our clients and friends to upgrade to Windows 11, especially for the added security updates.

Microsoft has revised their policies with the significant date approaching: the end of free security updates for Windows 10. Microsoft has announced that after October 14, 2025, users will need to pay for up to three additional years of security updates—essentially paying Microsoft to fix vulnerabilities in their own software.

Now, you might think the obvious solution is to upgrade to Windows 11. After all, Microsoft claims it's faster and more efficient than Windows 10. But despite that, they've imposed stricter hardware requirements for Windows 11, effectively locking out many perfectly functional Windows 10 machines that could actually run Windows 11. This feels arbitrary and, frankly, unfair.

As of July 2025, Windows 11 has finally overtaken Windows 10 in market share. According to StatCounter, **Windows 11 now runs on 52% of all Windows PCs**, while **Windows 10 has dropped to 44.6%**. That's a dramatic shift from

just a month earlier, when the two were nearly tied at around 48% each.

The surge in Windows 11 adoption is largely driven by Microsoft's aggressive push and the looming end-of-support deadline for Windows 10.

Still, that leaves **hundreds of millions of PCs**—many of them still perfectly functional—running Windows 10. And that's a problem for Microsoft. They're essentially saying they won't patch known security flaws in their own software unless users pay up. The patches exist—they'll be sold to those who can afford them—but everyone else will be left increasingly vulnerable.

So, it wasn't too surprising when Microsoft blinked. On Tuesday they announced a more flexible approach to Extended Security Updates (ESU) for individual users. Here are the three options:

1. **Use Windows Backup** to sync your settings to the cloud — free.
2. **Redeem 1,000 Microsoft Rewards points** — also free.
3. **Pay \$30 USD** for one year of ESU consumer coverage, \$61 per system for organizations.

Once you choose an option and follow the steps in the enrollment wizard, your PC will be covered from October 15, 2025, through October 13, 2026. The wizard is already available to Windows Insider Program members and will roll out to all Windows 10 users by mid-August.

# From The Desk of David Snell

For over a year, we have been urging our clients and friends to upgrade to Windows 11 for security and compliance reasons. After all, October 14th is coming fast. That's the date that Microsoft told everyone that they would be cutting off updates and support for Windows 10.

Well, it seems that Microsoft has blinked and will now allow you to purchase extended security updates for up to three years. This is very good news for those whose software won't run on Windows 11, or have other challenges with the upgrade.



If you haven't decided one way or the other, you can get our free report "Are You Ready For Windows 11?" (My punctuation here is correct; see Susan Rook's article "Common American Punctuation Marks: Top 3 Rules" on page 7.)

Todd Philies of Southcoast Marketing points out a problem that we see when visiting many small business websites. "Why Your Website Needs More Than Just a "Set It and Forget It" Approach."

A new contributor, Jason B. Harris, is in the Cranberry Country Chamber of Commerce with Pam and he's quite a guy! She says he's a networking guru! His article will help anyone be a better networker. "The Core 4 of Networking: How Smart Professionals Network with Purpose" is on pages 4-5.

Brian Hoffman's article on page 6, "When a Thank You Note May Not Be Enough" will get you thinking about more ways to make a good impression.



We celebrated "Christmas in July" with Xander and Sarah. Santa must have heard about our plans because he sent "Winter," sister of our Elf on the Shelf "Walter," to introduce herself. This was Winter's first job after graduating from Elf School. She made an impression on us all and we look forward to seeing her right after Thanksgiving!.

Earlier in the month, we took them to the Holiday Inn in Randolph for a weekend of swimming and a trip across the street to the Cinema de Lux where we watched "How to Train Your Dragon" in reclining seats. Yes, I know, it doesn't take much to thrill us!

The cucumbers and tomatoes in my garden are doing well, while the beans, both green and scarlet runner, are sadly underperforming.

Enjoy these last few weeks of summer!



*David Snell*

Continued from front page

So, if you're sticking with Windows 10, you'll soon have a straightforward way to stay protected—at least for another year.

Thanks to the Security Now podcast for this update.

<https://www.grc.com>

## Are You Ready for Windows 11?

If your business is still running on Windows 10, Microsoft has set strict hardware requirements for Windows 11, and some older devices aren't compatible.

The sooner you check whether your computers are ready for the upgrade, the sooner you can

plan your next steps – whether that's upgrading existing devices or investing in new ones.

So, how can you find out what you need to do?

Download our free report:

<https://actsmartit.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Win11-FreeReport.pdf>

We'll mail the Free Report to you

Request the report at:

<https://actsmartit.com/win11/>



## Why Your Website Needs More Than Just a “Set It and Forget It” Approach

Think of your website like a car. If you never change the oil, update the tires, or check under the hood, eventually it's going to sputter, slow down, or flat-out stop working. The same is true for your online presence.

We've seen too many businesses treat their websites as one-and-done projects. But in today's fast-moving digital world, your site is often the *first impression* potential customers get. If it looks outdated, loads slowly, or is hard to navigate, they're gone—likely to a competitor who's been keeping their site fresh.

### Regular updates and maintenance help you:

- **Stay secure** – Outdated websites are a hacker's dream.
- **Improve visibility** – Google rewards fresh, relevant content.
- **Boost user experience** – Faster load times and intuitive navigation keep visitors engaged.
- **Reflect your brand today** – Your business evolves; your site should, too.

Your website isn't a brochure—it's your 24/7 salesperson. Keep it sharp, current, and working hard for you.



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# The Core 4 of Networking: How Smart

In today's fast-paced world of real estate, entrepreneurship, and business development, one truth remains constant: your network is your net worth. But just showing up at events or collecting stacks of business cards won't build the kind of network that gets you referrals, opportunities, or partnerships. That's why I created The Core 4 of Networking—a simple, powerful framework that helps professionals connect with purpose and build real relationships that matter.

Let's break it down.

## 1. Show Up

***"Opportunities only come to those in the room."***

You can't make meaningful connections if you're not present—physically and mentally. Whether it's a networking event, a business breakfast, or a casual meetup, being consistent and visible puts you on the radar of key players.

### Here's how to maximize your presence:

- **Prepare in advance:** Know who's attending. Set a goal. Ask yourself, "How can I help someone today?"
- **Dress with intention:** People form impressions fast. Show respect for the space and the people in it.

**Be a regular:** Relationships form through repetition. Showing up consistently builds familiarity, trust, and credibility.

**Pro Tip:** Walk into every room with the mindset, "I'm here to give, not just get." The most magnetic people are those who genuinely want to help.

## 2. Be Yourself

***"Authenticity attracts the right people."***

You don't need to fake a polished version of yourself to be successful at networking. The most valuable connections happen when people feel

they're meeting the real you—not a rehearsed pitch.

## Here's what works:

- **Speak from your story, not your script.** People remember your journey, not your job title.
- **Drop the mask.** Vulnerability creates relatability. Share your challenges, not just your wins.

**Let your personality shine.** Whether you're quirky, laid-back, intense, or hilarious—own it. Your vibe attracts your tribe.

**Pro Tip:** The people who resonate with the real you are the ones who will refer you, support you, and stay connected for the long haul.

## 3. Pay Attention

***"Listening builds trust faster than talking."***

Want to stand out in a room full of talkers? Be the best listener. Active listening is your competitive advantage in any networking situation.

## Here's how to do it:

- **Put your phone away.** Nothing kills rapport like distraction.
- **Ask thoughtful questions.** Then listen without thinking about your reply.

**Notice the details.** Someone might tell you what they need without directly saying it. If you're paying attention, you'll hear the opportunity.

**Pro Tip:** The secret to being interesting is to be interested. When you truly listen, people feel it—and that builds trust fast.

## 4. Follow Up

***"The fortune is in the FU (Follow-Up)."***

This is where most people drop the ball. You had

# Professionals Network with Purpose

a great chat. You even exchanged cards. But then... nothing. If you don't follow up, you're just collecting paper, not building relationships.

## Here's how to fix that:

- **Send a brief follow-up message** within 24–48 hours. Mention something specific from your conversation.
- **Add them to your CRM or contact list.** Bonus points for setting a reminder to reach out again later.

**Stay in touch.** Share useful resources, invite them to events, or just check in periodically.

**Pro Tip:** Relationships grow between meetings. Your follow-up system is what turns a great first impression into a long-term connection.

**Bonus Wisdom:** Use the Tools

A CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) isn't just for salespeople. It's for anyone who wants to remember names, track conversations, and stay top-of-mind. Whether you use HubSpot, Google Contacts, or a notebook—just use something.

***If you try, you'll probably succeed. If you don't, you're guaranteed to fail.***

**Recap:** The Core 4 of Networking

**Show Up** – Be present, prepared, and consistent.

**Be Yourself** – Let your personality do the heavy lifting.

**Pay Attention** – Listen deeply to build real trust.

**Follow Up** – Keep the connection alive and growing.

These aren't just steps to network better—they're the foundation for building your reputation, generating referrals, and cultivating relationships that move the needle in your business and life.

Whether you're a real estate pro, entrepreneur, coach, or corporate climber... if you start applying the Core 4 today, your network—and your opportunities—will never look the same.

***Ready to level up your networking game?***

Start small. Show up to your next event with intention. Be real. Listen more. Follow up.

Because when you network with purpose, you don't just make contacts... you build community.

Jason B. Harris is "**Unofficially**" the **fittest** commercial real estate pro **South of Boston**, fitness coach, and straight-talking speaker who helps busy professionals get fit without fad diets. Once a 300-pound entrepreneur, he transformed his life through simple, habit-based strategies—now the foundation of his Diet Free Bootcamp.

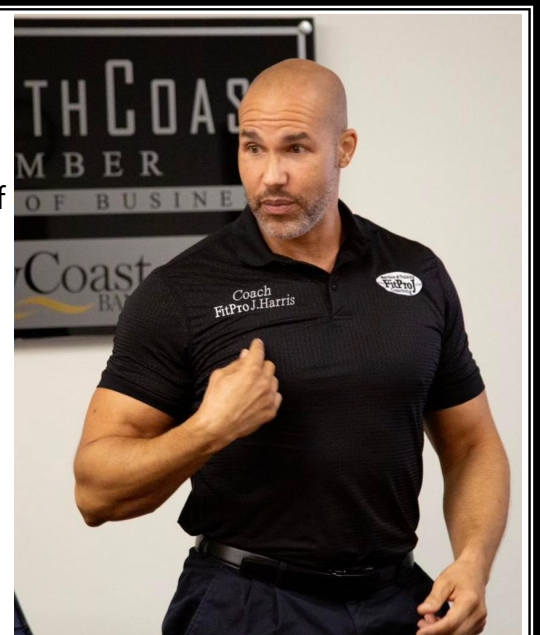
With 15+ years of walking the walk, Jason shows high performers how to :

KeepItSimple, ✓

KeepItMovin 🚴 and

KeepItReal 💯 so they can build the body, business, and network they want.

**Jason B. Harris**  
**(321) 830-5698**



# WHEN A 'THANK YOU' NOTE MAY NOT BE ENOUGH

In the business world, where product, service and support drive your revenue, being memorable – and being remembered – isn't the only thing. But ... it's pretty close!

If you and your firm have put significant effort into building a relationship with a new customer, client or business partner that has resulted in revenue, it's critical that the occasion is followed very quickly with a well-crafted thank you.

That's not only an important element of business etiquette, it's also just plain smart business practice. (And please note that a hand-written note is infinitely better than an email ...)

However, a nicely crafted Thank You note may not be enough.

There are going to be times when something more tangible – and rememberable – is called for. And that something should have your brand, your logo, your imprint on it.

It does not need to be extravagant. That old adage - "it's not the gift; it's the thought that counts" - is true. But if it's a token of appreciation, it absolutely does need to be on target in several ways:

- 1. It needs to be relevant** – something that matches up in terms of the business that was completed and the nature of the client's business.
- 2. It needs to be thoughtful** – if it isn't seen as something that required careful consideration, it may fall flat - no matter how well-intentioned.
- 3. It needs to reflect the value of the business** to both parties – a transaction worth \$25,000 should not be commemorated with a \$2.50 'token'.

**4. It should create a positive memory** and a desire to do business again.

There are a number of good reasons for doing this:

1. Your thank-you gift establishes a more personal connection. Your client likely will feel a closer relationship than just a revenue entry on a spreadsheet
2. Your gift can create a sense of intrinsic value attributable to you and will nurture a feeling that they made the right choice in working with you.
3. It shows professionalism and attention to detail. Clients generally feel good about working with partners who are detail-oriented. They know that you'll bring the same care to further business opportunities with them.
4. The Thank You gift from you builds a personal relationship and, like any good investment, it pays dividends down the road. And, candidly, there is greater direct benefit to you, the giver, than the recipient.
5. Your sincere – and timely – gift will differentiate you from your competitors. Clients will regard you as a professional partner who goes above and beyond.

Not sure about what might be relevant – and affordable – options for you when a Thank You Note isn't quite enough?? Give us a call or connect via email or text and let's chat!

And ... if you are a non-profit in search a Thank You gift that leaves more funding for your mission, Red Ball Cares – our non-profit channel delivers the same high-quality options at significantly reduced costs.



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# Common American Punctuation Marks: 3 Top Rules

English is used around the world, but its rules may vary significantly in different countries.

Here are just a few reminders of the American system's requirements.

1. We know that we end a sentence with either a period, exclamation mark, or a question mark, right? But how many of us know that in our system, if we end with quotation marks, the period or a comma **MUST** go inside/**before** the final quotation mark? Yup. No matter what. It must.

**No:** Sheila called him a "cad".

**Yes:** Sheila called him a "cad."

Question marks, exclamation points, colons, and semicolons go inside final quotation marks only if they are part of the quoted material; otherwise, they go outside/after. But if we end with either an exclamation mark or a question mark, the final quotation mark can go either inside or after, depending on the meaning.

Sheila yelled, "He's a cad!"

Did Sheila yell, "He's a cad"?

2. Use single quotation marks only inside doubles. Do not use them by themselves.

**Yes:** Sheila yelled, "He's a cad!"

**No:** Sheila yelled, 'He's a cad!'

3. Never separate two full sentences with just a comma. Either use another end mark and end the first sentence, or use a semicolon (;) to separate them.

**Yes:** Sheila called Jim a cad; however, she was really just joking.

**No:** Sheila called Jim a cad, however, she was really just joking.

**No:** Sheila called Jim a cad, she was really just joking.

**A footnote:** Always use quotation marks, brackets, braces, and parentheses in pairs.

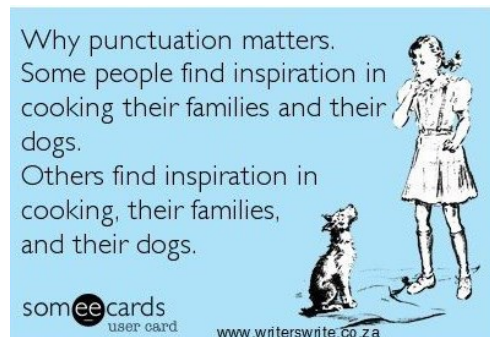
**Want more:** <https://www.grammarly.com/punctuation>

**Last thought:** Quotation marks are everywhere, even where they really are not needed. You could use them:

1. To differentiate a nickname from a given name: That's "Lizzie" over there.
2. To show irony, sarcasm, or skepticism (scare quotes): Her "kitty" was really a baby skunk.
3. To discuss words: (Let's talk about "paltry" and learn its meaning.

You could also just use a different font or italics to show the differences, too.

**Next time, we'll talk more about odd punctuation, the American way!**



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**Never ask: How smart is that person?**  
**Always ask: How IS that person smart?**

## August 2025—In This Issue:

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- Common American Punctuation Marks: 3 Top Rules

*This newsletter was thoughtfully edited by  
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so we can look and sound as smart as we are.*



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