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MEMO 1.0 Windows XP end of life

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To: The plant manager:

Subject: End-of-life for the Windows XP operating system

If you operate any kind of automated plant, you probably have a HMI (Human Machine Interface) computer somewhere where an operator can monitor and control the process. It is easy to overlook the importance and value of this computer. Often it is several years old and looks pretty out of date. The reality is that this is likely the steering wheel of your operation. It's very important and worth a lot of money. If you are unsure of its importance, just ask the operator what would happen if you turned it off for a day or two. If you are unsure of its value, find out what it would cost to replace it. You might be shocked.

The big buzz these days is that Windows XP is going away. It's not that big a deal if your HMI computer is secured properly. Any computer that performs functions important to your facility should be secured as follows:

➢ Do not allow operators to the surf the web or check emails on it, ever!
➢ Do not allow anyone to install unauthorized programs on the computer.
➢ Do not allow any unauthorized USB devices to be connected to the computer.
➢ Data should be removed from the computer by writing it to a CD OR DVD ROM disk.
➢ Do not allow the computer to be networked to non-secured computers.
➢ If remote monitoring software is used, be sure it is connected through a secure connection to the Internet, such as a VPN or through a firewall router.
➢ Utilize only computer technicians who understand the importance and value of the computer/software to work on it and/or make backups.

If you follow these precautions, your Windows XP operating system should keep running fine as long as the computer hardware lasts.

Future memo subjects:

➢ Maintaining computer hardware and backups
➢ Knowing what you are getting into before starting a computer/software upgrade
➢ How to be sure a computer technician is qualified to work on a plant computer

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