What's Smishing?
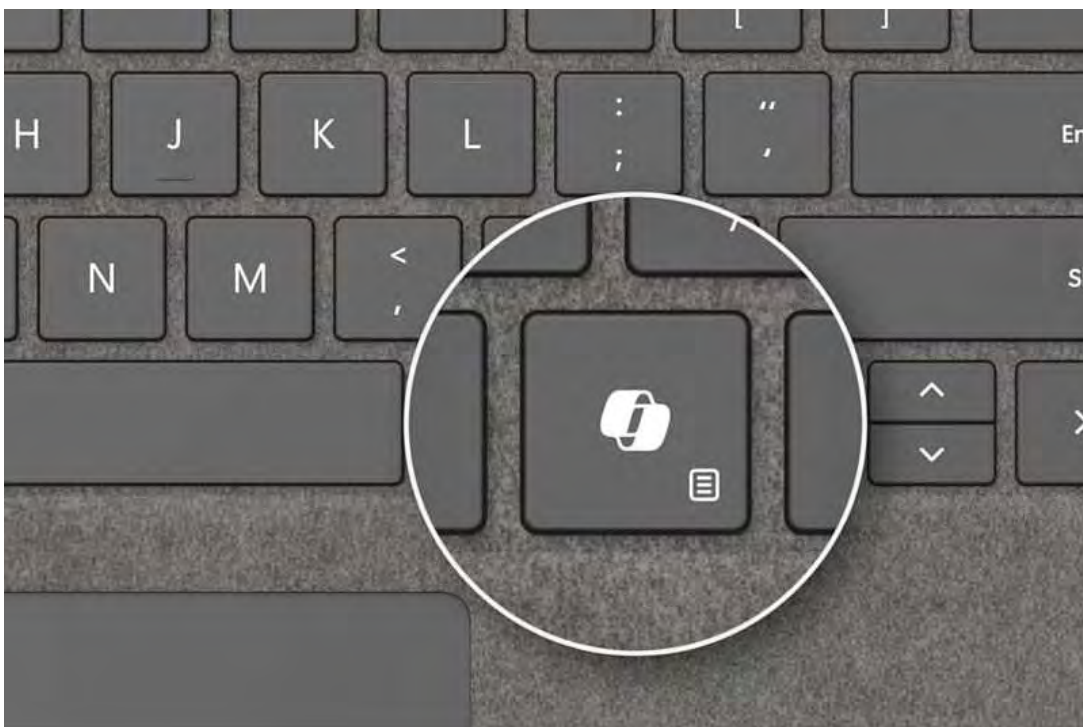
Security Definition of the Month: Smishing messages are fraudulent phone messages, using the usual tactics to get you to click on something dangerous, but delivered as a text message, technically known as an SMS message. Basically, it's a phone phish. Delete them, and block the sender in your phone if you can. Some of these may also show up as notifications; nearly all notifications are over-used and abused, and should be turned off in your browser software.

Copilot Keys

Microsoft's artificial intelligence service, previously named Bing Creator, has been renamed Copilot, and it's already everywhere, and it writes text, creates images, and searches the web in a more intelligent way than a simple word match, and a lot of that is free. So Microsoft is adding a key to their Surface computers that starts the Copilot AI interface, and other keyboard brands are already including the new shortcut key. The new Copilot link now shows up in all these locations:

- Windows 10 and 11, in the bottom-right corner, right of the clock.
- Microsoft Edge, top-right corner, below the 'X' for exit.
- Bing.com, first item in the top-of-the-screen menu.
- From your keyboard, the shortcut is Win-C. Hold the 4-square Windows logo key and tap 'c'.
- And now, as a dedicated key on new keyboards and laptops, starting with Microsoft's own Surface line.

Tip: Artificial Intelligence is still a service on a web server. We're a few months out from true AI running directly on computers and phones. There are some announcements, but not much yet in products. All I've seen so far in AI software that runs directly on a PC is an image enlargement program, but much more is on the way.

All this promotion is for early-adopter market share. The actual revenue model appears to be encouraging businesses to move from the free Copilot web service to the 'Copilot inside subscription Office' model, which is an extra $20/month, in addition to the cost of Microsoft 365 itself. As for placing that Copilot logo everywhere, it looks like unfair product placement to me; no other

company can position their AI icon as always visible in multiple locations.

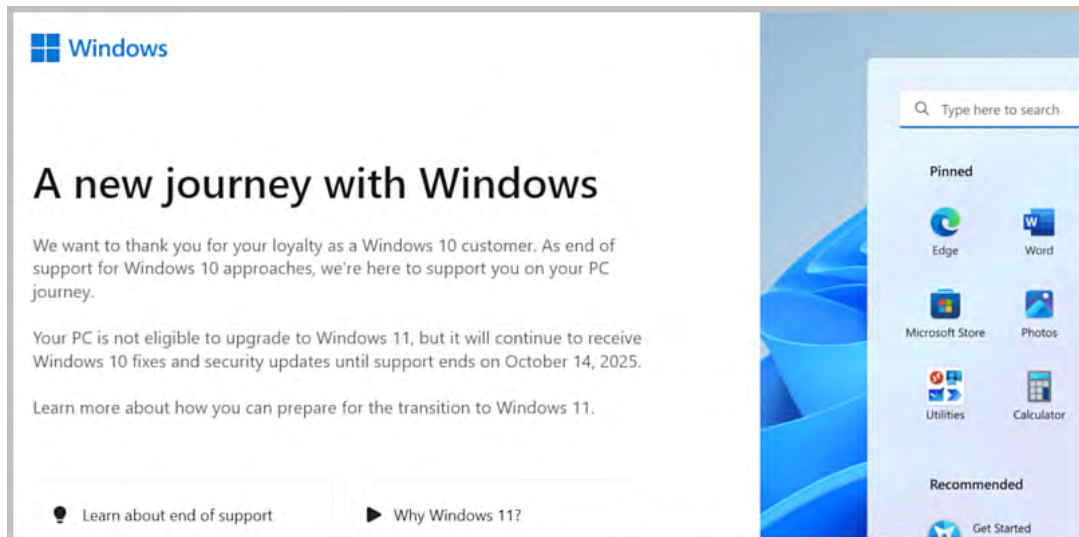

Thunderboom Season is Here

The annual hurricane count prediction has arrived: approximately 13 named storms will develop in the Atlantic this year, a very busy season. More frequently also means bigger. When a storm is bad enough that you're shutting down and going home, shut down and UNPLUG power from computers and disconnect the network. Easiest way to disconnect the network is to unplug just one end of the network wire between the modem and router. A direct lightning strike will pass through both power and network wires. Computers are safely disconnected when turned off at the switch on the surge suppressor.

AI weather predictions have begun testing. AI is very good at taking large sets of data spanning many years and turning all of that into something useful. That's weather forecasting. There is a century of good weather data that can be used to train an AI system. Windborne Systems is working on AI predictions, and they're at the stage of testing a prediction model, and we may see AI weather forecasts by next year:
https://arstechnica.com/ai/2024/06/as-a-potentially-historic-hurricane-season-looms-can-ai-forecast-models-help/

DeepMind, an Alphabet subsidiary, is also working on AI weather; watch out for GraphCast forecasts, eventually.
https://deepmind.google/discover/blog/graphcast-ai-model-for-faster-and-more-accurate-global-weather-forecasting/

Windows 10, the Beginning of the End

Here's a cropped version of the message that's showing up on Windows 10 computers now. Windows 10 security updates will end on October 14, 2025. Windows won't shut down at that point, but new security issues will be left mostly unpatched, and if your business is required to maintain compliance with basic security standards, Windows 10 computers will be out of compliance at that time. This especially applies to PCI (credit card security), HIPAA (medical security), and Sarbanes-Oxley (publicly-traded companies).

Computers from 2020 and newer should be able to run Windows 11, and the software itself is a free upgrade. Some computers from 2018 and 2019 can run it. Anything older can not be upgraded. Some computers will need changes in drive configuration and BIOS settings.There's a test program I can run that will tell us if a system can be made to run Windows 11. Call me if you're ready to upgrade to Windows 11 on your current computer or ready to move your files to new hardware.

Other pending end dates:

- Windows 11, version 22H2, reaches end of security patching October 8, 2024. (Current: 23H2)
- Office 2019 and older reach end of security patches October 15, 2025. (Current: Office 2021)
- Office 2021 reaches end of security patches October 13, 2026. (New Office is likely in October.)
- More Windows and Office important dates at https://pc410.com/calendar

For computer help, call 410-871-2877
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