

# Computers running Windows® XP SP3 or Office 2003 must be updated immediately

As reported widely in the media and mentioned in the December 2013 *LAWPRO Magazine*, Microsoft® ceased supporting Windows XP SP3 (Service Pack 3) and Office 2003 (SP3) as of April 8, 2014. There will be no new security updates, non-security hotfixes, free or paid assisted support options or online technical content updates from Microsoft for either of these products. After the deadline, your Windows XP computer will still operate and Office 2003 programs will still run, but you will be vulnerable to any new security risks including harmful viruses, spyware, and other malicious software which can steal your personal information or destroy your data.

Microsoft Security Essentials, Microsoft's anti-malware program, has not been available for download on Windows XP since April 8, 2014. But if you already have Microsoft

Security Essentials installed, you will continue to receive anti-malware signature updates through July 14, 2015. Similarly, Microsoft's Malicious Software Removal Tool, which works in conjunction with Security Essentials' anti-malware engine and signatures, will continue to be supported for Windows XP through July 14, 2015. Despite these continuing updates, PCs running Windows XP or Office 2003 after April 8, 2014 should not be considered to be properly protected from malware.

You should immediately take steps to update all law firm and home computers running Windows XP SP3, and upgrade to a newer version of Office on any computer running Office 2003. You can download and run the <Windows Upgrade Assistant> to check if your current PC meets the system requirements for Windows 7 or 8.1. If your current

PC meets the system requirements, you can buy Windows 7 Professional or Windows 8.1 Pro from a local retailer so you can upgrade your computer. If your PC does not meet system requirements, you will need to purchase a new computer.

Cyber criminals and hackers are expected to target computers that are running this unsupported software. The time and expense you will incur if your systems are compromised, and the potential risks to your firm's and clients' confidential data, are far greater than the cost of purchasing a new computer or updating Office. Please immediately take steps to update any computers running Windows XP or Office 2003. For more information, visit Microsoft's XP end-of-support information page at [microsoft.com/en-us/windows/enterprise/end-of-support.aspx](http://microsoft.com/en-us/windows/enterprise/end-of-support.aspx). ■

## Cybercrime and law firms: How prepared are you?

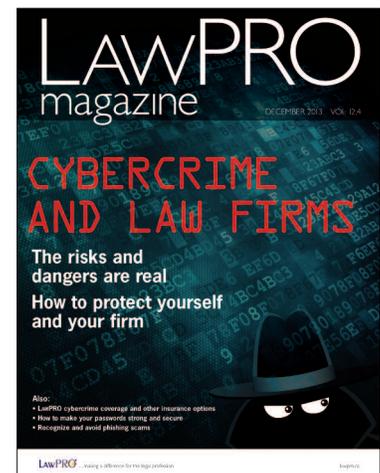
Ontario law firms and lawyers are being targeted by cyber criminals on a daily basis. Several have suffered significant financial losses after being duped or hacked. Cyber criminals commonly target lawyers and law firms because they have valuable information and large sums of money in trust accounts.

To assess your cybercrime preparedness, see if you can answer the following questions:

- Are your passwords secure enough?
- Would you or your staff be duped by a phishing message?
- How would your firm respond if one of its servers was hacked?

- Is your anti-malware software the most current version and is it updated?
- Could you tell if your computer had malware on it?
- Are your computer's security settings adequate?
- Is there a backdoor into your network?
- What would happen if a firm laptop or smartphone were lost or stolen?
- How would you deal with a major data theft by an ex-employee?
- Is your home computer safe?

If you don't know the answers to one or more of these questions, see the "Cybercrime and



law firms" issue of *LAWPRO Magazine* (published December 2013) for more information on cyber dangers and the steps you need to take to protect yourself and your firm. In that issue of the magazine there was also an article on the rationale behind LAWPRO's new \$250,000 cybercrime coverage and what it covers. ■