

# Medical Office Systems, LLC

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## March Issue #2 The New World Order

In recent months I have observed what I consider a “New World Order” in the computer industry. Things are radically changing again in several ways, big and small. Here’s a few:

**Faster Software Update Cycles:** Microsoft has taken a lot of heat for their rollout of Windows 10 and the “nag” pop-ups that keep appearing to get you to upgrade to Windows 10. Some would say Microsoft is going back on its word to keep Windows 7 supported for its promised 10-year lifespan. Microsoft is not going back on their promise, but they are pedaling as hard as they can to get you off Windows 7 and 8 ASAP. **Why? The cost of supporting software for ten years is killing them.** Ten years is a long time in the computer biz: no other manufacturer or software publisher has anywhere near a 10-year lifespan. Besides, Windows 7 is already 6 years old...! Apple is on an 18-month update cycle, Android is about the same, and Linux publishers tend to be on a 12-month cycle. Microsoft, if it is to be competitive and stay current, has to emulate the competition; its aggressive “pushiness” of Windows 10 is evidence of that.

**More Contraction Among PC Makers:** Last December, rumors surfaced of a big merger: the computer divisions of Toshiba, Fujitsu, and Sony were going to combine into one company. They all are losing money and can’t afford to do that for very much longer. Meanwhile, all manufacturers report tablet sales are declining rapidly: even mighty Apple reported 9% lower tablet sales in 2015. HP took the most aggressive step when it announced discontinuation of their low-end tablets; HP will instead concentrate on higher-margin, more expensive units for business. Dell’s tablet share is barely measurable: it is in the “All Others” category. I would not be surprised if they dumped tablets entirely.

**Higher Prices for Computers:** Is it just me, or did you notice higher prices for computers lately? Well, it’s not your or my imagination: prices are going up. Now that the computer market is fully mature, sales are down and the price wars have taken their toll – there are fewer manufacturers, and those that remain can’t afford to pump out cheap machines that lose money. So the inevitable swing to higher priced units is in progress: yes, you can find cheap units, but the current “sweet spot” for pricing is in the \$550 and up category. This is not a bad thing: the really cheap units are mostly junk anyway. **Exception:** See Chromebooks below.

**Boxed Software is Going Bye-Bye:** Take a stroll down the aisles of a computer store or office supply store. Remember when there were two or three aisles with racks and racks of software in boxes? Like the racks and racks of music CD’s, the boxed software is mostly gone. Software purchases have moved to the “cloud” - i.e.: “Apps” purchased and delivered online. You might find one aisle of software, but even many of those boxes are not filled with disks; rather a little “card” with a serial number... that you redeem to download and install online...

**All your stuff will be in the cloud soon:** I recently installed Office 2016 on my computers, and the thing I noticed first is the list of options you see when saving a file is not to save on your computer: instead the first option leads you to save your files in a cloud storage folder. I found the same to be true for Adobe Acrobat DC, Apple’s Photo, and others: you have to click extra steps to find the menu that lets you save to your local PC. The intent is clear: save your stuff in the cloud.

**Chromebooks take over the Education market:** If you want an inexpensive, simple computer for basic tasks, get a Chromebook. Chromebooks are cheap because all the “horsepower” is located on Google’s Cloud Servers. That setup allows the Chromebook to have the bare minimum processor, RAM and hard disk capacity. Chromebooks have caused a tidal wave in the education market: they are cheap, easily managed, and are perfectly suited for student needs. Many school districts across the country have dumped their PCs and Macs in favor of Chromebooks... and more will do so.

-John Becker