

Tech Q&A: Some slow PCs can't be made much faster

14 November 2019, by Steve Alexander



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Q: About three months ago, I purchased an HP Pavilion laptop, model 17-ar050wm, that is clearly the slowest PC I've ever owned or used. I had a technician look for anything that could be turned off or deleted to make the PC run faster, but it hasn't helped. Is this a problem with the PC that I'll have to live with, or is there a remedy?

Tom McGrady, New Richland, Minn.

A: It is a problem that you will have to live with, although there are some workarounds to make the PC go a bit faster.

Online forums list many similar complaints about this 2018 HP laptop model, and they're all the result of the same problem: The PC's main processor and memory have to shoulder the entire computing load for the PC's high-definition screen.

Some PCs (typically the more expensive ones) solve this problem by including a secondary chip with its own memory to help with heavy-

duty graphics processing. Because your PC has no secondary graphics chip, it runs slowly when its HD screen displays a lot of graphics.

One reviewer of this laptop noted that "graphics heavily slow down the processor, sometimes to the extent that even a simple web page will not load instantly" (see tinyurl.com/y6qj5vjb).

That said, there are a few workarounds to moderately speed up your PC:

- Don't leave multiple web pages open (particularly those that update automatically).
- Don't run multiple programs at the same time.
- Check the list of programs that automatically start when the PC does, and turn off unnecessary ones (see tinyurl.com/y52awaqs).

Another way to compensate for the PC's slow speed is to install an SSD (solid-state drive), a computer-chip-based substitute for a hard drive that retrieves data more quickly. But that would cost \$100 plus installation labor, which may be more than you want to spend on a year-old computer model that sells for \$450 new or \$410 refurbished.

Q: I just upgraded to a new PC with Windows 10, and would like to install my copy of Microsoft Office Home and Student 2007 on the new computer. But I was told that the program won't work with Windows 10. Is that true?

Claudia Schuman, Champlin

A: It is not true. Your version of Office will work with Windows 10, despite Microsoft warnings about some compatibility issues.

The compatibility concerns are about the

Outlook 2007 mail program and the Access 2007 database program, neither of which was included in your "home and student" version of Office.

A bigger concern is that there have been no Microsoft security updates for Office Home and Student 2007 since 2017. But experts say that is not a huge problem, provided that you use the Windows Defender antivirus [program](#) that's included in Windows 10, and make sure you download all the Office 2007 updates through October 2017.

To head off the obvious question, readers should note that using Office 2007 without security updates is far less risky than using Windows 7 after its security updates cease in mid-January. Antivirus software can protect Office 2007, but antivirus programs will not—repeat, will not—protect Windows 7 after mid-January.

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