

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month's questions are: I've heard that Microsoft is dropping support for Windows 98 and Windows NT next year, is this true?

Microsoft has a Windows Desktop Product Support Life Cycle Policy which they follow for all of their desktop products. This policy was updated in October and does show that Windows 98 and Windows NT 4 will enter a non-supported phase after June 30, 2003. This phase will last for one year during which time Microsoft will only provide Online Self-Help Support. On June 30, 2004, both of these products will have completed their Life Cycle and no longer be supported. It should be noted that all previous versions of Windows and DOS will complete their Life Cycle on December 31, 2002.

So what does this mean for users of these versions of Windows? For those products going into the non-supported phase, users will have to use online knowledgebase from Microsoft to solution problems. For those products completing their Life Cycle, users will have to depend on experienced computer professionals for help with problems. It should be noted that Hardware and Software Vendors will no longer be required to support the products that go into the non-support phase or have their Life Cycle completed.

For those of you that have Windows 98 or Windows NT 4, I would recommend that you look into upgrading to a newer version of Windows in the next year or so. For those with previous versions of Windows, I would recommend you upgrade as quickly as possible.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer to, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.