

## **Quest for A Reliable Microsoft Windows 10 Computer**

I upgraded from Windows 7 to Windows 10 in August 2015 which led to many months of frustrating problems on my old 2011 HP G72-B50US laptop computer. I gave up on trying to get it to work right and took the gamble and bought a new 2016 Dell I3558-9136BLK Windows 10 computer in May 2016. However, the new computer was not the complete solution to the problems and you can read about my experiences with it here:

### **Microsoft Windows 10 Upgrade 2011 HP Vs New 2016 Dell**

The Dell had the following specifications:

- 6GB Memory
- 1TB Hard Drive
- Windows 10
- Touch screen
- Intel I3 processor

I saw the following problems with the Dell during a week of testing:

- Single click menu buttons were requiring multiple clicks to select.
- Touch pad could not select text while pressing the left button and sliding the finger across the pad
- The touch pad arrow on the screen kept on getting stuck and a left click was required to get it going again.
- Microsoft Edge was missing characters and words typed in Yahoo emails. The old upgraded Windows 7 to 10 computer had also exhibited this problem many times.
- Trying to save a PDF file from the Microsoft Edge web browser caused the working on it "blue ball" to appear and locked it up. Microsoft Edge had to be ended from Task Manager to fix it. I was able to save it after this.
- Microsoft Edge web browser kept on randomly reloading web pages.
- Some Open Office & Libre Office documents were saying that they were locked for editing and could only be opened "Read Only" on the restored file system from my old Windows 10 computer.
- A HTML file that I was working on became corrupted and jumped from being 236K to 1,847K long. Examining the file showed that it was filled with random characters. The corrupted file would open in Libre Office (5.1.3.2 release) but would lock up Open Office and require it to be closed from the Task Manager.

I decided to return it due to seeing problems during the first week of use. I switched brands to a Hewlett Packard (HP) computer, model HP 15-ac143dx Laptop. This laptop had a similar specification to the Dell but with 4GB memory and no touch screen. I did a fresh backup of my old Windows 10 computer and restored it to the new HP computer. I saw the following problems with the HP during a day of testing:

- Single click menu buttons were requiring multiple clicks to select.
- Menu System completely froze.
- Track pad pointer freezing during running programs.
- HP pop up box that kept on appearing on the screen would not let me press the “Yes” button.
- The Windows icon on the bottom left of the screen stopped responding.
- After a night of file transfers I found the computer with the following problems:
  - Microsoft Edge would not start up.
  - The buttons on the windows menu system would not work which included the power shutdown button.
  - The computer had to be restarted from the Task Manager and appeared to work correctly afterwards.
- Some Open Office & Libre Office documents were saying that they were locked for editing and could only be opened “Read Only” on the restored filed system from my old Windows 10 computer.
- A HTML file that I was working on became corrupted and jumped from being 236K to 1,847K long. Examining the file showed that it was filled with random characters. The corrupted file would open in Libre Office (5.1.3.2 release) but would lock up Open Office and require it to be closed from the Task Manager.

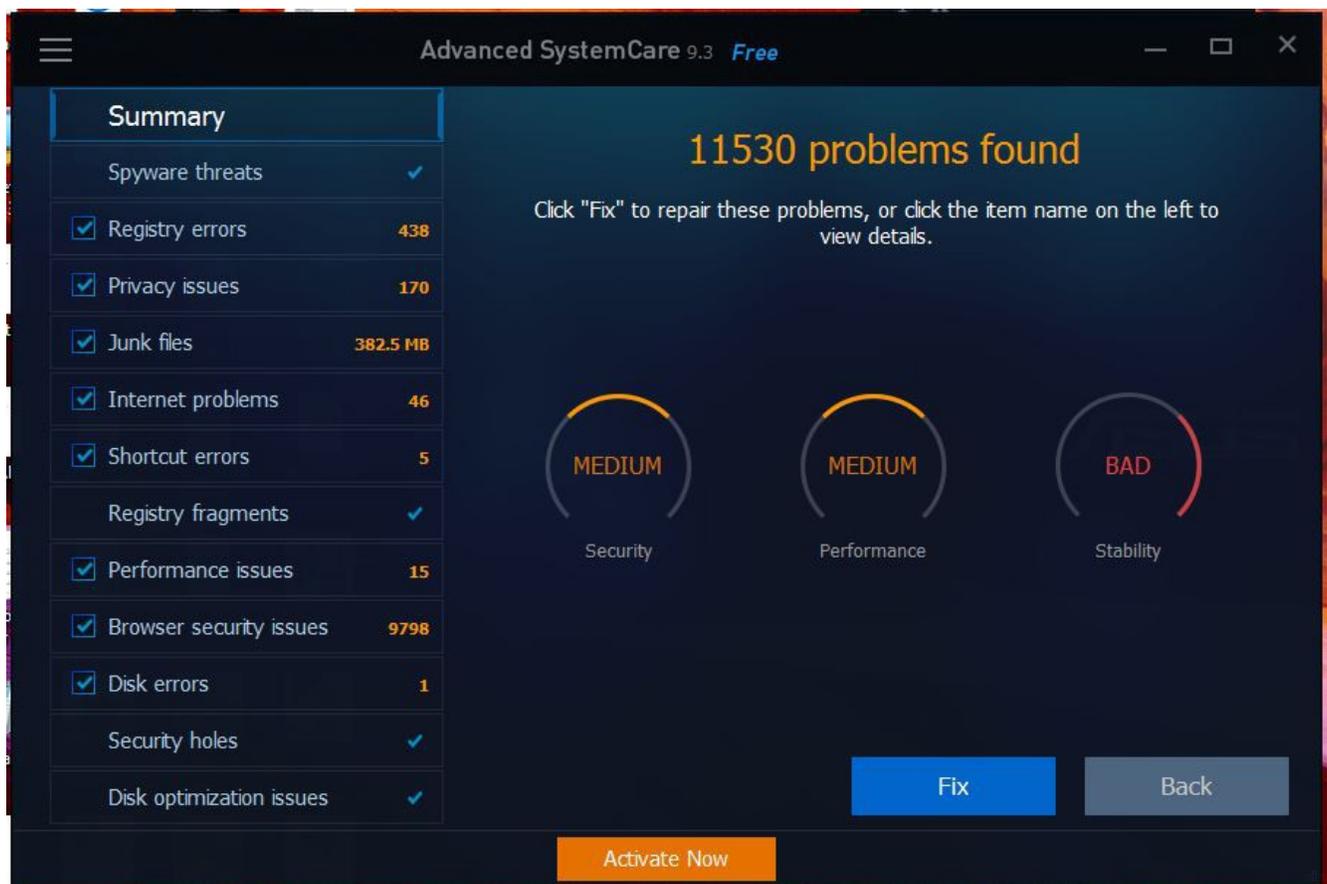
At this point the computer was returned. I resumed using my old computer which had a fresh installation of Windows 10 installed onto it and noticed that the corrupted file had also appeared on it. The old computer also had a fresh installation of Libre Office on it. Testing showed that the file was being corrupted if it was edited by Libre Office but would be fine if it was edited in Open Office. The HTML file corruption problem appeared to be a Libre Office incompatibility with the latest Windows 10 updates.

The next computer that I bought was an ASUS X540LA with similar specifications to the HP. I was concerned that the previous new computers had shown files to be locked for editing and thought that it may be due to corruption occurring in the Windows 10 backup and restore functions. I decided to transfer the files directly from the old computer to the new computer by using the network “Homegroup” function. Homegroup enables the sharing and copying of file folders between computers that are connected to the same network router. I saw the following problems with the ASUS during a week of testing:

- Touch pad required multiple clicks to select single click items off the menu. This problem persisted and was in line with what I had seen on the previous computers. It seems to be a bug in the June 2016 release of Windows 10.
- After doing a large network file transfer overnight I found the computer with a “Computer low on memory - Close File Explorer to fix” message. The computer was still fully functional and the files had transferred without problems.
- The ASUS did not come with DVD playing software. The ASUS “Giftbox” application did have the VLC Media Player for free download and it was installed.

- Copy and paste issues were observed between Microsoft Edge and Open Office applications and had been observed many times on my upgraded Windows 7 to 10 computer. It seems to be a bug that causes the first copy to be ignored and the second copy performed is generally successful.
- Java Runtime Environment (JRE) was missing and had to be installed for Open Office to function correctly.
- Microsoft Edge was observed to do a reload of the webpages on two occasions.
- It did not recognize the Canon MF3240 scanner/printer/fax machine and the drivers had to be installed manually.
- It did not recognize the resolution settings of the external HDMI Full HD monitor. Unable to select the resolution from “Settings – System Display – Advanced Display Settings” and had to select the correct resolution by right clicking the background image and selecting “Graphics Options – Resolution – 1920 x 1080”.

After a week of use Advanced System Care was ran and reported 11,530 problems and bad stability. It took two minutes for it to fix the problems. Note that the Dell reported 62,502 problems and it took an hour to fix them, so this was a great improvement. The problems can be seen below. McAfee Livesafe did a full scan of the computer and reported zero problems.



The ASUS was superior computer than the others for the following reasons

- Nice touch pad.
- Ran Windows 10 relatively well.
- Software applications appear to work well.
- It did not crash during testing. I did not have to manually shut down any tasks or restart the computer.
- The ASUS “Giftbox” application had a wide range of recommended free software for download.
- In addition to the testing performed on all computers, the ASUS was subjected to a vibration test by taking it on a drive for several hours in a padded computer bag. No problems were observed.

I wrote this article on my new ASUS computer using Open Office and continue to be happy with it. The numerous serious problems that were seen in the Windows 7 to 10 upgrade have mostly gone and Windows 10 is finally working relatively well. The June 2016 Windows 10 release still does have bugs in it and I realized that I would have to accept a buggy Windows 10 computer at this point or buy an Apple computer. Given that an Apple computer cannot run most of the computer drivers for equipment that I use, I compromised and accepted the best of the Windows 10 bunch which was the ASUS.

### Windows 10 Computer Buying Advice

- If you have a bad upgrade from Windows 7 to Windows 10, then your best choice may be to go to a new Windows 10 computer. Trying to go back to Windows 7 may cause you more problems than what it is worth. You may lose or corrupt your file system by doing so. Windows 7 is old and will not be supported in the future.
- If you are only doing word processing, internet and watching videos, a 4GB memory should be sufficient on a new Windows 10 computer.
- Buy local so that returning it is easy.
- Know the return period of time that you have and thoroughly test your computer during it. If it is showing any issues, return it for a refund or a different model. Local stores with a two week returns policy in June 2016:
  - Best Buy (Supplied all new computers tested)
  - Office Max/Depot
  - Walmart
- The very first thing to do with a new computer is to install the latest Windows 10 updates and restart it.
- Create a recovery USB drive in case the computer crashes during testing. The recovery drive will enable you to start the computer so that you can destroy your personal data on the hard drive for returning it.

- Put the computer through its paces by doing large (>100GB) file transfers to the hard drive. This will show up any instabilities that it may have.
- Fully charge the battery and use it on the battery to verify that it works as long as the manufacturer specifies, typically a few hours before you will get low battery warnings.
- Test all of the ports are working.
- Test the DVD drive by burning a data disk & watching a movie.
- Test the camera and microphone with Skype.
- Test the computer by using all of the applications that you are installing. If one of your applications does not work right and is stated to work with Windows 10, return the computer. If the same software problems show up on the replacement computer, then it is unlikely that the problem is being caused by the new computer.
- Make sure it works with all of your computer drivers for your products.
- Check the reviews and read through the 1 and 2 star reviews. If you are seeing any problems reported by others, you probably have a faulty computer.
- Sometimes a problem can be unique to one brand of computer. If your new computer has a problem and you return it, switch over to a comparable model from different brand.
- Comparable specification computers from multiple manufacturers can have very different performance between them.
- If you are seeing the same problems across multiple brands of new computers, then you likely have one of these things going on:
  - You are seeing a problem with the latest release of Windows 10 updates.
  - You are seeing a problem with the software that you installed.
  - You are seeing a problem with the way you set up the new computers.
- Subject the computer to a vibration test by taking it on a drive for several hours in a padded computer bag.
- Expect to have troubleshooting problems during your quest for your new computer.
- Run Advanced System Care and a full virus scan on the computer before your return period expires to see how the computer has been performing.
- Do not accept a computer that appears to be faulty.

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**Steven Magee - Author of Electrical Forensics**