

Bits & Bytes

Insider Tips On How To Use Technology To Make Your Business
Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably



Volume V, Issue VIII

August, 2014



“As a business owner , I know you don’t have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That’s where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems forever.”

Joe Stoll, President
Technical Action Group (TAG)
JStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com

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Could The Dog Days Of Summer Be A Threat To Your Business?

Every summer I print this article and up until this year, we had plenty of stiflingly hot summers in Toronto. This year has proven quite different but ever the optimist, I am confident Toronto won't see the Autumn until suffering a number of characteristic stinkin' hot, humid days, if they haven't already hit by the time you read this.

Many business owners are looking for ways to keep their company's sales and profits HOT, while keeping their IT expenses COOL. But if proper attention is not given to your server and network equipment during the summer, all the heat outside can actually bring your company's growth to a grinding halt and increase your IT expenses significantly.

Excess heat can be a big problem for small to mid-sized business servers, since a server that becomes overheated usually costs more in energy, fails more often and is more likely to crash. For most companies, a server crash can mean hours or days of downtime, unproductive employees, HUGE amounts of stress and thousands of dollars in lost opportunity.

“7 Steps Every Business Owner Must Take To Prevent A Server Crash”

Here are a few simple things you can do to prevent your server and network equipment from overheating and crashing this summer:

- ⇒ Tidy up the server room; a neater room will increase airflow.
- ⇒ Keep the doors to the server room closed and seal off the space., assuming the room has ample air flow.
- ⇒ Make sure cold air reaches all the equipment.
- ⇒ Have a redundant A/C that is specifically designed for computers.
- ⇒ Buy a rack enclosure where the cooling is built into the bottom of the rack.
- ⇒ Keep the temperature at no more than 77 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ⇒ Consider virtualization or cloud computing so that you are generating a lower amount of heat in the first place.

Protect your server and computer equipment from frying with our FREE “Beat The Heat” Network Audit. Schedule your “Beat The Heat” Audit today by e-mailing Joe at JStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com. Offer Expires 8/31/14.

Shiny Gadget Of The Month:



Inflatable Movie Screen

This 120-inch-diagonal airblown Inflatable Movie Screen is perfect for family movie nights and block parties, because everyone can see it all on this big screen in your backyard! The giant outdoor movie screen can be set up and inflated in minutes, ready to show movies, TV shows, cartoons, sporting events or even video presentations. This inflatable movie screen is also great to use indoors or out for fund-raising events, festivals or prom parties, providing a drive-in movie experience everyone will enjoy.

You can even hook up your game console to your projector (not included) to play video games for "tremendous" fun! And since this outdoor movie screen is portable, you can take it along to your summer cottage or company picnic!

This awesome addition to your family life AND your business can be found at www.skymall.com for about \$250.

Student Laptop Buyer's Guide: Use These 6 Tips When Buying Your Student's New Laptop This Fall

If you're in the market for purchasing a new laptop for one of your children (it seems like anyone from elementary schoolchildren to college graduates need a laptop these days, right?), here are 7 tips to get the most out of your laptop purchase.

Tip #1: Bigger is NOT necessarily better when it comes to laptops. If your student is on the go, smaller laptops are going to be your best bet. Go for less than 4 lbs. and either 11" or 13" screen size. The SurfacePro, UltraBook or MacBook Air are all solid options for most students.

Tip #2: Pay for a good design. A student will be using their laptop day in and day out. Choose sleek over clunky. Also opt for a design that is made to protect the display and resist wear and tear over the next few years of use.

Tip #3: Buy for the long haul. Think about how long you want your student's computer to last. Make the mistake of saving a few bucks now for a cheaper processor, lower memory or smaller hard drive and you'll be regretting that decision when you're buying another laptop in 2 years instead of 3 or 4.

Tip #4: Go for long battery life... your student will use it! Six hours of battery life is the MINIMUM spec you should purchase. If you can get 10+ hours of battery life in your budget, go for it.

Tip #5: Consider touch screen hybrids. Many Windows 8 devices such as the SurfacePro allow you to use the device as sort of a tablet/laptop hybrid. For kids that grew up on tablets and smartphones, these hybrids make them feel right at home with their new computer and actually make them more efficient.

Tip #6: Mac versus PC. This decision is really up to you and your preferences. Software choices these days allow your student to do just fine with either choice. Choose whichever operating system your student is used to using and they'll do just fine.

Still unsure what to buy? Don't hesitate to give us a call and we'll be happy to guide you in the right direction. We're here to help.

Warning: If You Are Using WordPress For Your Company Website, There Is A 73% Chance Your Site Is Vulnerable To Be Hacked

Hackers are crazy busy right now, and WordPress websites are their favorite target! So far this year, hackers have broken every record to date. In 2012, there were roughly 192,000 WordPress sites worldwide. In March 2014 alone, a single hacker used 162,000 hacked WordPress websites in just one single attack.

A recent study by EnableSecurity concluded that 73% of the 40,000 most popular websites that use WordPress software are vulnerable to attack. WordPress is the most popular blogging and content management system in the world and powers 1 out of every 5 websites.

The main culprit in these vulnerabilities is violating the first rule of WordPress security - not running the most up to date version of WordPress. In fact, if you're not running the very latest version of

WordPress, then chances are that your site is vulnerable to any hackers using simple, free automated tools.

Here are 5 quick tips on keeping your WordPress website secure:

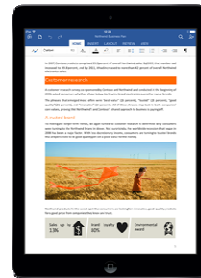
1. Always run the very latest version of WordPress.
2. Be conservative in your selection of plugins and themes (and run the latest versions of these).
3. Make sure every user has their own strong password.
4. Put a Web Application Firewall (WAF) in front of your website.
5. Force logins and admin access to use HTTPS.

Have You Installed Microsoft Office On Your iPad?

After years of rumours, Microsoft finally unveiled Office for iPad in late March. This is a huge addition to the iPad, as demonstrated by the more than 12 million downloads of the product in the first week it was released.

The iPad Just Got More Business-Friendly

One of the biggest business complaints about the iPad has been that it's great as a personal device and for catching up on e-mail, but you really couldn't do real work on it. You can now use the core 3 of Word, Excel and Powerpoint on your iPad fairly seamlessly. Microsoft has integrated Office for iPad into their Office 365 suite of products with an annual fee of only \$100, which includes online file storage (or you can simply view files in Office for iPad, but not work on them, for free).



A Familiar Interface And Functionality

Just about everything you're used to within the Office Suite is here on the iPad, optimized for touch screens. These three apps are feature-rich, powerful business tools. And while a menu item or two might be out of place, you'll soon quickly adapt to the user interface. If you've used an iPad and you've used Office on your desktop, you'll be just fine. Advanced features such as change tracking, find and replace are all there, and while there still may be a few things you need to do on your desktop, we're hard-pressed to find many of them.

Is VoIP Right For Your Business?

Technological advancement has played a huge role in helping businesses increase productivity and save money. One such tool is Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP), which moves phone communications to a network connection, allowing you to access communication services from anywhere. Though VoIP is quickly gaining popularity, many businesses are still on the sidelines, doubtful whether VoIP is right for them. With that in mind, here's what you need to know about VoIP to help decide if it's the right system for your business.

The Top 3 Movies Every Entrepreneur Must Watch

1. Miracle On 34th Street
What You'll Learn: The greatest lesson in salesmanship that no one follows.

The Entrepreneur's Lesson: A Macy's Santa Claus goes out of his way to help customers, often encouraging them to shop elsewhere for better deals. Instead of losing customers, Macy's gets overwhelmed with customers seeking Santa's help. Macy's sales increase by doing what's best for the customer.

2. Click
What You'll Learn: What it's like to fast-forward life.

The Entrepreneur's Lesson: Adam Sandler wants to keep fast-forwarding to the major accomplishments of his career. He loses the balance between work and home, and misses the lessons in life's daily routine. Entrepreneurs are generally of the "I want it all now" breed, and this movie will show you how wrong that is. Take the good with the bad, and never stop pursuing your entrepreneurial AND family dreams.

3. Glengarry Glen Ross
What You'll Learn: Lying, cheating and stealing never work long-term.

The Entrepreneur's Lesson: Hard-close sales work...for a single sale. Ultimately your reputation is ruined, and deceived people lie in your wake. This movie is about what not to do as an entrepreneur. Unfortunately, many businesses still follow these practices. Get in an industry with a "Glengarry" reputation and be honest, reliable and go out of your way to be helpful. Your business will flourish.

Apps To Help You Remember Not To Forget...

Google Now

What It Does:

Google Now is the latest incarnation of the Google search app that seems to magically know what you need and give it to you before you ask. It presents you with info on what you need to do, where you need to go, and how to get around.

iPhone users can use Google Now by downloading the Google Search app and signing in to your Google account.

Available on: Android and iOS

Price: Free

Remember The Milk

What It Does:

Yes, Remember the Milk is another feature-rich to-do list. Users love the tags and "smart lists." Tag items with dates, and it automatically organizes your life based on project deadlines. It syncs with Evernote, too.

Available on: Android and iOS

Price: Free

Quality improvement

Since its inception, the quality of VoIP service has come a long way. Today's VoIP services allow you to make and receive calls using standard phones. Sound quality has improved tremendously, to the point where many businesses have abandoned traditional phone systems in favor of VoIP.

Reduction of telecommunications costs

Operating costs for the majority of VoIP service providers are significantly lower than traditional phone companies. This allows VoIP providers to charge customers – you – much less than their competitors, both in calling rates and monthly fees. With VoIP, businesses no longer have to maintain separate networks for phones and data which also helps save money.

And while some businesses do pay their current phone company extra for features like call holding, call display, and call forwarding, most VoIP providers include these features in their product, meaning you don't have to pay extra for the features you need.

Easy to set up

With most VoIP connections, there's no need to install switching boards or phone connections. Some systems can be installed easily by downloading an app to your computer, while others might require that you install an adaptor that converts voice signals into digital signals using your existing phones. These adaptors are small and in most cases all you have to do is plug the phone's cable in before plugging the adaptor into an Internet connection socket.

More than just voice calls

Many VoIP programs also allow for chat capabilities, video calls, video conferencing, and even screen sharing. Not only that, but you'll be able to see if your employees are available through presence technology, as well as giving them more ways to stay connected.

Highly flexible phone systems

VoIP systems allow you to do far more than is possible with traditional phone technology. You can:

- **Take your phone system with you:** As long as you have access to a broadband connection you can use your VoIP system anywhere.
- **Talk on your laptop:** Many VoIP systems include telephone software that enables you to send and receive calls using a headphone unit connected to your computer. This helps eliminate the risk of you missing an urgent call when you're on your laptop.
- **Receive voicemail and faxes via email:** Many VoIP services allow you to have voicemail and faxes forwarded to your email inbox. You then receive all your messages in one place, and your voicemail and faxes can be easily archived or forwarded.
- **Have virtual phone numbers:** Your phone number can have any available area code, meaning you can have a business based in one place but can have a phone number with a different area code; advantageous if your business has, or wants, customers in specific areas.
- **Increase productivity:** Many VoIP phone numbers can be configured to simultaneously ring on multiple devices, such as your cell and landline phones. This eliminates time-consuming phone tag. According to a recent survey conducted by Sage Research, the increased productivity enabled by Internet telephony added up to 3.9 hours per week, per employee.