Bits & Bytes

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

Technical Action Group Inc
TAG we're I.T.

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"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."

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Windows XP Support Ends Soon!

What You Need To Know

The end of an era is upon us. After more than 10 years of service, Microsoft's most celebrated operating system of all time - Windows XP - will take its final bow and ride off into the sunset of history on April 8, 2014.

After April 8th, 2014, Microsoft will no longer support Windows XP or provide updates or security. Unlike the end of most operating systems, this will not go unnoticed by most computer users.

The statistics are quite extraordinary, given the fact that Windows XP is over a decade old and 3 operating systems have been introduced since its release - Windows Vista, Windows 7 and most recently the newly tooled, tablet-friendly Windows 8 and 8.1. Windows Vista support has already ended and the computer world barely noticed.

So what should you do if you're still using Windows XP? The simple answer is plan to upgrade now. Our tech department is ready to help you migrate your business systems from Windows XP to Windows 7.

The Windows 7 Upgrade Offers the Following Advantages:

Faster performance, better security, improved productivity and fewer IT support costs. If you have many computers that need an upgrade, the best strategy is to plan to upgrade a few systems at a time over the next six months to ease the transition and control your costs at the same time. Our technicians can help you plan an effective strategy for your upgrade. Just call us for details.

So What Happens If You Don't Upgrade?

Nothing will happen immediately. Your computer won't suddenly shut down or stop working. However, the lack of support and updates for Windows XP will make any systems using it much more vulnerable to security breaches, viruses and malware. This will likely result in more calls to IT support and an increase in support costs. Not to mention lost time and productivity for your business.

In addition, manufacturers will likely stop making new software or drivers for printers and other devices that are compatible with Windows XP. So if you want to update your printer in the future, it just might not work on your Windows XP computer.

Still Worried About Changing Your Computers to Windows 7?

You'll be happy to know that making the switch is relatively painless from a user perspective. Windows 7 is a rock-solid platform that is much more robust and secure than Windows XP. And you won't have too much trouble learning it, since it operates in much the same way as its predecessor with a few new features that you'll need to learn. In addition, we've found our Windows 7 users will experience much better system security and reduce their IT support costs.

Shiny Gadget Of The Month:

Leap Motion Controller

Just when you thought technology couldn't make things any easier, they've gone and done it again! With a wave of a hand or lift of a finger, you're about to use your computer in a whole new way. The Leap Motion Controller senses the way you naturally move your hands. So you can point, wave, reach and grab. Even pick something up and put it down. Just like in real life. It's an amazing device for the things you do every day and for the things you never thought you could do.

Browse the web, read articles, flip through photos and play music just by lifting a finger.

Draw, paint and design with your fingertip. You can even use a real pencil or paintbrush.

Sculpt, mold, stretch and bend 3D objects. Take things apart and put them back together.

Pick, pluck, strum and drum. Play air guitar, air harp or air anything.

Slice fruit and shoot bad guys with your finger.

You literally hold all the power in your fingertips. This sensitive device provides superb accuracy up to 1/100th of a millimeter. Get yours today for just $79.99. **https://www.leapmotion.com/**

Would You Rather Text Than Talk?

Essential Tips For Business Texting

You use your iPhone, Blackberry or Android for everything else. Your spouse even texts you to grab some milk at the store or to tell you they'll be gone when you get home. It's quick, easy and gets the job done. Why not in business too?

If you're going to text for business purposes, follow these 7 texting tips to keep it professional:

Consider if your message is urgent. Your text may interrupt your recipient…be sure there's a good reason for that interruption.

Is e-mail better? Most people prefer business communications via e-mail as it better respects their time and ability to respond appropriately. Text messages are also easily lost if sent at a bad time.

Do they only e-mail you? If yes, respond to them in the same way. If they e-mail, send an e-mail. If they call, call them back.

DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS. DON'T YOU FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS YELLING AT YOU WHEN THEY TYPE IN ALL CAPS? DON'T SEND E-MAILS OR TEXTS IN ALL CAPS.

Proofread your message. Ever hear of "Auto-Correct" in text messages? Some can be downright embarrassing. If you're taking the time to write the message, take the extra seconds to proofread.

No abbreviations! Your recipient shouldn't have to decipher your text message with a decoder ring. Be as clear as you can with proper grammar and pronunciation. No sense in risking losing a customer who gets fed up with your messages.

Include your name in the message. Not everyone knows who you are simply by your cellphone number. Assume that the person doesn't know who the message is coming from.
If you do text in a business environment, especially with a customer or prospect, follow these 7 tips to ensure that you are perceived as the true business professional that you are!

Cyber Liability Insurance? Yep—It Exists!

As technology becomes increasingly important for successful business operations, the value of a strong Cyber Liability Insurance policy will only continue to grow. The continued rise in the amount of information stored and transferred electronically has resulted in a remarkable increase in the potential exposures facing businesses. In an age where a stolen laptop or hacked account can instantly compromise the personal data of thousands of customers, or an ill-advised post on a social media site can be read by hundreds in a matter of minutes, protecting yourself from cyber liability is just as important as some of the more traditional exposures businesses account for in their general commercial liability policies.

Why Cyber Liability Insurance?

A traditional business liability policy is extremely unlikely to protect against most cyber exposures. Standard commercial policies are written to insure against injury or physical loss and will do little, if anything, to shield you from electronic damages and the associated costs they may incur. Exposures are vast, ranging from the content you put on your website to stored customer data.

Awareness of the potential cyber liabilities your company faces is essential to managing risk through proper coverage.

Possible exposures covered by a typical cyber liability policy may include:

Data breaches –Companies are beginning to have a greater responsibility to protect clients' personal information. In the event of a breach, notification of the affected parties is now required by law in Alberta, and may soon be required throughout Canada. This will add to costs that will also include security fixes, identity theft protection for the affected parties and protection from possible legal action. While companies operating online are at a heightened risk, even companies that don't transmit personal data over the Internet, but still store it in electronic form, could be susceptible to breaches through data lost to unauthorized employee access or hardware theft.

Intellectual property rights – Your company's online presence, whether it be through a corporate website, blogs or social media, opens you up to some of the same exposures faced by publishers. This can include libel, copyright or trademark infringement and defamation, among other things.

Damages to a third-party system – If an email sent from your server has a virus that crashes the system of a customer, or the software your company distributes fails, resulting in a loss for a third party, you could be held liable for the damages.

System Failure – A natural disaster, malicious activity or fire could all cause physical damages that could result in data or code loss. While the physical damages to your system hardware would be covered under your existing business liability policy, data or code loss due to the incident would generally not be covered.

Cyber Extortion – Hackers can hijack websites, networks and stored data, denying access to you or your customers. They often demand money to restore your systems to working order. This can cause a temporary loss of revenue and generate costs associated with paying the hacker's demands, or rebuilding if damage is done.

Business Interruption – If your primary business operations require the use of computer systems, a disaster that cripples your ability to transmit data could cause you, or a third party that depends on your services, to lose potential revenue. From a server failure to a data breach, such an incident can affect your everyday operations. Time and resources that normally would have gone elsewhere will need to be directed towards the problem, which could result in further losses. This is especially important as denial of service attacks by hackers have been on the rise. Such attacks block access to certain websites by either rerouting traffic to a different site or overloading an organization's server.

Cyber Liability Insurance is specifically designed to address the risks that come with using modern technology--risks that other types of business liability coverage simply won't cover. The level of coverage your business needs is based on your individual operations and can vary depending on your range of exposure. It is important to work with a broker who can identify your areas of risk so a policy can be tailored to fit your situation.

Mumby Insurance Brokers, Inc., Your Coverage Expert

As reliance on technology continues to increase, new exposures continue to emerge. As your business grows, make sure your cyber liability coverage grows with it. Mumby Insurance Brokers, Inc. is here to help you analyze your needs and make the right coverage decisions to protect your operations from unnecessary risk..

FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
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OutlookTip:

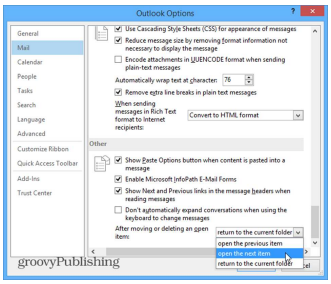
Open The Next Message Immediately After Deleting

Outlook, by default, will return to the folder of a message after you delete it. If you get tons of email every day, it's always good to find an advantage to get through them faster. To make things go more quickly, you might want to go directly to the next message. Here's how to set that up in Outlook 2010 and 2013.

Make Outlook Go To Next Message After Deleting E-Mail

Go to ***File > Options*** and select ***Mail*** in the left pane.

Then in the right side scroll all the way down to ***Other*** from the dropdown menu, select ***Open the next item*** and click ***OK*** to save the changes.

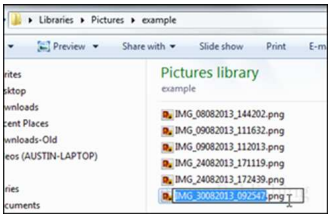


That's all there is to it! Now when you delete an open message, it will open the next message right away versus going back to the current folder you're in. This tip will allow you to manage your email in a more rapid fashion.

Windows Tip: Quickly Rename Files With A Keyboard Shortcut

If you constantly work with images and download several gigs of test files each day, then renaming becomes a complete chore and a hotkey can be a time and lifesaver.

In Windows when you select a file and press the F2 key you can instantly rename the file without having to go through the context menu. At first glance this shortcut seems rather basic. As seen in the screenshot below, it's the exact same thing that the context menu delivers.



However when you combine it with another renaming trick (also available from the context menu by holding shift + right-click might I add) it becomes immensely useful. That is, if you use your PC for processing photos. To do it just select a group of files and then press the F2 key, each file in the selection will be given the same name with a sequential number following after. If you recently took a trip to Australia and need a quick way to organize photo names, this is it and it doesn't require any messy third party software to get the job done. There are probably other files this might be useful for as well, but for photos this is king.

Tip: Just in case you want to practice some true Keyboard Kung Fu, instead of using a mouse to select multiple files you can use shift + the arrow keys.

BIG Business Solutions for the Small Business

Everything can feel extra difficult for small businesses. Technology makes things easier; yet technology costs money, and the lack of money tends to be at the root of a lot of problems for businesses of all sizes. Big businesses can afford the best technology, which is one reason they do so well. We level the playing field by making big business solutions affordable.

Just because your business is small, doesn't mean that you have to tolerate crummy technology solutions. You may think that you're saving money by not purchasing the newest technology, but if this cost-cutting measure means that you have to use low-end solutions, then you may not be saving any money at all. In fact, your crusty equipment may actually be costing you revenue. A business using cheap technology and jerry-rigged solutions lacks the competitive edge. Without this edge, a small business will stay small.

When partnering with Technical Action Group, you will get access to technology solutions that are normally reserved for big corporate enterprises at costs geared towards your budget; on top of that we will work closely with your business. We will do more than sell you a piece of equipment; we will take the time to learn about the unique needs of your business so that we can pair them up with the very best solutions for your money.

This is one of the biggest differences between Technical Action Group and a consumer-grade technology retail store. We are not trying to offload extra inventory, and will never try to sell you something that you don't need. At Technical Action Group, finding the right solution for you is our priority, even if it might not lead to the biggest sale.

We think this approach to sales is the best approach because we have discovered that, when a solution we recommend helps a partner's business, then their company will grow. New growth will provide more revenue. This revenue will be invested back into a partner's business, which will in turn provide even more growth--and when you grow, we grow! Overall, we feel this is a smart way to do business because we look out for each other and have a relationship built on decisions that are in your company's long-term best interest.

Here are just a few enterprise-level solutions that Technical Action Group can help your small business take advantage of. These cutting edge solutions are usually reserved for big business, but Technical Action Group knows how to work with your budget in order to help make these solutions a part of your company's growth strategy:

- Data Backup, Disaster Recovery, and Business Continuity
- Firewall and Security Solutions and Web Content Filtering
- Server Virtualization
- Virtual Private Networks
- Smartphone and Mobile Solutions
- Security Policy Management and Administration
- Email hosting and Spam Protection
- Software Solutions, Productivity Suites, CRM packages and much more!

Your business may be small, but this doesn't mean that you can't play with big business toys! Also, being small does not mean that you have to stay small. You want your small business to grow, and we want to help your company grow by providing you with the cutting-edge solutions you need. Call Joe Stoll at 416-489-6312 x 204 or e-mail him at JStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com find out more about all the different technologies that can take your company to the next level!