

Bits & Bytes

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



“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)
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Shocking New CBS News Report Reveals Why Your Office Copy Machine Is Actually A Security Time Bomb



According to a recent CBS news report, copy and multi-function machines in offices contain a huge, unknown security risk that all businesses must address immediately or face the legal, financial, and PR repercussions of a security breach.

A Surprising Fact About Your Office Copier

Nearly every printer, copier and multi-function machine manufactured after 2002 contains a hard drive that stores the images of every document you’ve ever copied, faxed, or scanned. These document images stay on that machine’s hard drive forever and can quickly and easily be reproduced with a little know-how. Surprisingly, this little fact has not received any press – until now.

A CBS Undercover Investigation

In April of this year, a reporter went undercover to a New Jersey copier warehouse that had over 6,000 used copy machines in stock for resale. This investigation reveals a shocking fact – it’s incredibly easy for a person to retrieve and reproduce every single document ever scanned, copied, or faxed through the machines available for resale.

As part of the investigation, the CBS reporter pulled 4 random machines that were available for sale and purchased them for approximately \$300 each. These machines were immediately loaded onto a truck and delivered within 2 hours to this reporter’s office. Using a free application available online, he was able to access the hard drive of each machine and reproduce the documents within 30 minutes. What he uncovered was unbelievable.

Disturbing Facts Revealed By The Investigation

They discovered that one of the machines was formerly owned by the City of Buffalo, New York, Sex Crimes Division. In no time at all they were able to access over 249,000 documents that passed through that machine, including lists of sex offenders and crime data. Another machine from the Buffalo PD Narcotics Division contained a list of drug raid targets. The third machine was from a construction company. It contained blueprints of buildings, over \$40,000 in check copies, as well as pages of paystubs, names, and the social security numbers of employees.

But the fourth machine was the most disturbing. It was previously owned by a New York health insurance firm and contained over 300 pages of detailed medical records including drug prescriptions, blood tests, and even a cancer diagnosis – all which blatantly violate privacy laws.

Shiny New Gadget of the Month:



Livescribe Pulse Smartpen

This month's gadget is PERFECT for not only students but also busy CEOs who love going to educational conferences and taking lots of notes. Here's why...

Taking good notes during class - even with the most rapid-fire professor - just got a whole lot easier. The Livescribe Pulse Smartpen may look like your average pen (it's about the size of a Sharpie), but it also packs in a voice recorder and up to 2 GB of storage. So far so good, but here's the really cool part: Not only does the Pulse remember everything you've written in digital form (you can sync your handwritten notes onto your PC or Mac and even share them online), it also keeps track of whatever was being said while you were scribbling a detail — just tap a word to hear all of what Professor Motormouth was saying at that particular moment.

What's the trick? The Pulse Smartpen's infrared sensor uses the tiny dots on the custom (and required) Livescribe notebook paper as reference points.

Price: The 2GB version retails for \$199.95.

Know What Your Responsibility Is

Before you trade in, resell or dispose of any office copier, scanner or multifunction machine you MUST make sure the hard drive is wiped clean of all information as you would any computer in your office. Failure to do so could result in damaging security breaches and identity theft for your company, staff, and customers. This goes DOUBLE if you use your office machines to scan, fax, or copy social security numbers, credit cards, or medical records of any kind.

As always, we are here to assist you with all things digital. If you are getting ready to dispose of or trade in a copier, scanner, fax, or multi-function machine, give us a call. We can make sure your data is forever erased and inaccessible to criminals looking for an easy hit.

How a \$400 PC From Future Shop Can End Up Costing You Double

I know many of you have been in this situation...A PC breaks down in your business (of course, at the worst possible time) and you need a new one, stat. You have a couple of options:

1. Call TAG (or your computer support provider) to order and install a business-class PC. This can be rushed and done within 1 to 2 business days.
2. Save a few hundred bucks on the PC by running to Future Shop, Best Buy or Staples yourself, get whatever's on sale and have us install it.

While option #2 sounds like a bargain and appears to reduce waiting time, it's worth considering the following, based on our experiences with a few clients over the past year who have purchased PC's on their own, without any guidance from the pro's (that would be us), or against our advice not to do so:

Operating System

In most situations, the computers being sold at major retailers such as Future Shop and Best Buy are geared for home use, not business. As such the operating system that is preinstalled is a home version that cannot be properly networked with your business' server. What does this mean? Setting up seamless access for your staff member to use internal printers, network drives, databases and e-mail becomes very cumbersome at best, but most often, will not work at all.

To get past this, we have to organize the purchase of an operating system upgrade and install it on the PC. Not only does this cause a delay in deployment, but increases the overall cost of the PC by up to \$500 (1 - 2 hours of computer support, plus \$150 - \$300 for operating system).

Hardware

Major manufacturers such as HP and Dell produce distinct product lines to service consumer (home) and business. The primary difference between the two is that the business products have components that have been field tested longer, and come with a longer and more comprehensive warranty. They are designed for overall stability, and to take the demands of a business user for 3—5 years (think Tonka truck durability). Simply put, the business class computer will long outlive the home class.

Is Saving \$400 Really Worth It?

As mentioned earlier, if you buy a consumer grade PC, spending extra money on a new operating system and the labour involved is unavoidable if you want your employee productive. Aside from that, the life expectancy of 3 - 5 years of a business class PC is the much wiser investment.

Get More Free Tips At Our Website: www.TechnicalActionGroup.com 416-489-6312

One thing I always tell my clients who are struggling with the initial price difference between consumer and business class equipment is that if you look at the investment as a 3 to 5 year life expectancy, the purchase of better quality hardware with better support from the manufacturer will save long term on not only computer support costs, but costly downtime, frustration and stress from frequent hardware failures.

Be Prepared

On a final note, as our clients are well aware TAG is a big proponent of always having one or two functional, spare systems available, ready to be used in a moment's notice so that a PC failure is not such a crisis, panic purchases can be prevented and employee productivity can be practically avoided.

The Enemy Within: The Biggest Threat to Your Company's Critical Confidential Data Revealed



If you ask most business owners what's the biggest threat to their company's network and data, they might say, "viruses, hackers and cyber criminals," or perhaps "faulty hardware, software and system failures". But research is showing a much different reality.

According to a recent study published by Computer Economics, (a research and metrics company for IT managers) employee sabotage – whether it be for financial gain, retribution or some other motivation – accounts for a bigger threat than viruses, hackers, hardware failures and natural disasters.

With so much critical data and operations tied up in a company's network, internal sabotage from employees becomes an even greater risk. In a matter of minutes, an employee can delete software or erase years of data vital to a company. They can purposefully download viruses or attempt to tarnish their employer's reputation by posting pornography on their company's web site or spamming all clients with racist, hateful and slanderous e-mails. Or they can simply download client lists and other confidential information and sell it to competitors, post it online or use it to start a competitive business.

What are the reasons why they do this? The biggest one given is simply "job dissatisfaction." Another contributing factor seems to be the downturn in the economy. Cut backs, layoffs and fewer raises have given rise to employees stealing data, equipment or money. For example, a law firm recently discovered their internal IT person was purchasing computer equipment on the company's credit card and reselling it on eBay. He had embezzled over \$40,000 before the company caught up to what he was doing.

Another company suspected that one of their employees was stealing and suspended them from work until a further investigation could be conducted. When the employee caught wind of what was happening, they deleted over a year's worth of company e-mails – all containing important client records and history – in an effort to cover their tracks. Fortunately this company had a solid backup system in place and was able to immediately recover all the data within a few hours.

To protect yourself, we strongly recommend you have an offsite backup of your data in place such as our TAGuard Backup and Disaster Recovery Service. Here's how it works:

- In 15 minute intervals, changes to data on your server are written to the backup server.
- At the end of each day, the latest changes to your data are sent to a remote, secure backup location.
- All data that resides on the backup server and at the remote backup location is encrypted to protect it from hackers.
- The remote data is mirrored in two data centers for additional redundancy and security.
- The backup server is monitored 24/7x365 to ensure data is being backed up.
- Each month we conduct a test recovery on sample data.
- No need to shell out thousands on a new backup server—it's included in the affordable monthly fee for the service!
- No more tapes to remember to rotate!

Even if you're not concerned about employee sabotage, this service is essential for any business that can't afford to be down days or weeks in the event of a disaster (server crash, fire, theft, flood) . We can have you back up and running within 3 hours in the event of a server crash, or 3 short days if your server is completely destroyed—with ALL of your data in tact.

Warning: iPods Earbuds Are Known To Cause Permanent Hearing Loss

Listening to music on the radio is about as antiquated today as using a payphone. Modern music lovers now carry thousands of songs around with them in their iPod and listen while driving, working, exercising, completing chores, etc. Problem is, the earbuds that come with the iPods (and similar products) let in a lot of ambient noise. That means users crank up the volume to drown out whatever is going on in the background.

The volume on an iPod can be raised to 115 decibels (db) which is the equivalent of standing next to a moving subway train and only 5 db short of an ambulance siren. The average individual can tolerate up to eight hours of sound at 85 db before suffering hearing damage. For every 5 db over 85, the exposure time before irreversible damage gets cut in half, say audiologists.

Because so many earbud users have suffered hearing damage, Apple was taken to court; but a federal appeals court exonerated the company, noting that Apple puts warnings on its packaging and iTunes site and offers instructions on how to set volume limits on iPods.

To hear music at a reasonable volume, users can purchase headphones with in-ear monitors (IEM) that reduce noise. You can also have an audiologist make custom earbuds for you to ensure a perfect fit and reduce background noise. They cost about \$400 but will save your hearing.

Thanks For the Kind Words...



“I Can’t Recommend TAG’s Service Strongly Enough”

“The biggest reason I use Technical Action Group is for the peace of mind they give me.

Their TAGuard Backup & Disaster Recovery Service for Small Business automatically backs up our data every night without fail. Plus, they monitor and test the backups to make sure that I can get all of my critical data back quickly in the event of a hardware failure or disaster.

I have enough things to worry about as a business owner but with TAG’s service, I never have to worry about being forced out of business if something unfortunate were to happen like fire, theft or flood. TAG would have my business up and running again quickly, with all of my data.”

Wayne Nofle,
President
Stateside Consulting

Please Welcome TAG’s New Client!

I’m thrilled to welcome a new client into our company!

**Creaghan McConnell Group Ltd.
The Exit Strategy Company
www.theexitstrategycompany.com**

Creaghan McConnell Group (‘CMG’) specializes in helping business-owning families plan and prepare for transitioning their businesses, either to the next generation of the family, or to new owners entirely.

CMG needed a computer support company they could rely on and work closely with to develop a technology strategy to better support their current business and future growth plans. Specifically, CMG needed recommendations that would improve stability, speed and accessibility for staff accessing their custom database applications internally, and from remote locations, while maintaining the integrity of the applications. They were also concerned about the frequency and reliability of their backups. TAG worked closely with CMG to gather details of their specific needs and concerns so our recommendations would be in complete alignment with that they needed. Upon completion of implementing our recommendations, CMG will see dramatic improvement in overall network speed, access to data, and stability.

With our TAGuard Backup and Disaster Recovery Service in place, should anything catastrophic happen with their server, we will have them back up and running within a few short hours—with all their data intact, thereby causing minimal costly disruption to their business and protecting them from permanent data loss.

Through TAG’s Professional Care Plan, CMG has peace of mind knowing that their entire network is being monitored 24/7 so potential issues can be addressed before they become downtime. As well, TAG’s weekly and monthly proactive maintenance activities on their network drastically reduce chances of virus infections and their data is kept safe from intruders. Budgeting for IT costs becomes simplified with this plan that includes unlimited remote computer support for one affordable monthly fee.

Would You Like a \$25 iTunes Card?

Congratulations to Walter Griebing of Morris Marketing for being the first to correctly answer July’s Trivia Challenge “*Millionaire John D. Rockefeller was noted for handing out what to children he passed in the street?*”

The correct answer was b) Dimes

Be the first to submit the correct answer to this month’s trivia question and you’ll receive a \$25 iTunes card!

What was the name of the singing cowboy in the musical ‘Oklahoma?’

a) Curley b) Lucky c) Frankie d) Petey

Send Your Answer Today to:
SStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com

Type: ‘September Trivia Question’ in the Subject line.

Due to the number of entries, only the winner will be contacted.