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BITS & BYTES

INSIDER TIPS ON HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS RUN FASTER, EASIER AND MORE PROFITABLY

IN THIS ISSUE

November 2016

"TAG specializes in providing management level responsibility for all the technology in your business. This includes support for your network and working with other hardware & software vendors who's technology you use.

We do this with friendly, proactive & responsive service!

Joe Stoll, President
Technical Action Group (TAG)

Could One Tiny Leak Wipe Out Your Entire Company?

Things were going great at Michael Daugherty's up-and-coming $4 million medical-testing company.

He was a happy man. He ran a good business in a nice place. His Atlanta-based LabMD had about 30 employees and tested blood, urine and tissue samples for urologists. Life was good for this middle-aged businessman from Detroit.

Then, one Tuesday afternoon in May 2008, the phone call came that changed his life. His general manager came in to tell Daugherty about a call he'd just fielded from a man claiming to have nabbed a file full of LabMD patient documents. For a medical business that had to comply with strict federal rules on privacy, this was bad. Very bad.

It turned out that LabMD's billing manager had been using LimeWire file-sharing software to download music. In the process, she'd unwittingly left her documents folder containing the medical records exposed to a public network.

A hacker easily found and downloaded LabMD's patient records. And now the fate of Michael's life – and his business – were drastically altered.

What followed was a nightmarish downward spiral for LabMD. Not one to go down without a fight, Michael found himself mired in an escalating number of multiple lawsuits and legal battles with the Federal Trade Commission and other regulators investigating the leak.

Finally, in January 2014, exhausted and out of funds, his business cratering under constant pressure, he gave up the fight and shuttered his company. One tiny leak that could have easily been prevented took his entire company down. Could this happen to you and your business?

Let's take a look at four fatal errors you MUST avoid, to make sure it never does:

Please, please, please do NOT think you are immune to a cyber-attack simply because you are not a big company. The fact is, whether you have 12 clients, or 12,000 clients, your data has value to hackers. A simple client profile with name, address and phone number sells for as little as $1 on the black market. Yet add a few details, like credit card and social security or social insurance numbers, and the price can skyrocket – $300 per record is not uncommon. Being small doesn't mean you are immune.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Hololens: Your New Reality?

A game designer sees a moving 3-D image of a living, breathing, mace-wielding ogre – on her desk. She flicks a finger and he turns from side to side, giving her a full view of his outfit and weapons belt.

An architect looks up at the ceiling in a building he's just designed. He waves his hand and reshapes it, allowing more light through. All virtually.

A space scientist designing a Mars rover strolls through the landscape, noting from all sides the position, shape and size of rocks his vehicle must navigate.

Now it's your turn. Put on the new HoloLens by Microsoft, and what do you see? How could you use this cool new augmented reality (AR) tool in your business?

At $3,000 for the developer's version, it may not be an impulse buy. But new AR tools like this will soon be part of your computing world.

Are you skimping on security to save money? Sure, of course you have a tight budget… So you cut a deal with your marketing manager, who wants to work from home at times. He links into the company network with a VPN. If configured properly, your VPN creates a secure and encrypted tunnel into your network. So his device now links his home network into the company network. The problem is, his home cable modem may be vulnerable to attack, an all-too-common issue with consumer devices. Now you have an open tunnel for malware and viruses to attack your network.

Could lack of an off-boarding process put your company at risk? It's crucial to keep a record of user accounts for each employee with security privileges. When an employee leaves, you MUST have those accounts removed without delay. An internal attack by a disgruntled worker could do serious harm to your business. Be sure to close this loop.

Have you been lax about implementing security policies for desktop computers, mobile devices and the Internet? The greatest threat to your company's data originates not in technology, but in human behaviour. It starts before you boot up a single device. In an era of BYOD (bring your own device), for instance, lax behavior by anyone connecting to your network weakens its security. Your team love their smartphones, and with good reason. So it's tough sticking with strict rules about BYOD. But without absolute adherence to a clear policy, you might as well sell your company's secrets on eBay.

Don't let a tiny leak sink your ship – here's what to do next…

Let us run our complete Network Security Audit for you. We'll send our top data security specialist to your location and give you a complete top-to-bottom security analysis with action plan. This is normally a $297 service. It's yours FREE when you call now through the end of November.

Don't wait until disaster strikes. Call me, Joseph Stoll or e-mail me at JStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com to schedule your FREE, No Obligation Network Security Audit TODAY.

Free Report Download: If You Are Considering Cloud Computing For Your Company, DON'T, Until You Read This…

If you are considering cloud computing or Office 365 to save money or simplify IT, it is extremely important read this special report, **"5 Critical Facts Every Business Owner Must Know Before Moving Their Network To The Cloud."**

This report discusses in simple, non-technical terms the pros and cons of cloud computing, data security, how to choose a cloud provider, as well as three little-known facts that most IT consultants don't know or won't tell you about cloud computing that could end up causing you MORE problems and costing you more money than you anticipated. **Even if you aren't ready to move to the cloud yet**, this report will give you the right information and questions to ask when the time comes.

Get Your Free Copy Today: https://www.TechnicalActionGroup.com/cloud-report

Dealing With the Dark Side of Social Media

Social media has become a true amplifier, permeating every nook and cranny of the web, giving a megaphone to those who might have previously found themselves voiceless. While I generally believe that the proliferation of the social web is a good thing, it does have a dark side that is difficult, if not impossible, to ignore.

I was reminded of this recently when an unscrupulous competitor accused me and my friend Larry Winget of an ugly racial slur. While it was totally fabricated, this person willfully resorted to defamation of character to defend his indefensible behaviour. It's easy to get mad, get on your computer and allow emotions to run amok. And that can come back to bite you. Yet there are times you shouldn't acquiesce to digital bullies. You need to take a stand.

Here are a few tips on how to keep your social media actions in check, and how to react to others who just can't seem to control theirs:

⇒ How do I think through my social media actions in a heated moment?

⇒ If you wouldn't say it to your grandmother, don't write it on Twitter. It feels good to blast an opponent, but such outbursts can easily be used against you.

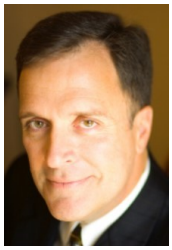
Remember that everything you say or do on the web is archived. Consider everything you write on the Internet to be permanent. Trolls may delete their comments, but they still leave a trail. Still debating saying it? Sleep on it. If you really feel the need to say something that might be taken the wrong way, consider sitting on it overnight. Waiting until the next day will rarely hurt your point, and it may save huge amounts of embarrassment.

If you do say it…make sure you feel you could defend it in a court of law. Falsely accusing someone of something is a big deal, and the repercussions could amplify beyond your original intentions.

How do I react when I am targeted on social media?

Grab screenshots. If someone truly is going after you, the first move is to gather evidence. Make sure you have copies. Odds are that they will quickly realize what they have done and will try to erase their trail, so the best thing you can do is make sure you have a copy on hand.

Report them. Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and most other platforms have guards against those who harass others. Don't hesitate to put in a report – that's why those guards are there! Remember that the truth is your best defense. As someone who has been egregiously accused of something I did not do, I took solace in the fact that I was innocent, and as such the accusation cruelly asserted could never be proven. We live in a world where unscrupulous people have migrated to online communities and live among the rest of us. I hope you never have to use the above actions, but when you do, I hope they serve you well.



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Savvy Users Are Capitalizing On The LinkedIn—Microsoft Merger

Here are three ways you too can profit:

1) Your profile photo now appears on both platforms. Run it by photofeeler.com to make sure it's up to snuff.

2) When it comes to updates, forget text – video rules. Check your newsfeed and you'll see how LinkedIn puts video on top and is burying articles.

No wonder members have seen a 60% to 90% drop in readership. To get attention, go video.

3) Keep an eye on LinkedIn's social advertising. With access to user data from both platforms, your ads could now enjoy a wider audience of both LinkedIn and Microsoft users.

This merger opens new doors for users. Now's the time to capitalize on it.
-Entrepreneur

Being "smart" isn't just for phones and TVs anymore.

Soon, Microsoft's Cortana will be able to see inside your fridge. With cutting-edge, fridge-safe technologies,

Cortana can identify the foods you place there. After spending some time with your fridge's contents, Cortana learns your food preferences. It can even offer up recipes or shopping lists to make your life easier.

While other smart fridges have cameras that show users what's inside without opening the door, the Cortana version actually helps you keep your fridge stocked.

By the time this fridge hits the market, it will have captured thousands of photos of food packages from around the world. And that means you may soon have a smart new helper when it comes to shopping and fixing meals.—*TechCrunch*

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Google's Chromebook Pixel may have faded into a high-resolution sunset….

But the good news is, some great new challengers will soon take its place. The Dell Chromebook 13, for instance, sports a 1080p touch-screen display, aluminum chassis, glass trackpad and a (very fast) Intel Core i3 processor.

Meanwhile, weighing in at just 2.9 pounds, the Toshiba Chromebook 2 delivers nearly the same performance as the Dell. Yet at a full two pounds less, you'll appreciate its light weight. And the new kid on the block, the Acer Chromebook 14, offers a high-end feel and near top-of-the-line specs for just $300USD. Any of these challengers will fill the bill for you if you love the low price of a Chromebook, but want something a little more premium. - *AndroidCentral.com*

A wafer-thin laptop so light you'll forget it's in your shoulder bag...

Want an ultrasleek machine with enough battery life to keep you going long hours without plugging in? A new breed of "ultraportables" offers that and more. The lightning-quick storage on these units lets you resume work in seconds, even after they've been idle or asleep for days.

The "best in breed" will cost you a pretty penny. But if you're willing to spend a little, you can get premium features. Touch screens, full HDMI ports and eight hours or more of battery life are not uncommon.

At the top end, you can expect a high-resolution 4K screen (3840 x 2160). Be extra-nice and Santa might even slip one in your stocking! - *PC mag.com*

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Is your mobile website stressing people out?

Of course, page-load times can affect conversion and brand perception. But did you know they also affect user heart rate and stress levels?

According to a 2016 study on mobility by Ericsson, page-loading delays lead to an average 38% jump in heart rate. Remember the last time you watched a horror movie? It's about that stressful… Not how you want your visitors to feel.

To keep your page loads painless and your visitors happy, make sure your website is mobile-friendly. It needs to be quick and easy to navigate and engage with. You have a lot at stake in your website – and making it stress-free for visitors could make a big difference. *-HubSpot Blog*

Want To Know The Secret To Beating Ransomware?

If there's a pop-up you NEVER want to see on your computer screen, it's this:

"Your files have been encrypted. You have 72 hours to submit payment or they will be deleted forever."

Once ransomware hits, it's too late. Game over.

The best way to beat ransomware is prevention. Make sure it never happens in the first place. And if somehow it happens anyway, make sure you have up-to-date backups ready to go.

The first step to prevention is to invest in serious cybersecurity. Start with antivirus software with active monitoring.

Then, layer in anti-malware and anti-ransomware programs. Finally, store current backups in the cloud and/or on a separate unplugged hard drive.
-blog.malwarebytes.com