BITS & BYTES

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

How To Ensure The Heat Doesn't Fry Your Server (And Your Profits!)

With the "dog days" of summer upon us, most 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 that heat outside can actually bring your company's growth to a grinding halt and increase your IT expenses significantly.
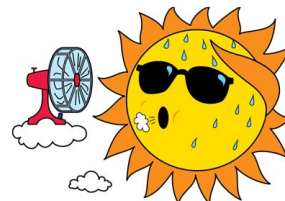
Excess heat can be a big problem for small to mid-sized business servers, since a server that becomes overheated usually costs more in energy, fails more often and is more likely to crash. For most companies, a server crash can mean hours or days of downtime, unproductive employees, HUGE amounts of stress and thousands of dollars in lost opportunity.

7 Steps Every Business Owner Must Take To Prevent a Heat-Induced 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.
♦ Make sure cold air reaches all the equipment.
♦ Have a redundant A/C unit 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 25 degrees celcius / 77 Fahrenheit.
♦ Consider virtualization or cloud computing so that you are generating a lower amount of heat in the first place.

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Protect Your Server And Network Equipment From Frying!

For free, we'll come to your office and…

♦ Audit the location and condition of your server and network equipment to ensure that they are protected against the elements.

♦ Check your computer network's security settings to make sure you are protected from the latest hacker attacks, worms and viruses.

♦ Check your data backup system to ensure it is working properly and accurately backing up all of the critical files and information you never want to lose.

♦ Verify that you have the most up-to-date security patches installed properly; miss one critical update and you're a "sitting duck."

♦ Diagnose slow, unstable computers.

To Claim Your Free "Beat The Heat" Network Audit go to www.TechnicalActionGroup.com/BeatTheHeat or call Joe Stoll Direct At
416-489-6312 x 204 or email him at JStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com

Reminder!!! Reboot Your Computer Nightly!

If you've been a client of TAG's for a while, odds are you (or someone in your company) has been asked by one of us when was the last time you reboot your PC when you call in with a report of a slow PC. There are often telltale behaviours with a PC that are caused by it not being shut down for days or weeks on end, which a quick reboot can often fix.

Turning off your PC at night has an obvious benefit: it saves electricity. Rebooting your PC, on the other hand, has less obvious benefits. Most laptops have the ability to go into sleep mode, which makes it easier to skip rebooting. Even though improved operating systems and more efficient computers have made rebooting less necessary, it still has advantages

Flushes RAM Your computer's random access memory (RAM) is also known as volatile memory, because it's constantly in flux -- as opposed to solid-state memory, such as your hard drive. Your RAM handles lots of different short-term tasks and data, like running processes and holding program values. Rebooting your computer flushes out all this information, allowing your device to start anew and helping it run faster and more efficiently.

Fixes Small Errors Many computer users are unaware that when they reboot, it runs diagnostics on itself, automatically fixing minor errors. These errors can range from buggy or glitchy applications to problems with the RAM. This is why you'll often find that when your computer freezes, or has a problem you don't know how to fix, simply restarting resolves the issue.

Stops Memory Leaks
Memory leaks occur when a program doesn't close properly. Every program that runs on your computer uses memory (usually RAM) while it's open. When you close the program, that memory should return to your computer. Outdated, overused or glitchy programs, however, can have memory leaks, which occur when memory isn't returned to the computer. Rebooting your computer each night can help prevent memory leaks from occurring.

And if the above is still too "geek speak" for you, just think of it this way. If you never turned your car off when you drove it home, wouldn't it get pretty tired and worn out and cause all sorts of problems? Computers, like cars, and people, need breaks too. Now if we humans only had a reboot button for ourselves…

Believe You Can Be Extraordinary

I left my home some 7,000 miles away with little money in my pocket. I was eager – and just 17.

My father died when I was six, and I came to America for college with the words of my mother still ringing in my ears: "If you want to be a great person, you have to walk side by side, hand in hand, with great people."

She was right. I have been blessed. And so many people have helped. Before coming to High Point College, I lived off campus at Mt. Olive College, and the housemother slipped into my bank account enough money for me to buy my first car – a used car. She told me she'd rather invest her money in a promising young man than park it somewhere in a bank. What an angel.

In 1993, two years after High Point College became High Point University (HPU), the school elected me to its board of trustees. Eleven years later, my fellow board members asked a question that would change my future forever.

Nido, they asked, will you lead HPU? In January 2005, HPU appointed me as its seventh president, and I saw my alma mater to be a God, family and country school that could emphasize the values and fundamentals that built America.

No apologies for that. As a patriot to the core, I remember what America and the campus did for me – and what higher education needs to do for others in the 21st century.

Students come to campus armed with iPhones loaded with apps, and they've gotten used to accessing anything in the world with a touch of their screen. Good for them – and us. But we must not confuse accessing information with obtaining knowledge. The two are not the same.

An education must be holistic, impacting the mind, heart and soul. And that includes understanding not just the how, but the why.

Couple that with an entrepreneurial spirit and an awareness of what built America in the first place, and I believe an education like this will set students on a trajectory of achievement and stewardship.

At High Point University, in the seminars I teach for freshmen and seniors, we cover all kinds of topics, from time management to fiscal literacy.

But the timeless principles I focus on pertain to all of us. Who you spend time with is who you become. Be a job creator, not a job taker. Stand for something or you will fall for anything. Change your words and change your world. They need to hear someone say, "You can make it. You are created in God's image."

They need to remember the words of Scottish theologian William Barclay: "Always give without remembering. Always receive without forgetting."

They need to know we are the by-products of the beliefs we keep close.

They need to believe they can be…extraordinary.

It is a choice, after all. And the best is yet to be.

Dr. Nido Qubein is president of High Point University, an undergraduate and graduate institution with 4,300 students from 40 countries. He has authored two dozen books and audio programs distributed worldwide. As a business leader, he is chairman of the Great Harvest Bread Company, with 220 stores in 43 states. He serves on the boards of several national organizations, including BB&T (a Fortune 500 company with $185 billion in assets), the La-Z-Boy Corporation (one of the largest and most recognized furniture brands worldwide) and Dots Stores (a chain of fashion boutiques with more than 400 locations across the country). As a professional speaker, Dr. Qubein has received many distinctions, including the Golden Gavel Medal, induction into the International Speaker Hall of Fame and as the founder of the NSA Foundation in Arizona. To learn more about Dr. Qubein, go to: www.nidoqubein.com

The Loophole That Lets Insurance Companies Refuse to Cover a Cybercrime Theft In Your Business

As hacking hit the headlines in the last few years — most recently the global hack in May that targeted companies both large and small — insurance policies to protect businesses against damage and lawsuits have become a very lucrative business indeed. Your company may already have cyber insurance, and that's a good thing. But that doesn't mean that you don't have a job to do — or that the insurance will cover you no matter what.

When you buy a car, you get the warranty. But in order to keep that warranty valid, you have to perform regular maintenance at regularly scheduled times. If you neglect the car, and something fails, the warranty won't cover it. You didn't do your job, and the warranty only covers cars that have been taken care of.

Cyber insurance works the same way. If your company's IT team isn't keeping systems patched and up to date, taking active measures to prevent ransomware and other cybercrime attacks, and backing everything up in duplicate, it's a lot like neglecting to maintain that car. And when something bad happens, like a cyber attack, the cyber insurance policy won't be able to help you, just as a warranty policy won't cover a neglected car.

Check out this real life policy exclusion we recently uncovered, which doesn't cover damages "arising out of or resulting from the failure to, within a reasonable period of time, install customary software product updates and releases, or apply customary security-related software patches, to computers and other components of computer systems." If your cyber insurance policy has a clause like that — and we guarantee that it does — then you're only going to be able to collect if you take reasonable steps to prevent the crime in the first place.

That doesn't just mean you will have to pay a ransom out of pocket, by the way. If your security breach leaves client and partner data vulnerable, you could be sued for failing to protect that data or found in breach of the newly updated "Digital Privacy Act" which could result in fines of up to $100,000. When your cyber insurance policy is voided because of IT security negligence, you won't be covered against legal damages, either. This is not the kind of position you want to be in.

All of this is not to say that you shouldn't have cyber insurance, or that it's not going to pay out in the case of an unfortunate cyber event. It's just a reminder that your job doesn't end when you sign that insurance policy. You still have to make a reasonable effort to keep your systems secure — an effort you should be making anyway.

> *"If your company's IT team isn't keeping systems patched and up to date, taking active measures to prevent ransomware and other cybercrime attacks, and backing everything up in duplicate, it's a lot like neglecting to maintain that car."*

Should You Have a Mobile App For Your Business?

One of the great things about apps is that you don't need to be a big developer or company to build one. In fact, according to www.smallbusinesscomputing.com, 42 percent of small businesses in the United States have their own mobile app.

By the end of the year, that figure is expected to hit 67 percent! Somewhat unsurprisingly, the most cited reason SMBs said they decided to build mobile apps is to increase sales (39 percent), followed by improving customers service (30 percent).

Others turn to mobile apps as a competitive advantage in specific markets (22 percent) while for some organizations, their parent company suggested an app (10 percent).

But with apps becoming more affordable than ever, there are lots of reasons to invest in your own app and lots of ways to recoup that investment. What would your ideal app do?

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