"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 finally and forever!"
    - Scott Phillips, Synergy Computing

Inside This Issue…

"The article you sent me on how technology causes stress crashed my computer."

Technology Times

"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably"

Could You Be Breaking The Law By Not Archiving E-mails?

It's 4:30 on Friday afternoon when you get the message that a key vendor will not be able to deliver what they promised on time, which will in turn cause YOU to miss a critical deadline for your most important client. Frustrated, you call the vendor, who instantly denies ever being told about the deadline. You know deadlines were discussed but can't find it in your original written agreement. You then turn to your e-mail only to be forced to dig through hundreds of messages to try and find the e-mail where you conveyed the importance of this project being delivered on time, but you can't find it because it was deleted.

Sound familiar? Or perhaps you've been in a similar situation where you've had to "dumpster dive" for old e-mail communications? Think about it – almost all of your business communications and negotiations are performed via e-mail, making them important documents to keep for reference. And since you send and receive hundreds if not thousands of e-mail messages annually, it just makes sense to have a simple and easy way to find old communication threads. But this isn't just a convenience issue, it's a legal one.

What Every Business Is Required By Law To Do

Some industries have strict federal guidelines on storing e-mail communications (financial institutions for example). But what most people don't realize is that ALL businesses must comply with the Federal Regulations on Civil Procedures, or FRCP. In this instance, ignorance is far from bliss – it could put you and your organization in serious legal trouble.

The amendments, which went into effect on December 1, 2006, mandate that companies be prepared for "electronic discovery." Simply put, that means you must know where your data is and how to retrieve it. Failure to do so can lead to fines or loss of a lawsuit.

But I Have A Backup…That Means I'm Okay, Right?

Wrong! E-mail *archiving* is not the same as conventional e-mail backups. Backups only enable you…

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month

www.WorkFlowy.com

WorkFlowy

Who doesn't want to be more organized? You're less likely to forget important projects, dates and tasks, which in turn will reduce your stress and wasted energy.

But if you think getting (and staying) organized is tough, maybe you just haven't found the right tool. If so, you should check out WorkFlowy.

WorkFlowy makes capturing and organizing your ideas, projects and "to-do" list simple. It's based around the idea of outlines. Just pick a topic to organize and start typing. The outlining is handled almost automatically through its intuitive interface.

You can create outlines within outlines and break up a large project into smaller actionable tasks. It's great for multi-step processes or even planning your week. Best of all, it's all online so you can access it from anywhere. All you need to do is create a free account and install Google's Chrome browser. Since it's free, you've got nothing to lose for giving it a try!

…to restore your e-mail servers to a previous point in time in the event of a disaster. An e-mail archive (unlike a backup) is indexed and searchable, which means you can find e-mail communications based upon various criteria, such as date, subject, sender or receiver address, attached files, or any combination of the above.

Aside from the legal issues, e-mail archiving just makes sense. Murphy's law dictates that you'll need an e-mail the minute you permanently delete it; that's why it's smart to archive your inbox. Plus, it will make searching your inbox infinitely faster (not to mention easier) AND prevent your inbox from getting so overblown that it stops working due to file size limitations.

If you want to set up an e-mail archiving solution for your company, give us a call at: 805-967-8744 or e-mail us at: info@synergyinc.net

When Can You Retire?

Here are some interesting facts about Social Security and saving for retirement that we thought you would find interesting as you file your taxes this year.

- "By 2037, all the social security reserves will have been drained and the income flowing into the program will be only enough to pay 75% of the schedule benefits. If that sounds tolerable, consider that two-thirds of seniors rely on Social Security as their main source of income. The average annual benefit is $14,000."
  – Washington Post

- "Nearly eight in ten small business owners prior to the recession in 2007 thought they would have enough money to live comfortably when they retire. By 2010, fewer than two in three felt this way." – Dennis Jacobe, gallup.com

- "The average life expectancy was only 63 years when Social Security was first created, and there were 40 workers supporting each retiree. We now have about 3.1 workers for each retiree. And by the time I reach my mid-60s, there will be about two workers supporting me – and I don't think they're going to want to do that." – Ken Dychtwald, New York Times

- "56% of retirees had outstanding debt when they left the workforce, and 96% refused to delay retirement because of the outstanding debt. In addition, 59% had saved less than $50,000 towards retirement." – Survey, nonprofit CESI Debt Solutions

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- ☐ What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company's Critical Data And Computer Systems
- ☐ What Every Small Business Owner Should Know About Backing Up Their Data To Get A FAST, Easy, And Economical Recovery In The Event Of A Disaster
- ☐ Ultimate Small Business Owners Guide To Setting Up A 'Work From Home' Program Or Remote Network Access
- ☐ Small Business IT Advisory Guide for Choosing an Honest Repair Guy
- ☐ Office Move Checklist
- ☐ How To Pick A Good Password

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The Lighter Side…

While YOU would never use a lame excuse like one of these, according to CareerBuilder.com, these are a few of the reasons employees have given their bosses for skipping work:

- Employee said a chicken attacked his mom.
- Employee had a bad hair transplant.
- Employee called in sick from a bar at 5:00 p.m. the night before.
- Employee had to mow the lawn to avoid a lawsuit from his home owners' association.
- Employee's finger was stuck in a bowling ball.
- Employee fell asleep at his desk at work, hit his head and had a neck injury.

Legal-eez?

Attorneys go to college for years to get a degree. But here are some court transcripts that will leave you wondering what they actually learned!

Attorney: "Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?"
Witness: "All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight."

Attorney: "How was your marriage terminated?"
Witness: "By death."
Attorney: "And by whose death was it terminated?"
Witness: "Guess."

How To Spot An E-mail Hoax

With the Internet and e-mail providing a free, viral platform for online scammers, hackers and cyber criminals, there's no doubt that at some point you'll receive an e-mail hoax. Some are harmless, but many can lead to virus infections, identity theft or worse. Here are some common themes to watch out for:

- Supposedly free giveaways in exchange for forwarding e-mails
- Bogus virus alerts
- False appeals to help sick children
- Pointless petitions that lead nowhere and accomplish nothing
- Dire, and completely fictional, warnings about products, companies, government policies or coming events

Probably the most common indicator that an e-mail is a hoax is the "Send this e-mail to everyone in your address book" request. Hoax writers want their material to be spread as far and wide as possible, so almost every hoax e-mail will have this request built into the message. In some cases, e-mail hoaxes will even give you a specific number of people to send the message to in order to collect a prize or get something for free.

Another surefire indicator that an e-mail is a hoax is that they don't provide a checkable reference to back up claims. Genuine competitions, promotions, giveaways or charity drives will almost always provide a link to a company website or publication. Real virus warnings should only come from your installed anti-virus software. E-mails containing government or company policy information are likely to include references to checkable sources such as news articles, websites or other publications.

A third indicator is often the actual language used. E-mail hoax writers have a tendency to use an emotive, "over-the-top" style of writing peppered with words and phrases such as "Urgent," "Danger," "Worse virus ever," and so on. Another indication is that these messages contain ALL CAPITAL LETTERS for added emphasis. When in doubt, don't forward the message or take the action requested.

Referral Program

We will pay you **$25** for anyone that you refer to us that we get an appointment with.

When your referral becomes a client (and spends $1000 or more) then we will pay you **$50 more**. And, we will give your referral **$100 off** their purchase.

Call us or visit **www.synergyinc.net/about-us/referral-program**

Our Tax Dollars At Work?

California welfare recipients have found that state-issued debit cards make accessing cash easy... in fact, a little too easy. These debit cards are meant to help poor families feed their families; however, an investigation conducted by the Los Angeles Times revealed that more than $12,000 in welfare funds were dispensed at strip clubs, and $1.8 million of the funds from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families were dispensed at casino and poker-room ATMs. Luckily, the state has put an end to this practice.

Walk To The Hospital?

When you dial 9-1-1, you expect to get help – but not so in the case of Curtis Mitchell from Pittsburg, PA. Mitchell dialed 9-1-1 and reported severe abdominal pains, but no one came. So he called again. Still, no one came. This went on for the entire weekend. He called a total of 10 times and eventually died in his home.

So what happened? Apparently the paramedics could only get the ambulance within 4 blocks of his home due to heavy snowfall. But instead of walking to his home, they told him he would have to come to them. The city is facing a civil lawsuit from Mitchell's family.

The Top 5 Network Security Mistakes

1. **Weak Passwords.** You know you need to have a stronger password, yet "password" is still the #1 password used by computer users. For maximum security, your password should contain numbers and letters, both upper and lowercase combined.

2. **Lack of Education.** Most viruses and spyware are invited by the user; therefore, if you want to make sure your employees don't download viruses, take the time to educate them on what new viruses are circulating and about common scams.

3. **Lack of Maintenance.** No software is perfect, which means security loop holes will be exploited by hackers the minute they are discovered. That's why it's critical to keep your security patches up to date.

4. **Plug and Surf.** Computers are NOT designed "ready to go" out of the box. Before a phone line, ethernet cable or wireless card is anywhere near a new computer, certain security needs to be installed and/or configured. Ideally, this should include virus protection, multiple spyware scanners and a program that runs in the background to prevent malicious software from ever being installed.

5. **Do It Yourself.** Setting up a network, applying proper security measures and downloading and installing software can be tricky. Large companies have IT departments. Small business owners should also ask for advice or even hire help. It's worth the extra cost.

Who Else Wants To Win A $25 Gift Card?
Take my monthly Trivia Challenge and you could win too!

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Ann Becker from Dr. Robert Kiken's office in Santa Barbara! She was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month:

According to legend, what did St. Patrick drive out of Ireland?
a-Witches, b- Leprechauns, c-An SUV, d-Snakes

The correct answer is (d) - "Snakes." Congratulations, Ann, you've won a $25 Gift Card! Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a gift card to Starbucks.

In a 1980 April Fools' Day hoax, the BBC reported that the iconic Big Ben will undergo a drastic transformation. What was the transformation?
a) Becoming a Swiss watch b) Double the size of the clock c) Go digital

Call me at 805-967-8744 or email me at info@synergyinc.net right now with your answer!