Technology Times

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

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Santa Barbara, CA

Inside This Issue…

Test Drive A NEW Offsite Backup System For FREE

In an effort to get our tape drive clients off their old, antiquated and unstable backup systems, we're going to give 3 lucky customers the opportunity to get an offsite backup unit absolutely FREE.

Why are we doing this? First, August is a slow(er) month for us, so I'd like to find a way to keep my techs busy. Second, anyone using tape drive backups needs to upgrade NOW – no ifs, ands, or buts! This offer will ONLY be good for the first 3 who respond. (Sorry, no exceptions.)

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

This just in: 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 <u>every document</u> 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.

Shiny New Gadget of the Month
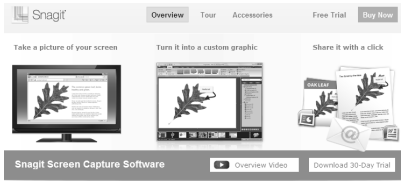
Snagit By TechSmith

This month's pick is not really a gadget. It's a cool, inexpensive software program you'll easily get addicted to. Snagit is easy to use screen capture software that allows you to copy, edit, share and organize images captured off of your computer screen. The more you use Snagit, the more ways you'll find to use it.

For example, if you are working with a designer or programmer to develop a web application or web site, Snagit will allow you to capture a screen shot of the web page and add comments, cut and paste sections, add instructions, edit the design, and much more, making your communication much more precise and clear.

Creating a user guide or instruction manual? You'll love Snagit because you can capture segments of a computer screen and add comments and instructions right over the area (or document) you are explaining, making even the most complicated processes and software easy to follow.

Best of all, you can store these images in various image files (jpeg, png, gif, etc.) and cut and paste them into an e-mail, Word document, web site, etc. Snagit costs $49.95 for a single user license and can be purchased at www.techsmith.com. If you want to try before you buy, you can download a 30-day free trial at the above web site as well.

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 the new HIPAA laws.

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.

Techie Terms Made Simple: What Is Cloud Computing?

Cloud computing is simply a term used to describe internet-based applications that are stored and accessed via a web browser instead of a server or computer at your location. Over the last couple of years there has been a HUGE movement towards companies using "cloud-based" applications because lost data is

more easily recovered and remote workers can conveniently access information. As a result, costs for hardware and support are drastically lowered.
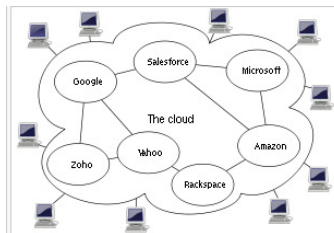
One "cloud" application we encourage our clients to consider is Hosted Exchange. Not only does this give you a tremendous amount of flexibility in accessing your e-mail, but it also lowers the costs of hardware, software, installation, and support DRASTICALLY.

While there are still some fears around hosting critical apps and data offsite, those fears will become a thing of the past as business owners see the bottom-line cost savings of cloud-based computing.

FREE Tips, Resources, Reports, and Services Available To Our Clients and Friends

Your Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Please (___) Mail, (___) Fax, or (___) Call me immediately with the following FREE info:

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- ☐ 12 Surefire Signs Your Business is Ready for a Server and How It Will Skyrocket the Speed, Security, and Reliability of Your Computer Network.
- ☐ 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
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Business Owner Beware: You Can Now Be Held Liable For Accidents Caused By Employees Who Are Talking On Their Cell Phones Or Texting While Driving

Over the past several years, states have been instituting laws to limit the use of cells phones while driving – so how does this affect companies who have employees using company vehicles? Quite a bit, actually.

Several lawsuits have cropped up in which a company was sued for an employee causing an accident while talking on a cell phone. In Virginia, an attorney driving home from work ran over a teenage girl, killing her. The family of the girl filed a $30 million lawsuit against the employer because the attorney was talking to a client when the incident happened.

In the state of Arkansas, a jury found a lumber company liable after one of their employees struck another car, gravely injuring the passenger. At the time of the accident the employee driving the vehicle was using a cell phone for a sales call. That particular case ended up being settled for $16 million.

Many states have defined hands-free laws and produced legislation that bans cell-phone use completely. Although employer responsibility isn't specifically defined in the cell phone legislation, there have been an increasing number of lawsuits relating to employer responsibility regarding mobile cell-phone use for employees. Hands-free laws have done little to protect employers from liability, and as the trend of cell-phone legislation increases, employers should be prepared to address their mobile workforce and advise them of the cellular phone laws that are in effect in your state or locality.

We recommend you talk to your attorney about implementing a mobile phone and vehicle use policy that all employees must sign. While this may not completely remove your risk of being held responsible for accidents or injuries caused by employees driving a company-owned vehicle, it does show some forethought and responsibility on your behalf.

Just For Giggles…

"Say you want to huff and puff and blow a house in…there's an app for that."

Are Extended Warranties Worth The Money?

Seems like you can't purchase any electronic device without being offered an extended warranty—but is it a good investment? According to a recent poll of over 2,000 readers of PC World magazine, 63% said they always go for the extended warranty plan; and of those who had to use it, 80% were satisfied with the service. Does that mean they are a good investment?

In our opinion, extended warranties are not necessary since most bugs will reveal themselves within the first 90 days of purchasing a technical gadget, which is well within the normal warranty of the product. But if you feel better buying an extended warranty, here are 5 tips to follow:

1. Read the terms before you buy: You don't have to read the warranty in the checkout line—take it home. You can usually buy it later.

2. Beware shipping charges: If the product needs to be sent in for service, you could get stuck with the tab.

3. Look for accidental damage coverage: Most policies do not cover products that are damaged from falls or spilled coffee. If that option is available, you might have to pay more for it (a good idea, particularly for mobile devices that get abused).

4. Look for extras: Many extended warranties cover replaceable items, such as bulbs in projectors which are expensive and can wear out.

5. Check for the product's reliability online first. If you are buying a quality product, an extended warranty might not be necessary. Obviously doing a little research and spending a bit more on a better built product will save you a lot of time and aggravation in the long run anyway. You can find some good information in PC World's annual Reliability and Service survey and Consumer Reports' reliability ratings.

Of course, you can always call us for our opinion since we have to fix the PCs, servers, and other gadgets for multiple clients!

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…drum roll please… Nobody! Nobody called to correctly answer my trivia question from last month:

Millionaire John D. Rockefeller was noted for handing out what to children he passed in the street?
a) Bubble gum, **b) Dimes**, c) Comic books, d) Bicycles

The correct answer is b, "Dimes." Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a gift card to Blenders In The Grass.

Who was the first U.S. President born outside of the original 13 colonies?
a) Abraham Lincoln, b) Martin Van Buren, c) Jimmy Carter, d) John Quincy Adams

Call me right now with your answer!
805-967-8744

Good News For Early Adopters…

It's good news for business travelers and vacationers alike.

The Transportation Security Administration says the iPad won't have to be removed from carry-on baggage at security checkpoints. It's just half-an-inch thick and has no parts that can block images when the machines go through the screening machine.

Electronics that are smaller than the standard laptop, such as the Kindle, Sony Reader, and small notebook computers, can also stay in the bag.

But it's not an actual rule. Screeners still have the discretion to ask that the devices be removed in order to further inspect them or the cases they are in.

The TSA recommends checkpoint-friendly bags that have a separate laptop flap that can be unfolded flat on the machine belt.