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"Ummm."

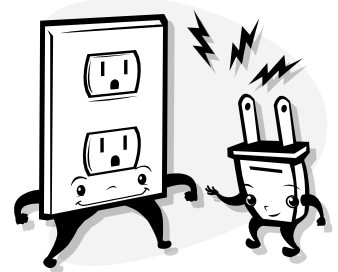
Technology Times

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

What Is Cloud Computing And Why Should You Care?

The web and cloud computing is to storing and processing data what the electrical grid and electric company is to plugging in your coffee maker: a more convenient, more reliable and potentially less expensive way to access the “computing power” and resources needed for the tools you use.

Traditional computer networks are undergoing the same technological revolution the one that altered our use of electric generators in the early 1900s.



During the industrial revolution, factories were required to produce their own electric power to operate the machines they used to produce their wares. In 1851, the man leading the pack was Henry Burden, an industrial giant who built the largest and most powerful electricity-generating water wheel in the world. At top speed this 600 foot, 250 ton machine could produce 500 horsepower, generating enough electricity to power the tools in his factory. This invention made Burden a very powerful and wealthy man.

Fast Forward 50 Years...

However, by the early years of the twentieth century, this once-world class, cutting edge technology was abandoned, left to rust in a field of overgrown grass. Why? Because Thomas Edison and his Pearl Street electricity generating station had realized the concept of providing electricity as a utility. It caught on like wild fire because it eliminated the large cost and complexity of running a factory, and within a very short period of time it became a competitive necessity for factories to tap into the cheaper electrical grid instead of producing their own electricity.

The Same Technological Revolution Is Happening Today With Cloud Computing

If you think about it, there’s a good chance that MOST of the software applications you use every day are SaaS applications, or “software as a service.” In other words, you don’t have to install it on your server or PC – you simply access it as a pay-as-you-go model for only the licenses, space and features you use. This gives you, the user, the ability to access highly

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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month: Car Interior Preheater



It happens every winter - you want to heat up the car before you get in, but you hate to leave the car running unattended. Ideally, you could turn on the heater without starting the car.

Now you can do just that. With the car interior preheater, you can set the programmable, battery-powered heater to begin running 20 minutes before you enter the car. The rotating vents allow you to push 180 degree air to pre-defrost the windows or to blow hot air throughout the vehicle.

This mini heater comes with an A/C adapter for charging and has a handy remote that will power the heater from as far as 200 feet away.

No more shivering in the car as it warms up or running the risk of keeping your empty car running. Get yours today for around \$120.

sophisticated software and functionality at a fraction of the cost – or even for free – and without long-term commitments.

For example, Google is a massive, free cloud application – the power required to search billions of web sites and content in seconds and deliver the relevant results to your screen far exceeds the capacity of your PC. Facebook is another free cloud application that allows you to post pictures, play games, and connect with your friends in real time without having to install those applications on your computer. Of course, there are also the applications such as Salesforce, Constant Contact, Zoomerang, etc., that you pay to use.

With the introduction of cloud-based office applications like Office 365, Google Apps and thousands of other SaaS applications, it's becoming unnecessary for some businesses to purchase and maintain an onsite server. Now we can host one or more of your applications, data, e-mail and other functions “in the cloud.” That simply means it's stored offsite in a highly secure, high-availability “utility” company that has far more power and resources than you could ever logically have onsite as a small business. And with devices getting cheaper and Internet connectivity exploding, cloud computing is suddenly a very smart, viable option for small business owners.

What Are The Benefits?

- Eliminates the need for expensive server upgrades and allows you to use cheaper devices (PCs, etc.) to get the same work done.
- Frees you to access applications from any device and any location. All you need is an Internet connection.
- Built-in disaster recovery and business continuity.
- Only pay for what you need and use (utility pricing).



Is Cloud Computing Right For You?

While there are a ton of benefits to cloud computing, it's NOT right for every company. Some applications don't play well in the cloud. You need commercial-grade Internet connectivity, and some functions, like working with big graphics files, are better kept local or the slowness will make you crazy. However, in almost every case, parts of your computer network (functions) can easily be put in the cloud to save you money and give you better service. So before you donate your server and sign up for Google Apps or Office 365, it's important you talk to someone who can honestly assess your unique situation and tell you the pros and cons of making the switch to cloud computing.

If moving to the cloud is something you are considering in 2012 you will need a Cloud Readiness Assessment. During this assessment we'll come to your office and conduct a complete review of your computer network, data, software, hardware and how you work. From there, we can provide you with insights and helpful answers as to how you might benefit from cloud computing. To schedule your Cloud Readiness Assessment, give us a call at 440-925-4005.

The Lighter Side... Kid Logic On Smart Buying And Careers



A little kid was looking at the large ripe watermelons growing in the gardener's melon patch. "I'll give you my twenty five cents for that watermelon," said the boy pointing to a beautiful, large, ripe fruit in the middle of the patch.

"No," said the gardener, "I get \$2 for a watermelon like that one." The little boy pointed to a tiny watermelon just beginning to grow nearby. "Will you take twenty five cents for that one?"

"Sure," replied the gardener, "I'll give you that one for twenty five cents."

"OK," said the little kid, sealing the deal by putting the coin in the gardener's hand, "I'll pick it up in about two weeks."

6-year-old Jimmy, a precocious kid, always told everyone he wanted to be a doctor when he grew up. One day as Jimmy was running through his house playing, he ran into the corner of a table and hurt his eye. Being a little kid, Jimmy cried for a while but also kept saying, "Oh no, now I can never be a doctor when I grow up."

Jimmy's mom trying to reassure him told Jimmy that he could still be a doctor but Jimmy kept insisting that he couldn't.

Finally she asked, "Why can't you be a doctor, Jimmy?"

Holding one hand over his injured eye, Jimmy said, "Because now I will have to be a pirate!"

How To (Finally) Hit Your Top 5 New Year's Resolutions Thanks To High-Tech

Thinking about setting the "usual" New Year's resolutions of losing weight, being more organized and getting out of debt, but have a feeling deep down you aren't going to follow through? We're here to help! Below are 5 common New Year's resolutions and simple techie ways to keep you on track.

#1: Be More Productive

If improving your time-management skills is one of your New Year's resolutions, this will be a BIG help: Turn off the automatic send and receive for your e-mail (I can almost hear the gasps of horror). Admit it, you're addicted to e-mail and if you're like most people, you're checking it *constantly*. In fact, there's a good chance it's the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night. If you want to stop the constant temptation to lose focus on your work, simply turn off the automatic send and receive function, forcing you to click on the "Send And Receive" button at set times. If that's too "cold turkey," you could at least turn off the sound and icon popup so you're not distracted by it while working.

#2: Save Time

After e-mail, checking social media sites can be another huge time suck. If you (and possibly your staff) are wasting a lot of time on Facebook, good content filtering software can keep you in check by preventing you from accessing these sites from your work PC. You can also allow certain people in your company access while blocking others; so if you have a web manager or marketing manager who needs to access these sites for work but find it too tempting for YOU, we can configure the system to assist you with that temptation.

#3: Get Out Of Debt And Start Saving More

If you feel like you can't get a handle on where your money goes, check out www.Mint.com. This site automatically compiles all your bank statements, retirement and credit card accounts to give you one snapshot of where you're spending money – and it's FREE! Best of all, you only need to set it up once and it will automatically update your finances and put them into easy-to-read graphical reports – and since Mint.com connects to almost every US banking and financial institution with internet banking capability, you won't have to manually enter your information over and over again. The site offers ways to save money, allows you to set financial goals and keeps track of those goals automatically.

#4: Lose Weight

Pearson's Law states that anything measured improves, and anything measured and reported upon improves exponentially; so if you want to lose weight, you might sign up for www.MyFoodDiary.com and start tracking everything you eat. This site allows you to set and track your weight loss goals by allowing you to post what you ate and then counting calories for you. If nothing else, it will help you think BEFORE you eat because you need to track the calories!

#5: Get Organized!

If you're like me, you've got a million things going on – from business, family and everything in between, it's easy to get overwhelmed and forget tiny (but important!) details. Using Evernote can help. Evernote allows you to capture and organize any files, notes, web sites, audio or hand written notes in one easy-to-learn interface. And with the mobile app, you can capture a to-do item or reminder at any time without the fear of losing it.

The Top 10 Technology Trends For 2012



During the Symposium ITxpo 2011, Gartner unveiled its prediction for the top technology trends in 2012.

Mobility and social media are taking a front seat for the ride into the future. Many of these technologies will drive the future of your business if they aren't already:

- 1) Media tablets and beyond
- 2) Mobile-centric applications and interfaces
- 3) Contextual and social user experience
- 4) Internet of Things
- 5) App stores and marketplaces
- 6) Next-generation analytics
- 7) Big Data
- 8) In-memory computing
- 9) Extreme low-energy servers
- 10) Cloud computing

The Difference Between Backup, Disaster Recovery And Business Continuity

If you think “data backup” is synonymous with “disaster recovery” and aren't sure what “business continuity” means, you're not alone. Most of the business owners we talk to make the mistake of not knowing the difference and end up paying the price when data is lost, a network goes down or a disaster prevents them from accessing their physical office and the server inside.

First, data backup simply means a copy of your data is replicated to another device or location. Tape drives, offsite backup and even USB devices provide data backup. Data backup is obviously important. However, the more important consideration is whether or not your backup solution provides easy *disaster recovery*, or the ability for you to recover all your files, software and functionality quickly, easily and without corruption. For example, if your server died, you wouldn't be able to quickly get back to work if you only had file-level backup. In order for you to start working again, your server would need to be replaced, all software re-installed, data re-installed and then the whole system would need to be configured with your settings and preferences. This process could take hours or even days – and that's if you have all your software licenses and a clean copy of your data.

Then there's business continuity. This is the ability for your business to continue to operate even after a major disaster. For example, if you ran an accounting firm and your building burned to the ground, you'd be out of business if all your files were on the server only. However, if you had your network in the cloud (see our first article) your employees could continue to work from home or some other location, giving your business continuity.

Of course, you need all three at some level. At a minimum you need to make sure you have in place the right backup and disaster recovery plan for your tolerance for downtime, and a plan for how your business could continue to operate if you could no longer access your building, server or data. You should review your plan annually. If you want a simple and easy way to get all of this handled, give us a call! We specialize in planning, implementing and managing these projects so you don't have to.