

TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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

Windows Server 2003 Set To Expire July 14th!

If your organization is currently running either Microsoft Windows Server 2003 or Exchange 2003 on any servers in your office, you need to know about a dangerous security threat to your organization that must be addressed very soon.

Windows Server 2003 and Exchange 2003 Replacements MUST Be Made By July 14, 2015

Microsoft has officially announced that it will retire all support on the Server 2003 operating system on July 14, 2015. That means any business with this operating system still running will be completely exposed to serious hacker attacks aimed at taking control of your network, stealing data, crashing your system and inflicting a host of other business-crippling problems you do NOT want to have to deal with.

This is such a serious threat that the US Department Of Homeland Security has issued an official warning to all companies still running this operating system because firewalls and antivirus software will NOT be sufficient to completely protect your business from malicious attacks or data exfiltration. Running Server 2003 will also put many organizations out of compliance.

Unless you don't care about cybercriminals running rampant in your company's computer network, you MUST upgrade any equipment running this software.

FREE Windows Server 2003 Migration Plan Shows You The Easiest, Most Budget -Friendly Way To Upgrade Your Server

During the month of April, we are offering a FREE customized Windows Server 2003 migration plan to all businesses still running this operating system on any computers in their office. At no cost, we'll conduct a full analysis of your network to help you determine what specific servers will be affected by this announcement. Additionally, we will provide a detailed analysis of all upgrade options available to you, along with the pros and cons of each option. While there, we will also assess other security, backup and efficiency factors that could be costing you in productivity and hard dollars. We will then put together a customized Server 2003 Migration Plan specifically for your office.

To schedule your FREE on-site assessment today, call us at 701-364-2718 to get started.



“Enabling People to Provide Great Products and Services - Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere”

- Rick Johnston, Information Management Systems

April 2015
Fargo, ND

Inside This Issue...

Windows Server 2003 Set To Expire.....Page 1

Prevent The Ultimate Break/Fix Nightmare.....Page 2

The WayTools TextBlade.....Page 3

Windows 7 Features For Better Usability.....Page 3

Does This Password Sound Familiar?.....Page 4

A Pleasant Drive With The Queen Of England.....Page 4



“How often does he go online?”

Prevent The Ultimate Break/Fix Nightmare

Have your IT problems become chronic? Is your break/fix contractor hanging around your office so often that he's on first-name terms with the maid? If you're starting to think about an alternative IT solution that can clear up your chronic IT issues for good, Managed Services may be just what you've been dreaming of. Even better, they could just prevent your ultimate IT nightmare from coming true.

The ultimate break/fix nightmare

Your business is running smoothly. Profits and staff productivity have been up, and you haven't had a single IT expense in months. Times are good. You kick back in your leather chair and break out that Cuban cigar you've been saving for just such an occasion.

But then the BIG ONE hits. Your servers crash. No, not just one – all of them! Your business comes to a grinding halt. None of your staff can work. You call your go-to break/fix IT provider, but he's overloaded with work and can't make it out to your offices till next week. Next week?! In a panic, you call the first IT contractor you find on Google. Thankfully he's available. But since you need this work done immediately, he charges an unbelievable fee for a last minute fix. You have no other choice, you hire the contractor. You're left hoping he fixes everything properly and none of your crucial data is lost in the process.

This is the precarious nature of break/fix IT services. And while this is a worst case scenario, situations like this can and have happened. So let's look at the reasons why it pays to hire a Managed Services Provider (MSP) instead.

MSPs prevent problems. Break/fix profit from them.

Think about the relationship dynamics of Managed Services compared to break/fix. If you're a business owner who currently use a break/fix contractor, when your IT goes down your contractor gains profit. Your problem equals his reward.

How motivated do you think he is to do an effective job of fixing your issue? If that problem pops up again later, it equals more reward for him. Now that's not to say all break/fix contractors aren't fixing your IT to the best of their abilities. But think about the basic mindframe of a break/fix contractor: problem=profit.

The MSP system works differently. You pay a set fee every month to your IT provider. So the reward for the MSP comes every month. If something goes wrong during that month, you don't pay anymore. Yet it costs the MSP more money, and therefore affects their profit margin. Because of this, the MSP is rewarded for taking preventative measures to ensure your IT is working as effectively as possible, always.

That's not to say problems won't happen with an MSP. But when they do, they'll end up costing the MSP provider, and they certainly don't want that. So for an MSP, the basic mindframe is: healthy IT=profit.

MSPs extinguish budget surprises

Everyone likes surprises, except when it comes to losing money. And when you have a break/fix IT service provider, big surprises can and do happen – and not the good ones, either.

An MSP is working to prevent problems from happening in the first place. You pay a monthly flat fee, so you always know what you're paying. You can plan and predict your budget accordingly.

With break/fix, it's true that some months you won't have any IT expenses from your contractor, which is great. But other months, you could have bills that are astronomical. So you never know just what you'll be paying for your IT budget in any given month. And if you don't have that money set aside, then what?

MSPs might just make you happier

Yes, as silly and simple as it sounds, with an MSP you'll probably be happier. The main reason is you won't have to deal with the frustration of unexpected IT problems eating away at your budget and the downtime that comes with it. Your IT will run more smoothly (which will create a foundation for your business to do the same) and your budget will be predictable.

Even better, you're more likely to have a fruitful relationship with your MSP provider since you both have the same goal: effective smooth running IT for your business. What business owner doesn't like the sound of that?

Want to learn more about Managed Services? Contact us today at 701-364-2718 to learn more about this effective alternative.

This entry was posted in Business Value—ROI, Why MSP Services Matter, General Articles C and tagged 2015Mar24_Business Value_C, break/fix, IT, Managed Services, MSP provider, predictable budget, prevent, QS_3. <http://www.techadvisory.org/2015/03/prevent-the-ultimate-breakfix-nightmare/>

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



The WayTools TextBlade

When we are surrounded by touch-screen mobile devices, sometimes we can get a little nostalgic for a good old-fashioned keyboard. Sure, there are a number of apps that make typing on a touch-screen easier, but tactile feedback is non-existent. Or we want to type something more substantial than a text message or quick email, and we don't want to go through the chore of typing it all out on a small screen. And then it's often hard to find a wireless keyboard that is both practical and truly portable.

The WayTools TextBlade aims to solve these problems. The TextBlade offers a fully-featured and responsive solution—while maximizing portability. Through a Bluetooth connection, you can sync it up to your favorite smartphone or tablet. The lithium polymer battery lasts upwards of a month with average use, and it's quickly recharged via USB. Small but powerful magnets keep it held in place when you're using it and when it's tucked away in your pocket.

It's priced at \$99 and you can find it online at www.waytools.com.

Windows 7 Features For Better Usability

When it comes to the most widely used operating system, Windows 7 is at the top of the list. In addition to its functionality and business-oriented programs, Windows 7 has many useful features that are unknown to general users who only care about word processing and Internet browsing. These features are very handy and they are right under your nose! Check out these Windows 7 features that will help improve your business performance.

Snipping Tool

While there are many simple screen capturing programs out there, Windows 7 has its Snipping Tool to make screenshots easier. With Snipping Tool, you can take 4 types of screenshots – free-form, rectangular, window, and full screen. So when you come across a great scene in A YouTube video or want to share some screenshots with your friends, simply use Snipping Tool to get the job done. You can even showcase the important parts with the highlight pen function, and you can save the picture in HTML, JPEG, GIF, and PNG formats.

Extended calculator

Calculator has always been a basic but crucial application on smartphone devices and computers. Even if you're already relying on specific software to analyze data, it's always handy to have a simple calculator program nearby to help you with the math. Everyone knows that Windows 7 has a calculator, but this specific calculator has a few extra tricks up its sleeve. Under the View tab, you'll find a bunch of powerful unit conversions, including scientific units. It can also do special calculations for programmers and for statistical needs. Don't take our word for it; go check it out for yourself.

Sticky Notes

Tired of pasting post-it notes all over your computer screen? Sticky Notes allow you to record texts to virtually remind you about important tasks or events. Run a search in the Start menu to find this feature in the Accessories folder. You can create as many notes as you like, color-coded for your convenience. Have an important meeting coming up? Use the red notes. Want to list places for your holiday plans? Put them in the bright yellow one. This tool works well for those who have a busy schedule and always need something to remind them what's going on.

Taskbar Pins

If you need to access certain programs or folders on a daily basis, then pinning it to your taskbar can be a real time-saver. Simply click and drag your programs to an empty space on the taskbar to keep them close at hand. While you can't place a folder on the taskbar, you can pin it to the Jump List, accessible via right-clicking on the leftmost folder near the start menu.

You might already be familiar with some of these simple yet effective tools, but it pays to be reminded that you can use them to assist you with your everyday tasks.

Want to learn how to integrate Windows 7 to boost your business productivity? Get in touch with us today and see how we can help.

This entry was posted in General Articles C, Microsoft Windows—News & Tips and tagged 2015Mar05, Windows_C, hand Windows 7 tools, QS_3, Windows 7 features, Windows 7 tips. <http://www.techadvisory.org/2015/03/windows-7-features-for-better-usability/>

Does This Password Sound Familiar?

You know the difference between a good password and a bad one. Many of us do like the convenience of a simple, easy-to-remember password that requires no effort to recall and type when we connect to our WiFi network, buy from our favorite e-tailer or use for online bill pay. But many of us also appreciate an added layer of security so we **don't** use an effortless password when sensitive data is on the line.

In a recent study conducted by SplashData, they looked at a sampling of over 3 million passwords (all of which were leaked during a data breach last year). They compiled a list of the most common passwords—and the results weren't all that surprising. **123456** was the No. 1 password used last year, followed by the classic **password**.

While these passwords may have the IT and security crowds shaking their heads in dismay, it's not all bad news. These popular passwords may offer next to no practical security, but according to the study, the 25 most common passwords only represent about 2% of the overall total.

This means most people don't use these passwords—or **qwerty**, or

111111, or **iloveyou**. The study found more variation among the most popular passwords versus the 2013 study. Is it a possible trend? Are people turning to more imaginative or secure passwords? Maybe, but only time will tell. Even if the study suggests most of us don't rely on overly simple passwords, SplashData's list serves as a reminder to use more secure passwords and to change them regularly.



North Dakota State Amateur Basketball Tournament

Information Management Systems sponsored a local amateur basketball team at the North Dakota State Amateur Tournament in Minot, ND. We are proud of what they accomplished this weekend with a 2nd place finish in the Class A division. The team consists of local F-M area players Doug Wick, Eric Muckenhirn, Jake Driscoll, Mark Bakkum, Tom Lunde, Josh Vaughan, Freddy Coleman, and IMS employee Eric Erdmann.



The Lighter Side: A Pleasant Drive With The Queen Of England



In 2003, Saudi Arabian King Abdullah paid a visit to the United Kingdom. While there, King Abdullah met with Queen Elizabeth II at Balmoral – the royal family's castle and estate in Scotland. Queen Elizabeth inquired if Crown Prince Abdullah would enjoy a tour of the estate. Although not initially keen about the tour, out of politeness and respect for the queen, Prince Abdullah accepted her offer.

When the transportation arrived – two regal Land Rovers – Prince Abdullah stepped into the front passenger seat, which would allow him an exquisite view of the estate and surrounding countryside. Much to his surprise, the queen walked to the driver's side door and climbed in. Without hesitation she turned the ignition, threw it in gear and hit the accelerator.

In Saudi Arabia, women are prohibited from driving. Needless to say Prince Abdullah was unprepared for the adventure he was about to embark on.

While giving the prince the royal tour, the queen (who is a *very* experienced driver) did not hold back. It was pedal to the metal as she blasted down the narrow country roads, all the while remaining attentive to her guest and keeping a lively conversation. However, Prince Abdullah felt the queen's attentiveness was misdirected and he pled with her to focus on the road. She did not.

In January, at the age of 90, King Abdullah passed away. Queen Elizabeth now rules the throne as the world's oldest reigning monarch at the spry age of 88.