



“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!”

- Rick Johnston
Information Mgmt. Systems

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“Thank you for calling our Technical Support Hotline. The longest we’ve ever kept anyone on hold was 19 hours and 23 minutes. If you break that record today, you will win \$10,000! Good luck!”

Technology Times

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

4 Questions About Backups That Business Owners Should Know The Answers To

The old saying, “Pack your own parachute,” comes to mind when I think of data backups or, more specifically, data RECOVERY. However, how many people actually know how to pack their proverbial data backup “parachute” and instead rely on someone else – be it an employee or vendor?

If that’s you, read on. Since the absolute WORSE time to check your backups is AFTER a data disaster, all company CEOs ought to know the answers to the following questions NOW so they aren’t unpleasantly surprised later when data gets erased and they’re scrambling to get back up and running:

- 1. Where EXACTLY is your data being backed up, and how do you get access to it?** If it’s being hosted in a remote place, you ought to have the account information and a direct contact you can call if your vendor or employee goes missing with this information. Ideally, it should be in your network documentation that is kept in your operations manual or somewhere you can easily access it if necessary.
- 2. Who’s responsible for monitoring the backups to make sure they are working?** When data is lost, the finger pointing starts. It’s not uncommon to hear, “Well I thought (they/he/she) was in charge of our backups!” only to discover that this person (be it a vendor or employee) actually has no idea that they had such an important responsibility. Keep in mind that many offsite backup companies allow you to store your data there, but they won’t agree to ANY responsibility for whether or not the data is being backed up correctly, completely or in a format that can be restored.
- 3. How often do you run a test restore?** The only way to know if your backups are working properly is to conduct a test restore or “fire drill” of your data. We recommend running this once a month at a minimum to verify that you can actually restore from your backups in an emergency.
- 4. If your data is lost, what’s the process required to restore it?** Some business owners don’t realize that their raw data backups would take a LOT longer to restore than they imagine. If you are not “imaging” your data (a process that takes a snapshot of your server as is) you will have to reload all of your software, set up

Want to Lock-in your IT Costs for the Next **THREE** Years? Sign up for IMS Total Care Services **TODAY!**

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month

www.RescueTime.com



This month's "Gadget" is not an electronic device. It's an online tool I'm sure you'll be interested in checking out.

RescueTime is a web application that tracks where you spend your time while working on your PC and then reports how productive you are based on what you consider productive time. Want to know how much time you REALLY spend checking e-mail, watching YouTube videos or on Facebook? RescueTime will tell you. After you've let it collect some data, you can go back to the site and tag various activities such as "work" or "fun time" to better track where your time is going every day. You can also set goals for yourself on how much productive versus unproductive time you should be spending every day and get notifications when you aren't hitting your goals.

They offer a free version you can download or a paid version that will track the productivity of your employees or a team of people.

the network, reconfigure your settings and THEN restore the data – a process that can take the better part of a week PROVIDED you still have your original software discs and licenses.

Our Backup Audit will give you the answers to these critical questions. We normally charge \$299 for our Backup Audit, we will give away for FREE to the first 10 callers. If you don't know the answers to these questions, give us a call to schedule a FREE inspection of your backup process. At a minimum you'll know for sure that your data is safe and in a format that can get you back up and running again FAST. Call: 701-205-3230 or e-mail us at: info@imsnetworking.com

Can Criminals Use Your GPS To Burglarize Your Home?



The Story: A couple of weeks ago a friend told me that someone she knew had their car broken into while they were at a football game. Their car was parked on the green which was adjacent to the football stadium and specially allotted to football fans. Things stolen from the car included a garage door remote control, some money and a GPS which had been prominently mounted on the dashboard. When the victims got home, they found that their house had been ransacked and just about everything worth anything had been stolen. The thieves had used the GPS to guide them to the house. They then used the garage remote control to open the garage door and gain entry to the house. The thieves knew the owners were at the football game, and they knew when the game was scheduled to finish, so they knew how much time they had to clean out the house. It seems they even brought a truck to empty the house of its contents.

True Or False? While there are cases in which GPS devices have been used in crimes against their owners, this particular story is a "friend of a friend" e-mail legend according to www.Snopes.com. That said, there is a valuable lesson here: Don't leave valuables in the car! GPS devices, like cell phones and laptops, are expensive electronic devices that are attractive to thieves. Plus, you should always make it a habit to lock your electronic devices using a strong password (one that contains upper and lowercase letters and numbers).



Spring Forward!

Don't Forget Daylight Saving Time Begins Sunday, March 13th.

Be sure to set your clocks an hour ahead when you go to bed.

The Lighter Side...

Funny And Odd Quotes On Computers:

“To err is human, but to really foul things up requires a computer.” – *Farmer's Almanac*

“Imagine if every Thursday your shoes exploded when you tied them the usual way. This happens to us all the time with computers and nobody thinks of complaining.” – *Jef Raskin*

“Programming today is a race between software engineers striving to build bigger and better idiot-proof programs, and the Universe trying to produce bigger and better idiots. So far, the Universe is winning.” – *Rick Cook, The Wizardry Compiled*

“To err is human – and to blame it on a computer is even more so.” – *Robert Orben*

“If the automobile had followed the same development cycle as the computer, a Rolls-Royce would cost \$100, get a million miles to the gallon and explode once a year, killing everyone inside.” – *Robert X. Cringely*

“Where a calculator on the ENIAC is equipped with 18,000 vacuum tubes and weighs 30 tons, computers in the future may have only 1,000 vacuum tubes and perhaps weigh 1.5 tons” – *Popular Mechanics Magazine, 1949*



3 Reasons To Have A Blog (Even If Nobody Reads It)

Building a massive following online is no easy task. But before you give up on your company blog due to the disappointing number of people who read and comment on it, here are 3 reasons to reconsider:

Search Engine Optimization. If for no other reason, blogging weekly about a particular topic will work wonders for your search engine optimization. Make sure your blog entries frequently include the keywords that people are likely use when searching for your services online, but avoid spamming the blog (overusing the words). There's no scientific percentage here; just don't repeat them so often that your writing seems unnatural to your readers.

Free PR. The media is constantly surfing the web for content and for experts who can provide content and commentary. All it takes is one reporter to find you online and you could get tons of free publicity. You can bolster your chances of getting mentioned by writing about current events in the world or local news. For example, if you sell insurance and a hurricane or other natural disaster hits your town, you should blog about useful tips for people submitting claims to their insurance agents or how to determine how much insurance you should have, etc.

Indirect Selling. Writing stories about projects you are working on, clients you're serving or case studies is a great way to showcase your expertise and “indirectly” sell services. Of course, you can also use your blog for new product or service launches and get direct input from clients and prospects on new products and services they want to see.

Is It Legal For Employers To Monitor Your Computer?

Courts have ruled that an employer's monitoring of its employees' e-mails and other computer related activities during work hours and/or on company-owned equipment, Internet, and e-mail accounts is not illegal.

Companies typically monitor employees' online usage for the following reasons:

1. To avoid claims based on sexual, racial, ethnic, and other forms of harassment.
2. To protect against an employee sending or posting confidential information.
3. To reduce exposure to intellectual property infringement claims.
4. To decrease the likelihood that an embarrassing message attributed to the employer will be sent.
5. To guard against computer viruses.
6. To improve productivity.

It is recommended that employers create an AUP (acceptable use policy) that outlines what is and isn't acceptable use of electronic media and communications.

Life's Little Truths

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you a mechanic.

If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you've never tried before.

My idea of housework: Sweep the room with a glance.

Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.

No husband has ever been shot while doing the dishes.

Junk is something you keep for years then throw away 3 weeks before you need it.

By the time you can make ends meet, they've moved the ends.

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves for they shall never cease to be amused.



Happy 
St. Patrick's Day

Social Media Policies In The Workplace

Back in November, the National Labor Relations Board issued a Complaint alleging that an employer illegally terminated an employee who posted disparaging remarks about her supervisor on her personal Facebook page. The posting referred to her supervisor as a "psychiatric patient" and used several vulgarities, which resulted in other employees chiming in (Associated Press, November 2010).

While the Complaint is only an accusation and not a formal ruling from the NLRB, the repercussions of this action are critically important for employers of both unionized and non-unionized employees alike. Many employers are now reviewing their social media policies with a view to determining what they can lawfully prohibit employees from posting online.

Although we cannot provide any legal advice, one of the things we can help our clients with is establishing an acceptable use policy that outlines how employees can use company resources, such as their e-mail, Internet and electronic equipment. We can also help by setting up monitoring software that can either allow management to govern employee access to certain web sites, such as gambling, porn, career sites, etc., or block employees from those sites all together. If you want to keep employees focused on being productive at work, then give us a call for a free consultation and trial of this service.

Cold is a Relative Thing

65° - Arizonans turn on the heat. People in North Dakota plant gardens.

60° - Californians shiver uncontrollably. People in North Dakota sunbathe.

50° - Italian & English cars won't start. People in North Dakota drive with the windows down.

40° - Georgians wear coats, thermal underwear, gloves, wool hats. People in North Dakota throw on a flannel shirt.

30° - New York landlords finally turn up the heat. People in North Dakota have the last cookout before it gets cold.

20° - People in Miami all die. North Dakotans close the windows.

0° - Californians fly away to Mexico. People in North Dakota get out their winter coats

-10° below zero - Hollywood disintegrates. The Girl Scouts in North Dakota are selling cookies door to door

-20° below zero - Washing DC runs out of hot air. People in North Dakota let the dogs sleep indoors

-30° below zero - Santa Claus abandons the North Pole. North Dakotans get upset because they can't start the snowmobile.

-40° below zero - ALL atomic motions stop. People in North Dakota start saying... "Cold enough for ya?"

-50° below zero - Hell freezes over. North Dakota public schools will open 2 hours late.