



“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 Management Systems

**February 2010
Fargo, ND**

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FREE Office Move Checklist

Planning on moving your office anytime soon? Call us for a FREE Office Moving Checklist and save yourself a lot of time, money and headaches!

\$99 Value See page 4 for the full details.

Technology Times

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

If Disaster Strikes, How Fast Could Your Company Be Back Up And Running?

You hear it all the time from us—back up your data, keep your virus protection current, and install and maintain a firewall to protect yourself from hackers and other online threats.

However, while these precautions will certainly help you avoid problems, they CAN’T do anything if you don’t have a good backup and disaster recovery plan in place.

Are You A Sitting Duck?

We all know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; yet, disaster recovery planning often takes a distant second to the daily deadlines and pressures of running a business. That means that most businesses, including your own, may end up offline and without your data after a simple lightening storm.

Don’t think that could ever happen to you? Consider this: “data-erasing disasters” can also take the form of office fires and broken water pipes, not just earthquakes, floods and tornadoes. If a fire started in your building, the parts that weren’t burned beyond recovery would probably be destroyed by the firefighter’s efforts. But even more common is software corruption, hardware failures and human error!

Disaster Recovery Questions You Need To Answer

A disaster recovery plan doesn’t have to be complicated, time-consuming or expensive. Start by asking yourself the following questions...

1. Do you back up your company’s data daily to both an onsite and offsite location?
2. Are you absolutely certain that your backup copy is valid, complete and not corrupt? How do you know for sure?
3. If disaster strikes, HOW would you get your data back, and how long would it take? In many cases it takes days and often weeks; what would you do during that period of time?
4. Do you have copies of all the software licenses and discs in a safe location that could be accessed in the event of having to rebuild your server?
5. Would you and your employees have a way to access your network remotely if you couldn't get to the office?
6. Do you store important passwords in a secure place that company officers can access if you are unavailable?

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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: PDA Keyboard

If your thumb muscles are sore from editing documents or sending lengthy e-mails on your PDA, relief is on the way. Thanks to Bluetooth technology (ak.a. "wireless"), you can now get a special full-sized keyboard that will work with your Smartphone or PDA. Just set your phone in the attached PDA stand and... viola...you have an instant office. There's no PC needed, either. Just download the software right to your phone.



Wondering how or why you'd lug around a big keyboard for your miniphone? They thought of that too. Weighing in around 6oz and folding to the size of a cup of coffee, these keyboards come with a small carrying case. With many manufacturers now on the PDA keyboard bandwagon, you can get your hands on one online for under \$80 through almost any technology reseller.



7. Do you have a UPS (uninterruptible power supply) device in place to keep your network and other critical data operations running during a power outage?
8. If your phones are down, where will you forward your business calls so you don't lose that business?
9. If a more common "disaster" occurs, such as server hardware failure, do you have an onsite way to get back up and running the same day?

This is NOT a complete list, but it is a good start to get you thinking in the right direction.

Our FREE Disaster Recovery Plan Helps You Prepare

Since Valentine's Day is this month, we've decided to show our clients how much we love them by giving away a FREE Backup and Disaster Recovery Audit. At no charge or obligation, we'll come to your office, review your plan (or lack of one) and provide a simple action plan on what you need to do to make sure your business can always be up and running.

But take note! We can only make this available to our clients and friends during the month of February; after that, the fee for this consultation will be \$395. For more information, please contact our office at 701-364-2718 or e-mail us at info@imsnetworking.com.

Disaster Avoided by IMS Backup and Disaster Recovery Audit

Recently one of our customers took advantage of our **Free Backup and Disaster Recovery Audit** which revealed that their 'automatic' database backups were not occurring as scheduled. They were shocked to find out there was a 43% failure rate for their existing backup system and that it was at high risk for data loss in the event of a hardware failure or disaster! They had no documented backup and recovery procedures, the operating system of their only server was not getting backed up, and their backup software was not updated to the latest patch level. After IMS repaired and tested their database maintenance plans and backup schedule, as well as updated and tested the newest version of their tape backup software, they were finally backing up all their data and their server's operating system. Plus, their primary accounting database was running more efficiently due to its transaction logs being flushed by the corrected database maintenance plan.

A few days after our audit and repairs, we received a call to let us know that another IT firm responsible for their hardware was replacing a failed motherboard and at least one failed hard drive, but our customer was greatly relieved to know that their backups to tape were complete. Their operating system and data recovery were fully restored after the hardware repair. We hadn't even finished documenting the backup and recovery procedures yet! All we had to do was reset the server's clock for them, which was offset one hour after the hardware repair.

"One's objective should be to get it right, get it quick and get it out and get it over. You see, your problem won't improve with age."

- Warren Buffet

The Lighter Side... The Computer Programmer's Creed

“Not even computers will replace committees, because committees buy computers.”

“If a program is useful, it will have to be changed.”

“If a program is useless, it will have to be documented.”

“Software complexity must grow until it exceeds the capabilities of the programmer who must maintain it.”

“There's always one more bug.”

“Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later.”

“Any given program, when running, is obsolete.”

“Any non-trivial program must have at least one bug.”

(Above quotes from various writers and celebrities from www.basicjokes.com)



**“What do I use to clean the bathroom?
My husband.”**

How To Avoid The Top 3 Budget Busting, Stress-Inducing Mistakes When Moving Your Office

Moving is always a pain in the rump, but it doesn't have to be a horrific, expensive experience. The number one lament from someone who's experienced a "bad" move is, "I didn't know I needed to..." followed closely by "I completely forgot that..." In other words, *it's what you don't do that makes the move a disaster*. To make your move easy and effortless, here are the 3 most common mistakes you want to avoid:

Mistake #1 — Trying To Save Money By Using Your Employees To Move Your Computer Network

Don't ask your staff to disconnect, move and reconnect computers, phones and other devices just to save a few bucks. You'll frustrate them and end up with phones ringing at the wrong extension, lost cables, and workstations that get dropped rendering them useless. You don't want to let the movers do this job either; they may be great at moving furniture, but a network is a lot more sophisticated and sensitive. *Be smart and hire an IT pro to pack and move your network.*

Mistake #2 — Not Hiring The RIGHT IT Firm To Move Your Network

While we're on the topic, make sure you know what to look for when outsourcing the move. A few things to look for would include references from other clients, proof of insurance (get them to fax you a copy), a service level guarantee limiting the amount of time you are down, and a professional, organized approach to quoting the move. A real pro will insist on visiting your current location as well as your new location to conduct a detailed site survey. NEVER hire anyone who wants to quote moving your network over the phone. Additionally, look for an IT company that will apply the charges for conducting your site survey against the total cost of the move if you choose them.

Mistake #3 — Not Giving Your Phone, Internet And Cable Vendors Enough Advance Warning

Eighty percent (80%) of unexpected communications blackouts and cost overruns on network moves are caused by failure to properly plan voice, data and electrical installation *in advance*. Just because the prior tenant had computers and telephones is no guarantee that the cabling is suitable for *your* phones and *your* computer network. Advance planning will help you avoid emergency rush fees or band aid fixes to make things work.

Internet and telephone connections require as much as six weeks advance notice to be installed, tested and ready the day you move in. And if you are building a new office, don't leave it up to the builder to decide how many power outlets, network and phone connections you will need.

With printers, scanners, faxes, and other technologies connecting directly to the network these days, the rule of thumb of one electrical outlet, one phone and one network connection per employee is woefully outdated. Consult your IT provider in the early planning stages to ensure you have what you need before the drywall goes up.

Please Welcome Our Newest Client and Friend!

We are thrilled to welcome our newest client into our company! We want to extend a sincere "thanks" for the trust and confidence this client has shown in us:

Dakota Monument
Thanks, Dave!

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

“How To Get Clients To Pay In Full And On Time”

If the U.S. financial crisis of 2009 taught business owners anything about giving credit terms to their



customers, it would be this: use caution. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, over 12% of small business loans defaulted last year, leaving over \$2 billion unpaid.

For a fee, you can check your customer's business credit through any of the three major credit bureaus (Experian, Trans Union, or Equifax) or from Dunn & Bradstreet. You can also get up to 25 reports for free at www.credit.net.

Since these reports can be incomplete or inaccurate, you should also get answers to the following 4 questions to help you prevent losing money to a dead-beat customer.

1. Can your client provide references for at least 3 or 5 other long-term vendors that you can call and validate payment history with?
2. How long has the company been in business? Startups can be more unstable than companies who are well-established.
3. Do you know who the management team and owners are?
4. Have they had a recent change of ownership?

Call Us Before Your Next Office Move And Get A \$99 Office Move Checklist, Site Survey, and Network Move Plan...FREE!

If you (or someone you know) are planning on moving, contact us for a FREE Office Move Toolkit. You'll receive:

- FREE Office Move Checklist to make sure you don't overlook important action items.
- FREE Site Survey and Network Move Plan. At no charge we'll map out your move to minimize costs and downtime.

Call us now! 701-364-2718

Outlook E-Mail Signatures Protect You From Lawsuits

Do you hate typing your name and contact information at the end of each e-mail you create? Would you like to include legal disclaimers to help protect you and your company? Then use an Outlook "signature" to automate the insertion of this information.

Here's how... On the Tools menu, click Options. Then click the Mail Format tab. Then click the Signatures button. Click the New button and give your signature a name when prompted and click Next. Type the text you would like to have appear at the end of each email in the box and click Finished. That's all there is to it. Be sure the name of the signature you just created appears in the box titled Signature For New Messages: and Signature For Replies and Forwards: and click the OK button. You can test the signature by creating a new email message. The signature you created should automatically appear at the end of your email message.

Once you have successfully created this basic e-mail signature, you can experiment with adding company logos, color and custom fonts to the signature. For more MS Office features, go to <http://office.microsoft.com>. For more on email disclaimers, go to <http://www.emaildisclaimers.com>.

Here is a template for a disclaimer message. **Be sure to have your lawyer approve your disclaimer prior to use.**

DISCLAIMER: *This e-mail message and any attachments are intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information which is proprietary, privileged, confidential or otherwise legally exempt from disclosure. If you are not the named addressee, you are not authorized to read, print, retain, copy or disseminate this message or any part of it. If you have received this message in error, please notify [Your Name] at [Your Company] immediately (by replying to this message or by sending an email to [Your Email] or by calling [Your Phone Number]) and permanently delete this message and any attachments. Thank you.*