TECHNOLOGY TIMES

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

What's New

We love having you as a customer and, quite honestly, wish we had more like you! So instead of just wishing, we've decided to hold a special "refer a friend" event during the 1st Quarter.

Simply refer any company with 10 or more users to our office. We will call and schedule an appointment. When we get the appointment we will send you a $10 gift card to Scheels. If the referral you submitted becomes a client, you will receive $500 off of your next monthly service! For more information, please go to:
http://www.imsnetworking.com/about-us/referral-program/

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Rick Johnston, President of Information Management Systems

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

5 Great Ways To Prevent Cyber–Attacks

As technology consultants, we're stuck between a rock and a hard place. We want to provide our clients with enterprise-level IT, but that requires that we specialize in overwhelmingly intricate technology. Explaining even the most foundational aspects of our cyber-security would most likely put you to sleep before convincing you of our expertise. But if you really want to know, here are a few summaries of how we focus on *proactive* strategies rather than *reactive* ones.

Understand the threats you're facing

Before any small- or medium-sized business can work toward preventing cyber-attacks, everyone involved needs to know exactly what they're fighting against. Whether you're working with in-house IT staff or an outsourced provider, you should review what types of attack vectors are most common in your industry. Ideally, your team would do this a few times a year.

Reevaluate what it is you're protecting

Now that you have a list of the biggest threats to your organization, you need to take stock of how each one threatens the various cogs of your network. Map out every device that connects to the internet, what services are currently protecting those devices, and what type of data they have access to (regulated, mission-critical, low-importance, etc.).

Create a baseline of protection

By reviewing current trends in the cyber-security field, alongside an audit of your current technology framework, you can begin to get a clearer picture of how

you want to prioritize your preventative measure versus your reactive measures.

Before you can start improving your cyber-security approach, you need to know where the baseline is. Create a handful of real-life scenarios and simulate them on your network. Network penetration testing from trustworthy IT professionals will help pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in your current framework.

"As soon as you focus on preventing downtime events instead of reacting to them, your technology will begin to increase your productivity and efficiency to levels you've never dreamed of"

Finalize a plan

All these pieces will complete the puzzle of what your new strategies need to be. With an experienced technology consultant onboard for the entire process, you can easily parse the results of your simulation into a multi-pronged approach to becoming more proactive:

♦ Security awareness seminars that coach everyone — from receptionists to CEOs — about password management and mobile device usage.

♦ "Front-line" defenses like intrusion prevention systems and hardware firewalls that scrutinize everything trying to sneak its way in through the front door or your network.

♦ Routine checkups for software updates, licenses, and patches to minimize the chance of leaving a backdoor to your network open.

♦ Web-filtering services that blacklist dangerous and inappropriate sites for anyone on your network.

♦ Antivirus software that specializes in the threats most common to your industry.

As soon as you focus on *preventing* downtime events instead of *reacting* to them, your technology will begin to increase your productivity and efficiency to levels you've never dreamed of. Start enhancing your cyber-security by giving us a call at 701-364-2718 or email info@imsnetworking.com for more information.

Fun Facts

♦ Camping can help reset your body clock, according to research

♦ The smell of Crayola crayons is so familiar that it is 1 of the 20 most recognizable scents to American adults

♦ Over its lifetime, the average microwave consumes more energy to display a digital clock than to heat food

♦ On average, every dollar bill you touch has over 3,000 different types of bacteria

♦ Daydreamers are better at solving complex problems

♦ People who laugh more are better able to tolerate pain—both physical and emotional

♦ The small pocket in the larger pocket of your jeans was designed for pocket watches

♦ The top sales at Walmart as a storm approaches are Pop-Tarts and beer

♦ Taking a nap after learning something can help your retention of it

For more fun facts go to: http://www.funfactz.com/interesting-facts/

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Handheld? Console? No, It's...Switch!

Nintendo's long-awaited new gaming platform Switch should be available any day now, if it isn't already. It combines the best elements of handheld games with a home console. Handheld, the gamepad is the screen. Slip it into its dock and it plays on your TV.

The gamepad comes with two detachable "Joy-Cons." One player can hold a Joy-Con in each hand, two players can each take one, or bring in more Joy-Cons and multiple people can play.

If you're on the go, pull out the "kickstand" on the back of the gamepad and prop it up on an even surface for easy viewing. There's a slot on the side for game cards and a USB-C port for quick charging.

Because it has greater processing power than the Wii U, you'll have no trouble playing Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, Super Mario and a host of your other favorite Nintendo games.

The Countdown Begins for Windows 7 Users

As the saying goes: *Out with the old, in with the new*. That's exactly what Microsoft is encouraging Windows 7 users to do as soon as possible. It's been reported that Windows 7 in 2017 is so outdated that patches are unable to secure it anymore. Maybe it's the nostalgic qualities that make it hard for users to take the leap. But sentiments aside, Windows 10 is the way to go.

Windows 7 was given extended support in 2015. And with that, Microsoft warned its users that this outdated version would drive up operating costs due to remediating software attacks that Windows 10 systems could otherwise avoid. The three-year countdown toward Windows 7's twilight officially kicks off with a warning to enterprises that they could face hefty fines for sticking with the platform's outdated security.

According to Markus Nitschke, head of Windows at Microsoft Germany: Windows 7 does not meet the requirements of modern technology, nor the high security requirements of IT departments. How would this make current Windows 7 users feel? Why are users choosing to remain faithful to the platform's outdated security? Users can delay upgrades until January 13, 2020, after which extended support for the 2009 OS will end and it will no longer receive patches — unless the customer is paying for a pricey Microsoft Custom Support Agreement.

Markus also added that "As early as in Windows XP, we saw that companies should take early steps to avoid future risks or costs." The message came as Microsoft published studies that showed Windows 10 Anniversary Update's built-in security managed to neutralize zero-day exploits, even without patches needed to protect earlier versions of Windows.

Failing to upgrade to Windows 10 means that you and your networks will miss out on noteworthy security features such as the Windows Hello biometric login, the AppContainer sandboxing technology, and Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection, which will gain new features after upcoming Creators Update.

On top of missing out on all the security features that Windows 10 has to offer, enterprise organizations on Windows 7 soon won't have the additional zero-day protection that EMET, or the Enhanced Mitigation Experience Toolkit, offered since 2009. Last November, EMET's expiration date was extended from January 2017 to July 31, 2018.

With the help of newer tools, migrating from Windows 7 to Windows 10 is considerably easier when compared with migrations from XP. Microsoft is still urging corporate users to make the shift before Microsoft permanently terminates support for Windows 7, stating that their business could be looking at real trouble if they fail to comply.

Business owners always do their best to ensure the future of their organization. That includes knowing which tech resources to rely on and which ones to avoid. If you still have questions about Windows 7, feel free to give us a call at 701-364-2718 or email info@imsnetworking.com.

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

Bits & Bytes

Imagine careening through a virtual forest on the back of a Pegasus in a race against other fitness buffs…

VirZOOM hopes their stationary, VR-equipped exercise bikes will soon be coming to an arcade or fitness center near you. They've already installed the bikes in over a dozen venues in the US, from Connecticut to California. Walk into any of these places and you can strap on a VR headset and compete in live, multiplayer matches. Plans are already being hatched for full-blown tournaments, complete with prizes and onlookers. You can ride your way to fitness with the aforementioned Pegasus, straight bike races or even a good old-fashioned tank battle… Who'd'a thunk doing something so good for your health could be so much fun? *Engadget.com, 01.05.17*

Uber has added a new destination: people.

Let's say you just flew into Phoenix and you want to meet a friend there for drinks before heading to your hotel. It used to be that you'd ask them, "Where are you? … Where's

that again?" then try to quickly type in the address before you forgot any of the details, hoping you didn't misspell anything. With Uber's new "People" feature, instead of typing in your destination, you simply enter the person's name, skipping all the back and forth. Uber then locks in their destination and directs the driver to take you there. It also sends your ETA to the person you're going to see. Just sync your contacts with Uber before your next trip, and enjoy the ride. *Mashable, 12.21.16*

The Furbo Dog Camera lets you play with your pet from miles away.

Missing your pup while you're at work or on the road? Pull out your Android or iPhone and check in. Furbo delivers 720p video in a 120-degree field so you see what's going on at home. Call your dog through the microphone and even flip her (or him) a treat for responding to your command. Just swipe your phone's screen in "Dispense" mode and Furbo launches a treat out onto the floor – or right into your dog's mouth, if she's clever enough to catch it. Furbo can be placed anywhere with an electrical outlet

nearby. And with its sleek white hourglass design and bamboo wood top, it blends in with any decor. *NerdTechy.com, 12.5.16*

Introducing the mercenary software that powered Trump and Brexit.

NationBuilder was built for any person or organization with a supporter or donor base who cares about what they're doing. It helps activists cast their influence into the wider world via e-mail, social media and campaign website updates. Its goal is to convert interest into tangible support such as voting intent, monetary donations or volunteered time. Yet NationBuilder isn't the only platform used by politicos to carry out their vision. Nor is it just for political or advocacy groups; in one case a woman used it to help raise money for her fiancé's fight against cancer. What NationBuilder and other similar programs do is help people make a difference – no matter what their beliefs. *DigitalTrends.com, 12.21.16*