Tax Scams?

Be aware that the IRS does not initiate taxpayer communications through email—ever. One of the biggest indications that an email is fake is when it addresses you as "sir", "madam", or "taxpayer". Do not click on any links or open any attachments claiming to be from the IRS, "Income Tax Department", or your tax preparation company. Report any emails claiming to be from the IRS by forwarding the emails to phishing@irs.gov. Never respond to unsolicited emails requesting scanned copies of personal documents. Try to stay safe online this tax season, and remember that the deadline to file is on Monday, April 18.

April 2016

This monthly publication provided courtesy of Chris Schalleur, CEO of Christo IT Services.

"As a business owner, 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!"

Which Flavor Of The Cloud Is Right For You

Secure data backup, greater reliability, better resource and growth management options, and improved collaboration are just a few of the reasons to take full advantage of cloud computing today.

Yet understanding the choices you have can help you avoid some VERY costly mistakes you could wind up seriously regretting later. To help you move forward with confidence, here are some important points to consider.

Three "Flavors" Of The Cloud
Not all cloud models are the same. A cloud environment that works for a dental practice with a half dozen locations may not be entirely suitable for a new law firm with just a single office.

In determining what the best cloud model is for your organization, it's important to know how cloud services are structured.

Basically, there are three types of cloud: public, private and hybrid.

Public Cloud Services Offer Flexibility And Lower Cost
A public cloud comprises a collection of data storage and software services that can be accessed on an as-needed monthly basis, somewhat like an electric utility or fitness club. It houses data facilities outside the corporate firewall that you access through an Internet browser without having to make any initial or ongoing capital investment.

Well-known examples of public cloud services include Google Drive, Microsoft Office Online, Apple iCloud and Amazon Cloud Drive. They provide data storage and, in many cases, web apps.

Public clouds are best used where a high level of privacy is not required. They can provide access to a growing pool of newer technologies that would

not be affordable if developed individually.

Private Clouds Support Highly Specialized Apps

A private cloud resides within an organization's firewall, and is typically owned, managed and supported by that business. IT resources are available to members of the organization from their own data center.

Private clouds can support highly specialized and/or privacy-restricted applications, like medical-records software for a health-care organization concerned about HIPPA requirements, for example.

And, while it can be more expensive to set up initially, a private cloud may deliver a higher ROI in the long run since you're not paying for ongoing shared services.

Hybrid Clouds: Balancing Complexity With Flexibility

Merging the flexibility of public cloud services with the control of a private cloud, a hybrid cloud can provide the ideal infrastructure for some organizations.

A hybrid cloud enables you to put some of your apps and data – archives and e-mail, for instance – in a public cloud, and the remainder in your private cloud. This provides the cost savings and benefits of the public cloud while retaining the customization and security advantages of a private cloud.

"Each type of cloud has its own pros and cons."

While it can be more complex to deploy and manage than a pure public or private cloud, a hybrid cloud may deliver the best blend of control, flexibility and cost-effectiveness for some organizations.

So Which "Flavor" Is Right For You?

There is no perfect solution – each type of cloud has its own pros and cons. That being said, here are a few key factors to consider when determining the best approach for your particular business:

> Public cloud solutions are best suited to the flexibility and budget requirements of smaller businesses that want access to the kind of IT resources that bigger organizations can afford, without the cost of development and ongoing support and management.

A private cloud, managed and supported by an in-house IT team, may be ideal for your organization if control and privacy are of paramount concern.

A hybrid cloud could be the ideal solution for any enterprise that wants to manage sensitive data in-house while availing itself of third-party software and data storage for uses where the data involved isn't as sensitive.

How To Get The Best Professional Help

While hiring a cloud-computing expert can prove extremely beneficial in the long run, it's critical to work with a professional who has depth of experience in all types of cloud environments.

We've helped dozens of companies set up and run cost-effective, powerful and secure cloud networks. For a Free Cloud Readiness Assessment, contact us at 215-256-7902 or email info@christoit.com today.

Free Report Download: The Business Owner's Guide To IT Support Services And Fees

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- Exclusions, hidden fees and other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.
- How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.

Claim Your FREE http://www.ChristoIT.com/ITbuyersguide

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

New Printer Fits In Your Pocket

So, what's about the size of a deck of cards and prints instant photos from your smartphone – with no ink needed?

Yes, there is such a thing, and if you guessed the new Polaroid Zip, you'd be right.

Selling for $129.99, it prints full-color 2x3-inch prints with an optional peel-off sticky backing. Each print costs about 25 cents and they look okay, all things considered – just don't expect ink-jet print quality.

How does it not need ink? It uses Polaroid's Zink zero-ink paper, embedded with cyan, yellow and magenta crystals. They turn into the appropriate colors when activated by a heat process. And since there's no ink, there's no stickiness, smearing or waiting for photos to dry.

Connect to your smartphone via Bluetooth, then just shoot and print!

Cloud Hosting or Dedicated Server Hosting: Are You Asking the Right Question to Get the Right Answers?

There are many Pros and Cons for both Cloud and In-House Servers, and based on your particular needs for your business, these can steer you in one direction or another. One of the factors that is frequently discussed is TCO (Total Cost of Ownership). Physical Servers have an upfront cost while Cloud Based Servers have an ongoing monthly "rental" cost. Physical Servers for an in-house server typically have a 5-6 year lifespan, while cloud based servers do not. What we have seen is that over time, comparable systems have a very close TCO regardless of the location of the system.

While it is an important variable, cost should not be the start of the discussion regarding cloud vs. in-house systems. More telling variables such as your Line-Of-Business applications, scalability, uptime needs, and mobility of your workforce should be the starting point of the discussion. Christo IT has been a Microsoft Gold Partner since 2010, and works with Microsoft's Azure platform to bring easy to use and deploy cloud options for our small business clients. Call us today at 215-256-7902 to discuss how cloud might be an option for your firm.

Services We Offer

Complete Care, IT Business Support, ChristoCloud, IT Consulting, ChristoGuard, Data Recovery, VOIP Services
Give us a call today at 215-256-7902 to discuss your needs.

More glitches ahead.

Software bugs have been around for a while now. But with so much new technology going online – often without sufficient testing – the interactions are getting harder to predict. A glitch grounded 5,000 United Airlines planes for two hours. Other glitches have halted trading at the New York Stock Exchange. And a glitch at Netflix caused this odd summary: "This Disney film follows a gentle, crippled bell ringer as he faces prejudice and tries to save the eyes of individual dinosaurs." Unlike software bugs, which can be tested and corrected, glitches happen when technology breaks in unexpected ways. Bottom line? No need to abandon technology – just monitor systems and communicate with IT managers more frequently.

-Harvard Business Review

Naturally successful people "sprint," then relax.

An American schoolteacher who moved to Finland in 2014 was skeptical of the Finnish practice of giving students 15 minutes of free time every hour. Until he tried it. He was astounded when they went from dragging their feet to having a bounce in their step and more focus in their studies. The makers of DeskTime, a software that tracks employee time use, studied the habits of the most productive 10% of their 36,000-employee user base. The surprising results? They work for 52 minutes then break for 17 on average. They treat the 52 minutes like a sprint. During the break they tend to go for a walk or tune out, rather than checking e-mail or Facebook.

-Reader's Digest

Your tech: Productive…or distracting?

With constantly evolving technologies, it's getting harder to know where your time is best spent. To help you stay on track, here are three questions to ask about any situation in your business where technology is involved. 1) Who's the right person to handle this? For example, let your IT partners help employees with tech support questions. 2) Will this save us time and money? Cloud-based productivity solutions, for example, can give your firm access to the resources of big IT without the need to build it yourself. 3) Is this making your job easier or harder? Syncing devices, for instance, could free you and your sales force from the desk to meet with customers.

-Entrepreneur

What's your business missing by not accepting bitcoin?

Here's what you need to know: on the plus side, bitcoin allows direct transactions between end users and product or service providers. That makes it fast and free from transaction fees. It's also extremely difficult to counterfeit, and virtually guarantees user anonymity and security. And promoting that you accept it could enable you to tap into a lucrative demographic. On the other hand, since bitcoins aren't maintained by a single repository, daily exchange rates can fluctuate rapidly. A bitcoin payment you accepted yesterday could be worth half as much today. That, along with a lack of regulatory oversight and ambivalence toward bitcoin by the U.S. Treasury Dept., suggests a wait-and-see approach.

-CBS Pulse

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"Come on you guys. If you're gonna snicker every time I say 'dump file' we're gonna be here all day."

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IT Services
Small Business Solutions

Christo IT Services
314 Ruth Road
Harleysville, Pennsylvania 19438

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