



Michael Mellott, President

“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!”

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XperText

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

Save Over \$5000 per Employee!

Do you have any idea how much time your employees spend on Facebook, March Madness or fantasy baseball websites? If they are doing it on your time, then you should know. A \$20 an hour employee losing 1 hour per day costs you over \$5,000 a year. Content filtering helps you control that cost.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Content filters can be software only or a combination of software and hardware. The type of content filter will depend on your network and how much reporting you would like. Most content filters have a way that you can block everything or you can allow specific employees to have access.

WHAT CAN YOU BLOCK?

Content Categories. You can block websites based on a category. Some of the categories that you might want to block would be pornography, violence, hacking, sports, news, dating, bank and chat sites.

File Type. You can restrict your employees from downloading files. For example, you can block the download of executables or EXE files. This would prevent your employees from accidentally installing a virus or pirated software.

Application Blocking. You might want to block applications including Internet music applications, software updates, and browser toolbars.

Allowing Access. Because some people need higher levels of access and functions, you can set filtering by the individual user or a group.

Web Traffic Monitoring. You can setup the filter for monitoring specific website categories or domain names without presenting block pages to users or preventing access. Monitoring will help to make a business decision on what blocking you might want to use.

Time-based Exceptions. Another common feature is allowing access during specific time periods. You could let all your employees have access to Facebook over their lunch break.

Spyware and Virus Protection. You can block access to known spyware sites, spyware downloads and detect and block spyware activity.

To read more about how to save \$5,000 per employee visit

WWW.XPERTECHS.COM/CONTENTFILTERING



Get More Free Tips, Tools, and Services at our Website: WWW.XPERTECHS.COM

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



If you are a business that is still faxing or mailing documents because you need a signature, you'll love this month's gadget, EchoSign.

Contracts have been faxed and mailed for years because of the binding laws associated with signatures. EchoSign allows the legal, electronic signing of documents to speed up the signing process – now you can e-mail a PDF, Word document or Excel file to someone and allow them to “sign” without printing it off, signing and scanning, faxing or mailing it back to you.

The free version of EchoSign allows the user 5 signatures a month, which may be adequate for those that only deal with contracts and other signed documents once in a while. However, for those that need to use the product on a daily basis, upgrading to the Pro version costs \$14.95/month, the Team version (2-9 users) is \$40/month and the Enterprise version for 10 or more users costs \$299/month.

In addition to speeding up the signing process, this app also allows you to track, organize and file your paperwork securely online, available for reference at any time.

For those who prefer to keep the paper trail organized in computer files instead of physical files, EchoSign would be a great help.

Is Best Buy's New Electronics “Buy Back” Program All It's Cracked Up To Be?

You may have heard about the new “Buy Back” program being offered by Best Buy. The premise behind Best Buy's Buy Back program is simple: Buy a technology product in certain categories – mobile phones (but not pre-paid phones), laptops, netbooks, tablet computers and TVs – from Best Buy, and the store will let you bring it back and receive a portion of the purchase price. Of course, there are “catches.”

First, the Buy Back program isn't free. Its upfront cost is based on what you're buying. For example, the Buy Back benefit on a \$2,500 TV would cost \$349.99. New laptops can run \$70 and phones \$40 to \$60. Second, Best Buy won't give you the full purchase price back. The amount is based on the age of the device and the condition it's in. An item returned within six months will get you a maximum of 50% of the purchase price *provided it's* in good condition and you have all the parts. If you wait 18 to 24 months, you'll get no more than 20% and if you wait 24 to 48 months, you'll only get 10%.



Finally, you don't get cash but a Best Buy gift card, which, naturally, can only be used at Best Buy. So is it a good deal? Depends on how often you like to upgrade your equipment and how much you frequent Best Buy stores. If you like new things and love Best Buy, it's probably a great deal. However, there are many critics of the promotion who say the only beneficiary is Best Buy.

Careful! Phishing E-mails On The Rise

A phishing e-mail is an e-mail sent by a hacker designed to fool the recipient into downloading a virus, giving up their credit card number, personal information (like a social security number), or account or login information to a particular web site. Often these e-mails are well designed to look exactly like an official notification from the site they are trying to emulate.

For example, a recent phishing e-mail was circulated that appeared to come from Facebook stating that videos or photos of Osama Bin Laden's death were posted online. These e-mails looked exactly like a legitimate Facebook e-mail and even appeared to come from “Facebookmail.com.” Once you clicked on the e-mail the phishing site would attempt to install a virus on your machine.

And now due to recent security breaches with Sony and e-mail marketer Epsilon, phishing attacks are going to increase – and they are going to get more sophisticated and harder to distinguish from legitimate e-mails. That's because the hackers that were able to access the private databases of the above mentioned companies now have the name, e-mail and interests of the subscribers, and in some cases birthdays, addresses and more. That means a phishing e-mail can be personalized with relevant information that the user provided to Sony, making the e-mail appear to be more legitimate and the user more likely to click on the links provided and take the actions requested. Now more than ever it's critical that you are wary of e-mail notifications and the actions they request you take. Even having good anti-virus software installed won't protect you if you give your account information away freely.

Ask the Xpert

Tech Tip Trade Offs

Buying a New Computer - choose the option to add more memory/RAM. And for even better discounted price purchase RAM from online retailers, like Crucial.

Media Center - Purchase the best displays, speakers and components, but beware of the unnecessary cost of expensive A/V cables they might try to sell you. Today with many connections digital – where there is little to no signal degradation along the length of the cable (even with analog connections) you will hardly notice the difference between cheap cable and an expensive one. Although if you are connecting components more than 25 feet you may need to make an exception.

Camera Shopping - Beware of *megapixels*, it is a useless specification. Instead focus on the sensor size. To make an easy comparison to *megapixels* go to www.sensor-size.com

Internet Access Savings – Increase speed by adding about \$10 per month to move up a notch from your basic package. This option will support the heavy video streaming allowing you the pleasure of canceling your movie channels and going with services like Netflix and Hulu Plus or Amazon Instant for less cost. New TVs or a Blu-Ray player can access Netflix and other providers giving them the capacity to connect to your home internet connection. Plus other options available under \$100 are apple TV or Roku boxes. Within a year's time your hardware services cost will be less than your cable company payment.

A Note From Michael's Desk...

Separating the Fog from the Cloud

Many of my clients who are hearing about “Cloud” often wonder, “Is the Cloud another buzzword for web technologies or is it something more?” or “What’s different about technologies before and after the advent of the Cloud?” To answer those two questions, I need to explain what the Cloud *is*.



The IT industry defines cloud computing as “...a model for enabling convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources” The concept of Cloud computing, as I define it from a consumer’s perspective, which is where most of my client’s will find themselves, has three important aspects:

1. Services are available over the web using a browser or by way of programmable calls to a service;
Little or no startup costs are required because the services are utilities for which you pay as you use them; and
3. Like a cloud in the sky, the capacity and resources are infinitely expandable.

Cloud vs. Fog

The non-public Cloud offerings, for the most part, are those technologies that allow people to build what marketers call a “private Cloud.” I don’t believe these technologies are Cloud, but merely “marketing Fog.” Usually this internal, private Cloud is a marketing term used for describing server consolidation strategies and tools for managing virtual machines (VM). So does this mean server consolidation and VM management approaches are worse than Cloud approaches? Not necessarily, there are several business reasons why you might want internal management/hosting and not want to move something to the Cloud. Still it’s important to understand that, by nature, internally-managed services are *not* Cloud because Cloud is essentially an economic model for acquiring services as much as it is a technical approach.

The Money Side

That’s right, as much as Cloud is a technical thing, it’s an *economic* thing, too. In the non-Cloud world we make capital investments in software and servers. In the Cloud world we make operational expenditures on services – which tend to be much cheaper than the large capital investments. So rather than buying equipment and software, we buy services, much like your organization buys electric power or cellular phone minutes. For the most part, Cloud services come in the form of Software as a Service (SaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS). Each cloud provider has its own approach to billing. Some allow you to buy blocks of use in advance at discounts while others only allow for monthly subscriptions. However, they all provide some time-bounded approach to billing. Regardless of the unique billing approach, the approaches are fairly similar for all Cloud providers. Still, this is a radical departure from traditional economic models for technology where organizations make substantial upfront investments in licenses or investments in equipment. For further information on cutting through the fog that surrounds Cloud computing, call me directly at (410) 884-0225.

The Lighter Side...

The World's Funniest Real Ads

Believe it or not, these ads actually found their way into newspapers all over the world:

Braille dictionary for sale. Must see to appreciate.

FOR SALE BY OWNER: Complete set of Encyclopedia Britannica. 45 volumes. Excellent condition. \$1,000.00 or best offer. No longer needed. Got married last weekend. Wife knows everything.

For sale, Hope Chest, brand new, half off, long story.

Christmas sale. Handmade gifts for the hard-to-find person.

Wanted, man to take care of cows that does not smoke or drink.

Three-year-old teacher needed for pre-school. Experience preferred.

Tired of working for only \$9.75 per hour? We offer profit sharing and flexible hours. Starting pay: \$7-\$9 per hour.

Our sofa seats the whole mob and it's made of 100% Italian leather.

Nordic Track \$300 hardly used, call Chubby.

Joining nudist colony! Must sell washer and dryer \$300.

Free puppies: ½ cocker spaniel, ½ sneaky neighbor's dog.

Snow Blower for sale...only used on snowy days.

Bill's Septic Cleaning: "We Haul American-Made Products."

Cows, calves never bred...also 1 gay bull for sale.

Nice Parachute – Never opened. Used once.

Hummels – Largest selection ever. "If it's in stock, then we have it!"

Can You Really Get Microsoft Office For Just \$6 A Month?

Recently, Microsoft announced a real "game changer" for the IT industry and something that may mean the demise of the \$62 billion company's stronghold on the desktop. What is it? Office 365, which is their new cloud computing answer to Google Apps. Instead of paying \$300 per license, you can now access the entire Office suite of products via the Internet for \$6 to \$24 per month (like paying for a utility).

What Is "Cloud Computing"

Cloud computing or "going to the cloud" is very similar to the concept of paying for electricity as a utility rather than purchasing and running your own generator to power your home or office. Public utilities can provide a cheap, reliable, "pay as you go" service to anyone wanting water or power. Similarly, cloud computing means that the cost of hosting, securing and delivering services (like Office) is owned by the utility company (in this case, Microsoft).

Is This A Smart Move?

The cost savings with Office 365 are hard to ignore; however, there are a number of things to consider before you jump ship to cloud computing. You need to consider the reliability of your Internet connection, what type of help desk support you want, security, what other applications (accounting, CRM, line of business applications, etc.) you need and which devices (scanners, printers, iPads) you need to use. Many people also have concerns about security and where their data is kept – all things that need to be addressed before you move to the cloud.

Free "Cloud Readiness" Assessment Will Give You The Facts

If you want to know if cloud computing is right for you, call Michael at (410) 884-0225 or visit WWW.XPERTECHS.COM/CloudReadiness for a free, no-pressure, no-obligation cloud readiness assessment. We'll evaluate your current situation and provide insights and options for moving to the cloud. We'll also answer any questions you have and tell you the unvarnished pros and cons of choosing this option.



Microsoft Office 365
Try It Now

Hot Off the Press!!!

Microsoft Corporation announced on June 28th the general availability of Microsoft Office 365, the company's newest cloud service! Office 365 is now available for your business, and it brings together Microsoft Office, Microsoft SharePoint Online, Microsoft Exchange Online and Microsoft Lync Online in an always-up-to-date cloud service, at a predictable monthly subscription.

XPORTECHS has worked with Microsoft during the beta release and would like to offer all the readers a Free Trial for their business! Call us today or visit our Office 365 site to sign up!

WWW.XPERTECHS.COM/OFFICE365

