



Michael Mellott, President

“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 today and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!

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Inside This Issue...

How To Determine The TRUE Cost Of Any IT Upgrade, Transition Or Addition.....Page 1

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month: LoJack For Laptops.....Page 2

What Is Google+ And How Will It Affect Your Company’s SEO And Online Presence?.....Page 2

‘Is Your Business Ready for the Cloud? Join Us for Our Next FREE Event to Find Out!! ..... Page 3

Warning! If Your Employees Are Using Their Own Phones And Laptops To Work From Home, You Need To Read This Now.....Page 4



"No, you don't get to choose between the wearin' of the green and the eatin' of the green."

5090 Dorsey Hall Dr. Ellicott City, MD 21042  
(410) 884-0225 | WWW.XPERTECHS.COM



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

How To Determine The TRUE Cost Of Any IT Upgrade, Transition Or Addition

I’m often asked about the ROI (return on investment) for technology. Truth is, I don’t believe you “invest” in technology. Investments are things that provide a measurable, quantifiable return for your money.



Of course it can easily be argued that technology *does* provide a return for your money. If you don’t think so, try communicating with your clients and market without e-mail or tracking inventory with pen and paper. And the right technology applied with a smart strategy can certainly give any business owner a strategic advantage in faster delivery of goods and services to customers, greater productivity, lowered production costs and the like. In fact, there aren’t too many businesses that can operate without a few core IT applications. But the reality is that your bank account is going to be a bit lighter after you install that new upgrade or technology, so how do you know if that IT upgrade or project is worth the money?

The right way to look at the true price of any IT project or upgrade is to look at TCO or “total cost of ownership” and not just the PRICE of the project or upgrade. For example, if you buy a car, the price of the car is only one cost of owning it. You also have to consider insurance, gas and routine maintenance like new tires and oil changes to get an accurate look at what you’ll pay. Therefore, the total COST of owning a car is far more than just the price tag – and a cheaper car up front can end up costing more in the long-haul if frequent repairs are needed.

In IT, the same principle applies. You have to look at the TOTAL cost of a particular IT decision, not just the price tag, when comparing options. For example, the real cost of not upgrading a network may actually be higher than spending several thousand dollars on new equipment and upgrades when you accurately assess the total cost of maintenance, service fees and poor performance. These days, many business owners are looking at “going to the Cloud” because they want to save money. And in many cases, it will do just that, but the cost savings will often come in the form of cheaper devices, less maintenance and low (or no) upgrade costs over a 3 year period – not in a month to month service fee. So before you say “No” or “Yes” to that next IT project, make sure you are taking into consideration the TOTAL cost of your decision, and make sure you are talking to a true pro who understands the difference between the price of something and the total cost.



Get More Free Tips, Tools, and Services at our Website: [WWW.XPERTECHS.COM](http://WWW.XPERTECHS.COM)

## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month



Since we talked about “who pays” (employees or employers) when a device goes missing in last month’s newsletter, we thought we would recommend a good device tracking system for laptops this month.

The company that provides LoJack for Laptops, Absolute Software, is NOT the same company that provides the vehicle recovery service you’re most likely familiar with (they license the name). But they do provide a similar service in the sense that they help businesses and consumers track, manage, secure and recover mobile computers and devices.

Once installed, LoJack for Laptops will allow you to geographically locate your lost or stolen laptop. It also allows you to issue a remote command to freeze your lost or stolen computer and/or create a customized message to display on your computer’s screen to help someone who finds it return it to you. If you feel like it’s fallen into the wrong hands, you can remotely erase files on your computer. You can opt to delete all of your files, or just certain file types. The next time your laptop contacts the Monitoring Center, it receives the “delete” command and erases the files you selected.



## What Is Google+ And How Will It Affect Your Company’s SEO??

Not too long ago Google introduced Google+ in an effort to take on Facebook and Twitter in the social networking war – and given the fact that over 20 million people have already started using this feature since it was introduced last June, there’s a good chance it will continue to gain ground and popularity among web users. But what is Google+ and how will it affect the ranking of your company’s web site – if at all?



Google is attempting to combine the most popular features of Facebook and Twitter into a centralized social hub where users have the ability to share content with specific groups of people called “circles.” As users build these circles, they’ll be able to see web sites that members of their circles have +1’d (is that a verb?). There’s also a group video chat feature called “Hangouts,” and a user-defined topical news feed similar to Twitter’s hashtag called “Sparks.” While positive (or even negative) reviews from users online have always been viewed through the lens of skepticism, Google+ will add a level of validation to those reviews since you only see the +1’s from people in your circles.

While it’s still too early to tell how Google+ will affect your company’s SEO, it’s safe to assume that Google will reward web sites that get lots of +1s because of the web’s evolution to become more “social” and user driven.

The bottom line to all of this (and a key ingredient to any company’s success online OR offline) is good old fashioned customer service. These days it’s easy for any disgruntled customer to post a negative comment online. And once it’s posted, it’s practically written in indelible ink. Get enough negative reviews and your reputation will definitely take a hit. Additionally, it’s important that you monitor your company’s reputation online and encourage happy clients to post positive comments about you.

### Why Make The Switch To Exchange 2010?



This is a question that we receive frequently. Many of our clients are now using Exchange 2010, and have seen the benefits.

Microsoft Exchange Server 2010 brings a new and rich set of technologies, features, and services to the Exchange Server product line. New features and functionality in Exchange 2010 support several key concepts:

- Flexibility and reliability
- Access from anywhere
- Protection and compliance

The pressure to optimize your IT infrastructure to respond to changing business conditions demands agility and that means investing in solutions that provide your organization choice. Exchange 2010 gives the flexibility to tailor your deployment based on your organization’s unique needs and a simplified way to help keep e-mail continuously available for your users.

# Ask the Xpert

## Cloud Edition

Lately, we have been receiving many questions about “the Cloud.” So, this month we decided to answer some of them:

### What Connectivity Is Needed?

Cloud services hosted outside your local office network require that a fast, reliable internet connection be in place. In scenarios where many or all of a company’s software or network assets are “in the Cloud” a second (i.e. redundant) internet connection is recommended.

### What Type Of Equipment Is Needed?

The required hardware (i.e. equipment) for Cloud services is dependent on the type of service and design. Private Cloud desktop solutions typically require only an internet connection to access. Office locations should always have a firewall and switch.

### Is The Data Secure And Accessible At All Times?

Yes! All your business data is secured through traditional networking security protocols and best practices. Data is also encrypted during transfer and access. The availability of most Cloud services is based on an “anywhere anytime” approach. As long as you have internet access your Cloud is available!

For Xpert tips and more Xpert advice visit our website:

[WWW.XPERTECHS.COM/XPERT](http://WWW.XPERTECHS.COM/XPERT)

## A Note From Michael's Desk..

Cloud: New Year, Same Question

Jay Leno, The host of *The Tonight Show*, has an amusing segment entitled “jay walking” wherein he asks random people on the street pretty basic questions that most of us think anyone should know, but as we find out, the answers are invariably surprising! Here we are in 2012 and by now, you would think that everyone has heard enough about Cloud that it would be easy to define it. But, after asking several of my clients over the past week, what they would like to know about the Cloud and how do they define it, there were many people who still do not understand it or how to leverage it in their business.

So I have made it my personal objective to educate as many people as possible on what is “The Cloud,” and more importantly, “How can I get there from here?” I want to be your tour guide for everything Cloud. I have restructured XPERTECHS to be a Cloud Integrator and help company’s leverage the Cloud for their business. While the Cloud may be different things for different organizations, the concept of Cloud computing, as I define it from a consumer’s perspective, which is where most of my clients will find themselves, has three important aspects:

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

In other words, the Cloud is simply a datacenter delivered as a service. It defies geography, creates new security paradigms, has unique cost models, uses tons of alien technology not seen in the average SMB, and allows everyone the opportunity to scale as needed. But until most people actually see real case studies of businesses using the Cloud, they won’t be able to understand how to get there from here.

**So stay tuned to our Cloud educational events during 2012.**

**Our next event is March 14<sup>th</sup> – see directly below for more details!**

**For further information on Cloud computing, call me directly at (410) 884-0225.**



YOU'RE INVITED!!!

XPERTECHS **FREE** Lunch-and-Learn Webinar:

**“How Cloud Computing Can  
Cut Your IT Costs by Half,  
Provide Automatic Disaster Recovery &  
Free You to Work from Anywhere on Any Device.”**

**When: Wednesday, March 14th, 12:00 PM**

**Where: Participate from the comfort of your very own office!!**

**Register Online TODAY: [www.xpertechs.com/events](http://www.xpertechs.com/events)**

**Or Call Chris @ 410-884-0225**



Space is limited to the first 25 people who register. Attendees will receive American Express gift cards to use for the lunch of their choice.

## Are Your Employees Using Their Personal Devices To Work? Be Careful!



It's only natural that employees will want to check e-mail and do other work-related activities from home or on the road, often using their own personal devices. But be careful! You could be opening up a serious security loophole by allowing this.

Since these personal devices aren't company owned and regulated, you have limited access and control over how they are used. Employees can easily download malware and viruses and infect your network when they connect, send e-mails or transfer files. Another risk is the security of the device. If an employee loses or misplaces a device with confidential client information on it, it puts a responsibility on YOU to notify clients and can lead to a costly PR nightmare or security breach.

That's not to say you shouldn't allow employees to use personal devices – but if you do, then you need to make sure these devices are being secured and backed up like every other device in your network. The type of remote security monitoring you need will depend on the device, the information being stored or accessed and the laws regarding the information you store for patients or clients.

If you are interested in knowing more about developing a concrete and effective IT security policy for personal device use as well as general system access, please don't hesitate to give us a call so we can sit down with you and discuss a custom security blueprint that's just right for you.

## Success Is a Result of Achievement Not Good Intentions

At the beginning of every year many people make a New Year's Resolution List: lose weight, stop smoking, exercise more, learn a second language, lower their cholesterol, spend more time with their family, etc., etc., etc. Making a list is a great idea because "How do you know you got there, if you don't know where you are going?" Unfortunately most people never accomplish anything on their list. Why?

There can be many reasons why people fail at achieving their New Year's Resolutions: lack of commitment and resolve, poor planning, poor organization, lack of time or poor time management, letting trivial things interfere, choosing too many resolutions, depending on others to help, family demands. With all the surprises and demands that pop-up in our daily lives, "New Resolutions" start getting pushed further and further back until they just disappear.

This year I have decided to simplify this process in hopes of helping to ensure my success. I have decided to choose only "One" goal in each of "Four" important areas of my life. Areas you may want to consider are family, health, business, leisure, financial and personal. The key here is to limit your areas, because the more you pick, the greater your chance for failure. It is better to pick one and achieve it than it is to choose five and fail. When you concentrate your focus on just one goal, many other positive things can occur. A simple example would be to decide you are going to exercise more. Exercise will improve your health and your appearance, give you more energy, slow the aging process, cause you to sleep better, and reduce illness...One goal = many results. My suggestion for you this year is to Simplify (1 goal), Decide (4 areas) and Abide (Do).

### Success is a result of achievement, not good intentions.

*Guest article provided by: Robert Stevenson is a highly sought after, internationally known speaker. He is the author of the best-selling books "How to Soar Like An Eagle in a World Full of Turkeys" and "52 Essential Habits For Success."*

## Name Our New Cloud Service & Win An iPad 2!

As most of you may know, XPERTECHS is now in the cloud! We are so excited to be able to begin offering full cloud services to our customers, but we still need a name for this new service!

### What does this mean for you?

We are asking for your help! Send us your ideas and help us name our cloud services and you will be entered for a chance to win an iPad 2!

Please send your name ideas to [marketing@xpertechs.com](mailto:marketing@xpertechs.com) by **Tuesday, March 13th**. After we receive all entries, we will choose and announce our WINNER!



The winner will receive a brand new iPad 2 from XPERTECHS!!



Get More Free Tips, Tools, and Services at our Website: [WWW.XPERTECHS.COM](http://WWW.XPERTECHS.COM)