# IT Radix Resource

*Checkmate...Game...Match!*

**Spring 2013**

## All the Right Moves

Chess is a brutal mental game. So is business. You need to make your moves carefully.

These days, information technology is at the foundation of almost every business. So, what is a smart business owner to do?

**Know the phases of the game and have a plan**
In chess, people often talk about "first mover advantage." More important is the last mover. You have to be durable. Many businesses start out small, with just a small number of computers. In the beginning, perhaps only basic email, word processing and simple accounting is needed. However, over time, the company grows and the IT needs usually grow with it. This growth needs to be planned and carefully implemented to ensure its operations during good times and bad.

If the computer system is down, a myriad of outcomes could result. If a single user computer is down, the impact could be similar to the loss of a pawn in a game of chess. Lose your entire IT infrastructure and it could be "checkmate." Forty percent of businesses fail as a result of a major disaster.

Food for thought: From chessmaster Peter Thiel's lecture *War and Peace*, "A good intermediate lesson in chess is that even a bad plan is better than no plan at all. Having no plan is chaotic."

**Know the relative value of your pieces**
In chess, the queen is the most valuable piece on the board.

When it comes to computers, it's tempting to lump all applications together, but really there is a whole set of gradations.

Some applications provide basic functionality, e.g. a basic contact database, while others will provide full business process automation. When developing your IT strategy, it is important to understand and know the value to the business so that a good move can be made when selecting technology.
For example, many businesses will stick with a separate accounting program (e.g. Quick-

*"When you see a good move, look for a better one."*

*— Emanuel Lasker*
*chess champion, mathematician, philosopher*

Books) and a service management system rather than moving to a single full featured application. The result: Double data entry, workflow inefficiencies and potentially inaccurate decision making.

Similar inefficiencies can result from a poorly architected cloud computing strategy. If multiple cloud solution providers are used, it may be difficult to integrate and share information between them.

Food for thought: From chess grandmaster Danny King, "You can't take your moves back. Once you play your move you could be stepping into some horrible trap."

**Know how your pieces work best together**
The correct way to play chess is to use every piece (chess is a team game)! In IT, at its core, there are users and there are applications. The power users will really use the applications and the information it makes available to them to improve their efficiency and productivity. Others need basic functionality that is very easy to use and very reliable. It's important to match up the right user with the right computer with the right application. You have to strike the right balance. By using all the pieces effectively together, your IT infrastructure can help make your business great.

Food for thought: From Bruce Pandolfini, one of the world's greatest chess teachers, "You want the bulk of your moves to be objective and analytical. But being good at chess also requires being good at reading people."

By practicing chess strategies in your business and IT planning, it can help your business grow and to be more profitable and proficient which will have a huge pay off. I am not a professional chess player, but I do love thinking about strategy, especially in IT and how it relates to your business. Give us a call today to develop your IT strategy in the game of business.

# Front-Line Warriors: The Pawns

*"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds… That may be the postman's motto (clearly old) but I think it should be IT Radix's!"*

*Dana D'Angelo*
*D'Angelo & D'Angelo*

*"Chess has become a different game, one could say that computers have changed the world of chess. That is pretty clear."*
*— Vladimir Kramnik*

Pawns are positioned out in front, directly in harms way. As per the rules of chess, they're expected to advance out in front and take the brunt of oncoming attacks and serve as shields for other pieces. These little warriors can only move straight forward—no retreating for these soldiers. But, if one of these brave soldiers makes it to the other side, they are rewarded with a promotion to a queen!

Your business should have a frontline of defense too when it comes to protecting your company's IT assets! You can do so by establishing clear-cut backup, virus protection and patching policies. All three are necessary to avoid having your defenses breached. You, too, will be rewarded by being pro-active and establishing good, strong policies to protect you in the face of a disaster.

**Daily Backup Policy**
IT Radix recommends backing up all changes, every day. The principals of sound data backup are:

1. Determine what data needs to get backed up, how often and for how long. If you're backing up locally, keep it simple by backing up everything. Online backup systems automatically perform incremental or differential backups once a full backup is complete.

2. Test your backups. Once a month, select a few files at random and restore them. A few times per year, select a critical database to restore.

3. Keep some sort of backup off-site. Online services are great; your data is automatically off-site without human intervention.

**Weekly Virus Protection**
Virus scans should be performed regularly (at a minimum, weekly) with real-time protection always active. Virus definitions (i.e., list of known viruses) should be checked regularly to ensure they are current. Virus protection software should be upgraded yearly to ensure all known viruses are identified.

**Monthly Patching Policy**
Software patches should be performed regularly (at a minimum, monthly). Patches include software updates and fixes to MS Windows, MS Office Suite, Adobe and Java.

The good news is that all three of IT Radix's Managed Service plans address each and every one of these best practices above. Give us a call to learn more about how you can incorporate these policies into your own business strategy and come out a winner!

# Introducing…IT Radix Chess Masters

IT Radix boasts a few chess masters of our own, with a variety of backgrounds and reasons for loving this challenging game of wits!

**Seth Shedrick** learned to play chess in high school because it was the "cool" thing to learn at the time. As a member of his high school chess team, he placed 2$^{nd}$ in a state chess tournament in his senior year! Seth revels in the challenges of chess as he strategically looks for his next move from his perspective as well as his opponents. Seth relates this to real life when it comes to recommending technology purchases for our clients, and the importance of seeing technology needs from their perspective!

**Mike Oster** finds chess to be a nice relaxing way to exercise his brain. Although, he admits that the true chess player in his household is actually his son, Michael, who is on his high school's chess team. "People don't always think of chess as being competitive, but let me tell you, it is!" states Mike. "These kids really love to flex their mental muscles."

**Tom Quitt** enjoyed playing chess back in his college days with his friends at local coffee shops. "It's fun and challenging, and you get bragging rights when you beat your friends (albeit nerdy bragging rights)," claims Tom. An important approach to a good chess game is being able to look at a problem from multiple angles.

**Ron Vreeland** learned to play chess from his dad. Ron likes chess because "the game board represents an open field of possibilities. No two games are exactly alike. Every action has a counter, and every counter has an action. In this way chess relates most to life—it is never possible to fully anticipate what moves you will be forced into."

**Brian Collora** started playing chess during lunch in middle school and likes the strategy involved. He claims that his approach depends on his opponent, "sometimes kamikaze chess works and other times slow and steady is best." Brian enjoys chess because it makes you think two or more steps ahead.

Recently, IT Radix had our own chess tournament at our office in Whippany. Check out our Facebook page to see who won this battle of wits!

# Entering by Stealth: The Powerful Knight

The knight is the most unique chess piece! Not only does it resemble a horse, it is the only chess piece that can jump over another chess piece or pieces according to chess rules. The knight's move is rather different too. Think of the move as "L" shaped—two squares either forward, backward, left, or right and then left or right one square. This special "jumping" feature makes it possible for the knight to enter by stealth, attacking its opponent unexpectedly, and inflicting fear along with the element of surprise.

Whether it be in chess or in life, fear can be a great motivator when it comes to deciding your next move. Two types of malware that rely on fear, deception and technology are rogueware and ransomware. So convincing are they that many unsuspecting, intelligent people are falling prey to their scare tactics.

### Rogueware

Rogueware, the most pervasive malware threat for several years, basically tries to scare you into doing something, with the intention of collecting money.

Rogueware's plan of attack is first to convince the reader that they are vulnerable to a presented negative consequence and that the recommended action will eliminate the threat. Beware! Rogueware can be very convincing. Rogue security software often imitates real security software, and uses names that mimic or are very similar to legitimate security scanners. These fake applications will pretend to scan your computer and claim to find viruses and, in order to remove them, you must pay for the full version of the application. The point to all of these invasive fear tactics deployed by rogues is ultimately to force you to pay a fee using your credit card in order to address the "supposed" security risk and remove the reported infections.

Recent studies have found that rogues have focused mainly on English-speaking populations, with most reports of these malware coming from the U.S. Surprisingly, despite the success of rogueware, there was a steady decrease in the number of rogues in circulation last year.

### Ransomware

In the last year, we've seen the rise of a new threat whose success also relies on persuading affected users to act on the receipt of a deceptive message in order to avoid an unpleasant consequence— Ransomware! It is foreseen to be the #1 viral threat in 2013. As the name implies, ransomware literally holds your computer for ransom. It locks your computer by locking the screen and displaying an image and/or message. Or, it may encrypt files, thus prohibiting users from accessing these files. Once infected, users are then prompted to pay a ransom to regain access to their computer.
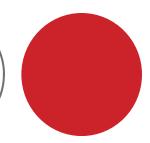
What's a person to do to protect themselves? Here are some preventative measures that you can take now to protect your corporate server and personal computers:

- Ensure all the latest server/ software updates and patches are installed on your company server and personal computers. Hacks are often performed by exploiting existing software vulnerabilities. It is crucial to apply patches as soon as possible.

- Ensure remote backups are made regularly. IT Radix recommends daily backups as a bare minimum.

- Use strong passwords, containing random alphanumeric characters. This will make gaining access to your server or personal computer through brute-force much more difficult. Tips on how to build strong passwords can be found in the January 2009 IT Radix Resource.

- Use a real-time Antivirus solution with a good behavior blocker, which will detect the changes malware makes at an early stage.

Don't live in fear! Thwart off potential attacks before they happen. There's no time like the present to make your move towards a pro-active approach to protecting your IT assets.

IT Radix Managed Service plans address all the above preventative measures and more! Call IT Radix to learn more, strategize and start planning your next move today.

## Welcome!

A warm welcome to our newest **Managed Service** Clients:

*Broad Reach Benefits Inc.*
*Life Savers Inc.*
*Montville Executive Suites*
*Remax of Morristown*
*Saddle River Capital Management*
*Tudor Gardens*

Remember, IT Radix is here to service all of your technology needs!

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# Don't Let Technology "Checkmate" Your Business

A technology tale by **Mike Oster**, IT Radix Senior IT Consultant…

Have you ever played chess? If you're anything like me, you may play a little and even have some limited success. But every once in a while you have that one match where you wait too long to move your king. Then, before you know it, you're cornered and then…Checkmate!

I know, you're wondering what the heck this has to do with technology. Well sit down and let me tell you a little story.

A small business purchases a nice, new server—15 or 20 workstations, printers…the works. The business owner springs for a shiny new Line of Business (LOB) application. Life is great! It's the perfect little network. The applications and computers do everything the business needs. But, as new versions of their perfect application are released, they pass. After all, the version they use does everything they need. All the PC's work great and nothing is broken. Then one day the unthinkable happens… A mere 6 years after purchasing all of their shiny new computers, one of them fails! It is not repairable and must be replaced. So the business owner does what any business owner would do.

He fires up his still working computer, opens up Internet Explorer (Version 6!), and heads on over to www.newcomputersforsale.com. Well, nothing is working—he can't navigate the site, nothing looks right, and he can't order a replacement computer. That's OK, he can see the phone number on the website, so he calls the sales team and orders a new PC. When the computer arrives, it's taken out of the box and set up. Great, time to install that great LOB and get to work. Oh no! Errors! That's OK, we have a great support plan for our LOB. So, the business owner calls the support team at Perfect Application Co. LLC and the conversation goes something like this:

**Support**: *Hello, this is Tech Support.*
**Business Owner**: *Hi, I need some help installing Perfect Application Version 2.6 on Windows 8.*
**Support**: *<Long silence, then a slightly muffled> Hey guys, I have someone on the phone that wants to install V2.6 on Windows 8. <Uncontrollable laughter ensues>*
**Business Owner**: *But…But…I have support.*
**Support**: *Of course sir, that's no problem. Since you have a maintenance plan, you are entitled to a free upgrade to Version 4.5 which is fully supported on Windows 8.*
**Business Owner**: *Perfect, will you also assist upgrading the application on*

*my Windows 98 computers?*
**Support**: *<The sound of someone shooting Mountain Dew through their nose> I'm sorry sir, but Perfect Application V4.5 requires a minimum of Windows 7.*

Do you see where this is going? The application also won't run on the old server. The parallel printers won't connect to new PC's. There are no 64-bit drivers for the scanner. etc., etc., etc…

—**Plan Ahead**—
Get the XP Out by April 2014!

Our business owner only wanted to replace one little thing, in this case a failed workstation, and this terrible snowball effect ensued. Someone waited too long to upgrade their technology and… Checkmate…Game over!

Don't let this happen to you. The best way to prevent technology "Checkmate" is to have a technology plan. Stay current. Take advantage of version upgrades from your application vendors. Replace and upgrade hardware on a regular basis. Take advantage of trade-in and upgrade offers from hardware vendors. I suggest budgeting to replace 20%-25% of your technology investment annually. Yes…even if things that still working! Trust me, this will save a lot of headaches in the future.

If you need help with your technology plan, give IT Radix a call, and we will be happy to help.

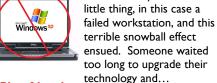© IT Radix, LLC—Spring 2013

# Computers: Our Strategic Ally (Cont.)

analyzing the openings commonly used by their opponents. Players can use branching to predict all the possible moves that a given opponent could play. Reports, in the format of game notation, can be printed with all the branching possibilities included. As the tournament is played, changes can be taken into consideration based on an opponent's performance in previous games and whether the player needs a win or just a draw at that point. Once all this data is generated, this is where computational power ends and

human skill and talent take over, as the chess player must then memorize hundreds of possible moves.

Another factor in preparing for tournament competition is practicing your strategies and techniques. Players improve and grow stronger in their game when they play against those who are equal or higher in rating than themselves. For top tournament players, it may be hard to find such partners, because many of them are the best in their regions. Computer programs that actually play chess, like Rybka, help keep

players at their best—matching their skills and abilities.

It's no surprise that computers can process more information, faster than the human brain. However, there are things that computers cannot do. Much of chess is intuitive, and machines will always miss those nuances. That's why it's important to use the computer's output as a starting point. It's the chess player who makes the final strategic decisions. Ultimately, talent will always matter; but, today's technology is helping talented players learn faster and better!

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# A Battle of Features:
# Windows 8 vs. OS X Mountain Lion

Is your company strategizing your next technology move? **Charles Reid**, IT Radix Technical Consultant, shares some neat features in both Windows 8 and OS X Mountain Lion that may make your decision easier.

### Accessing Apps

The **Metro Screen** in Windows 8 replaces the start button you're used to seeing in Windows 7 or XP. It provides a full screen view of all the programs you want to use. You have the ability to separate your programs into groups and name the group. By right clicking on the Metro Screen you will get an icon that can show you every program installed on your computer. You can then bring any program or app to your Metro Screen. Going back and forth between them is very easy as all you have to do is press the Windows key on your keyboard. The Metro Screen allows you to have live tiles on it that offers up-to-date information for news, weather, stocks, and social media. The live tiles can only be seen from the Metro Screen. You also have the ability to see your desktop and metro tile side by side.

**Launchpad** became available in OS X Lion. It is known as mostly an alternative to using the dock or going to your applications folder. When launched, it opens a full-screen view of all of your applications installed on your Mac. This feature is good if you're one of those people who likes to go into Finder and then your applications folder. This can be looked at as a shortcut to that folder.

### Switching Between Apps

In Windows 8 you can still use (Alt + Tab) to switch between applications; however, there are also a couple of new ways that you can switch between applications. In Windows 8 you can use (Windows key + Tab) which lets you switch between the desktop and metro tiles that you may have open. Another way is to position your mouse at the top left of the screen, called a "hot corner," and the same list of open applications will open up. When switching between applications you can also snap the open tile to the left or right of your screen by right clicking the application and clicking snap left or right.

The **Switch List** in Mac OS X was introduced in Lion. It allows you to switch between open applications by pressing the (Command + Tab key) together. Prior to this, you just had to use your mouse to switch. The new track pad allows you to use gestures to switch between applications as well.

### Searching Apps/Files

**Smart Search** is a new feature in Windows 8. It not only allows you to search for apps, settings, and files, but you can also search within software installed on your computer. Although, you need to know what category your search would be in. There are a couple of ways to bring up Smart Search. If you're on the Metro Screen you could just start typing and the Smart Search will show up. If you're on the desktop, you could hit the shortcut (Windows key + F) to open the Smart Search. This is very easy to use and can be a fun tool.
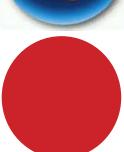
**Spotlight** is the desktop search utility on a Mac. Spotlight lets you easily search your computer for any item you want. You can search for photos, music, documents, and more. You can still find your document even if you can't remember the name of the file. You would just need to type words that appear in the document and it would show up in the search. This is a fantastic tool for finding a needle in a haystack—a very handy tool included in the Mac OS.

Planning your next move? Call IT Radix today...we're here to help take all the guess work out of what technology is right for your business!

## Most Powerful of All: The Queen

### Women in Technology

June is *National Women in Science and Technology* month in the United States, the country in which only 20% of jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) are held by women. This is a month when we honor the accomplishments of today's women.

IT Radix is proud to announce that 45% of our overall staff are women; and, three of our technical consultants are women.

Kudos to all the women in science and technology who are working to make their presence in this industry known—you've come a long way baby!

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# IT Radix

**We make IT
work for you**

**From the desk of:**  Cathy Coloff

**Subject:**  Let the game begin!

As I prepared for this newsletter, I discovered how little I knew about the art of chess.  As any good researcher will do, I spent a decent amount of time "Googling" around about chess, chess strategies, chess masters, computers and chess, and the like.  What struck me was the number of times the "brutality" of chess was referenced.  Former world champion Garry Kasparov stated, "There is nothing cute or charming about chess; it is a violent sport, and when you confront your opponent you set out to crush his ego.  The world chess masters with whom I have competed over the years nearly all share my belief that chess is a battleground on which the enemy has to be vanquished."

I also found numerous comparisons of chess to business and I started to get worried.  The purpose of IT Radix seemed to be in stark contrast to the goal in chess:  defeating our opponent or vanquishing our enemy.  While I acknowledge that the IT industry is fiercely competitive, I choose instead to focus on our purpose—to help our client's succeed.

As I considered more, perhaps our opponent isn't another IT service provider but rather the "F.U.D. factor" that many of our clients face when considering IT strategies.  What's F.U.D.?  Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt.  Since our purpose is to help our clients succeed, we must, like in chess, help them use tactics and long-range strategies to help them overcome the F.U.D. factor and win at the business of IT within their own organization.  We attack an IT problem in our clients' business piece by piece by helping them balance needs with budget.  We help them move forward proactively, rather than constantly reacting and "putting out fires."  I could go on and on.

But, generally, I prefer to appreciate and applaud the requirement of intense focus in both business and chess.  And while my chess game needs some serious work, I'll continue to develop at IT Radix our art of thinking strategically in the world of IT for our clients.

*Cathy*

## Computers:  Our Strategic Ally

After IBM's supercomputer, *Deep Blue*, first defeated world chess champion, Garry Kasparov, in 1996, the game of chess has never been the same.  Players now realize that they can learn from computers.  Once rivals, men and machines are now working together to improve chess strategies.

While old-schooled chess players may not be comfortable with computers and new technology, many of today's young champions, in their teens/twenties, have grown up with computers.  They tend to be very comfortable with using high-tech aids to help them prepare for games and develop strategies and tactics.  Some top-level players even hire someone else to handle the data analysis and assist them in planning strategies.

As in a real battle, you're more likely to come out the winner if you plan and prepare carefully.  Champion chess players now use specialized database software to help plot strategy.  Chess databases are key to preparing for tournament play.  The databases contain all of the moves made in a large number of games.  Endgame databases, like ChessBase, contain analyses of endgame positions and optimal moves in each possible position.

One very important rule of warfare is to "know thine enemy."  This same rule applies to chess!  At the chess table, the more a player knows about their opponent—how they've played in the past, favorite moves, strengths, weaknesses—the

more likely they are to defeat them.  Technology is just what a chess player needs to give themselves an edge against a tough opponent.  Once a player determines who they will be going up against and finds out the "colors" (who will be playing white/black in each game), a player can start

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"I think my spell-checker is broken. It keeps changing l-u-c-k to p-r-e-p-a-r-a-t-i-o-n."