IT RadixResource

We make IT Work for You

April 2015

How Does Your Technology Grow?

Planning Your Garden

Like Rome, a garden can't be built in a day. As all seasoned gardeners know, planning is critical for success. Everything must be considered before the first seed is planted: weather, environment, soil, and potential pests (both insects and animals). The same is true for business and the use of IT. A solid IT infrastructure cannot be built overnight. Time must be spent planning with your company's long-term goal in mind.

Important considerations when planning your company's IT garden:

What are your long-term goals? It's difficult to forecast and predict what the future holds. What is your reason for planting? Do you want to reap benefits sooner or wait for higher yield and more profit? The perennial, asparagus, for example, takes 2-3 years to grow. However, once established, asparagus can provide a good crop for 20-25 years! The same is true for planning your business' IT infrastructure. Where do you want to be 5 years down the road? Technology is always changing. Implementing important, structural IT changes upfront now can offer key benefits in the years ahead. Be open minded—when it comes to technology, what is not possible today may be possible in the future.

What do you have to work with? When planning a garden, all things must be considered: planting zone, soil, environment and weather. Since 1818, the Farmers' Almanac has been like a bible to farmers, helping them forecast and plan. When it comes to IT, it's important to take a step back and see what your company has to work with. What technology tools and equipment do you currently utilize in your business? Is your staff properly trained on using these tools to their utmost potential? Are existing technology limitations holding you back?

Timing is everything. Most gardeners start plowing and planting in the spring to reap a bountiful harvest in the fall. The best time to plant is after the last frost and depends largely on your area's planting zone. When it comes to technology, our clients have found that the summer is the best time to roll out an upgrade. Business is a bit slower for our clients during the summer months, and many of their clients are on vacation. Avoiding peak season when upgrading technology minimizes the impact on your business.

Protect against outside intruders. Successful Gardeners use barrier plants to keep pests at bay—plants like marigolds attract "good" bugs that feed on aphids, while sunflowers attract aphids to them and away from other plants. Fences are used to keep hungry bunnies away, and mulch is used to prohibit weeds from growing and stealing vital nutrients and space. When it comes to IT, building strong barriers is also important. Installing firewalls and security software are key to protecting your company's resources and data.

Continuous maintenance ensures success! The practice of rotating crops to ensure nourishment keeps vegetable gardens healthy. It is important in preventing crop-specific pests and diseases from building up and carrying over from one season to the next in the soil. Ideally, gardeners should rotate a vegetable so it grows in a particular spot only one year out of three. When it comes to technology, implementing a proactive managed service plan keeps your IT healthy and running smoothly.

What is your company's IT forecast? Let IT Radix be your master gardener so you can reap the benefits of a bountiful harvest.

In This Issue

If you would rather receive our newsletter via email, sign up on our website or send an email to resource@it-radix.com

More free tech tips at:
www.it-radix.com/news-blog

Introducing…Anne Citrin

Spring is in the air! And with that, comes new beginnings… We are happy to introduce one of our newest, budding employees—Anne Citrin!

Anne came to IT Radix with a wealth of business experience. Most recently, she worked as a Sr. Sales Manager for the First Occupational Center in Orange, NJ, which is a rotational training center in a supported employment setting for people who are developmentally disabled. For 23 years, Anne worked as a liaison between Fortune 500 companies who paid her clients to package and assemble their products.

As a Business Developer/Office Assistant at IT Radix, Anne is a jack of all trades working behind the scenes on various clerical support activities. Anne prides herself on her people and communication skills. An active member of the Morris County Chamber of Commerce, Anne enjoys meeting new people and inviting new businesses into our growing IT Radix family garden. Her friendly, upfront, tell-it-like-it-is personality is like a breath of fresh air! Anne insists that she does not have a green thumb, and any gardening success that she may have is pure luck! However, we have full confidence in Anne, and the health of our flourishing office plants rests in her more than capable hands.

For the past 31 years, Anne has resided in Maplewood with her husband, Pat. Born in Brooklyn, NY, Anne grew up in Queens and considers herself a "city girl." In her free time, Anne enjoys writing, cooking and collecting glass items (perfume bottles, porcelain statues, and colored glass). On the weekends, you'll find Anne antiquing at area flea markets and garage sales. She also enjoys visiting her daughter, Alexandra, in the Poconos where she manages a horse farm. No grandchildren on the horizon…yet—but Anne's hopeful one of these days.

Anne's Personal philosophy: Treat people the way you want to be treated.

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."
– Henry David Thoreau

— In Honor of Earth Day —
Free e-waste recycling offered to
IT Radix clients in April.
Drop-off hours are 10am-4pm.

Welcome!

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

Celimmune
Vitiello Communications Group

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

Is Your Email Ripe for Harvest?

Does email sprout like weeds in your Inbox by the minute? If you're like most people, as much as 80% or more of your email is spam. Have you ever wondered: How did they get your email address in the first place? It's simple, they harvest it!

Some email address harvesting methods are perfectly legal, others are less so. Either way, the use of a harvested email address is typically not ethical. It costs very little to send an email. As a result, there is no pressure on spammers to limit how many addresses are targeted or to restrict sending an email to persons that are likely to be interested. It's similar to blowing on a dandelion head and watching the seeds float away. To improve their chances that at least some of the seeds, or in this case emails, land in a place suitable for growth, the spammers have to produce lots of seeds (i.e., emails).

All good gardeners use preventative measures to help prevent weeds. Here are some tips to avoid having your email addresses harvested.

For general web browsing and email:
• Get a disposable/auxiliary email address for use on websites, forums, and the like.

OUR CLIENTS SPEAK OUT: *"We are very pleased with the prompt and friendly service we receive from IT Radix."*

Dan Skarbnik Sr., Owner — Lakeland Lawn & Landscaping

Is Your Email Ripe for Harvest? (cont.)

- Set your email to block HTML in an email until you can assess if it is from a legitimate source. If HTML is enabled, you risk your email address being validated as working by simply opening the email.
- Only use reputable anti-spam, spyware and virus software. Not sure? Ask us.
- Avoid using web browser toolbars.

If posting your email address on a website:
- Munge it! Address munging is essentially changing the address to something like "jane at yourcompany dot com" instead of posting jane@yourcompany.com.
- Make it an image. This technique is very effective at preventing email harvesting.
- Use secure contact forms. By having someone fill out a form, you can avoid exposing an email address altogether.

Want to test your email address to see if it's ripe for harvest? Try "Googling" your email address. The results you see represent the minimum places that are visible to harvesting scripts. Where possible, remove your email address from the page. Sometimes, it was posted by a well-meaning person or organization. If that's the case, typically they will be more than willing to remove your address from their website. Use these techniques to help prevent spammers from reaping what you sow—your email address.

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SPECIAL OFFER

Sowing Seeds of Security

Sign up for a year of Data Loss Prevention software during the months of **April, May** and **June**, and get 2 months free. That's 12 months for the price of 10!

Call IT Radix today to learn more about protecting your data.

Toxic Computer Effects on Gardening

The advancements in computer technology and the information economy that we have enjoyed over the last twenty years has brought us enormous benefits. They include the availability of: instantaneous worldwide communications, wireless document sharing, history-making video produced with a small device in the palm or your hand and the list goes on and on. It would seem that without technological devices such as computers, cell phones, monitors, tablets, servers and associated hardware, much of today's business could not exist.

Those advancements though, in most cases, rely on some sort of electronic equipment or hardware that was produced using a variety of scarce and sometimes toxic materials and chemicals. Just take for example a simple smartphone of today. It is highly likely that it contains hazardous flame retardants, PVC, bromine, and heavy metals like lead, mercury, tin, calcium, and chromium. These are all materials that are regulated by the EPA. And, this is just in a small cell phone. An average computer is made of about 50% metal, 25% plastic, 15% glass and 10% gold/silver/palladium or platinum.

Think of all the computers and components and associated hardware that has been produced over the past twenty years. The average person has had and disposed of up to six or more personal computers. And industry estimates indicate that the average resident of the U.S. gets a new cell phone every 18 months. What happens to all that stuff?

All that stuff is now labelled as "e-waste." Because technology advances so fast, much of these pieces of consumer and business electronics hardware are considered disposable. Easily over 60 million personal computers are disposed of in the U.S. each year. Where does it all go?

We strongly encourage recycling (donating to another organization, returning it to the manufacturer, breaking it down for parts and, when all else fails, safely disposing of the equipment). The government estimates that in 2009 only about 25% of TVs, computers, etc. were recycled. Recycling recovers valuable components and materials and, as a result, greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and energy use are all reduced while less raw materials are extracted from the earth.

Unfortunately, plenty of electronics are not recycled. If electronics are just tossed into the trash they can heighten the risk of polluting the air, and contaminating the soil as well as leaching into water sources. Even those that end up in a landfill are worrisome. Water flowing through a landfill picks up trace elements from these materials and the water is contaminated. Eventually this water, now called "leachate," gets through layers of natural and manufactured landfill liner and other protection. When it reaches natural groundwater, it introduces lethal toxicity to our ecosystem…and your garden! That is bad news.

We encourage the following:
Recycle – Use a certified e-waste recycling organization for a host of reasons—security as well as environmental. Many municipalities are organizing special dates for recycling/disposing of e-waste. Twice a year IT Radix provides free e-waste recycling for our clients—April (in honor of Earth Day) and November (RED Month).
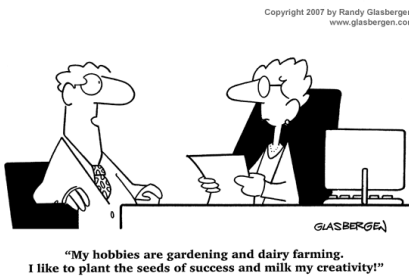**Return** – A number of retailers have effective recycling programs in their stores.
Donate – Charitable organizations can sell your used electronics to fund their missions.

Enjoy the advancements that technology has brought us, but remember to dispose of them properly to ensure we can all enjoy this beautiful planet for many more years, and advances, to come!

> "Where flowers bloom
> so does hope."
> — Lady Bird Johnson

Just for Laughs!

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"My hobbies are gardening and dairy farming.
I like to plant the seeds of success and milk my creativity!"

From the desk of: Cathy Coloff
Subject: Spring Has Sprung!

It's fitting that April is *Keep America Beautiful* month because, in our area, it's starting to get beautiful! The snow is melting and the world around us is literally greening up. In my younger days while at college, I especially enjoyed this time of year in the Duke gardens. I would bring my books and a blanket, pick out the perfect spot in the sun and attempt to focus on my studies with limited success. Inevitably, I would have the wrong book or need some from the library. Oh well, it was just nice to sit outside with the sun on your face. These days, I suppose I would be sitting in the garden with a laptop or a tablet, getting full Internet access and have no excuse for not completing my work except, perhaps, sun glare?

There are a few other special days in April that I always enjoy celebrating—Earth Day on April 22nd and Arbor Day on April 27th. At IT Radix, we're doing our part to make our corner of the world cleaner and more beautiful; and this year, I'm looking forward to planting some new trees around the building, doing our usual electronic recycling and cleaning up the building inside and out. How 'bout you?

"UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better. It's not."

— Dr. Seuss, The Lorax

Perfect Plants for the Office

Plants are a great addition to any office environment! Not only do plants enhance the overall appearance, but they also reduce stress and eliminate air pollutants. In addition, office plants can provide privacy as well as a cool focal point. The best plants for your office depend on your space and specific needs.

Low Maintenance Plants

Some of the best plants for the office are those that require little care since not everyone has a green thumb:
- **Philodendrons –** These plants are great for adding height to small areas. These hardy plants are easy to grow and can stand occasional neglect.
- **Spider plant** – These plants are one of the easiest plants to grow indoors.
- **Cacti** – When all else fails, cacti are the way to go!

Pollutant Reducing Plants

All plants produce oxygen, but these have additional environmental benefits as well:
- **Peace lily** – These beautiful plants are tolerant of low light and are vigorous growers.
- **Rubber plants** – These plants are well known for removing indoor air pollutants.
- **English ivy** – Ivy is not only easy to grow but also helps eliminate mold. They thrive in nearly any light condition.

Privacy Plants
Plants offer unique solutions to screening and privacy for open-concept offices:
- **Snake plant –** These plants grow somewhat tall and have attractive, sword-like leaves.
- **Umbrella plant** – This plant (tree) is perfect for providing privacy, as it grows quite tall.

Any way you look at it, plants are a beautiful, green solution for any office environment!