The E-Insider

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

The End Of An Era… Take Action By New Year's Eve 2013!

As you may have heard, Microsoft has long ago announced the retirement of its most successful software platform of all time, Windows XP. Effective April 8, 2014, Microsoft will no longer support the Windows XP platform in any way, shape or form.

What this means if you are currently running XP

This means any computer or server with Windows XP installed will be completely exposed to serious hacker attacks aimed at taking control of your network, stealing data, crashing your system and inflicting a host of other business-crippling problems you do NOT want to have to deal with.

This is such a serious threat that all companies housing financial and medical information are being **required** by law to upgrade any and all computer systems running XP because firewalls and antivirus software will NOT be sufficient to completely protect them (or you).

Unless you don't care about cyber criminals running rampant in your company's server, you MUST upgrade any servers or workstations running these programs no later than April 8, 2014.

The Time To Act Is Now

As Windows XP comes to the end of its life, businesses with software applications dependent on XP will feel the effects. Not only will Microsoft stop supporting XP, so can any other company that still has software built for XP that they are currently supporting. The writing is on the wall and these companies will follow. Companies producing antivirus and firewall software will also have no reason to continue releasing updates for something considered to be dead.

Don't wait until the last minute to plan for an XP-free business existence. We fully expect to be extremely busy now through April 8. **Schedule your Microsoft XP Risk Assessment and Migration Planning Consultation today by calling our office at 412.788.8081.**

"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!"
Tim Steinour,
E-Safe Technologies

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"You should see someone about that."

Get More Free Tips, Tools and Services At Our Web Site: www.E-SafeTech.com

Backing Up Your Server Alone May Still Lead To Data Loss

Most business owners know that it is important for their server(s) to be backed up. But what about your computers (desktops, laptops, Macs)? Though it's true that quite a bit of your data is stored on your servers and backed up by your network, your computer itself (your icons, your background, all of your settings, your local files, music and pictures you have stored, and all of your software applications) is NOT being backed up.

If your computer were to crash, get a virus or simply die, all of that information could be lost. The company data that you've saved to your server would still be there IF you are saving everything to your server (a big if for many companies), but everything else would be gone. You would have to recreate that computer by reloading all of the software and settings. And if you've ever had this happen to you, you know it can take a significant amount of time to do. What a pain!

So, How Do You Solve This Problem?

Simple. You use imaging software on your computer that automatically takes periodic images of important, irreplaceable machines and sends them off-site or to your server for safekeeping. For travel laptops, this can often be done via the cloud. Imaging software takes a "picture" or "snapshot" of your computer, recording it exactly as it is, with all of the software, settings and local files you have on it. This way, if your computer ever crashes, there is no need to reload everything onto it and reconfigure the computer. Simply restore your last "image" from before the crash and your computer can be back to its old self again. This is a huge time-saver and can be a lifesaver when something goes wrong.

Protect Your Desktops And Laptops!

How are your desktops and laptops currently being backed up? Take action today. You'll be amazed at the peace of mind you find when you are **completely** backed up! Give us a call at 412.788.8081 to find out more details.

If you want to prevent your personal or business identity from being stolen by a cyber criminal, this e-book is a MUST-read!

You will learn:

1) The top 3 ploys used by online identity thieves to easily gain access to your business and personal information and how to avoid them.
2) 10 sneaky e-mails used to steal your identity that you should IMMEDIATELY delete if they land in your in-box.
3) One easy, surefire way to keep your network and computers safe and secure from online thieves.
4) Best practices to prevent your employees from inadvertently giving away passwords and other "keys to the castle" to Internet criminals.

Claim Your FREE Copy Today at www.E-SafeTech.com/identitytheft

Data Backups—4 Common Mistakes

Business is becoming increasingly complex, with the majority of systems and data now being stored online or on a computer. Because of this, a disaster such as one that knocks out power or even destroys your equipment could be devastating. Disasters put all business data at risk and that's why so many businesses take steps to protect their data. But there are still risks that they may miss.

If you are looking to protect your data, one of the best ways to do so is to be informed, and learn from the mistakes other companies make when they develop data protection or Business Continuity Plans.

1. Not backing up data It may seem like common sense when preparing for a disaster or developing a continuity plan that you should back up your data. However, a 2011 study from Semantic found that only half of businesses back up more than 60% of their data. Other businesses don't back up data or only back up certain systems. This means that if these businesses are faced with a disaster, they could lose up to 40% of their data. Some businesses could lose all of it.

Many experts suggest that businesses not only back up their data, but take more of an all-or-nothing approach. All data should be backed up so that should a disaster happen you can guarantee that nothing will be lost.

2. Failing to protect off site data Business is becoming increasingly spread out, with many employees working from outside of the office, or on their own systems. People who telecommute or use their own systems usually store important data on their local machines. When a company goes to protect or back up their data, some may forget to back up data on machines outside of the company premises.

What's more, some industries have regulations stating that you must back up data from all end-points (e.g., computers and devices) regardless of their location. So, when you are backing up data, be sure that you also back up data on systems that aren't in the office.

3. Not backing up data consistently The data in your business is always evolving and growing. Therefore, you need to ensure that it is backed up regularly. Because backups take time, there is a higher chance for them to fail. If you only back up once a year without checking, and disaster strikes, you could find that your data is incomplete, inaccessible or out of date. This may make any recovered data essentially useless.

The question is, how often should you back up your data? For most small businesses, a full backup at least once a week is suggested. If you work with client data on a regular basis or in a regulated industry, daily backups would likely be the best plan.

4. Using outdated backup methods Just because you back up your data doesn't mean it will always be available, especially if you use older backup methods such as data tapes or disks. These physical backups can be lost or even destroyed in a disaster and possibly even stolen. You may want to employ a more modern data backup solution that is more reliable, such as cloud backup.

That being said, you don't have to give up older methods as these can come in handy, especially if you are going to be operating without the Internet for an extended period of time. By employing more than one solution, you can cover all bases while ensuring that data is largely backed up and available.

If you are looking to learn more about how you can protect your data, please contact us today to see how our systems and solutions can help.
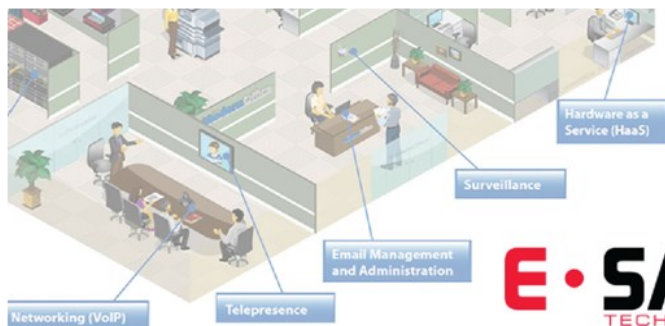
E·SAFE TECHNOLOGIES | The **Modern**Office™

"What is Email Management and Administration (EMA)?

Email Management and Administration is a specific field of communications management for managing high volumes of inbound electronic mail received by organizations. It is an extremely important topic because in today's world, business is won and lost through email. Direct mail has taken a back seat, and it is much more efficient to communicate through short messages online. Email now accounts for the majority of communication between companies and their customers. With so many messages being exchanged during one business day, there has to be some sort of order to control the flow of the incoming and outgoing mailings.

Email management and administration tools integrate with your email clients and is used to route, track, report on, and ar-

chive your corporate asset email communication sent to such group inboxes as: info@company.com, sales@company.com, and support@company.com. With customizable rules and rights, a complete communication history, and a reporting engine, your email service can become efficient as possible, eliminating wasted time rummaging through emails. With this accountability, emails can't be lost, avoided, forgotten, or mismanaged, which enables you to continue to operate and not get jumbled up in the process.

Poorly managed email represents significant corporate risk and potential liability through crippling malware, spyware, and ransomware

(CryptoLocker). Email management and administration tools can ensure effective measures to securely store, manage, and retrieve your organization's email content. With email ticketing systems, receipt modules, data enhancement modules, and intelligent analysis modules, a management system handles different phases of the email management process. These tools enable companies to communicate with their customers at a profound rate, simplifying the communication process and shortening sales cycles and response times. Administering your company's email flow and setting the rules and rights is becoming more and more popular because it gives you total control.

E·SAFE TECHNOLOGIES **Start with a Plan, Finish with Success.**

"How Can EMA Improve My Business?"

Email Management and Administration streamlines the inbound messaging process, utilizing servers in the cloud to filter through spam, sort and distribute mail in a productive way, and automate the delivery process. These methods open up the communication channels that directly affect your business in the following ways:

Accelerate Customer Service – With more efficient ways to distribute large volumes of email data, EMA helps you provide consistent and timely email response to your customers with easy-to-learn and time-saving features.

Handle Large Volumes – You can set rules and regulations that categorize messages that send email files to particular folders, reducing the

main inbox and alleviating the burden of daunting amounts of email.

Knowing Customer History – Through archiving and sorting, customer emails and messages can be stored so you know the latest information in your clients custom folder. With this method, you can impress customers by knowing in advance some of the challenges they are encountering.

Internal Collaboration – You are able to add internal notes to email conversations for easy reference, so that your whole team is on the same page. Add instructions for follow-ups and reassign email to another team member.

The ModernOffice™

"How Does EMA Work?"

Email Management and Administration uses different rules and commands to determine the importance of each email and file it into a specific folder. Most EMA solutions are based on four major components that were mentioned earlier.

First, there is the email sorting system that allocates reference numbers to all incoming emails which is known as ticketing. All later emails relating to one matter can then be grouped under the same reference. This method allows user to track their relevance in a more time effective way.

Second, EMA solutions use an email receipt module that filters out spam and unwanted content to a separate location. After this task is performed, it then assigns unique ticket numbers based on certain conditions and rules. This method is usually referenced as email filtering, which is the processing of email to organize it according to specified criteria.

Third, the EMA solutions use a data enhancement module. This module adds tags to each email for further processing and includes the ability to connect to remote databases and retrieve specific information about the person who wrote the email. They also automate the process that examines the authors past communication with the organization to more accurately sort and distribute the email properly.

Lastly, these systems use intelligent analysis modules that scan the wording of the document. It reads the subject, message, and attachments and the tags that were added in the previous step in an attempt to understand the subject matter of the email. All of this data processing happens in the blink of an eye.

"What's My Investment In EMA?"

Email Management and Administration services are very affordable for any sized business. Microsoft's Office 365 solution provides EMA in the package and is extremely price friendly. Office 365 for Small Businesses is $5.00 user/month for up to 25 users. Small Business Premium (Office Applications included) is $12.50 user/month for up to 25 users and the Midsize Business Package is $15.00 user/month for up to 300 users.

While this solution is extremely affordable, there are many other solutions out there that provide Email Management and Administration capabilities for inboxes already established in your environment. The benefits to using EMA greatly outweigh the costs.

With the steady influx of new malware, spyware, and ransomware, organizations need to take every step to ensure their email is filtered in the cloud and never able to show up on a physical machine. When the process is automated in the cloud, it takes away the possibility of human error when people click on corrupted links sent with spam email. If you take the proper precautions from step one, it can eliminate potential problems in the future.

Businesses and External Hard Drives

The computer's hard drive is one of the most essential components of your machine. This is where all of the programs and data are stored, and without it, the majority of computers would be more or less useless. Of course, hard drives have a finite amount of space, and you may eventually run out. One way around this is to use external hard drives, but are they useful for businesses?

Hard drives are separate drives that you can connect to almost every computer. The vast majority of drives use a USB cable, while some are Apple specific and use the Thunderbolt cable. Because computers, by default, don't rely on these drives in order to operate, they can usually be connected to other devices as long as they have the correct formatting.

There are numerous ways these hard drives can be used in the office. The most obvious is to back up data. Because many of these drives now come with a large amount of storage, you can easily fit computer backups and even systems onto a drive. Add in the fact that they are relatively cheap to purchase, and you can see how they can be a useful tool, especially when combined with other backup solutions.

Four benefits of using an external hard drive in your business The majority of external hard drives are used as some form of backup solution e.g., to actually back up systems, or to keep a copy of files, which afford several benefits:

1. **Portability -** Most external devices are small enough to move easily. This makes it easier to move copies or backups off site for safe keeping. And, due to their smaller size, these drives can be used to easily move data from one system to another, without the need for an Internet connection or cables.
2. **Security -** While cloud-based backup and storage solutions are useful, there are occasional security issues or concerns. In order to ensure that your data is completely secure, having a redundant and equally secure solution is important. External hard drives are secure, largely because you are in control of them. Of course, these drives could be stolen so taking measures to ensure they are secure is important e.g., they don't leave the office, or are signed out and in.
3. **Accessibility -** When you don't have an Internet connection or are away from your office, trying to access data that is online or in the office can be tough. Because these drives don't need an Internet connection, the data stored in them is readily available as long as you have the hard drive with you.
4. **Reliability -** There are times when other systems are down, rendering the data stored on them unreachable. As long as you have data on an external drive, you can easily access it. This makes the drives reliable, not to mention that many have cases around them to protect the device from physical harm.

A question many ask is whether they should use external drives exclusively. The best answer we can give is to use them as part of your whole data strategy. For example, back up your files on both an external drive and another source like cloud backup. What you are looking to do is basically implement a redundancy - if one fails, the other can step in. This will help ensure your data is always accessible, regardless of the issue.

Two different types of external hard drives

1. **Portable -** Portable devices can range from USB thumb-drives to devices about the size of a passport. They are usually powered by USB cable and are meant to be highly portable. Despite their portable size, you can find units with over 1TB of storage space.
2. **Desktop -** These devices require a power connection and are designed to sit on your desktop. Despite the name, this type of device is usually smaller, around the size of a novel, and can come with up to 4TB (Terabytes) of storage space.

There is another type of external storage that is used in businesses, but isn't as popular - NAS. Network Attached Storage (NAS) devices are essentially large hard drives that are connected to a network, with the storage space shared among the users. The easiest way to think of NAS devices is as a platform that allows you to attach multiple hard drives to, which are then shared with computers on the network. These devices tend to be about half the size of most normal desktop PCs and can offer as much as 32TB of space.

If you are looking to learn more about how you can leverage external hard drives in your business, please contact us today.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Lockitron: Keyless Entry Using Your Phone

Hate taking your keys with you on a run? Have friends coming to visit and can't be there to let them in? No worries…

Now you can lock your door from anywhere in the world. Any smartphone can use Lockitron through its intuitive two-button app. With Lockitron you can instantly share access with your family and friends.

In addition to the convenience, Lockitron gives you peace of mind. Lockitron lets you see if your door is locked when you're gone. It will send a notification when someone unlocks the door using a phone or key.

Here are some of the key details (no pun intended):

♦ Any phone works – Lockitron is compatible with any smartphone, thanks to our mobile web site. Older phones can use Lockitron through simple text-message commands.

♦ WiFi built in – Lockitron connects to the Internet, thanks to built-in WiFi. You can control Lockitron and receive notifications from Lockitron anywhere in the world.

♦ Keyless entry – If you use an iPhone 4S or iPhone 5, you can enable Lockitron to sense when you walk up to the door and unlock for you using Bluetooth 4.0.

♦ Powerfully smart – Thanks to intelligent power management, Lockitron's batteries last for up to one year. Lockitron will even send you a notification when they are running low.

♦ Easily customizable – You can control your Lockitron through our incredibly simple API endpoints or program it directly, thanks to its Arduino-compatible ATMega microprocessor.

Pre-order your Lockitron today for only $179! https://lockitron.com/preorder

Workplace Lemons (and How Not to be One)

According the Wikipedia, "**Lemon laws** are American state laws that provide a remedy for purchasers of cars in order to compensate for cars that repeatedly fail to meet standards of quality and performance."
No one wants to spend money for a car or other product that is defective or doesn't meet expected standards. And no one likes to be disappointed by what they get for the money they spend. What if there were lemon laws for disappointing workplace performance?
As an employee who is paid by an employer to perform, what might get you disqualified as a "lemon"? In the workplace, they're not called "lemon laws." They are called dismissal and termination. And they're bad for both the employer and the employee.
If you like your job, you don't want to be replaced for being defective in the results you deliver. Here are three ways to make sure your work won't invoke the spirit of the lemon law:

1. Know what is expected
Every employer has expectations when they do business with you. Unfortunately, some employees don't find out what those expectations are until after they're not met.
Meet with your manager to clarify your own job expectations. That includes where you should focus your attention, what gets priority and what skills you need to develop or improve.
Priorities change, so regularly schedule a brief meeting for feedback on your performance to make sure you're focused on doing the right things.

2. Meet standards and, if possible, exceed them
The most valued employees are those who know how to add value to their work. To earn more, contribute more. The worst thing you can do, for an employer or a customer, is to over-promise and under-deliver. That's a guaranteed strategy for disappointment.
Consider these questions: What are you doing to exceed expectations? Are you willing and able to do a little more than expected? Are you unique in a way that your company values, or are you interchangeable with anyone else who could do the job?

3. Commit to excellence
Excellence begins with a mind-set. It is the commitment to focus your attention and skills to create something worthy of you, valued by your employer and worthwhile to your customer. Those who do only "just enough" often get by but they never get ahead. Employers appreciate not just the work that is done, but the attitude of the person doing the work.
There is an old and familiar saying: "If life gives you lemons, make lemonade." That's great advice for dealing with adversity and setbacks. But if you want to be a valued employee and move ahead in your career, make sure your work doesn't qualify for any lemon laws of low performance. Instead, strive to be a positive example of superior performance.

4. Seek feedback
One way to assure that your performance is as expected or better is to ask for ongoing feedback. Don't just inquire about how you're doing; specifically ask about what you could do differently or better to improve your work. A rational employer will appreciate your efforts to assure quality and get better at what you do.
If there were lemon laws for workplace performance, neither you nor I would want to invoke them with substandard work. Aim to meet expectations, continually improve performance and become an encore performer in your organization.

Mark Sanborn, CSP, CPAE, is president of Sanborn & Associates, Inc., an idea studio dedicated to developing leaders in business and in life. Mark is an international best-selling author and noted authority on leadership, team building, customer service and change. Mark is the author of eight books, including the bestseller *The Fred Factor: How Passion in Your Work and Life Can Turn the Ordinary into the Extraordinary,* which has sold more than 1.6 million copies internationally. Learn more about Mark at www.marksanborn.com

Meet Debbie Cyrilla

Debbie is our Procurement/Accounting Manager here at E-Safe and has been with the company for nine years. Prior to working at E-Safe, she worked at Lender's Service Inc. for 13 years in their accounting department as well as an Executive Assistant to the VP of Sales and a Project Manager for the Closing Department. Debbie has experience in A/R, A/P/ billing, collections, timesheet processing, all aspects of procurement, HR, and operations. She is a graduate of Montour High School ('85) and has lived in the suburbs of Pittsburgh for most of her life. She is a single mom who has two wonderful children: a son (14) and daughter (15). She loves to watch her kids play sports, spend time with her family and do projects around the house!

Free Microsoft Office 365 Cloud Software For Non-Profits?

As part of its "Technology For Good" program, Microsoft has recently announced that it is giving away Microsoft Office 365 software licenses for free to qualified nonprofit organizations. Office 365 is Microsoft's cloud-based software solution that allows users to run office applications, e-mail, calendars, video conferencing and more all through the web.

The Office 365 donation program is part of Microsoft's larger giving program where it hands out $2 million worth of software each and every day to nonprofits around the world. This specific program donates the "cloud only" Web Apps version of Microsoft Office 365, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint, online cloud storage and more, to qualified organizations. Nonprofits can upgrade to the cloud/desktop hybrid version of Office 365 for a reduced rate of over 75% off the normal price.

See If You Qualify: Eligible nonprofits must hold recognized charitable status and must have a mission to benefit the local community in areas such as providing relief to the poor, advancing education, improving social welfare, preserving culture, restoring the environment, promoting human rights and establishing a civil society.

If you're a nonprofit organization or have a nonprofit organization in mind that could benefit from this free program, you can check for availability online at http://www.microsoft.com/office365nonprofits or by giving us a call at 412.788.8081.

Join us for one of our Holiday Parties

Come partake in one (or all) of our seasonal celebrations as we gather in a relaxed environment to create new business relationships and share in delights of fine libations as we prepare to ring in the new year!

Robinson Township—Wednesday, December 11th 4pm-7pm
Cadillac Ranch (1060 Settler's Ridge Center Dr, Pittsburgh, PA 15205)

Cranberry—Thursday, December 12th 4pm-7pm
Jergel's Rhythm House (285 Northgate Drive Warrendale, PA 15086)
Allman Brothers Tribute Band starts at 8:00

Downtown Pittsburgh— Wednesday, December 18th 4pm-7pm
Easy Street (301 Grant Street Pittsburgh, PA 15219)

**Please email me at TimSteinour@E-SafeTech.com
to let us know when you'll be coming!**

The Lighter Side:

Things You Probably Didn't Know About December

December is known around the world as a family time of celebration honoring cultures, religions and traditions that have been with humanity for hundreds of years. See below for a mix of the weird and wonderful facts about this magical month!

1. An almanac prediction states that if snow falls on Christmas Day, Easter will be warm, green and sunny.

2. The name December comes from the Latin *decem* for "ten," as it was the 10th month in the Roman calendar.

3. December 12th is Poinsettia Day.

4. Saint Nicholas, who would eventually be called Santa Claus, was originally the patron saint of children, thieves and pawnbrokers!

5. December 28th is considered by some to be the unluckiest day of the year.

6. The first artificial Christmas tree was made in Germany, fashioned out of goose feathers that were dyed green!

7. Spiders and spiderwebs are considered good luck on Christmas.

8. "Jingle Bells" was composed in 1857, and not for Christmas – it was meant to be a Thanksgiving song!

9. In 1647, Oliver Cromwell, English Puritan leader, banned the festivities of Christmas for being immoral on such a holy day. Anyone who was seen celebrating was arrested! The ban was lifted in 1660.

10. An ancient legend states that forest animals can speak in human language on Christmas Eve!