E-NEWS

March 2018

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MARCH MADNESS IS HERE!

March is finally here! Join E-Safe Technologies for our annual March Madness Event:

Thursday, March 29th

8:00am – 4:00pm

Highmark Stadium, Station Square, Pittsburgh, PA.

Be sure to register and join us for the largest event of the year. Please visit

http://www.e-safetech.com/marchmadness/

Join us Thursday, March 29th from 8:00am to 4:00pm for a day filled with food, drinks, prizes, and the newest IT information.

This event is your chance to learn about the latest products and solutions in the IT industry from leading technology vendors: Exagrid, Barracuda, PacketViper, Veeam, Citrix, Sophos, Lenovo, Liquidware Labs and more!

Please be sure to sign up now to lock in your spot. Space is limited and we do not want you to miss this opportunity. This year we have an incredible guest speaker. Pittsburgh's very own Eric McElvenny will be joining us. Eric is a retired marine and 7 Time Ironman. As an amputee Eric has over come many challenges and has an amazing speech prepared for us. You don't want to miss out on this event. Food, prizes, and information will be provided.

Virtual Desktops vs. Containers

Even if you're aware of virtualized containers, it's probably difficult to explain how they differ from virtual desktops. Thankfully, all you really need to understand is whether containers are the better option for your business -- and we can answer that in under ten minutes.

What are virtual desktops?

Imagine all you have is a computer monitor, keyboard, and mouse. Virtual desktop technology allows you to connect those devices to a server across either the internet or your office network. Once connected to the server, your monitor will display a fully functional operating system, and your keyboard and mouse will interact with that desktop with zero lag.

The server you connect to could host dozens of virtual desktops that other users access simultaneously, each with their own storage space, files, and applications.

What are containers?

Let's start with an example. Envision a business that provides video production services. All of its employees spend 20% of their time editing videos in one application.

That application requires a lot of computing power, but this company can't afford to buy everyone a high-end computer for a task they spend so little time on. Other production tasks are simple and don't require expensive hardware, so virtual desktops aren't necessary.

With containers, employees could connect to the server from their mid-range desktops and use its hardware to run the resource-hogging application. As long as your server is fast enough, employees can connect, run the application, and go back to other programs on their local computer.

Aside from using server resources more efficiently, containers are also exempt from operating system limitations. If a container is stored on a Windows-based server, there's nothing stopping a Mac computer from working with the application stored inside the container.

Are virtual desktops or containers better for my business?

The biggest factor when choosing between these two technologies is the nature of your work. If employees are regularly switching between half a dozen applications, it's probably smarter to go with virtual desktops since they are more flexible and open-ended. If most of your challenges are centered around one or two programs, containers are likely the smarter choice.

Every business is different, and we'll be the first ones to admit there are cases when it makes more sense to invest in high-end employee desktops, or create a virtual desktop for that one obnoxious application. Whatever the right answer is for you, we promise to give it to you straight!

Give us a call today to hear our two cents on how you could be saving money with virtualization.

Tips for using Outlook more efficiently

Outlook is arguably the best tool that businesses use to manage their email, set up meetings, and coordinate projects. It's much more than a basic email program and includes features that help you organize your work, contacts, and business communications. Let's take a look at a few tips you may have missed.

Clean Up your inbox
No matter inbox how meticulously organized your Outlook inbox is, there's always room for improvement. For a little computer-assisted help, try the 'Clean Up' feature.

- From your Inbox, click the Home tab and choose from Outlook's three Clean Up options:
- **Clean Up Conversation** - Reviews an email thread or a conversation and deletes redundant messages.
- **Clean Up Folder** - Reviews conversations in a selected folder and deletes redundant messages.
- **Clean Up Folder & Subfolders** - Reviews all messages in a selected folder and its subfolder, and deletes redundant messages in all of them.

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These are just a few strategies for getting more out of Microsoft's email platform. To unlock Outlook's true potential, you need the support of certified IT professionals. Give us a call today.

Fighting ransomware with virtualization

Ransomware takes your data hostage and demands a payment for its recovery. While it may seem like there's no other choice but to pay the ransom, you should never give in to the hacker's demands. Before the next wave of ransomware comes around, it's important to protect your business with virtual disaster recovery solutions.

Virtual DR

Virtual DR solutions allow you to create point-in-time copies, or "snapshots," of operating systems, data, and virtual machines as they appear at a given point in time. These snapshots can then be loaded onto any workstation with everything still intact. In the event of a ransomware attack, administrators can essentially roll back the system to a point before the malware hit.

What's great about point-in-time copy features is that they are automated. Just schedule the snapshots, and your virtual DR software will do the rest. And although virtual DR solutions vary, most of them have the capacity to store thousands of point-in-time copies, giving you plenty of restore points to choose from.

Why virtual DR trumps traditional DR

Traditional DR methods don't have these features. Even though most computer operating systems have a system restore functionality, modern ransomware strains are designed to disable them. On the other hand, virtual DR software isolates point-in-time copies and restore functionality from virtual machines, which means they can't be affected if one virtual machine was compromised with ransomware.

Another reason why traditional DR is not a great option is because there is a lot of manual labor involved. You have to copy all your data into a backup drive, reinstall applications, and reconfigure hardware. By the time you've recovered from the ransomware attack, the financial and reputational damage caused by downtime will have taken its toll on your business.

When recovering your system, you want as little hassle as possible. With virtual DR, you can load a clean, ransomware-free snapshot onto your system in less than 30 minutes.

However, implementing virtual DR can be complex, especially if you don't have much IT expertise. But if you partner with us, this won't be a problem! Call us today to get robust solutions that guarantee business continuity.
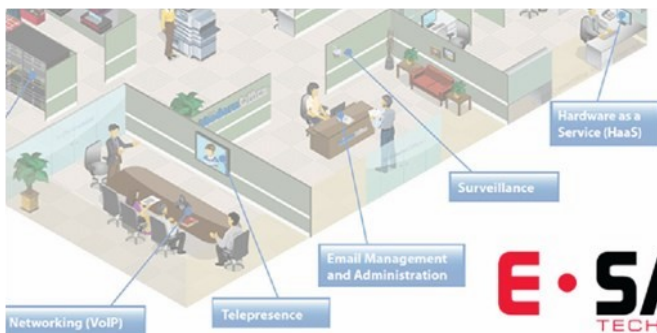
"What is Software as a Service (SaaS)?"

Software as a service is a software delivery model in which software and the associated data are centrally hosted in the cloud by software vendors or application service providers. SaaS is typically accessed by users utilizing a thin client device or via a web browser, which allows for easy access and mobility. This software distribution model is made available to customers and clients over a network infrastructure, most commonly the Internet. One of the most popular software platforms that utilizes this model is Salesforce.com where companies purchase login credentials on a monthly basis and have access to customer relationship management tools in the cloud. This model allows organizations to access their business applications at a minimal cost per month rather than paying a lump sum up-front. The software is hosted on the providers servers and equipment, which makes it easier for them to update and maintain. You don't have to keep purchasing new versions of the software. Instead, they update it and sync these changes to your already existing accounts. This is also beneficial because users don't have to invest in hardware that runs their specific software, whether it's their CRM, email, or database management tool. Corporations are beginning to build data centers that can host your applications over the web interface, which is also extremely easy to scale for prospective customers. As you grow, you don't have to purchase additional infrastructure to host users. Instead, you purchase monthly user licenses which is a much lower cost. SaaS is inspiring new operating models and when implemented correctly can benefit organizations of all sizes.

"How Can SaaS Improve My Business?"

Accessing your vital business information on the cloud can benefit companies in the following ways:

Mobility: No longer do you need to have your computer with you at all times to access vital software applications. With SaaS, you can access your information if you have a connection to the Internet with your login information on hand.

Price: By utilizing SaaS, you pay a small monthly fee to use the software. You don't have to purchase dedicated infrastructure to support your applications onsite. This also decreases the amount of taxes that you pay because there won't be that steep investment in hardware in the beginning. Also, this saves on power costs that it takes to run and maintain the infrastructure.

Manageability: There is no longer a need to run updates on your hosted software. Because the application is hosted on your provider's infrastructure, they handle the updates and streamline it to your account.

Scalability: As your business grows, there has to be an integrated solution that can grow with it. With SaaS, that is easier than ever. You don't have to purchase more faulty equipment. You are able to add to your current licenses which will increase your bill only a few dollars per month.

Next Issue:

Cloud Services

The **Modern**Office™

"How Does SaaS Work?"

Companies basically rent licenses or access the software from a service provider or a managed service provider. The software runs on servers owned and maintained by the service provider, which allows the customer to utilize the software without having to run pesky updates. These software applications are typically run out of large datacenter facilities with redundant power, battery backup solutions, climate control systems, and security procedures that are financially out-of-reach for the small

and medium sized business space. SaaS can allow those businesses to access the software applications on a per user basis. A large amount of SaaS solutions are based on a multi-tenant model. This means that a single version of the software

application and a single configuration are used for all customers who are linked to that system. In some cases, a second version of the software is set up for a select group of users to test the pre-released versions of the software application. This enables users to increase their productivity by not having to worry about different versions of the software. The application is tested, patched, and maintained by the provider. Some other SaaS solutions utilize virtualization to manage a large number of customers instead of the multi-tenant model.

"What's My Investment In SaaS?

SaaS is extremely affordable for small to medium sized businesses. As stated before, you only have to pay for access on a per user, per month basis. Usually these are very low costs. For example, Microsoft Office 365 allows you to use the latest Office applications for around $10 per month / per user. This is an extremely low amount to pay when you take into consideration how relevant the latest Office applications stay in the mainstream business environment. It seems like every two years they come out with the latest and greatest applications. For the

monthly payment, you have access to the newest software. You don't have to purchase and install the latest version in a few years and you don't have to download patches and updates. The provider maintains the application which allows you to focus on more important things. Software as a Service takes everything that's relevant in technology today and combines them to give you the stability, scalability, and manageability you need in today's fast mobile business environment. As long as you have connection to the Internet, you have access to all of your valuable business information.