

## What's New

Business Information Solutions hires experienced help desk technician, Christopher Smith.



## November 2016



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Phillip Long, CEO of BIS Technology Group.

Our Mission: To deliver solutions to our clients to help them overcome challenges that threaten the health of their business.



# 6 Questions To Ask Before You Move To VoIP

Thanks to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and ever-improving cloud technologies, the phone-service options available to you as a small business are plentiful, with more features at a lower cost than were ever available before.

However, with all the options and vendors, separating the good from the bad and navigating the hype can be difficult. Not only are some VoIP systems a complete waste of money, but fees can be “hidden,” so what appears to be a big cost-saving decision can end up costing you more in the long run once you’ve calculated in ALL costs over a three- to five-year period.

**Here are six revealing questions you must ask to cut through the hype, half-truths and “little” white lies that could bury your company.**

**1) What will the call quality be like on my new system**

Companies that sell phone systems

and do not install and support computer networks – which is what your VoIP system is running on – are often NOT qualified to recommend or install a VoIP phone system for your office. One of the biggest reasons for VoIP failure (poor sound quality, slowed Internet speeds, etc.) is that the person selling you the system does not understand how to properly assess your company’s firewall, routers, network traffic, Internet connection speeds, as well as a host of other factors, to make sure their phone system will work as advertised in YOUR SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT. That’s because they’re phone-system sales guys, not network engineers.

**2) How many data centers do you have and are they geographically dispersed?**

If the answer is only one, run away! What happens if their ONE data center goes down? Or, more commonly, what happens when the VoIP equipment *inside* the data

*continued on pg2*

center goes down? Your business is without a phone until they get their systems back online! Insist on at least two redundant data centers that are states away from each other to lower the risk of a natural disaster wiping out both data centers at once.

### 3) What was your uptime last year? What's your guarantee for uptime?

If it's anything less than 99.999%, find a different provider. And don't just take them at their word; ask for documentation proving the reliability of their network in the previous year. If they can't even do that, don't buy their system!

NOTE: Uptime is the system's ability to make and receive calls. If an individual office happens to be down due to an Internet outage, this does not affect the overall reliability of the system, because the system was ready and able.

### 4) If my phone is unreachable, do you have automatic failover to another phone?

If your provider's system isn't constantly monitoring the status of

your network, VoIP system and VoIP phones, you should consider going with another provider. If your Internet goes down, or even a single phone stops working, the system should know that within a few minutes and automatically forward the calls to a predetermined destination (like a cell phone or another office location).

### 5) Do you monitor my phones and system 24/7/365 for any potential issues?

If you have to tell your provider the phones aren't working, then find another provider. Any quality vendor should be monitoring and maintaining your system for you, using remote management tools. If you are missing calls, move on to a different system.

### 6) Do you offer a money-back guarantee?

If your provider is not willing to back up their claims with a WRITTEN, no-small-print, money-back guarantee, free of "weasel out" clauses, look for a vendor that does. Every phone-system sales guy is

going to tell you how wonderful their system is and how you won't experience any problems. If they're THAT confident, have them guarantee it in writing so you're not stuck paying for a new system that doesn't work.

### Free VoIP Assessment Cuts Through The Confusion, Myriad Of Options And Tech "Mumbo Jumbo" To Help You Make The Smartest, Safest Phone-System Choice For Your Company

If you're looking to upgrade your phone system to VoIP sometime in the near future, this free assessment will help you avoid making any mistakes and help you navigate the endless number of choices, techy "mumbo jumbo," conflicting advice and confusion. We'll answer all of your burning questions and determine which phone system is BEST FOR YOU, based on your specific needs, budget, Internet connection and existing network. No charge and no obligation! Simply call us today at 251-410-7601 to get started!

*"If they're THAT confident, have them guarantee it in writing..."*



## PC and Device Encryption: You've Been Told You Need It, Now Know Why

### You will learn:

- About data breaches that could hurt your company
- How to keep criminals away from your data
- The "nuts and bolts" of encryption
- When encryption is necessary to meet compliance regulations

Claim Your FREE Copy Today at [www.askbis.com/encryption](http://www.askbis.com/encryption).

## Exploits as a Service: How the Exploit Kit + Ransomware Tandem Affects a Company's Bottom Line

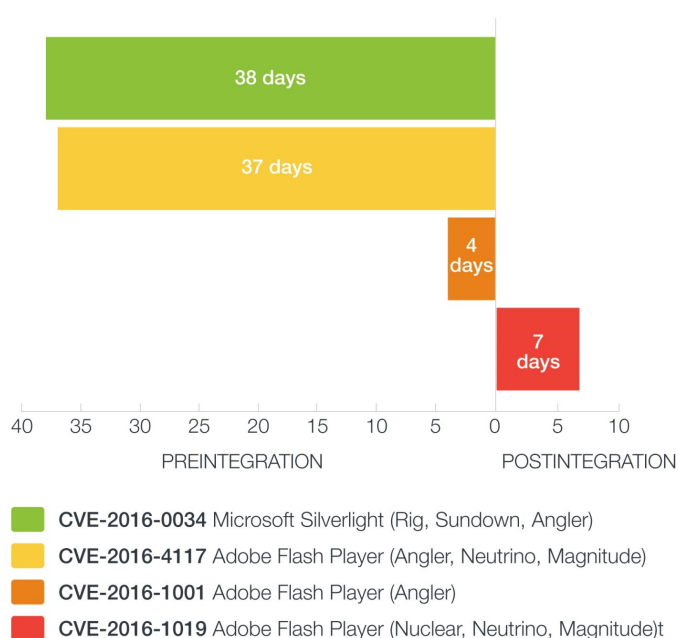
Blackhole Exploit Kit introduced the lucrative but hazardous exploit-kit-[ransomware](#) combo with CryptoLocker back in 2013. Soon after, other exploit kits, like Angler, Neutrino, Magnitude, and Rig, followed suit. At least [18 percent](#) of known [ransomware](#) families now arrive via exploit kits.

Note, though, that exploit kits have been distributing a plethora of threats since as early as 2006. Since 2010, we've seen at least 100 exploits incorporated in more than 10 kits.

[Ransomware](#) comprises just one of the many threat types that exploit kits can possibly deliver to vulnerable systems.

2016 has yet to end, but ransomware has already raked in around [US\\$209 million](#) from enterprises alone. While data loss is an immediate ransomware risk, other ill effects that surface range from damage to brand and reputation and legal fines to additional costs to recover critical data.

What makes exploit kits effective means to deliver a myriad of threats? They require less user action, for one, as they take advantage of unpatched vulnerabilities in the most popular software. In the first half of the year alone, Trend Micro (with TippingPoint) and the Zero Day Initiative (ZDI) detected 473 vulnerabilities.



At any given time, networks will always have vulnerabilities, especially if they use legacy systems or software. Add to the mix zero-day vulnerabilities, patches for which are not readily available, and you have a constant race with time. IT administrators need to protect their networks even if security patches for zero-day exploits that are integrated into kits have yet to be released. They need to face various challenges like keeping mission-critical systems online while securing their network perimeters. It doesn't help that they have to first test patches prior to deployment. On average, enterprises need around [30 days](#) for patch testing. These and other factors can introduce windows of exposure to threats brought on by exploit kits.

*Windows of exposure tied to exploits that were integrated into kits in the first half of 2016*

Patching is critical to mitigate risks that exploits pose. With the aforementioned challenges though, endpoint and network [protection](#) via Intrusion Prevention System (IPS) solutions are also a must. These technologies secure systems from zero-day and other vulnerabilities, even those for which patches will no longer be made available.

Read [this guide](#) on *Exploits as a Service (EaaS)* to learn how a company's bottom line can suffer from related attacks and what it can do to secure its perimeter and data.

Article by: Trend Micro | Simply Security



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## Top 5 Reasons to Be Thankful for Technology

By: Taylor D'Amico, Digital Marketing Specialist

Technology has become so richly interwoven into the fabric of our lives it would be hard to imagine doing some of our most common tasks without it.

We are capable of navigating unfamiliar routes, checking bank balances, listening to music, shopping, reading and much more, all from just our smartphones.

Think of how often you turn to it—and not just to communicate. Smartphones have become just one more element of irreplaceable technology we rely on. Tablets and laptops have made us more mobile, making us even more productive. And countless apps and software programs have added a little bit of convenience to our busy lives.

But how thankful are we for it all? We're more reliant on technology than ever before as we've become a more connected, more plugged-in society that we may easily take it all for granted.

So in the spirit of thanks this season, let's remind ourselves why we should be so thankful for technology and all the things it does for us we would have a hard time living without.

**It Improves Our Lives.** Advances in technology have touched every aspect of our world. Improvements in medicine, automation and communication, to name a few, have resulted in better healthcare delivery, more efficient production and even faster distribution of information, time-sensitive and otherwise. It's created jobs, solved environmental problems, enhanced our safety and heightened the sense of community as it's made our world more connected.

**It Enhances Our Creativity.** Thanks to technology, we have more sophisticated tools to express ourselves and to quickly deploy those messages to an even bigger audience.

With access to music-editing software, self-publishing platforms, 3D drawing programs, video production tools and so much more, we have the innovative power of technology to help us give life and voice to whatever we can imagine. And, also because of technology, we have the ability to share our creativity with the world.

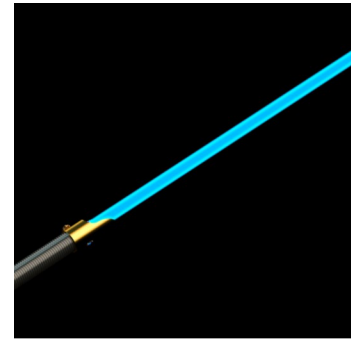
**It Drives Innovation.** Technology and innovation have become so intertwined one informs the other. Even as one new and improved product has been released, you can bet its follow-up is in production. Everything from automated processes to computers, from fitness trackers to surgical techniques is continually being studied, tested and upgraded. Technology not only helps improve our lives, but it also helps make even more improvements possible.

**It Makes Everything More Accessible.** Credit technology with making the world smaller—and larger. On one hand, it's made us much more connected to others close to home and around the world via social media. But it's also opened us up to an even greater wealth of information that's accessible with the power of our fingertips. Technology is responsible for linking us with online educational opportunities, friends and family, new places in the world and so much more just in a matter of minutes.

**It Downright Fun!** Simple but true, this may be one of the biggest reasons we're so addicted to technology. There's a novelty in translating our love for scrapbooking to Pinterest or expanding our photo editing skills with Photoshop, Lightroom and Instagram. With Skype, you can instantly communicate face-to-face with friends or family in the next time zone or a world away. Technology adds a new, interesting dimension to the hobbies or interests we already have—and makes them even more enjoyable.

**[Get Your FREE Network Evaluation!](#)**  
**[Give us a call to schedule it... 251-410-7601!](#)**

### Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



### Resist The Dark Side Custom Lightsaber

The Sith Lord is about to strike – this is no time for an ordinary lightsaber. Time to pull out your own hand-made custom lightsaber...

You'd be hard-pressed to find an imaginary weapon as iconic as the Star Wars lightsaber. Haven't you (or someone you know) ever secretly yearned to wield one against an evil warlord? Well, in case you didn't know – you can. And, with your own custom-made lightsaber, you'll be well-armed.

These are no ordinary Hasbro plastic toys. In fact, the features and choices available at some of the top-rated lightsaber shops could well leave you "starstruck." From "flash-on-clash" to blade color to heavy, medium or light battle-readiness, to custom soundboards and circuitry, the choice is yours.

If you're a diehard do-it-yourselfer, complete kits are available. You can even get a double-bladed or cross-guard-type lightsaber. Prices range from about \$400 on up. For more details, check out <http://www.ultrasabers.com/>.

Choose well, young Padawan.

# How to Boost Black Friday & Cyber Monday Sales

By: Taylor D'Amico, Digital Marketing Specialist at BIS Designs

For many businesses, it's already starting to look a lot like Christmas—and with good reason.

Combined sales from last year's Thanksgiving Day, Black Friday and Cyber Monday neared \$20 billion, including both brick-and-mortar stores and online shopping.

Online sales showed significant gains in 2015, but brick-and-mortar sales fell during this peak shopping period. Why? This is possibly due to businesses extending the holiday sales from Thanksgiving Day to the Cyber Monday finale. Online retailers typically have strong digital marketing strategies in place to promote their seasonal sales. Brick-and-mortar stores should also be taking advantage of how digital marketing can increase their foot traffic.

Last year for the first time, sales on mobile devices edged desktop sales, and now more than ever that means businesses need to leverage their social media marketing efforts to take advantage of these trends.

From national chains to small boutiques and shops, every business can tap into the power of digital marketing to capture the attention of deal-seekers looking for Black Friday and Cyber Monday specials.

Timing, of course, is everything, and it's not too early to start developing a social media marketing strategy. Last year, the first Black Friday ads emerged even before Halloween, potentially putting those businesses at the front of the line for early shoppers' dollars.

So how can you maximize your sales on Black Friday and Cyber Monday? To take advantage of the growing trend of online sales, particularly on mobile devices, these four areas of your digital marketing strategy should not be overlooked.

**Mobile Website.** Last year, purchases made on mobile devices (most often smartphones) peaked at 37 percent on Thanksgiving Day, followed by 36 percent on Black Friday and 26 percent on Cyber Monday.

Optimize your website to provide a convenient browsing or buying

experience across computers and mobile devices, ensuring your website is mobile friendly with a responsive design layout.

**Landing Pages.** Nearly 40 percent of shoppers start turning their attention to Christmas purchases before Halloween, according to the National Retail Federation. To capture those early deal-seekers, create your holiday deal landing pages now to give search engines plenty of time to index them. Starting early will also allow for planning how best to track each holiday campaign through web analytics.

You can also offer email subscriptions that provide exclusive deals to customers who share their email address on your landing page—plus you'll get the benefit of another way to communicate with them digitally.

**Social Media.** Put Facebook, Twitter and any other social media platform your company is active on to good use - it's free after all! Turn up the activity level with the goal of engaging your customer seven more.

## Is Your Marketing On Track?

Give us a call now to set up your FREE marketing roadmap assessment! Call 251-410-7601!

## Website of the Month Katy's Catering



Katy's Catering came to us looking for a website that would reflect their re-branding efforts within the community. By providing resourceful content in a whimsical fashion, their customers can review a full list of services as well as download the service agreement.

To visit their website, go to <http://katyscatering.com>.

*“The best place to hide a dead body is page 2 of Google search results.”*

*-Anonymous*

## Accomplish More By Doing Less



As I've considered what some of today's greatest achievers – Richard Branson, Maria Shriver, Arnold Palmer, Tony Hawk, John Wooden and Colin Powell, among many others – have accomplished in their lifetimes, I've thought about why many of the rest of us work harder and put in longer hours without achieving the same big results. What makes the difference?

After a great deal of thought, I realized the key is not to do more or work harder; the key is actually to find ways to do less and think more, to be less busy and more productive. In this, I have struck upon the very secret to what separates the super-achievers from the rest of us.

I've started applying this strategy in my own life and work. And I'd like to share with you three of the principles I have found to move from stress-filled "success" to super-achievement and a more balanced lifestyle filled with joy, harmony and personal fulfillment.

### Learn to Stop Doing

Reevaluate how you spend your time and stop doing the time-wasters. The only way you can gain more time is to stop doing something. If you don't like what your life has become, you need to figure out what to stop doing so you can concentrate on activities that bring better results in your life.

Consider: if you spent just 40% of your time on your high-value activities, you could double your income. Spend 60% or even 80%, and you could multiply your income by four times.

### Create and Protect Your Boundaries

For a workaholic, these are dangerous times. The natural boundaries of time allocated to work, personal and family have been obliterated. Technology has penetrated the walled garden separating these important segments of our lives. This breach provides for constant intrusions into our attention,

keeping us constantly connected and at the mercy of a stream of information and demands.

### Put a junk filter on your life.

To filter incoming requests, you must first become clear on what you want.

Who are you? Who do you want to become? What is most important to you in life? What direction do you want your life to take?

What are your three most important goals for the year? This month? This week? Today?

After identifying your values, goals and priorities, put a junk filter on everything else and keep it out of your in-box and off your to-do list.

### Don't Just Learn...

Knowledge isn't power; it's the potential of power. What you do with knowledge is where the power lies.

### Don't just read a book and put it down.

Read it, summarize the key ideas, then write out how you're going to implement those ideas in your life. Now act, review and improve. Stick with the ideas in that book until you realize a desired transformation.

I hope you'll take time to stop and examine your life and incorporate these principles into your daily routine on your journey to super-achievement. Remember: it's not what you know; it's what you do.



Darren Hardy is the visionary force behind SUCCESS magazine as the Founding Publisher and Editor, and is the New York Times and Wall Street Journal bestselling author of what has been called "the modern day Think

and Grow Rich": *The Compound Effect—Jumpstart Your Income, Your Life, Your Success* ([www.TheCompoundEffect.com](http://www.TheCompoundEffect.com)) and the world-wide movement to onboard 10 million new entrepreneurs through his latest book *The Entrepreneur Roller Coaster--Why Now is the Time to #JoinTheRide* ([www.RollerCoasterBook.com](http://www.RollerCoasterBook.com)). Access Darren: [www.DarrenHardy.com](http://www.DarrenHardy.com) and get free daily mentoring: [www.DarrenDaily.com](http://www.DarrenDaily.com)

## Ditch The Meeting, Get More Done



The average manager spends 30%-50% of their time in meetings. And most feel 67% of meetings are an utter waste. So what can we do to stop killing time? Quit having meetings. Here are three ways to tell if a meeting is worthwhile. 1) Compare cost to benefit. Take the number of folks attending times their average pay rate. Multiply that by their time spent meeting. Is the desired outcome worth it? 2) Will this be a one-sided affair? A dead giveaway is the conference call when the boss puts everyone else on mute. 3) Is the meeting a guise for "communication"? Instead, send an e-mail, point to a website or suggest someone to consult with. Now you're talking...

-Entrepreneur

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## Help Us “Hook” Some More Clients Like You & Get Rewarded!

We’ve decided to start a special rewards program for the clients we value the most.

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For more information, visit [www.askbis.com/referral](http://www.askbis.com/referral) or call 251.923.4015.



\*The BIS Division Only

*“Earn your leadership every day.”*  
-Michael Jordan



### Who Wants To Win A \$5 Starbucks Gift Card?

Every week, we will have a Grand-Prize Winner for our Monthly Trivia Challenge Quiz! He or she has to be the first person to correctly answer my quiz question.

Now, here’s this month’s trivia question. The winner will receive a \$5 gift card to Starbucks!

What Founding Father thought the turkey should be the national bird of the United States?

- a) John Adams
- b) Benjamin Franklin
- c) George Washington

*Email us right now with  
your answer!*  
[hvalentine@askbis.com](mailto:hvalentine@askbis.com)

## Being “Smart” Isn’t Just For Phones And TVs Anymore



Soon, Microsoft’s Cortana will be able to see inside your fridge. With cutting-edge, fridge-safe technologies, Cortana can identify the foods you place there. After spending some time with your fridge’s contents, Cortana learns your food preferences. It can even offer up recipes or shopping lists to make your life easier. While other smart fridges have cameras that show users what’s inside without opening the door, the Cortana version actually helps you keep your fridge stocked. By the time this fridge hits the market, it will have captured thousands of photos of food packages from around the world. And that means you may soon have a smart new helper when it comes to shopping and fixing meals.

-TechCrunch