

What's New

We are so excited to announce that our Sentinel IT support plans have just gotten even better! Now, you will receive a monthly network health report. It will outline the health of these 8 major categories including antivirus, disk, backup, intrusion, usability, services, updates and events.

You'll also receive information regarding the amount of server drive space used, your current patch health, service statistics, an analysis of your assets, a workstation summary and information on your operating systems.

January 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.



Upgrading To Windows 10? Avoid Headaches, Downtime And Frustrations By Following This Advice

For the past few months, we've been swamped with questions about Windows 10.

If you're wondering whether now is the best time to upgrade your system, here's what you need to know:

First and foremost, if your organization relies on your computers in any way to make money or save lives, consider the risks carefully.

As with any software upgrade - but especially your computer's operating system - you've got to weigh the advantages of upgrading now against potential downtime if there are problems with the new code.

A good rule of thumb regarding any operating-system upgrade is to wait six months after the product release before deploying it into any system or group of systems that your business depends on.

Since January 29 marks six months since the Windows 10 official release date, it's a good time to look at

whether it's wiser to upgrade now or wait for further fixes and improvements.

That being said, here are a few of the key questions we've been fielding - and pitfalls to avoid:

Q. It's free for a "limited time" - don't I have to act now?

A. No. You have until July 2016 to take advantage of the free upgrade. And, if your system hasn't prompted you to upgrade yet, you'll need to wait. If and when your system is deemed capable of adapting to the upgrade, your current Windows OS will notify you. Either way, you have until July 28, 2016. If you do plan to upgrade, we strongly advise that you get it done well before that date, in order to avoid any last-minute scrambling.

Q. It's better and/or faster, right?

A. Maybe... It depends. Here's what we're seeing:

- Windows 10 radically changes how your system operates, compared to

• Windows 7. While some computers make the change with no problem at all, it can cause older systems to lose key hardware drivers (like networking or printing), rendering them an “instant brick.”

• Some systems, even those certified by their manufacturers as “Windows 10 ready,” start misbehaving after being upgraded. That means undue downtime while you reinstall or upgrade MS Office or other software – or even revert back to your older OS.

• Some older systems actually run slower on Windows 10 than on Windows 7 or 8.1.

Q. Will my computer work with Windows 10?

A. Age is probably the biggest factor for any Windows-based device. Anything older than three years is not worth upgrading. At three years old, your machine is nearing the end

of its useful life. You are better off leaving the old operating system in place and waiting for Windows 10 until you upgrade to a new computer.

Q. I’ve heard Windows 10 transmits all of your personal information to Microsoft. Is this true?

A. This is true, unless you opt out of some of the most attractive features, such as the MS Store and Cortana, the voice-controlled virtual assistant. According to Windows 10 terms of service, Microsoft can:

“access, disclose and preserve personal data, including your content (such as the content of your emails, other private communications or files in private folders), when we have a good faith belief that doing so is necessary to protect our customers or enforce the terms governing the use of the services.”

If you decide that giving that kind of control of your personal and

business data to Microsoft is not in your best interest, you can still install Windows 10; just call us and we’ll help you adjust the settings to keep all your information from being sent to Microsoft.

Q. We use some custom software here. Will it run on Windows 10?

A. Until your custom software vendor blesses Windows 10 for that program, the answer is no. In all cases, we advise against upgrading to Windows 10 until your custom programs are 100% fully vetted, compatible and supported for it.

Deciding when to upgrade to Windows 10 isn’t as simple as Microsoft and some pundits would have you believe. But if you know the pitfalls we’ve laid out for you here in advance, you’ve at least got a fighting chance for a smooth, headache-free transition.

Want help setting a target date and plan for your business to upgrade to Windows 10? Call us at 251-410-7601 or e-mail us at jpartin@askbis.com to schedule a free Windows 10 Readiness Assessment.

“Some systems start misbehaving after being upgraded, which can lead to downtime.”

The Ultimate Small Business Guide To Setting Up A Work-From-Home System For Your Staff



WORK FROM HOME GAMEPLAN
 “The Ultimate Small Business Guide To Setting Up A “Work From Home” System For Your Staff”

Secrets Every Business Owner Must Know Before Installing A “Virtual Network” To Allow Employees To Work From Home, On The Road, Or From A Remote Office

You will learn:

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Cloud Storage vs. Dedicated Servers

By: Whitney Jones, Digital Marketing Specialist

For a business, you want your data to be stored in a safe, secure location that is also accessible to your employees. At the same time, you need a storage solution that can handle all the files being uploaded and downloaded on a regular basis.

In today's technology, there are two viable options for data storage: **cloud or server**. But which one is right for your business? Many will argue one is better than the other for many different reasons.

Cloud hosting allows for a less expensive solution compared to dedicated servers, but the cloud doesn't have the same level of protection servers do, which many large businesses rely on. If you are a small business though, large costs can affect your your profits, so picking a cost-effective option when considering storage is important. But don't think just about cost when deciding upon data hosting. Your business's security and accessibility to its data should always come above expense. In this day and age, when hackers are becoming stealthier, protection should be the first priority!

The Cloud

If you are considering price, **cloud storage is argued that it is the most cost-effective option**, though sometimes when the cost is broken down, [cloud hosting can actually be more expensive](#) than upgrading to a new server. But that of course all depends on the size of your cloud and what you need out of it. Cloud hosting can prove to pay off in the end if you are paying higher up-

front costs than you would with a server. By switching to a cloud storage system, which is run on multiple servers, you can increase or decrease the amount of servers that host your cloud, which helps with scalability. [Cloud storage also runs on mobile devices](#), like iPhones and Android, via apps. So if your employees are on the go, they can easily access data through the cloud app. Cloud hosting is also very reliable (less prone to crashing) and require less maintenance.

Dedicated Servers

Server hosting on the other hand has its [benefits](#) too. Since a server is a dedicated device that is physically at your business, [they can provide a higher level of protection for your data and usually is the better solution for large businesses because they directly connect](#). Strict security is the most prevalent benefit compared to the cloud due to the physical aspect of a server. Plus, when you have a dedicated server, you will usually have an IT company behind it that will help manage and run updates.

So which one is best for my business?

For security purposes, servers may be better than the cloud, but that does not mean that cloud hosting isn't protected. As many businesses are migrating to cloud hosting, more strict security measures are being created and implemented to keep your data safe from hackers.

Cloud hosting is the best option for a small business that requires 24/7 access to its data on multiple devices. It usually comes out to be a less-expensive option than using a dedicated server. But servers provide a level of security that trumps the cloud currently, and usually are better with regulation compliance.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Who Else Wants A Little Music With Their Light?

The next time you replace a lightbulb, you can now pick one that will stream your favorite music and light up your life in your choice of over 16,000 colors, all with a tap on your phone.

In case you haven't noticed, some LED bulbs now include a Bluetooth- or Wi-Fi-controlled speaker. And at least one, the MagicLight® Plus, available on Amazon, also lets you pick a light color to suit your mood.

At anywhere from \$15 to \$129 or more, these bulbs can add music - and light - throughout your home or office in a matter of minutes, at a fraction of the cost of a wired-in sound system.

How's the sound quality? It depends on the one you select. And it may not resonate like Carnegie Hall live...but hey, it's a lightbulb - what did you expect?

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

Tips for Marketing to Tourists Digitally

By: Whitney Jones, Digital Marketing Specialist at BIS Designs

Ah, life on the beach. It's many people's dream retirement destination. Luckily for us, and everyone else that calls the Gulf Coast their home, someone else's dream *is* our life. But as great as it is living by the water, for businesses in our area, it can be extremely profitable. Living in an area where tourism is a main profit-generator, businesses can be either very successful marketing their brand, or sometimes miss the mark.

As tourism fuels our economy here, local businesses look forward to times of the year when tourists are most abundant. Summer, as you can imagine, is the peak-season to travel to the beach for vacations. Spring break and winter getaways are also very popular. But the times of the year people visit the beach play into their demographics too. Fall and winter yield a higher number of elderly visitors, seeking refuge from the harsh winters in the northern parts of the United States, while spring is when many college students vacation for their Spring Breaks.

Local businesses prepare for tourists year-round and adjust their marketing programs based off of the season and the common demographics of visitors for each season. At least *most* business do. **Now that digital marketing is here to stay, and is an important player in the marketing sphere, make sure your tourism marketing**

includes digital.

Facebook Advertising. Targeted social media advertising lets you select *exactly* who you want your ad set to reach. Whether its adults aged 55 + whose interests are traveling and shopping, or adults aged 18 – 25 whose interests are water sports and the beach, you can determine your exact audience with [Facebook advertising](#). This lets you get your message out to the people that are most interested in your product.

Social Media. Facebook represents one of the largest online communities in the world. You can connect with friends, groups, and business pages. Set up a business page to engage with fans and followers, inform them of yours services and products, specials and discounts and create a two-way conversation with them instead of just spitting out promotions. Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest are just a few others that have excelled for businesses. Travelers will look up businesses on social media channels to see if they are still in business, check out user reviews and what the business is posting about. Check out [BIS Designs' social media](#) services.

SEO. Provide travelers with the information on destinations they are looking for at every stage of their planning

process. When deciding upon a destination location, internet users go to search engines, with Google dominating the market at 67%. Google is the key search engine that you should focus on because of all the applications Google owns, such as Google Maps and YouTube, which aids in SEO. The higher your business ranks for your specific keywords, the easier it will be more tourists to find your shop, restaurant or whatever your business may be. Google Maps is now becoming a fast and easy way to search for businesses in the user's location. There is a lot of SEO works that goes into making your business searchable. Page titles, great content, meta tags, backlinks, and HTML code are just some ways to use SEO to increase your ranking. If you feel overwhelmed with the task of [SEO](#), that is what BIS Designs is here for.

Pay-per-click. [PPC marketing](#) uses search engines in a different way to help market your business. PPC is paid advertising that shows up at the top of the search results. Say someone searched "water activities in Gulf Shores." You can use PPC to have your water recreation business show up at the top of the search results for *alimited time*. This does not take the place of organic SEO, but helps to showcase your business quickly.

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

Royal Limousines

By Liz Miller



Royal Limousine is all about excellence in ground transportation services. Founded by a retired Marine vet with experience in transport, this company is fully focused on superior service. This value follows suit on the website, where customers can learn more about Royal Limos, research rates or book their reservation immediately online.

To visit their website, go to Royallimosofmobile.com

“Google only loves you when everyone else loves you first.”

- Wendy Piersall,

The Content Superheroes

Copiers and Security

Did you know that your copiers might put you, your employees and the company at risk? Copiers hang onto sensitive data that is scanned, copied, printed, faxed and emailed by employees. That data is usually stored within the copier's hard disk drive. If your employees are scanning or printing information that is sensitive in nature, you need to implement a copier policy to keep your data secure.

But how does a copier take that information?

Most work copiers have a hard disk drive which is necessary to manage and control tasks and jobs sent to the copier. These types of copiers, referred to as "digital copiers" are more productive and high-tech than the average at-home copier, which usually does not contain a hard drive. The hard drive in work copiers stores images of every document, whether you are scanning, faxing, copying or emailing a document.

How can someone steal that stored data?

As the digital age progresses, so does the intelligence of hackers. These hackers have discovered a way to extract this sensitive data either remotely or after the hard drive had been removed and replaced. This extraction software is available online, *for free*. Many times, work copiers are leased, used and then returned for a new copier through a third-party office systems company, such as BIS Office Systems. When a copier is returned to the leasing company, those hard drives get replaced and or stay on the old copier, meaning anyone could buy a copier containing birth certificates, social security numbers, bank records, income statements and much more from a past company. Copiers can also get leased by one company, returned then sold to another copier. So knowing how to extra your company's data and protect it is extremely important to protecting your business.

So what can I do?

Create a data security plan for when you are leasing, buying and returning your copiers. This plan should be understood by all employees and added to your company's security policy program. Make sure every employees understand how document data is stored and how the company will protect that data from hackers. If your business uses an IT company or your business has its own IT staff, these security experts should be the ones in charge of your copier data. They will have the knowledge and expertise to keep your company data safe and secure.

Make sure you ask the manufacturer which security features comes with your copier and if it will be an add-on you need to purchase. Additionally, talk to the copier leasing company to see how they dispose of old hard drives or if you can keep the hard drive once the copier is returned. Make sure that is an agreement in writing before you lease a copier.

Your IT staff should handle all data security issues, and if you do not have IT support, you should make a copier policy and plan to remove all existing data before the copier is returned, or even to clear data after every use. Security education is one of the most important aspects to running a company. It is your responsibility to keep company data safe and away from hackers with malicious intentions.

Want to know if your company could save money? Give us a call right now to set up your FREE PrintSmart Evaluation... 251-476-3113!

Product of the Month: Toner

We offer a full line of compatible toner for many of the major brands including: HP, Dell, Kyocera, Lexmark, Copystar, Canon and Xerox.

We will beat or match any local competitor's pricing!

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20% OFF
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Offer expires October 31, 2015. Offer to promote copiers and color control.

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

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Here’s the deal...

Refer clients to us and receive a \$50 gift card to any place of your choosin’ when your referral becomes a BIS client. Earn a \$100 gift card when 3 or more of your referrals do business with BIS!

For more information, visit www.askbis.com/referral or call 251.923.4015.



*The BIS Division Only

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”

-Michael Jordan

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Who Wants To Win A \$5 Starbucks

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.

Last month’s quiz question was: **What US state first recognized Christmas as an office holiday?**
 a) OK b) AL c) TN d) VA

The correct answer was **b) AL (Alabama)**

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

Who played Meg Ryan’s husband in ‘Top Gun’?

- a) Anthony Edwards
- b) Val Kilmer
- c) Whip Hubley

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

Find the “marketing” synonyms:

- Advertising
- Brainstorming
- Branding
- Call to Action
- Cold Call
- Contests
- CRM
- Customer
- Focus Group
- Ideas
- Marketing
- Target Market



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January Events

January 28th at 11:30 AM

The Original Oyster House | Gulf Shores, Alabama

EXECUTIVE BUSINESS LUNCHEON (FREE!)

How to Develop & Implement a Successful Digital Marketing Plan to Increase Company Revenue

www.askbisdesigns.com/seminar

To RSVP for any of these events,
call 251-923-4015 or visit
www.bisuniversity.com.