

January Newsletter 2013

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Is it Time for Your Business to Go BYOD?

Tablets, smartphones, and laptops have changed the way people work. No longer are workers chained to a single desktop computer. And no longer do they store all their important documents, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and reports on one machine.

This has led to a rise in the BYOD movement, with flocks of employees toting their mobile computing devices to work in their backpacks each day. As the Everon business blog says, this trend – which stands for Bring Your Own Device – isn't slowing any time soon. The trend is also, more importantly, changing the way businesses across the country operate.

Businesses in the past often frowned upon letting employees use their own laptops, smartphones, or tablets at work. The fear? That employees would take important company data out the door with them should they move on to new employment. Other companies worried that employees would infect their computer systems with viruses by connecting their mobile devices to company servers.

These fears, of course, are still very real ones. However, innovative companies are also realizing that there are several benefits to those businesses who embrace the BYOD movement. The BYOD movement might even give businesses who allow employees to bring their personal devices to work a significant productivity boost.

The numbers



According to a recent story by PayScale.com, 16 percent of companies surveyed by SAP and NetBase said that a BYOD policy might help boost sales at their companies. The reason? Employees who can use their personal devices at work might also complete more company work after hours. By relying on devices that they are familiar with, they might be able to turn in even more impressive marketing materials and reports. Both of these factors could result in a boost in sales and a boost in company profits.

PayScale cites the experience of security firm ADT, which reported that its sales doubled in some areas when the company let its employees use iPads.

Such a move also helps companies cut costs, the PayScale story said, and helps ensure that the move to mobile solutions occurs more efficiently.

Of course, not everyone is a fan of BYOD. The PayScale story found that one in eight companies worry about liability issues should something go wrong with employees using their own devices. A total of 15 percent of respondents said they worried about confidential company information falling into the wrong hands should employees lose mobile devices.

Policies

Trade publication IT Manager Daily recently ran a story on its website providing valuable advice for companies moving toward a BYOD policy.

One of the keys, according to the story, is that companies should create a clear, written BYOD policy that outlines the responsibilities of employees.

For example, the policy could state that employees who share company knowledge stored on their personal devices with outside parties could face disciplinary actions, including losing their jobs.

The written policy should also spell out the responsibility of the company itself. And employees should sign an agreement acknowledging that they have read and understand the company's BYOD policy, according to the IT Manager Daily story.

The Everon blog adds a few other factors that employers need to consider when creating a BYOD policy. First, employers have to determine who pays for mobile voice and data charges. Next, they need to establish minimum system requirements for the mobile devices that their employees want to use.

There are financial factors to consider, too. Employers, for instance, might decide to provide a financial stipend to help employees obtain their mobile devices. And who pays for repairs should a device malfunction? Companies must also determine whether all data stored on employees' mobile devices must also live on the company's file server.

These are important questions, and some of them are challenging. But a written BYOD policy that answers these questions will spare businesses from future problems. Such written policies will also make certain that employees have no excuse for violating companies' BYOD policies.

BYOD advantages

What are the most important advantages associated with a BYOD policy?

The IT Solutions Blog lists many advantages that students receive when they're allowed to bring their own devices to the classroom. Surprisingly, many of these advantages pertain to workers, too.

For instance, IT Solutions Blog says that because students are already familiar and comfortable with their own devices, they can focus on actually learning instead of deciphering how to use the device. That holds true for employees, too; they won't waste time trying to determine how a particular device works.

At the same time, consumers' personal devices tend to be more up-to-date than most company technology. A BYOD policy can help companies more easily, and inexpensively, keep up with the latest technology.

Another benefit, according to the IT Solutions Blog? Students might be more inspired to continue learning after school if they are allowed to use their own devices at school. That's a benefit that employers should seek, too. Their workers are more likely to work after hours if they can take home company data on their personal devices.

The Everon blog adds a few more benefits of a BYOD policy. The biggest? Employees are more accountable for their own productivity. Workers can't blame malfunctioning company equipment or an inability to access company computers for turning in work or assignments late.

Companies also can save time and costs by not having to create a hardware lifecycle plan or keep inventories of electronic assets. When employees rely on their own devices, such inventories are no longer a necessary job.

Change is always a challenge for companies. And many might still resist putting a BYOD policy in place. Such companies, though, run the risk of being left behind as the computing world turns increasingly to mobile devices.

Yes, a BYOD policy brings risks, real risks. But it also brings real benefits. And a growing number of companies are realizing that these benefits outweigh the risks.

Read more at ...

- Everon IT: <http://kbit.co/byod-tips>
- PayScale: <http://kbit.co/byod-infographic>
- IT Solutions Blog: <http://kbit.co/byod-pros-cons>
- IT Manager Daily: <http://kbit.co/byod-policy-template>

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Avoid a Spyfall When Emailing

David Petraeus, as head of the CIA, ranked as the country's top spy. However, when it came to sending illicit email messages, Petraeus was no James Bond.



Petraeus, in early November, resigned his position as director of the CIA after an FBI investigation uncovered an extramarital affair with his former biographer. The director's use of Gmail played a significant role in exposing the affair.

This has caused technology site Lifehacker to leap into action. The site recently ran two posts exposing the mistakes that Petraeus made with email and how others can avoid having their own email messages traced.

Here are some suggestions from Lifehacker writers on how to cover your tracks when sending out potentially sensitive email. (And remember, you don't have to be having an affair to use this information. You can use it whenever sending out emails that you'd rather others not see.)

How Petraeus was caught

According to Lifehacker, Petraeus and his mistress, Paula Broadwell, left draft messages for each other in a shared Gmail account. They could then each log into the account to read the messages in the draft folder without actually sending email messages to each other.

However, when the IP address that logs into the account with the drafts is always the same, it can be traced back to a source.

Hide your IP address

The best way to protect your email privacy is to hide your IP address. You can do this by using a Virtual Private Network, or VPN. This is a group of computers networked together. The key point is that a VPN secures your computer's Internet connection to guarantee that all of the data that you are sending and receiving to others is encrypted and invisible from prying eyes.

You have to be certain, though, to launch your VPN client on your computer and log in before sending email messages.

Disposable email addresses

You can also sign up for a disposable email address, one that, as Lifehacker says, self-destructs after a message is read. Lifehacker says that if Broadwell had used such an address, the affair between her and Petraeus most likely never would have come to light.

The good news? There are plenty of providers out there that provide disposable email addresses. A quick online search will lead you to them.

Read more at Lifehacker.com:

- <http://kbit.co/browse-like-bond>
- <http://kbit.co/email-privacy-tips>

New to Gmail? Here's How to Make It Work for You

Satisfied with your current email client? Or maybe you'd like to explore another service, one that makes it easier to find your old email messages and follow email conversations.

If so, Gmail, the email client from Google, is a good alternative. Fans of the service swear by it. They say it's the most intuitive email client available, meaning that is easy to use, flexible, and powerful.



However, when you're just getting started on Gmail, you might have some questions. Here are the basics of how this service works and how it can make you more productive.

Getting started

To start on Gmail, you need to set up an account. You might not get the exact email address that you want, but you should make sure to create an address that makes sense to you. You might not be able to get `joesmith@gmail.com`, but you might be able to get `jsmithaccountant@gmail.com` or `jsmithwriter@gmail.com`.

To finish creating your account, you'll need to provide Google with a second email address that it can use to send you password information in case you forget your password. You must also give Google a phone number at which it can contact you.

The terms

Once you've created your Gmail account, it's time to study some of the terms that come with the service. You'll need to know the language to successfully navigate Gmail.

For instance, "Label" is a key term in Gmail. It's basically the same thing as an email folder. There's one key difference, though; you can set up your email messages so that they exist in more than one Label or folder.

Filters are important, too. By applying filters, you can automatically send messages from specific users to a certain label, delete messages from other users, or push messages with certain words in them to the head of your message list.

Then there are stars. Any time you star a message, it moves to the top of your inbox. These are the messages that are most important to you.

Threaded

One of the niftiest features of Gmail is the way it threads conversations. Instead of organizing

messages only chronologically, Gmail groups them by topic. Therefore, if you engage in a long email conversation with a client about a specific project, all of your back-and-forth messages will be listed together.

This means that you won't have to search through pages of old email messages to find your third answer to a conversation that started two months ago. Instead, all of your replies will be bunched together in one threaded conversation.

There is a reason Gmail has so many fans. Now that you know some of the basics of how this email service works, why not sign up for an account? You might be surprised at how easy Gmail is to use.

Read more at Mashable: <http://kbit.co/guide-to-gmail>

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Tech for Emergencies

Most of us think of technology as a work tool or as something to entertain us. However, some forms of technology can actually help us survive emergencies.



This is something that the writers of the Wirecutter technology blog have recently addressed. In the wake of the devastation brought to the East Coast by Hurricane Sandy, Wirecutter listed some key technology that could help you in case of an emergency. Here are some of the blog's suggestions:

NPower PEG Person Energy Generator

When public transportation goes down—as much of it did in New York City following Sandy—the odds are high that you'll be doing a lot of walking. The editors at Wirecutter, then, recommended the NPower PEG Person Energy Generator. This tool will use the energy that you generate from walking—or from, say, biking—to charge your cell phone.

You can also charge the device by shaking it vigorously. According to Wirecutter, if you shake it for 10 minutes, you'll create enough power to make a short cell phone call.

Eton BoostTurbine1000

The TurbineBoost1000 is a backup battery pack that can provide a charge of 50 percent to a smartphone that's run out of battery life. It also comes with a hand-cranked generator that can recharge the BoostTurbine1000's battery.

According to Wirecutter, one minute of hand cranking will create enough energy to make a 30-second cell phone call or send and receive a few text messages.

Solar Joos USB gadget charger

The Solar Joos USB gadget charger is waterproof and can charge a cell phone either from its battery or from the solar panel's power. It can also recharge itself either in the sun—in less than a day—or faster through a USB port.

The device also comes with adaptors for a wide variety of cell phones and USB ports.

Of course, this is just a small list of technology that might be able to help you survive long power outages. It's nice, though, to realize that technology isn't only about letting us watch *Breaking Bad* on our smart phones. Sometimes, technology can help keep us safe and in contact with our loved ones during emergencies.

Read more at The Wirecutter: <http://kbit.co/tech-for-emergencies>

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You Got Your iPad. What Apps Should You Download?

You've finally broke down and purchased your own iPad, but now you're wondering which apps to download. After all, an iPad's much more fun once you load it with entertainment, productivity, and communication apps.

Here are some must-have apps for your iPad:

Notability: Your iPad is like a miniature computer. Because of this, you'll often want to use it to jot down notes while you're on the go.



That's where Notability comes in. CNET calls Notability the best note-taking application it's seen. And it's easy to understand why. Notability lets users use their onscreen or plug-in keyboards to keep track of information by grouping your notes into subject categories. This makes it easier to find your notes when you need them.

Pages: Need to produce high-quality documents while you're out and about? It's time to turn to Pages. This app lets you create documents complete with images, tables, and graphs, all using your iPad's touchscreen keyboard. You can also access a host of common templates, everything from standard letters to resume layouts to reports. Fans of this app say that Pages really does feel like a standard desktop word-processing program.

Hootsuite: This free app is essential for iPad users who spend lots of time with social media. The app lets you create social network streams and then view them in an easy-to-read interface. You can also use Hootsuite to send messages to several networks at the same time.

Dragon Dictation: This nifty app lets you dictate messages simply by speaking into your

iPad's microphone. The amazing thing? Dragon Dictation produces messages that are usually accurate. You can then send these messages to others through e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter.

Spotify: You want to have a bit of fun with your iPad, too, right? What's better than listening to your favorite music while you're working or surfing the Internet? Spotify lets you do this. And, best of all, it's extremely simple to transfer your songs to iPad using Spotify. This isn't the case with iTunes.

Netflix: One of the selling points of the iPad is that you can watch movies and TV shows on it. And no service is better for this than is Netflix. Yes, you'll have to pay a monthly subscription fee, but once you do, you'll have access to thousands of movies and TV shows on your iPad. The only problem? It can take a while for some of the better new releases to hit Netflix's streaming service.

Read more at The Wirecutter: <http://kbit.co/20-ipad-starter-apps>

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