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In This Issue

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

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In this day and age we are faced with a non-stop parade of new technology, smart phones, software, computers, and so on. Each time something new comes along, we often face indecision and temptation. Should I stay with my current device or go with something new? Is it time to trade up to a smart phone when the flip phone is working fine? Would this device make me look cool and cutting edge? Can I still sell people on the idea that my 8 track is retro?

But there comes a point, beyond the, "won't I look important because I am talking to this piece of plastic sticking out of my ear while reading the Wall Street Journal," where logic and pragmatism should set in. You can get so wrapped up in the look cool, don't care if I look cool, maybe I'll wait for the next version, why change, thoughts swimming around in your head that you might never take a few minutes to learn about the true benefits or detriments of something new.

So where do you turn when you are evaluating the practicality of a new piece of technology? Consumer Reports is a good place for general, mostly unbiased information. Along with the ratings, they typically provide feature explanations so you know what things like 4G or HDMI mean, and whether those features are useful or useless. Their coverage is not as in-depth on a specific item as technology-oriented publications; nonetheless some of their information is news-breaking, like when they were first

to disclose the iPhone antenna problem. For more in-depth information CNet and PCWorld are two good sources that rate products and provide detailed, device-specific articles. CNet was a great help when looking for a cover for my tablet PC, offering descriptions, pictures, links to the manufacturers sites, videos, etc.

And the last source, that is available to our clients, is us, the TechSolutions' techs. Techs and new technology are like kids with a new pool in July, just try and keep them away from it. Often we are reading about new technology prior to its release and testing beta versions, like we have been with Windows 8. It is not uncommon for one of our techs to show up at work with some new gadget they are beaming about. A few minute conversation with one of our techs and you can get the straight, first-hand scoop on things like Kindle Fires, Galaxy S III phones and even BuckyBalls. Yes BuckyBalls, the magnetic bb's you can make into infinite shapes. After receiving them as gifts from TechSolutions management, our techs have become BuckyBall whizzes as evidenced by the diverse structures gracing their desks.

Along the TechSolutions line of information, our Facebook page (Facebook.TechSolutionsInc.com), Twitter posts (Twitter.TechSolutionsInc.com) and TechSolutions blog (Blog.TechSolutionsInc.com) are a great source of wide ranging tech information including numerous posts on new technology, gadgets to enhance your current technology and even how to make things like solar phone chargers. And as a reward for those who have slogged through this article so far, go to our Facebook page and Like us and/or Twitter page and Follow us and we will enter your name in a drawing for a $50 gift card, plus we'll send you a stylish TechSolutions mug.

Research or not, sometimes you don't even realize the full benefits of a decision until after it is made. A couple of years ago, due primarily to my wife's insistence and with little research, I hesitantly made the jump from flip phone to smart phone. Yes I thought the smartphone was impressive, however from a practical standpoint, I didn't see why I needed it. After switching though, I soon realized this was no phone, but instead, an electronic Swiss Army knife. Besides the convenience of quickly checking my email without having to fire up my computer a couple of times a day, it also has internet access which has proven invaluable for searches on-the-go, a flashlight I have used numerous times, an top-notch still and video camera, a navigation device (goodbye GPS) and thousands if not millions of apps that do countless useful and entertaining things, just to name some of many helpful features.

The constant flood of new contraptions is never ending as is the question: Should I stay or should I go? Cool and hip are part of the equation, however some quick research will help you determine the answer.

Now if I could just reconcile with my brain that the $1200 washer we just purchased washes $700 better than the $500 washer I wanted to purchase.

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What Does Your Web Browser Say About Your Personality?

We all browse the web today. But we don't all use
the same browser. There are plenty of choices out

there — everything from the traditional Explorer to Firefox, Opera and Chrome. But what does your choice of browser say about you? Plenty, according to a popular online quiz on Blogthings.com.

Jumping on the Latest Trends?

For instance, if you use Chrome, you're willing to jump onto the latest trend, according to Blogthings. And you're willing to do this even if all the details of these trends haven't yet been nailed down. Chrome users, the website says, are also never satisfied with the status quo and are always striving for more.

But what if you use Firefox? According to Blogthings, you're untamed and willing to buck the system. What if the Blogthings quiz says you're Internet Explorer? Then you're likely to be a down-to-earth person who plays by the rules. Opera users, according to the quiz, like to chart their own course to success. These users can adapt to any situation, the site says, with grace and style.

Explorer Still Number One

Of course, Internet Explorer is still the most popular web browser out there, according to the numbers. The website W3Counter says that Explorer holds a market share of 28.8 percent in the browser world. Second is Chrome, with 26.4 percent. Firefox comes in third with a market share of 23.3 percent, while Safari pulls up fourth with 6.2 percent. Opera ranks fifth with a market share of 2.3 percent.

Searching for the Right Browsers

The Blogthings quiz is fun, but a wide range of users rely on each of these browsers. Some people use more than one browser depending upon what they are using the Internet for at any given time. Our advice? Don't just take the browser that comes with your computer. Sure, it might end up being your favorite one. But you'll never know this until you try the competitors. You might find that some smaller browser out there is the perfect fit for you.

Read more at Blogthings: http://kbit.co/browser-personality

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Be a Better Procrastinator with These Facebook Tips

Facebook is a great way to waste time. Don't want to read that business report? Why not log onto your Facebook page? Not in the mood to put the finishing touches on that PowerPoint presentation? Now's a good time to post about your upcoming family vacation to Disney.

But as good as you may be at procrastinating with Facebook, the odds are good that the following three tips — brought to us by the savvy tech writers at the *New York Times'* Gadgetwise column — can boost your time-wasting skills.

Filtering Friends

Do you have a Facebook friend that posts far too often? Maybe there's not a headline that goes by that this friend doesn't forward. Maybe this friend posts what he ate at every lunch or what she thinks about every reality show on cable TV.

You need to block this friend's posts. And you need to do it without resorting to a de-friending.

There is hope. As Gadgetwise says, Facebook lets you trim the content you receive in your news feed and filter out updates from specific sources. Find an update from a person you'd like to eliminate from your news feed and click on the arrow that pops up when you move your mouse's cursor over the top right side of the update. A menu will show on the screen. Choose "unsubscribe from status updates" for that person to block messages.

Extending Messages, Not Friendships

Here's another nifty Facebook tip: You can send messages to people without first sending them a friend request. Simply go to the Facebook page of the non-friends to which you want to send messages. Search for the "message" button on the upper-right corner of the page. People who let others send them messages without first befriending them will have this button.

Connecting Facebook Chat to Other Services

Did you know that you can connect Facebook Chat to other services? It's true. If you are a Hotmail user, you can link your Windows Live profile to Facebook. This allows you to chat with online friends directly from your mail window.

You can do the same with instant message services such as Yahoo messenger. Simply search Facebook for information on how you can connect your chat programs to the service.

Read more at Gadgetwise by [clicking here](#).

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Don't Waste Money On Antivirus Software For Your Phone

Antivirus software has taken a beating lately in the news, mostly because it has struggled to identify and contain some of the bigger malware attacks in recent months.

Antivirus Not Necessary on Smartphones?

Then there's the realization that antivirus software isn't much use to consumers who do much of their computing on smartphones. This is important, because so many consumers today read email messages, surf the Web and access social media through their smartphones. If antivirus software isn't really helping these folks, then the antivirus industry is losing out on a load of potential customers.

Patrick Lambert, a writer for the TechRepublic blog, does a good job at explaining just why consumers needn't bother with protecting their smartphones with antivirus software.

Smartphones vs. PCs

First, modern smartphones operate differently than do traditional PCs and laptops. On a smartphone, each app is provided with its own work environment and is not able to access the data contained in other apps. This is actually a nice security upgrade from the world of PCs and laptops. Malware that is just installed onto a smartphone will be able to do little harm.

So there's the first strike against traditional antivirus software: there's not as much need for it on a smartphone.

Secondly, because of the way smartphones work, antivirus software won't be able to do much to combat any malware smartphone users do pick up. That's because antivirus software won't be able to scan multiple apps to look for trouble.

Smartphone Antivirus Programs

That hasn't stopped companies from offering antivirus apps for smartphones. Lambert points to VirusBarrier, an antivirus program that smartphone users can purchase in Apple's App Store. The problem is that the program doesn't scan anything on a smartphone because it can't. Consumers, then, who want to scan email attachments have to send it to VirusBarrier from within their mail program. This is not only aggravating, it's also fairly useless.

Consumers should consider this good news. There really is no reason for them to waste their money on antivirus software for their smartphones.

Learn more at TechRepublic by clicking here.

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Avoid the Most Common PowerPoint Mistakes

PowerPoint presentations are the vacation slide shows of the business world: we've all sat through boring ones that seemed to last forever.

Fortunately, there are several tips that you can follow to avoid creating a PowerPoint presentation that bores your co-workers. This is important: You create PowerPoint presentations to spread your message, promote products and achieve results.

You can't do this if no one's paying attention to them.

Don't Forget the Creativity

As the writers at Microsoft's Business Hub say, PowerPoint doesn't give you permission to get lazy. You still have to be creative if you want to develop a winning presentation that grabs the attention of your audience.

This means that you can't let PowerPoint's ease of use trick you into thinking that you don't have to come up with compelling content. Just because you can create an endless series of text-filled slides doesn't mean that you should.

So don't. Come to your sales pitch or company meeting armed with interesting and useful information. Don't just slap some sales numbers on a series of slides. Instead, explain what these numbers mean.

Come with Solutions

You'll also want to come armed with ways in which your company's employees can improve these sales numbers.

Another fault of many PowerPoint presentations: they provide information. But they don't provide useful strategies for how employees can use that information to better the company's performance.

If your PowerPoint presentation shows that sales are down, make sure you follow up with your own suggestions on why sales have fallen and what the company can do to boost them. If sales are up? Provide information on how your company can maintain its momentum.

Don't Get Too Fancy

As TrainSignal Training says, it is possible to get too creative with PowerPoint. Many managers clutter their slides with unnecessary photos and graphics. Others stuff charts that are too small to read on their slides. Still others add moving images that do little other than distract. Don't fall into this trap. The best way to convey a business message is to do it as directly and simply as possible.

And don't simply fill your PowerPoint slides with the same words that you're going to read aloud to your audience. You're not in the first grade. Your audience doesn't want to read along while you repeat every word that's on your PowerPoint slides.

PowerPoint remains a powerful business tool. But it's one that is easy to misuse. Don't make the

mistake of creating a PowerPoint presentation that turns off your audience.

Get more useful tips at [Garr Reynolds' website](#).

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