

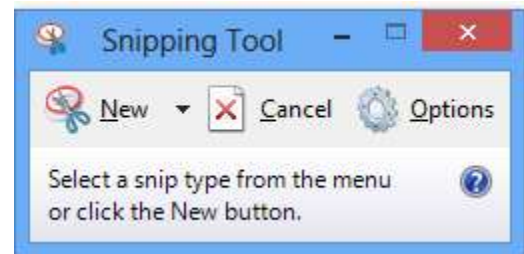
***In This Months TechPoints***

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**Let's Get Snippy**

By Dan Ayars, Marketing Coordinator, TechSolutions, Inc.

I wanted to let you know about a handy little tool that someone turned me on to. It's called the Snipping Tool and something I have come to rely on daily. Included in Windows Vista, 7 and 8, what this tool does is essentially take pictures of part, or all, of your computer screen. Web page, desktop, document, pictures, message box, whatever you see on the screen, this tool can take a picture of it.



If you'd like to check it out, click on the Start button and begin typing "snipping tool" in the search box then click **Snipping Tool** once it appears in the menu results. You'll see the Snipping Tool application start and your cursor will turn into a cross, which lets you know you are ready to snip. Now just move the cross to any corner of the area you want to capture, hold down your left mouse button, drag to the diagonally opposite corner of the area you want to capture, release the left button and voila, you've created a snip from your screen. At this point, the image you just snipped is on the Windows Clipboard and is ready to be pasted into a Word document or an email.

I use this tool all the time and feel it's far easier to use than Print Screen. I've used it to capture screen shots for articles in this newsletter, like the image above, and I have even taken a shot of my entire desktop, so if my icons become discombobulated, I can refer to the snip to accurately restore them back to their original order and location. On a couple of occasions I have experienced a worst-case scenario when the Word document I was working on suddenly froze. I couldn't click Save, I couldn't Copy/Paste and I wasn't able to work in Word at all. Fortunately I was able to use the Snipping Tool to take a snip of the document text before using Task Manager to force the Word session to end. Even though I lost the document I was able to recreate it a lot more quickly and accurately than trying to remember what I wrote and rewrite it again from scratch.

The resulting snip can only be saved as a picture file such as JPG, PNG or GIF. That means that you can't, for example, snip a Word document and then go in and edit the text in the snip. However the tool does offer a pen and highlighter, so you can use that to mark up the snip. Another useful feature is the ability to choose the type of snip you want. If you click on the New button drop down menu you'll see the following 4 types of snips:

- **Free-form Snip.** Draw any shape around an object with your finger, mouse, or tablet pen.
- **Rectangular Snip.** Drag the cursor around an object to form a rectangle. (This is the default).
- **Window Snip.** Choose a window—like a browser window or a dialog box.
- **Full-screen Snip.** Capture the entire screen.

Give the tool a try. It takes just a few minutes to figure out how to use it and I think you will find it handy in several ways. If you have problems accessing or using the Snipping Tool, just email or call and I'll gladly help you out.

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## Virtualization 101

Productivity and cost-efficiency are two key factors of a successful business. However, these factors can be compromised due to financial issues brought about by using traditional in-house server models. One option at your disposal that could help you realize better success is virtualization. The problem is, some business owners are unsure as to what virtualization actually is and when, if ever, will it be right for their business.

### What is virtualization?

Virtualization is the act of migrating physical systems into a virtual environment. In other words, it is the creation of a virtual version of a device or resource; anything from a server to an operating system. By providing a virtual view of computing resources, this allows you to turn one server into a host for a group of servers that all share the same resources.

### How is it different from other systems?

With virtualization, you can instantly access nearly limitless computing resources which allow for faster and broader business capabilities. It also gets rid of haphazard IT rooms, cables, and bulky hardware; reducing your overall IT overhead as well as management costs.

While many look at virtualization as the cloud, in reality the cloud is just a part of virtualization. The most important function of virtualization is the capability of running multiple operating systems and applications on a single computer or server. This means increased productivity achieved by fewer servers. Virtualization can usually improve overall application performance due to technology that can balance resources, and provide only what the user needs.

### When to virtualize?

Virtualization can be a solution for many businesses, but not for all. The key is to know exactly when to virtualize. Here are four situations where a business could virtualize systems:

- **Virtualize if you rely on technology** - Companies that rely on technology often use several servers and technology from hardware like laptops and networks. Basically, if your company needs technology to operate, virtualization can help you reduce the overall operation costs.
- **Virtualize if your company exceeds 20 employees** - Many tech experts agree that there is no need for virtualization if you have a business with less than 10-20 employees. With that number, traditional servers are usually more than enough to cater to your needs.
- **Virtualize if you can cover the costs** - While virtualization is meant to reduce costs, like any modern technology it requires an initial investment. The cost of virtualization can be high for smaller businesses to implement, however you do have an option of working with an IT partner like us. We can help you realize cost-savings or even a Return On Investment (ROI). For companies with servers in place, virtualization can be as simple as installing a free program.
- **Virtualize if you want space** - Certain business operators throw away a big chunk of their money on an extra room to house large server racks, wires or even IT personnel to maintain them. The issue here is the cost of maintenance, as well as limited office space. In this situation, virtualization can help make better use of space while reducing hardware costs.

There are several reasons as to why many businesses look into virtualization. Like any type of technology, it's a tradeoff between practicality and money. If you think you're ready to move your systems to a virtual world or are looking to learn more about virtualization solutions, contact us today.

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## Introducing Windows Phone 8.1

Are you looking for a Windows Phone that's intuitive, highly customizable, and a perfect fit for your business? If you answered yes, then the new Windows Phone 8.1 might be just what you're looking for. All you need to do first is learn more about what the new phone's features are and how you can personalize these to fit your business needs.

Every phone user desires a phone to reflect what they need a phone for; or how they use a phone. With this in mind, Windows Phone 8.1 was designed with customizable tools to allow users to creatively express their own individuality. Innovators in Windows even coined this, "the world's most personal Smartphone". So why is this? Let us first take a look at the screen.

### **A more personalized look.**

Customization is the word to describe your phone screen if you have Windows 8.1 OS. Windows has made the Windows Phone start screen highly customizable by providing an additional column to give way to more tiles so that more can be seen, allowing ease in navigation. These tiles are also set on top of a customizable start background where you can add your favorite image or use the default options. There is also a new app that allows you to set up screen lock themes with tons of visual and animation themes available to choose from.

### **Superior streaming experience.**

Aside from the highly customizable look of the start screen, Windows Phone 8.1 also offers an improved video and music streaming experience. Windows has added Internet Explorer 11, an upgraded browser that enhances video playback significantly. In fact, this new browser offers a playback experience like that of a desktop. It even allows for video and music playback even behind a locked screen.

### **Simplicity of navigation.**

One of the most anticipated feature of this phone OS is its new notification center. This feature allows for users to manage all alerts from different apps by simply bringing them all to one location. It also has an action center for easy access to settings.

### **Your own personal assistant.**

What truly makes this OS a standout is Cortana. This voice assistant competes against Siri and Google Now. This feature is more than just a voice assistant; it can get to know your personal inclinations and update you regarding news and weather based on your location and preferences. Cortana behaves like a personal assistant by getting to know you the first time you interact with the feature and building a relationship by asking questions. Over time, Cortana will draw on the answers you provide and base actions on your pretenses provided by you. Basically, Cortana detects what you care about, looks out for relevant information and even manages the phone volume so you can focus on whatever it is you are doing.

The Windows Phone 8.1 Operating System will be undoubtedly snapped up by smartphone users. This particular OS is available in Lumia 630, Lumia 635, and Lumia 930; it is also compatible to existing Windows Phone 8 OS users.

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## Home, Smart Home - With Wireless Technology

([NewsUSA](#)) - How smart is your home? You can make your home smarter and safer, and make your life easier, with these five simple switch-outs that make the most of emerging home technology, courtesy of Jack Thomasson, HGTV [Smart Home](#) House Planner.



- **Entry level.** You needn't throw away your key, but save it as a backup, and install a keypad at your front door instead. The latest keypads provide not only security, but also remote access via your smartphone. You'll never again have to wonder whether you locked the door; your smartphone, tablet or other Internet device will tell you if you did, and let you lock it if you didn't. Need to open the door for someone when you're not there? Keypads allow for that option as well.
- **Perfect temperature.** Want to come home to a cozy warm or comfortably cool house? Make the switch to a WiFi-accessible thermostat, and adjust the temperature of your home remotely.
- **Guess-free garage.** With wireless technology and your smartphone, you can check the status of your garage door and open or close it as needed.
- **Who's there?** Security cameras accessible from your smartphone let your house tell you who's making a delivery. In addition to viewing camera feeds, remote home monitoring systems allow you to arm or disarm your home security system and to receive specific notification by text, email or phone in case of emergency.
- **Smart cookies.** Preheat your oven while you're still at the grocery store. Certain apps and appliances will let you adjust and monitor your oven and other appliances remotely via your smartphone. You can adjust cooking temperature and set a timer, too.

Need more ideas and inspiration for how to make your home smarter? Check out the HGTV Smart Home 2014 in Nashville, Tennessee. The English cottage-style home includes three bedrooms and 4 1/2 bathrooms, and lies in the fashionable Green Hills area of Nashville. The home's high-tech features include remote management of energy use, security, lighting and climate control.

Visit <http://www.HGTV.com/smart> (#HGTVSmart), and enter for a chance to win the home between April 15 and June 9, 2014. The HGTV Smart Home 2014 was designed by P. Shea Design and constructed by Carbine & Associates.

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