HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!

Tech Times

Solutions Unlimited, LLC
WITH THE RIGHT BLEND OF PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY
We make your IT systems run. Better.

Wake up!

3 Assumptions Often Made About Slow Computers And Why They Don't Hold Water

It's 8:15 AM and you're settled in your office chair just waiting for your computer to wake up and smell the coffee. Why does it run so slow in the morning? Could it be its age? Is it out of space? Or worse, maybe you have an infection? These are the most common assumptions people make about slow computers. Take a look at the real reason why things are sluggish.

Myth 1: My hardware is old so it's just wearing out. The whole idea that a computer's performance suffers because the hardware is just "wearing out" seems like a logical assumption, right? It definitely happens to other types of machines like lawn mowers or that pesky pump in your swimming pool. However, with computers and servers the operating system and software are the key components that weaken over time. Many issues that cause your machines to slow down are caused from everyday activities like installing programs, drivers and updates.

Truth: It's just like brushing your teeth. If you skip brushing for a week, you will feel a gruff film over your teeth made up of little pieces of things you've consumed. We definitely don't recommend this test, but you see the big picture. Your computers may retain residual clutter from your daily activities. The truth is, most hardware will run wonderfully, as well as the day it was purchased, if it is properly maintained.

Myth 2: You need as much hard drive space and RAM as possible. Most people think the more space and memory you give your computer the better. You need to have enough RAM and hard drive space to make sure the computer can keep up with all the things you do each day. Unfortunately, it doesn't really work that way.

Truth: The truth is any extra space and RAM you have, over what you actually use, is just sitting inside your computer going to waste. Remember, RAM helps the computer multitask so you can run

What's Inside

Independence

Remember that fireworks look even more *amazing* when you're not checking Facebook.

Nothing says, "Let's celebrate America!" like *playing* with explosives.

This 4th of July let's celebrate our freedom by *enjoying* the 2 hour traffic jam on the 8 mile trip to the 40 minute fireworks show.

The Story of July 4th

Each year we celebrate Independence Day on the 4th of July. Often we think of the John Adams, The American Revolution, and the birth of America as an independent nation, but it's really a little hazy.

Did you know? The American Revolution actually began in April of 1775 when British troops and colonial militiamen in Lexington and Concord began armed conflicts from growing tension. By the following year the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia and decided to put together a Continental Army with George Washington as their commander in chief.

June 17 was the first official battle. Colonials pressed through the British regiment led by General Howe at the Battle of Bunker Hill. While this battle ultimately ended in loss, it spread hope and encouragement to the revolutionaries. By June

401 E. Kennedy Street, Suite B6

Spartanburg, SC 29302

(864) 599-8678

SolutionsUnlimitedSC.com

5 Assumptions You Make...

multiple programs simultaneously and hard drive space is just for storage. Increasing your RAM or hard drive may not speed things up at all. If you are able to run the programs you need without anything stalling or closing on its own you probably have enough RAM. If you use a file server or cloud environment to store your data, you're probably fine on hard drive space too. Upgrades can be costly. Make sure you know what the problem is before you sink a bundle of cash into a solution that won't help.

Myth 3: When a computer slows down it's because of an infection. Does your computer take its time in the morning? So much time that you want to throw a Red Bull in the computer case to give it a jolt? What about your Internet browser? Does it take its time starting-up? Do you find yourself waiting patiently humming the Jeopardy song in your head while your computer joins your workday? It's got to be infected somehow to go so slow, right?

Truth: Sure, it's possible that your computer is infected or even your whole network, however it's more likely that your computer is just bogged down. Perhaps you have too many programs running when you start-up your computer or maybe a boat load of unnecessary add-ons kick-off when you open your Internet browser. Don't worry, these are easy inexpensive fixes.

Invest in the overall health of your equipment to keep things running smoothly. Your computer and network need ongoing attention just like your teeth. Just like brushing daily, look for an IT provider to proactively maintenance, monitor, and offer live support to keep your equipment in tip-top shape.

There are a lot of maintenance myths out there. Worried about the slowness of your computer or network? Give us a call. We will perform a full Network Audit to ensure your business is running at peak performance.
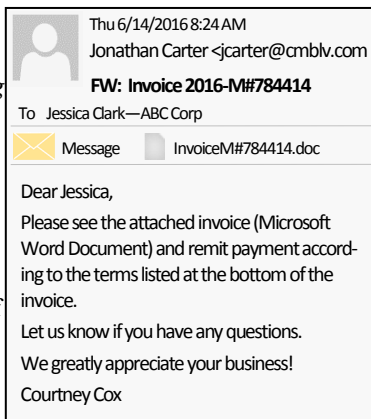
Solutions Unlimited
(864) 599-8678

Backup What?

Have you ever stopped to consider exactly what you're backing up?

We can all agree backups are really important. Everyone always says, "Make sure you're backing up your computer." But, what does that really mean? What do you need?

What's a full back-up? Truthfully, there are no set rules that apply for everyone. However, the most important items are generally documents, pictures, videos, e-mail, virtual machines, databases, and standard application settings.

What you really don't need. Windows and standard program files are not a necessity. Realistically, if your computer is on its last leg we're going to reinstall your applications. So, the whole thing will be wiped out anyway.

Test your backups regularly. Always test your backups to ensure your files are complete and accurate.

Are Codecs Safe?

There was once a time when you had to use a Codec to watch videos online. Little programs like RealPlayer or QuickTime were vehicles for online viewing, but not anymore.

What's a Codec? Codecs are programs that compress data to transmit the data faster and then decompress the information when it is received. Sounds like a mouth full, right? They are actually just encoding and decoding data for you to view.

Codecs are really just a thing of the past. Advancements in website code over the last decade allow developers to play videos in your browsers without any additional programs. Occasionally, you will find websites that require Java or Microsoft's Silverlight, but you don't normally need to install codecs to watch videos online.

Dangerous Codec downloads online. If you happen to find a website or video in social media that asks to install a Codec, don't do it! It could be a nasty little trick. Clever thieves use these types of downloads to infect your computer with viruses, spyware, or even malware. *Stay safe online.* Always be on the lookout for strange looking downloads.

Locky, A New Variant Of Ransomware

A new Cryptolocker-type ransomware virus is spreading at an alarming rate. Locky encrypts users' files and asks for bitcoin payments to decrypt them.

'Locky' discovery. Security researchers at Phishme, a leading provider of threat management solutions, found Locky ransomware when they identified a number of large sets of e-mails delivering Word documents that contained macro scripts.

How it spreads. Targets receive a phishing e-mail that looks like a message from a vendor containing an invoice (sample above). Recipients are led to believe that the document is a harmless invoice requiring some sort of payment. However, when they opened the Word document, it requests permission to run a macro. Many

> Thu 6/14/2016 8:24 AM
> Jonathan Carter <jcarter@cmblv.com>
> **FW: Invoice 2016-M#784414**
> To   Jessica Clark—ABC Corp
>
> ✉ Message   📄 InvoiceM#784414.doc
>
> Dear Jessica,
> Please see the attached invoice (Microsoft Word Document) and remit payment according to the terms listed at the bottom of the invoice.
> Let us know if you have any questions.
> We greatly appreciate your business!
> Courtney Cox

victims allowed it, and the macro installs Locky. This vicious malware encrypts the files on the computer and adds a .locky file extension that cannot be unlocked without a bitcoin payment.

How you can fight Locky. The best defense is to have a good backup of all your important files that includes storing backup files in an offline or off-site environment that cannot be reached by infection. That way, if you do have to face any type of ransomware, you can reinstall your data quickly on another computer and get back to work.

Awareness is half the battle. Advise your family, friends and co-workers about this new threat and avoid suspicious e-mails completely.

Page 2

Why Antivirus Can't Always Protect You

You have an antivirus program and you've sunk a pretty penny into security, so why are you still fighting infections? Antivirus can't always protect you.

Antivirus protection misconceptions. Most people think that antivirus is the best safety net for infections. Unfortunately, it isn't perfect. Nothing can function with 100% accuracy all of the time, but many of us blindly believe that antivirus software is the only security method they need to keep their computers and networks safe.

Scary truths about antivirus programs. Antivirus software is a helpful line of defense on your computer, but it really isn't something you should rely on completely. Symantec, a global leader in cyber security, even says that antivirus software fails to stop most cyberattacks.

What does this mean for you? Don't worry the sky isn't falling just yet. Don't abandon antivirus completely, but use it as a last line of defense behind other security measures for your business.

Create a cybersecurity plan for your business. As your company grows, you're becoming a larger target for cybercriminals. Thank god you don't need to be cybersecurity expert to ensure your company is protected. Start with these easy steps to safeguard your organization:

- *Assess your risks.* What holes could let attackers in? Do you have mobile devices connecting to your network? Is your Wi-Fi left open for the public? Put tools in place to secure your network and monitor activity.

- *Implement a plan for security.* Obtain a full network assessment to help you build a plan to mitigate your greatest risks. Your plan should include preventative measures and resolutions for issues that may arise.

- *Train your greatest asset, your employees.* The best investment you can make in security isn't some expensive piece of equipment. It's training your people. Talk to your employees about keeping their computers running smoothing, changing their passwords regularly and backing up their work.

Make security a priority. Make sure everyone knows that one little antivirus program won't save them. Security is everyone's responsibility every day.

The Story...

of 1776 the Revolutionary War was in full swing and American forces were gaining more support than ever from colonists.

The Declaration of Independence Many people thought John Adams, the most outspoken in the bunch of five committee members working on the document, wrote the Declaration. However, Thomas Jefferson was actually the best writer out of them all. Jefferson was an avid reader and used his knowledge to work for over two weeks on drafts for the Declaration before bringing it to congress.

What really happened on July 4th? What most people don't know is the Declaration was actually presented on the 2nd of July and final edits from Congress were made from the initial submission through the 4th of July. Late in the day on July 4th, John Hancock, president of Congress, signed the final form. The Declaration of Independence was finally "legal and binding" July 4th, 1976.

Celebrating 240 years of independence. The Declaration proclaimed separation from Great Britain and basic rights for everyone in our great nation. *Happy Birthday U.S.A!*

Give A Tech A High-Five!

You know those guys that are always crawling under your desk to fix your computer? There's even a holiday for them. So, take some time Friday, July 29th to give a tech a high-five for Systems Administrator Appreciation Day.

SysAdmin Appreciation, was created to show a little love for those who work hard to keep your company's equipment running smoothly. While their jobs are much like that of a super hero, preventing mayhem, monitoring networks for evil doers, and cleaning up messes created from reckless programs that chew up your network, they don't often receive recognition for their work.

A little gratitude goes a long way. Don't be shy, give a tech a high-five followed by a sincere "Thank you" just to show how much you appreciate their hard work.

"I hope you learned something from last year, son. The one on my back doesn't get lit until the finale."

"We make all of your computer problems go away without adding additional full-time I.T. staff!"

Ask about our fixed price service agreements — Computer support

Inquiring Minds...

Tech Humor You'll Love.   We combed through the funniest tech support stories we could find this month to bring you a little light humor. So, from our desk to yours — take a breather and enjoy a chuckle:

- *Client:* Hey, can you help me? My computer has locked up again and no matter how many times I type eleven, it won't unfreeze.
  Tech support guy: Um, what do you mean, "type eleven?"
  Client: The message on my computer screen says, " Error Type 11!" What do I do now?

- *Client:* I need to schedule and on-site appointment right away. I have a dead mouse in the server room.
  Tech support guy 1: Sure, how is 3pm today?
  Client: We'll be here. Thanks.
  Tech support guy 1: (Set up the appointment and sent tech support guy 2 on-site with a few mice knowing there are a few different connectors at that client's location.)

  Tech support guy 2: (Calls support guy 1) Hey, did you know there is really a dead mouse in the server room?
  Tech support guy 1: Yea, that's why you're there.
  Tech support guy 2: Oh, ok. That pesky rodent managed to wiggle into the server enclosure and got caught in the wires.

- A new prospect calls in and says she is having issues with her Mac. When asked what kind of Mac she has… she replied "Intosh."

Equip Your Company With Knowledge.   The best way to keep your company safe is to raise awareness for your biggest threats. Inform your employees about all your concerns for your company's security. Give them the best tool they can use to help identify and avoid risks, knowledge.

Security is everyone's job.   We are all shaped by the choices we make and our networks are too. One fantastic defense that won't even cost you a dime is to spread awareness throughout your organization. Keep your employees informed about keeping their computers clean, reporting errors, and how to identify threats.

A good rule of thumb.   Create and share a standard security policy with your employees. Make sure everyone understands how their activities online can cause losses for your organization. Share best practices like using strong passwords and being mindful about mysterious e-mails. Employees should know the basics like "When in doubt, throw it out" and "Unknown outside programs can open security vulnerabilities." Ask them to be watchful and encourage them to report strange happenings immediately. Let them know your business depends on their capable hands to safeguard sensitive data and protect your company resources.

Knowledge is power!

401 E. Kennedy Street, Suite B6

Spartanburg, SC 29302

(864) 599-8678

SolutionsUnlimitedSC.com

Backup with Ease!

93% of business are forced to close their doors after suffering a significant data loss.

Backup your core business data in an off-site location to keep your information safe. We offer fast, secure, automatic off-site backup solutions, storage, and retrieval designed to meet your specific company needs. We will assess your data needs, create a backup solution, schedule regular backups, and monitor them so you can rest assured your data is safe.
Call today for your FREE Assessment. Don't become a horrible statistic.

Solutions Unlimited ● (864) 599-8678