

Happy New Year 2017

January 2017

# Tech Times

## Solutions Unlimited

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



## 3 Flexible IT Solutions That Grow With You

With the new year upon us, we are all thinking about resolutions to keep ourselves on track. Exercising more is generally one of the most adopted resolutions out there. You don't have to do a downward dog or plank to be more flexible though. See how you can put a few new solutions in place to keep your company flexible with new growth.

### Growth can be overwhelming.

Have you ever tried yoga? Even though it seems like just a bit of stretching, endurance trained athletes often find it difficult. Yoga actually focuses on a wide range of body motions unlike many sports activities that only force you to use specific muscle groups. All the poses in yoga push you into positions that you're not use to. These positions challenge your movement, balance, and breathing encouraging you to bring your mind and body together into one exercise. Growing your skills can be taxing so give yourself time to learn the positions, build strength and become more flexible.

**Growing your business is just as challenging as starting a new yoga routine.** If your company grows too quickly, it can cause undue stress on your network. A sudden increase in sales can



cause strain on your organization or even inhibit your ability to maneuver. Here are three flexible IT solutions that will help you implement the right tools for growth so you can build strength and flexibility for the future.

### 1. Implement a managed service agreement.

Many small to mid-size organizations do not employ a full-time IT person due to budget concerns or lack of full-time work. However, this doesn't release the business from their need for security, back-up, threat management, and IT support. A managed service agreement is a great way to outsource your IT needs to a proactive management company. Generally these Managed Service Providers (MSP's like us) offer monthly service programs that attend to all your IT needs for one fixed rate. This type of agree-

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## Solutions Unlimited, LLC

401 E. Kennedy Street, Ste. B6  
Spartanburg, SC 29302

(864) 599-8678

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## Success

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."  
~ Eleanor Roosevelt

"Nothing is impossible, the word itself says I'm Possible!"  
~ Audrey Hepburn

"If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or objects."  
~ Albert Einstein

"Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties."  
~ Helen Keller

## How To Keep Your 2017 Resolutions

*Making a resolution is easy, it's keeping them that is truly hard work. Here are a few proven steps to keep you on track this year.*

**Make resolutions that truly matter.** Making a resolution that actually matters to you and adds to your quality of life will help you keep an eye on the prize. Resolve to add things that you can actually do, want to do and can do.

**Roughly 80% don't succeed.** Give your self room to breathe. Plan properly to achieve your goals. Be ready to tackle your new resolution and don't be afraid to adjust your goal if necessary. Life will always throw a curve ball. Expect it and move gracefully over each hurdle.

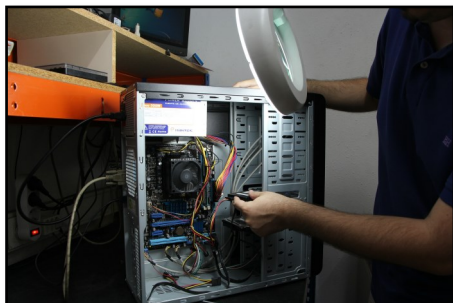
**Backup planning.** Create a back-up plan. We often change direction in life. Your resolution at the turn of the year may not be applicable come April. Develop a few resolutions so you

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## 3 Flexible IT Solutions...

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ment will give you the resources you need to properly maintain everything on your network efficiently.



The major benefits are 24-hour monitoring, minimized downtime, reduced overall costs, and regular maintenance. This proactive approach also gives your company flexibility with growth and a

heads up when there are hurdles ahead.

### 2. Plan ahead for hardware and software replacements.

What happens when your computers or server need to be replaced? Do you just buy as you go? Do you know what expenses are creeping up on you for 2017? Reacting when hardware fails can stall your business functions and may even cause data loss. Put a plan in place to replace aging computers and

servers before they disable your business.

3. **Implement scalable and reliable communication solutions.** Sound communications are key for smooth operations. There is nothing like trying to get through to a company and your calls are dropped, your e-mails are returned, or there is just no one replying to any type of message. Create an environment where your clients feel like they are calling a friend when they reach out to your business. Make sure your communication systems including phone, e-mail and social media are always accessible and can grow with your company.

### Give your company time to adapt.

Growing is difficult. Just as your body will need time to adjust to your new yoga class, your team will require some ramp up time to become more efficient with your new tools and resources. Any one of these three flexible IT solutions won't resolve everything in an instant. There will always be a strenuous period of a few months where your business is settling into the arms of a new Managed Service Provider (MSP) or a time when three old computers fail all at once and they weren't staged for replacement for a few more months. Expect the unexpected and be patient with yourself. These things happen.

### Flexibility gives you a competitive edge.

Just remember, organizations of all sizes struggle to keep a competitive edge over their competition. The more flexible and scalable your company is the easier it will be for you to capture market shares as your industry evolves. Keep the cost of your IT solutions under control with proactive tools like an MSP agreement, a replacement plan and reliable communication solution.

**Worried about growth in 2017?** Give us a call. We can help you increase efficiencies, reduce costs and minimize interruptions for your business.

## Tech Trends For 2017

*Every year we are blown away by new technology introduced by manufacturers. So, what is on the horizon for the new year?*

**AR and VR.** There have already been massive strides to bring augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) to the consumer market. Pokémon Go is a good example of an AR game that has taken the world by storm. In the coming year, we will see things like this really take off.

### Machine learning.

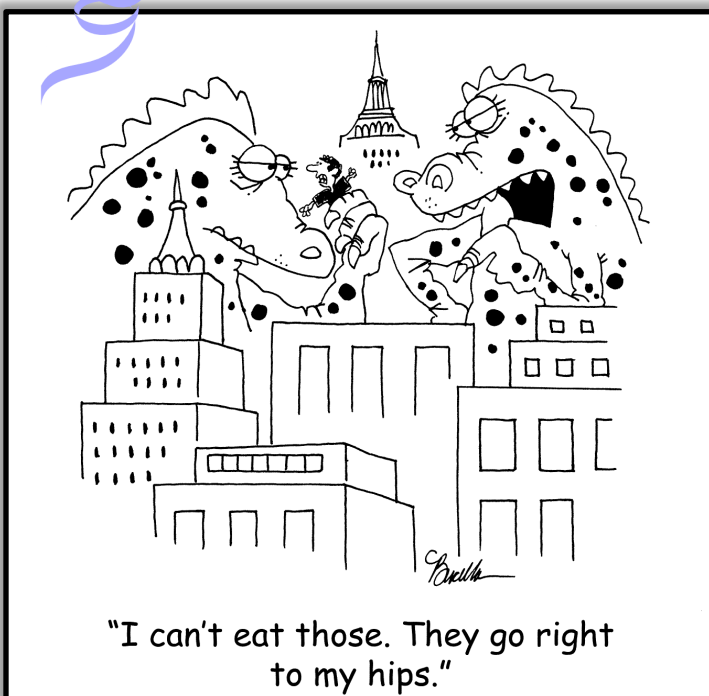
Throughout the year, we will see more machines learning from the data they collect like Google's core algorithm. This type of technology will improve the user experience of an analytics application.

### Everything will be on-demand.

No, not on television but similar. Things you want will become available as needed through thousands of applications. Everything from rides and food deliveries to office supplies and services will be at your finger tips.

### Automation for previously human exclusive tasks.

Soon, many standard operations will turn into automated functions. Productivity will skyrocket raising the bar for many white-collar workers.



## How To Keep Resolutions...

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can refocus on something new if necessary.

### Accountability.

Share your resolutions with your friends and family. This small step will help keep you accountable for reaching your goals.

### How do you eat an elephant?

Sometimes resolutions seem insurmountable. We have such high expectations of ourselves that it's hard to imagine completing our resolution. So, take small steps to devour the elephant one bite at a time.

### Give yourself the wins.

Keep yourself motivated with small awards for achieving each step. If your exercising more, treat yourself to new running shoes when you're up to 10 miles each week.

### Track your progress so you can see the finish line.

It's difficult to stay motivated when there is no end in sight. Track your resolution in a noticeable place. Put a chart or list on the fridge of your next steps and end result.

**Stick to it!** Whatever you do, DON'T GIVE UP! Resolutions are a great way to improve your life.

Happy New Year!

## Does Antivirus Software Still Work?

*Have you been Cryptod? Experienced an oddball infection lately? You're probably thinking, "I have antivirus software, why isn't it working?" Here are a few reasons why it just isn't enough and what you can do.*

**Malware mayhem.** Even some of the largest antivirus software vendors in the world are truly giving up the fight against nasty malware. The classic ways of preventing these malicious attacks are just ineffective these days. So, what can you do to make sure your company information is kept safe?

### Put a network security policy in place.

Network security is everyone's responsibility. However, leaving your organization wide open for every person may leave you with too many exposure points to track. A network security policy will help you tie up loose ends. The main components include company policies about computer usage like locking your computer and changing passwords, a clear separation of duties, and specified privileges that lock down items that are not a part of an employee's regular job functions.

### Filter every e-mail for spam and malware.

A good e-mail filtering system will significantly reduce the amount of e-mail coming in that can bog down your network and cause infection. Most filters now come with link reputation-checkers that review the validity of the included

links in an e-mail to ensure they have not been reported as malicious.

### Keep your computers updated.

Of course, keeping your computers and server up-to-date is one of the most overlooked and most important ways to fight infections. Patches and software updates resolve problems with the software filling any loopholes that could expose your organization. They also attend to newly arising security threats. While you will not see a noticeable change with the software itself, these patches and updates help the software keep out nasty attackers.

### Get a full security assessment,

sometimes referred to as a vulnerability scan. It's virtually impossible to know exactly what actions you should take without running a full scan of your entire network. Draft an expert to review your systems. Generally, these vulnerability scans take very little time, but give you a plethora of information about how to properly secure your systems. Annual reviews will ensure your IT investments are truly protecting your company from harm.

### Need help?

Give us a call today. We offer a FREE 27-Point Security Assessment that will give you a baseline to jump from when exploring new security options for your organization.

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## 4 Easy Steps To Secure Your Smartphone

*There are over 6.5 billion active cell phone subscriptions around the world. It's not surprising that smartphones have become a new target for hackers. Here are a few easy steps to help you keep your phone secure.*

**1. Review applications before you download.** Some apps could seriously compromise your privacy. Be sure to review the app's rating, read the user reviews and only download from reputable sources.

**2. Set a password on your phone.** While this seems elementary, it is often

overlooked and can leave your phone open to intrusion. Without a password, Spyware can be downloaded to your phone without your knowledge and all your activities, calls, texts can be tracked.

**3. Watch out for suspicious links.** Links with infections sent in e-mail, SMS or found on social networking sites can impact your phone.

**4. Unsecured Wi-Fi hotspots.** Be cautious about what you do on unsecured connections. Stay away from banking and private e-mails.





***“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...

**What Is A Zero-Day Vulnerability?** You may have heard about the increasing number of zero-day vulnerabilities over the past year in the media. But, what does it mean for your business? A zero-day vulnerability refers to a hole in a piece of software that has not been discovered yet by the actual software vendor.

**Why is this important?** An increase of these zero-day vulnerabilities means that software in general is not as secure as it should be. These holes in the software offer a great entry for hackers to exploit. When the vulnerability is finally discovered, the software vendor will rush to fix it and offer patches to plug the hole. These flaws can be very dangerous for your business as they leave a backdoor open for attacks.

**What can you do to fight a good fight?** Keep all your equipment updated. Make sure to install regular updates and patches from vendors. This will help you prevent intrusions. If you aren't sure if your computers, server or firewall are up-to-date, give us a call. We are happy to help.

**A Little Stormy IT Humor.** A lady calls in frustrated as anyone could be. I mean a full level 10 of anger. There she was just plugging right along and bam, her computer stopped working. Here's what happened.

\* Lady calls for IT support. Tech says, “Good afternoon, my name is Jon, how may I assist you today?”

\* Obviously frustrated, the lady states, “Yes. Well, I am having issues with my computer. I was just typing right along, and all of a sudden the darn thing just went away!”

\* “Went away?” the tech said puzzled. He walked her through chasing the cables behind the monitor back to the power source and to the computer to ensure nothing was unplugged when she began to become extremely aggravated.

\* “I cannot see all the cables! How is this helping?” she said.

\* “Well, we need to make sure there is power so we can trouble-shoot the issues. Did your monitor turn on?” said the tech.

\* “I just don't understand, I cannot see the cables because of how dark it is and I cannot get this darn computer working. Isn't there anything else you can do?” the lady said.

\* “Why is it dark? Can you turn on a light so you can see better?” the tech said. “Well, of course not, there is a power outage!”



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## A Security Resolution

The New Year is here and there is no time to waste. Technology is not perfect; inevitably vulnerabilities will creep up on you. The key is to stay abreast of threats your company can't always see.

Many intrusions happen because it is too easy to miss critical updates and patches.

Call today for your **FREE 27-Point Security Assessment**. We will provide you with details about the current state of your network and a full list of recommendations to help refocus your defenses and protect your business in the coming year.

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