

Happy Earth Day!

April 2015



# Tech Times

**Solutions Unlimited, LLC**



## Stumped About Network Security?

*Feeling overwhelmed by the potential risks your business faces every day? The truth is, the size of your business has little to do with your vulnerability to network attacks. Review these tips to secure your network without breaking the bank.*

**Use strong passwords for everything.** We've all heard it time and time again. Use strong passwords to protect all of your machines, devices, and accounts. Strong passwords are those with eight or more characters, they don't contain real words or common words for your company, they have at least one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter, one number, and one symbol or character. Strong passwords help you lock down your devices and accounts from intruders.

**Build up security all around your business.** Get a firewall and give it a strong password. Putting a firewall in place acts as a fence surrounding your business with a secure outer shell. It only offers openings like gates where necessary for the information you need and use. For example, if you have an e-mail server, there should only be openings on proper ports to allow your messages to go out

and come in, just like a gate. A firewall controls this flow of information with specific open one-way ports to keep your company information safe.

**Update your software programs, computers, servers, and firewalls.** Updates are really important for several reasons. Developers are always bettering their products and often release patches to solve known problems with software or to close security holes. Updates can also address new cyberattacks looming online that may impact the security of your program or device. Remember, your firewall is no exception. Regular updates for your programs and devices help your company cope with new developing threats.

(Continued on page 2)



## 5 Ways To Join In Earth Day

*Earth Day is coming up on April 22nd and this is a very special year. EarthDay.org is celebrating 45 exciting years of environmental history. Here are five ways you can get involved.*

**1. Create Green Teams at your office.** You don't have to be an environmentalist to participate. Earth Day is perfect for everyone in your office. Green Teams are groups of individuals who work together to support Earth Day. Companies can encourage Green Teams by awarding and recognizing their achievements.

**2. Plant a tree or wildflowers together!** Tree and wildflower planting have long been staples for Earth Day celebrations. While planting may seem like a small act, the new plants help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, clean pollution, secure soil to prevent erosion and provide homes for biodiversity.

(Continued on page 3)

## What's Inside...

- ◆ Sunjack's Solar Charger .....pg 2
- ◆ Windows 8.1 Quick Tricks.....pg 2
- ◆ How A Little Dirt Can Hurt .....pg 3
- ◆ Net Neutrality...pg 3
- ◆ New Directions In Technology .....pg 4
- ◆ DNS Basics ....pg 4
- ◆ FREE Network Assessment.....pg 4

## Did You Know?

- There are really two Earth Day observances? The March Equinox and April 22nd.
- Often confused... Earth Day celebrates conservation efforts and green living while Earth Hour is a World Wildlife Fund effort to spur responsibility towards a sustainable future.
- Earth Day organized by Senator Gaylord Nelson in 1970.



**401 E. Kennedy Street, B6  
Spartanburg, SC 29302  
(864) 599-8678  
suisc.com**

## Stumped About Network Security...

(Continued from page 1)

**Watch yourself and scan often.** Yep! Make sure you are watching the traffic on your network 24/7/365. Scan your entire business to see what's really going on inside. This is a great line of defense against network attacks. Just like the saying "Think like a hacker, defend like a ninja." Scanning your network regularly for vulnerabilities will give you the upper hand identifying loopholes your business needs to address to stay safe.

**Use VLANs.** Virtual Local Area Networks are fancy tools that allow you to direct traffic within your network. Think about it, your receptionist doesn't really need to see your company financial documents like tax filings or insurance information. So, why leave everything open for everyone? VLANs give you the ability to assign permissions to your network users. Each person has their own login to view the necessary compartments of information they need to complete their job. No more open access for all to see. The best part,

most businesses already have this capability as it is included with many routers.

**Don't miss a backup!** This may be the most important piece of information in this entire article. While many people think network security is all about not letting everyone in, it is also about recovering when something goes wrong. Regular off-site backups are essential for a speedy recovery.

**Can your business survive with only 70% of it's data? What about 20%?** Things like cyber attacks, natural disasters or even theft can demolish your business. Keeping your network secure not only means from the inside out, but also from the outside in.

**Questions about security?** Give us a call today. We will come to you and conduct a full FREE Network Security Audit to ensure every inch of your company is covered.

**Solutions Unlimited, LLC**

**(864) 599-8678**

## Sunjack's Solar Charger

*Harness the power of the sun to juice up your gadgets. Sunjack now offers solutions that charges your cellphone or a tablet with renewable energy.*

**Charge it!** On the go this spring? Don't miss a beat at the office while you're away on that camping trip. The Sunjack 14 Watt Solar Charger + 8000mAh battery pack with USB ports is all you need when your truly disconnected.

**Layout the mat and juice up your devices.** This clever charging matt offers ongoing charging abilities in direct sunlight and up to 5 hours of charge even without the sun. Its slim foldable design allows you to slip it right into a backpack or shoulder bag for fantastic portability too.

## Windows 8.1 Quick Tricks

*Struggling with Windows 8.1? Feel like the menus are useless? Learn to set up the applications for a more efficient interface.*

**Go to my desktop!** If you hate logging into your computer and seeing the application screen, change it. Right Click on the toolbar at the bottom of your desktop, click Properties, then select the Navigation tab. From there you can change your Start Screen options to something more useful.

**Change your defaults.** Want to stop those weird tablet-esque apps from opening your images? Send your mouse to the bottom right of your screen click the cog image for Settings on the right, click Change PC Settings and search for Apps. Then you will be able to see all your default applications to the programs you love.

**Organize your apps.** Sick of seeing a bunch of apps you don't use when you hit the Start button? Go to your Start Menu and click the downward facing arrow in the bottom left corner. From there you can click on the box next to Apps at the top and choose to order your apps by how often you use them. This will help you access what you need most often quickly.



## 5 Ways To Join...

(Continued from page 1)

Look for local opportunities to participate in a planting event and drag your coworkers, friends and family along for the day. Check your local news outlets or earth-day.org for public events.

**3. Buy Earth friendly products.** Are you purchasing new computers or printers for your office? Ready to renovate a section of your building for further use? If you said yes, look into Earth friendly options. There many options for energy efficient lighting, doors, computers, and even printers.

**4. Recycle for charity.** Some businesses find this time of year the perfect time to reach out to the community with a recycling campaign. Many items can be collected like batteries, electronics, paper and plastic. Visit Earth911.com for recycle locations near you.

**5. Educate.** If tree planting and recycling aren't for you, try reaching out to your community. There are opportunities to educate children and share Earth Day related materials with those around you at local schools and community centers.

## How A Little Dirt Could Definitely Hurt Your PC!

*Mother's always say, "A little dirt won't hurt." Oh, how they are wrong when it comes to computers. Take some time this month for a little Spring cleaning, on your computer.*

**Your computer's immune system is low** when the insides are suffering with dust and debris. Here's what you'll need:

- Compressed air can
- Microfiber cloths
- Q-tips
- Rubbing alcohol
- White vinegar
- Distilled water



**Start with the outside.** Don't be afraid, turn off your computer and disconnect all of the cables on the back (just make sure to take a picture of them if you won't remember where they go). Then mix a few tablespoons of vinegar with warm water and use a cloth with the mixture to wipe down the case on your tower, monitor, printers, scanners, monitors, even your desk. This solution will clean away sticky messes, dust, dirt and germs sanitizing your entire workstation.

**Blow away the dust.** Use your compressed air to blow around the keys on

your keyboard and wipe the surfaces of the keys down with the vinegar solution.

### On to the insides of your computer.

Take the case off of your computer tower. Generally, there are only a few screws on the back side where everything plugs in. Be careful, some cases slide off and others slide and lift off. Hold your compressed air upright to avoid the inner solution leaking onto your equipment, then blow out the dust from the inside of your computer.

**Filter fun.** If your computer has filters around the fans, remove them carefully and gently rinse them in a sink. Then use your Q-tips and alcohol to wipe away any added debris on your motherboard and fans. Alcohol and Q-tips can also be handy when cleaning out the backside of your optical mouse.

**Warnings.** Remember, computers are electronics that can be easily damaged. Use a portable battery operated vacuum if you want to suck up the dirt. Avoid using harsh chemicals to sanitize as they can damage computer screens and dry out the surfaces of your equipment. Never spray anything into your computer or directly onto your monitors and scanners. This can cause the solution to drip into the workings of your equipment and damage them.

## Trivia For CA\$H!

Before computers were affordable and conservation was cool, there lived another kind of green machine.

### Question:

What was the world's first GREEN Machine?

Here's a hint, it was all the rage in 1978.

Give us a call today with your best guess and you'll be entered in our drawing for \$50.00!

You should know:

## Net Neutrality?

Net neutrality is the concept of a completely open Internet. The FCC recently approved the Open Internet Order that pushes Internet Service Providers (ISP's) to be neutral gateways instead of manipulating Internet traffic for their benefit. This will stop ISP's from taking extra money from giant companies and then allocating more speed to those specific accounts or blocking accounts they don't want to promote.

Now it's all fair on the Internet. ISP's are being forced to give all traffic the same love so we will be able to find what we want online. Want to learn more? Search for "Net Neutrality".



***“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 at a flat monthly fee you can budget for, just like payroll!**

## Inquiring Minds...

**New Directions In Technology.** The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) of 2015 showed the world how technology is changing for the coming year.

**Wearables are exploding in the marketplace.** Wearable devices can be worn anywhere, like on your fingers and wrists or on your dog. Smartwatches and trackers for your wrists were hot items. One high-tech ring allows wearers to turn on and off lights with a magical wave of the hand.

**Automakers are adding more technology too.** GM's OnStar now tells when a car needs service. Nvidia's Drive PX will actually allow a car to find its own parking spot in a garage. The car can be automatically recalled to the front of the garage through a smartphone.

**Hate cords?** Dish Network's Sling TV is a streaming service for \$20 a month that will include a dozen live channels including ESPN. Google's Chromecast, not just for TVs, comes with HDMI input and streams Web video to TVs. Google has taken it up a notch this year the inclusion of Pandora too.

**DNS Basics, What? How? Why?** Domain Name Servers (DNS) are like an Internet phone book, you enter a website name and you receive a series of numbers assigned to that name. It's a maintained directory of domain names or website addresses like

earth911.com that are translated into Internet Protocol (IP) addresses like 23.239.4.218. While we use web addresses to access webpages, computers and machines reference websites based on IP addresses not pictures and words.

**How does DNS work?** When you visit a domain like www.earthday.org, your computer begins a series of steps to turn the website you requested into a readable IP address. The IP address points to all the records that make up the website you want to see. This happens every time you type in an address in your web browser.

**Why do we need DNS?** DNS house a variety of records like: A Records, MX Records, NS Records, Pointer Records, and Canonical Name Records. I know this is a bit of geek talk, but follow me here. A Records tell your computer where domains live and MX Records direct traffic for e-mail. If we didn't have the records working behind the scenes, websites would never load and messages would never send. Ultimately, we need DNS to locate and display what we want on the Internet. Your business needs DNS to keep your company website and e-mail online and connected with the outside world.



**401 E. Kennedy Street, B6  
Spartanburg, SC 29302  
(864) 599-8678  
suisc.com**

## Feel Like You're Up A Creek Without A Paddle?

Are you always concerned about backups? Do you wonder if there are viruses hiding in your network? Are you scared to take a vacation for fear of your equipment failing once you leave the office?

IT should be a tool for your business to grow and thrive. If your technology has left you feeling stranded...

Give us a call today for your:

**FREE 27 Point Network Assessment**

We will review every inch of your network and develop an actionable plan to keep your IT running smoothly.

**Solutions Unlimited, LLC  
(864) 599-8678**