



November 2009

Intelligent Technical Solutions

# Innovations

## Be thankful

The two most important words in the English language are “thank you.” This is true for business and personal communications.

For business transactions, a quick thank you tells your customers and prospects that you appreciate their patronage. In addition, a simple thank you card is a powerful way to add a personal touch to your client contact.

In the social realm, these two simple words help people express gratitude and show their commitment to a social relationship. So, roll these grateful emotions into your business relationships with associates, clients, prospects, and vendors.

After all, this is the season of giving and appreciation. So, don't be afraid to say thank you!

## Harvest the true power of your computer

*Imagine, you are just finishing up an important client document and all of the sudden your computer shuts down. No warning. No error message. No blue screen of death. What could be the problem?*

**Dust. That's right!** Those pesky particles that leave a thin grey layer on the bookshelves behind your desk could be plaguing your computer too. Dust is actually a computer's arch enemy but thankfully you don't need an army to keep your computer clean. Just follow these easy steps to clean your computer and keep it running like new.

### How does dust get inside the computer?

Unfortunately, dust is attracted by static electricity accumulated naturally in your computer. The tiny ventilation holes on the back of your computer are an inlet for debris. These holes, and other nooks around the cover, actually leave enough room for dust particles to slip right in.

If you haven't taken the cover off of your computer, try it! You will be surprised at the amount of dust inside. Remember, cleanings are recommended 2 or 4 times each year for tower computers, if your computer is housed in a relatively clean environment.

**Before you begin...** Make sure to turn off your computer and unplug it. This will ensure you will not damage your equipment or shock yourself. Also, there are a few items to gather before you get started. Round up a can of compressed air, a few cotton swabs, glass cleaner, a lint-free cloth, paper towels, rubbing alcohol, and a screwdriver.

**1. Clean your tower each quarter.** To clean out the case on your computer, place your computer on a level surface (unplugged) and remove the outer cover. Visually inspect the wires inside your computer looking for frayed or damaged areas. Don't attempt to repair frayed wires. Give us a call and we can examine the parts needed, order, and install them for you.

With the cover off, use compressed air to blow debris out of your machine but, remember to keep a safe distance (follow the directions on the back of the compressed air can). Be sure to pay special attention to the processor fan. Those nasty little dust particles love to attach to the blades and cover on the fan which can cause your computer to overheat. Use a cotton swab to wipe dirt off the fan blades and away from the ventilation holes. Never use a standard vacuum to suck debris out of your computer as the static electricity from

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## How to use a distribution list to keep in touch with your contacts over the holidays

*Are you looking for a quick way to keep in touch with your current clients or prospects over the holidays?*

If you have never used a distribution list, you are missing out. A distribution list is a bundle of names all placed together under one label in your e-mail address book. For example, if you want to send a holiday greeting to your current customers, you can create a distribution list that includes their e-mail

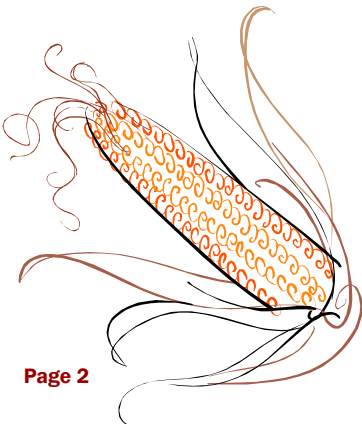
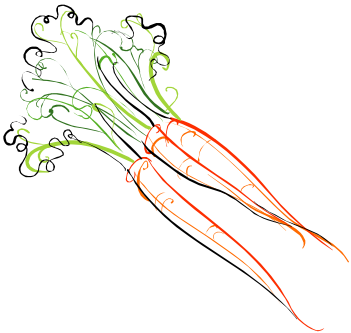
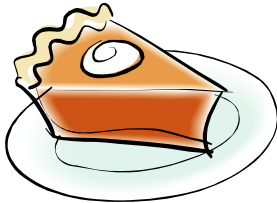
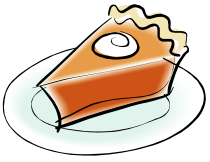
addresses and label it “Current Clients.” Then when you compose the e-mail, you simply type in “Current Clients” as the address and fill out your message.

**Safety tip to remember...** If you use a distribution list in the “To” field of your message all of the recipients will see all of the names you sent the message to. If you would like a more confidential method,

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## Harvest the true power of your computer...

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the vacuum can be harmful to the components on your machine. Finally, replace the side cover of your computer case and be sure to fasten the screws tightly. Use a lint-free cloth to wipe down the outside of the computer case. You may use a spray of window cleaner on the cloth to dislodge or clean up stains on the case. Be sure not to spray directly onto the computer case. Finish up by plugging your components back in, wiping down each cable as you go.

### 2. Clean your mouse monthly or more!

Caution! Remember, when cleaning an optical mouse, do not put anything on the optical sensor! First, disconnect the mouse from the back of your computer and place it on a flat surface. Moisten your lint-free cloth with a dab of alcohol and wipe the outside of your mouse liberally. Pay close attention to the buttons on your mouse as dirt and oils from your skin builds up between the buttons and on the roller ball. This build-up can decrease the functionality of the mouse.

### 3. Clean your keyboard at least monthly.

Have you ever experienced a keyboard malfunction? We receive calls, unfortunately regularly, from people who have stuck keys and don't even realize it. For example, did you know that Windows has "accessibility options" built in so you can shortcut to features you need? However, these shortcuts become problematic when accessed accidentally.

## The Extraordinaries

*Do you have that nagging feeling that you could do more for others and want to get involved? Take a look into micro-volunteering with The Extraordinaries. Despite your busy schedule, you can donate slivers of idle time to a cause and make a difference everyday!*

Micro-volunteering is a new trend afoot infecting people around the world with the spirit of giving. Just a few moments of your time as you walk to your car, get a hair cut, or wait in line to purchase a cup of coffee is all you need to be an active volunteer and impact the world around you.

**If you have an iPhone**, micro-volunteering is even easier. The Extraordinaries created a fancy iPhone app you can download from their website at [BeExtra.org/widget](http://BeExtra.org/widget). This application connects

Recently, we had a gentleman call who could not use all of his letter keys on the keyboard because menus kept popping up. As it turned out, his shift key was stuck and if Windows senses the shift key activated five times in a row, it assumes you're requesting a feature called "Sticky Keys." This feature allows you to use Shift, Alt, Ctrl and use the Windows keys as a toggle so you don't have to hold them down. So, every time he typed, Windows processed a command not just a letter.

The moral of the story, don't eat over your keyboard and use compressed air to clean out your keyboard as often as you need. Use a cloth with window cleaner to wipe down the keys and stop bacteria from breeding right under your fingertips. Cleaning your keyboard will keep it functioning properly and can reduce the risk of spread of a cold or flu, creating a healthier work environment.

### 4. Clean your monitor as needed.

Keeping your monitor clean is the easy part. Turn off your monitor, spray glass cleaner on a paper towel, and wipe your monitor with soft circular motions. Be sure not to put pressure on the screen as it may damage the display and don't forget to wipe down the cords too.

*If you're interested in learning about our managed service plan, give us a call today! We will be more than happy to assist you.*

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micro-volunteers with tasks that need attention. When you open the application, a listing of tasks appears with instructions to walk you through the duties to complete the task.

**In less than five short minutes**, you could be helping to translate text for a nonprofit website, tag images for the Smithsonian, or even record locations of potholes for municipalities. The Extraordinaries have full listings of organizations with missions you may choose to accept.

**The goal of The Extraordinaries group**, is to allow organizations to engage their supporters via micro-actions, done on-demand and on-the-spot using a mobile phone or web browser. So, even if you don't use an iPhone, look up [BeExtra.org/do](http://BeExtra.org/do) to get involved today.

## How to use a distribution list to keep in touch...

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place the distribution list in the Blind Carbon Copy or “BCC” field to mask the distribution list recipients names and addresses from other recipients.

**How to create a distribution list.** There are two ways to go about creating your distribution list: you can copy names from an e-mail or snag names from your address book to compile a list. To use addresses from an e-mail message, copy the names you want in the list from the message and click on the “File” menu. To use your address book to create a distribution list, begin by clicking the “File” menu from anywhere in Outlook.

Then, select “New” and “Distribution List” in the “File” menu. A window will pop-up labeled “Untitled - Distribution List.” You will use this page to add names and set criteria for the list.

**Sending a distribution list.** After you set up your distribution list, you can send it to a coworker to help them with their communication efforts too. Simply open your address book, find the distribution list you want to send and right click on list. Put your cursor over the menu option labeled “Send full

contact” with an arrow pointing to the right. When you mouse over this option you will see the following two options; In Internet format (vCard) and In Outlook format.

The “Internet format” opens an e-mail for you to send to someone with the distribution list attached as a text file. The “Outlook format” opens an e-mail with the distribution list “as is” ready for the recipient to add to their Outlook contacts and use immediately in an e-mail.

**Sharing a distribution list.** Distribution lists are very handy for everyone. A list of current clients could be used to send out holiday greetings or special offerings for the season. If there are multiple employees who work with your clients or prospects, a global distribution list may be necessary. If you have a Microsoft Exchange Server to manage your office e-mail, the Global Address List will house distribution lists for your entire office making them available to everyone in an instant.

If you would like assistance building a distribution list visit [office.microsoft.com](http://office.microsoft.com) and look up “distribution list” for more details.

## A few basic Google search tips to remember

*Millions of people use Google to search the Internet each day. However, much like the cell phones we cling to so dearly, many of us only use a fraction of the features available. Take a look at these Google search tips to maximize your efforts.*

**Times at your finger tips.** Did you know that Google has listings for the current time in every city and for flights too? All you need to do is type in “What time is it in...” followed by the city name and Google will show you the time, day of the week, time zone, state and/or country.

Flights are just as easy to look up. Simply, enter the airline and flight number to receive the status. Google automatically pulls up the date of the flight, departure and arrival time and location complements of [www.flightstats.com](http://www.flightstats.com).

**Track a package with one click!** Enter the tracking number no matter what service, UPS, FedEx, or the U.S. Postal Service, and press enter. Google will pull up the service carrying your package immediately. With one click on the website

found, you can see the tracking and deliver information for your package in an instant.

**Comparison shopping is a breeze.** If you want to be sure you are getting the best deal on a product, type all of the numbers beneath the barcode into Google and search. This will pull up all of the websites with information about the product so you can research the product or view vendors.

**Google categories.** Don’t miss the handy categories at the top of your Google search page. You can narrow your search by selecting “Images” to find pictures, “Maps” to look up directions, “News” to only view reported news and much more.

## How to make a toast

All eyes turn to you when you make a toast at a wedding, farewell party or Thanksgiving dinner.

The ritual is a simple act that tells people “we are happy to be together and happy to share this moment.” The toast should be no longer than a minute, especially if there are others who will toast after you.

It should not be an opportunity for a lengthy speech or a talk supported by note cards. It should be short and easy to memorize.

Begin by raising your glass to eye level. First stare directly at the person you are toasting, then as you speak look at the other guests.

After the salutation and the glasses clink, the host can take the first sip. Touch glasses with everyone there, which means the person accepts your statement. If many people are present, touch glasses with a few around you.

Toast often. It brings people together. The subject of the toast can be as simple as toasting to a beautiful day.



“On the brighter side, our company bowling team is in first place.”



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## Inquiring Minds...

**When a flash drive just won't do.** Freecom, a manufacturer of external hard drives and other portable storage devices, is working to release their new Hard Drive XS 3.0 product to consumers in Europe this month. According to Freecom, this handy hard drive is the first in the world to hit the market equip with “SuperSpeed USB” technology offering transfer speeds of approximately 130 MB per second. This is well over anything you can find in stores today. Not only is the XS 3.0 fast but also offers up to 2 terabytes of storage.

This new product line will revolutionize the way we view storage. According to [www.Freecom.com](http://www.Freecom.com), Axel Lucassen, Managing Director of Freecom says, “We can transfer a 5GB movie in just 38 seconds—it’s unbelievably fast.” Now, imagine using a device like this to backup your office computers in just minutes. The best part, the Hard Drive XS 3.0 surpassed its counterparts in security tests and will have a superior encryption element too.

If this new Hard Drive is a bit to robust for your purposes, take a look at the other products Freecom has to offer at [www.Freecom.com](http://www.Freecom.com).

**While you are out!** Just a quick note to remind you of a few safety measures to review before your time away from the office this holiday season.

🔗 **Quadruple check your backup!** There is nothing like receiving an emergency phone call from the fire department while you are on vacation. If your office floods, catches fire, or is burglarized your recovery will only be as good as your backup saved on file. Be sure to run a backup just before you leave the office, observe the backup process to ensure everything is captured, and test the files backed up so you know the data is functional in your time of need.

🔗 **Set your “out of office” greetings on your phone and e-mail.** Don’t miss out on important information, be sure your clients, prospects, and vendors know you are away and when you will respond to their message.

🔗 **Be sure to unplug un-used equipment.** If you are away from your office for more than just a few days, be sure to unplug things like your printers, standing lamps, even the office coffee pot. These items still use electricity when they are not in use. Unplugging them can save you a few pennies on your electricity bill and lower your risk of an electrical fire in the office.

If you have any questions about preparing your office for the holidays or just want to be sure you have all the bases covered, feel free to contact us. We can help you check your backup, set your “out of office” greetings, and advise you on things to shutdown or unplug.

Remember, if an emergency situation comes up, we are just a phone call away. We will respond quickly, assess the problem, determine your options, and present them to you in plain English with a full estimate of your costs to get you up an running again in no time at all!

## I'd Love To Hear From You

Is there an article you would like to comment on? Is there a topic you want me to research? Have a funny story or a resource you want to share with the other subscribers? Send it to me! We are always looking for new and useful content to add to our newsletter.

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