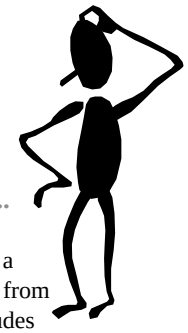
May 2010

Intelligent Technical Solutions

Innovations



Pickle Facts

According to www.ilovepickles.org

Did you know that pickling is one of the oldest forms of food preservation, discovered at the dawn of civilization, over 4,000 years ago in Mesopotamia?

What's even more amazing is that the love for pickles continues to grow around the world.

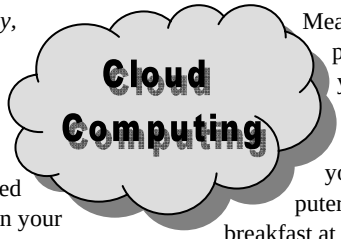
In fact, International Pickle Week, spanning ten days at the end of May, is now one of the longest running food promotions celebrated in the United States.

Visit the Pickle Packers International Web site to find pickle facts, recipes or even order some pickle gear for your IPW celebration.

Confused about cloud computing?

Learn more about the benefits and limitations cloud computing presents for businesses...

Depending on the size of your company, cloud computing may dramatically reduce administrative costs. However, do the benefits outweigh the pitfalls?



Cloud computing is Internet-based computing. This means, all of the shared resources like software and information your company uses every day, would be provided to office computers and other devices as it is needed. By renting usage from a third-party provider, your business can cut costs by eliminating the need for a full physical infrastructure.

Cloud computing terms to remember...

Cloud computing has two bases, Software as a Service (SaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS). Think of SaaS as a software rental car company: In business, you use software as a vehicle to travel through transactions and communicate with others. Whether you are creating a contract for a new client, or processing a regular monthly payment, the software you use costs money. SaaS offers the software you need for a fixed monthly fee.

Meanwhile, PaaS is similar to a package deal you purchase from your travel agent that includes all of your travel arrangements. Instead of just renting the vehicle (software), you rent the hotel room (desktop computer) and your agent throws in coffee and breakfast at the buffet, too (a support contract.)

Blah, blah...cloud computing...blah blah...platform, what?

If the last few paragraphs didn't make much sense, this might help: Cloud computing can be described as a public utility. Your business pays for the specific software or other amenities, such as equipment or storage, on a monthly basis just as you would pay for the exact amount of electricity that's used.

The benefits of cloud computing.

There are four major benefits of cloud computing for businesses: easy scalability, increased reliability, high performance and specific configurability. Comparatively,

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INTELLIGENT TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

Don't broadcast optimal times for thieves to attack!

Are you an avid Tweeter? Do you update your Facebook with your location on the go? Beware, your social networking efforts give hackers the optimal times for an attack.

Social networking sites are a great tool to use when building connections with family, friends, vendors, clients and even prospects. However, if you have joined the new wave of Twitter users who are using location-aware tweeting, you may be endangering yourself and your business!

Be careful with geolocation features that may say more than you want!

Twitter recently integrated their geographic location program directly into their main Twitter Web site. While this is an interesting application, it can be very dangerous too. Turning on this geolocation feature, means broadcasting your location using the name of your town, neighborhood or even your exact position. Once this feature is turned on, other users can view a map with a mark-

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Confused about cloud computing…

(Continued from page 1)
these benefits surpass the standard dedicated infrastructure method of networking.

New businesses looking for a computing solution, or companies looking to make a change in their infrastructure, may elect to use cloud computing instead of forking over a huge capital investment to setup a network, purchase software packages, and pay someone to manage it all. Cloud computing can be a fantastic way to get a jump-start with little initial investment and fixed, or at least, predictable monthly costs.

The limitations of cloud computing.

As with everything, cloud computing has it downfalls. Cloud computing isn't suitable for all business types, especially those that are reliant on decade old software. As a matter of fact, security and compliance are huge factors for decision makers because, cloud computing takes your data out of your office and out of your control. As a result, it is imperative to select a vendor that offers the security and privacy controls you need.

Software compatibility woes…

That's right, Vista isn't the only animal with compatibility issues. While it seems that any program you can think of should be available in the cloud, it isn't a software heaven. Cloud computing vendors are still working to offer industry specific or specialty programs. You may need to shop around to find a vendor that has what you need.

However, be aware that transitioning from an older version of software to a newer version may not be a walk in the park. Older software may cause limitation with a newer operating system; it's like trying to change a tire on a car while driving. Be sure to look at the features and advantages to keeping your current software and explore new opportunities for your business if necessary.

Don't be afraid of change.

Cloud computing is said to be the "Next big thing!" in technology this year. If you are ready to make a change for your office, give us a call today to explore cloud computing options for your business.

Don't broadcast optimal times for thieves…

(Continued from page 1)
er of your location which, when hovered over, turns blue and shows a mini-Google map displaying the origin of your tweet.

Suggestions from vendors.

The "Tweet With Your Location" feature allows you to *selectively share* your location with others when you tweet. Another rising location sharing social networking site, Foursquare.com, leaves your privacy in your own hands. Their Terms of Use boldly state, "Foursquare makes no guaranty of confidentiality or privacy of any communication or information transmitted on the site or any Web site linked to the site". Therefore, they are eli all responsibility for user postings.

So, what can you do to stay safe?

It's as simple as saying "NO!" Don't use location sharing programs on any social networking sites to reveal your home address or other personal information. If you want to share the location of a great business or venue, then type the address or give information about the venue like the date, time and name of the event. This will help you protect your privacy so unwanted visitors don't crash on your couch while you are finishing dinner with your prize client or marching in a community parade.

Social networking safety is a must!

Here are a few quick tips to remember when you're updating your blog, tweeting on the go or catching up with contacts on Facebook:

- Social networking posts should not reveal enough information that it could be used to case a business or a residence for a burglary.
- Remember, once you post information online, you cannot take it back and it may quickly spread to other Web sites.
- Use privacy settings to restrict who can see your posts online.

It's a bit of common sense, but sometimes the best practice is honesty. To learn more about Internet browsing and social networking safety visit www.OnGuardOnline.gov.

Are you experiencing password fatigue? Replace your passwords with your face!

Are you overwhelmed by the number of passwords you have to remember? In order to be safe, you should have a different password to login to your computer, your online banking or credit card accounts and even another password for your e-mail.

Still using the same password for everything? Too many users think if their password is difficult enough no one will ever guess it, and that it's ok to use it for everything. Wrong! Fox News reports, "Using the same password for multiple Web pages is the Internet-era equivalent of having the same key for your home, car and bank safe-deposit box."

Change your approach! KeyLemon is a great tool anyone can use to handle their passwords in a snap. This new face recognition software is simple to configure and is compatible with Microsoft Operating systems, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and more.

How does it work? First you download KeyLemon on your computer and follow the installation instructions. You will be prompted to create your face model and replace your password with your face image. Then you are all set to enjoy the convenience of face recognition.

No more password frustrations! Have you ever been locked out of an account for trying the password too many times? Well, now you will have all of your passwords at your fingertips. KeyLemon works as a password manager for your favorite sites. Firefox even has a fancy plug-in called LemonFox that recognizes your KeyLemon account access and automatically logs you into your networking sites like Facebook and YouTube.

Fantastic security features. KeyLemon also comes equipped with Hijackers Tracking. This feature allows you to retrieve information about who tried to access your computer when you were away by letting you view pictures of the person who was in front of your computer before an automatic windows lock, or even a person who typed the wrong password into your computer when it was locked.

Taking a break? With KeyLemon, your computer will automatically lock when you leave and unlock when you return through face recognition. That way, you can top off your refreshment at the coffeehouse before chatting with your top client and no one will be able to access your computers files or programs.

Download KeyLemon today
www.KeyLemon.com

Internet vocabulary terms 101

Binary: Literally means "two," or "base two." Binary code is a language that computers use to work with data. For example, the letter "A" is displayed as 01000001 in binary code.

CPU: The Central Processing Unit (CPU) is a tiny chip that's essentially the brains of a computer, aka the processor.

Pixel: The word stands for "Picture Element," and is a tiny dot of light on your monitor. For example, this picture is 32 pixels wide by 32 pixels tall. It contains a total of 1024 pixels.

RAM: A temporary storage space on chips in your computer, Random Access Memory (RAM), also referred to as memory, holds files and programs while you are using them. When you turn off your computer, everything in the RAM is cleared. For example, you may need up to 1 gigabyte of RAM to run Windows Vista.

"It's voice activated, password protection software. Now, the cat can't log on using my screen name."

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May 2010
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Inquiring Minds...

Every business should have an employee handbook: How to make one. Some experts say the employee handbook should be a good-news tool. It will help you attract qualified people and keep those you already have.

While some categories, such as paid holidays, are specific, the book's forward should emphasize that it contains general guidelines. When writing it, advisors at *INC*. magazine recommend saying "we may" in the book, rather than "we will." Avoid making the book sound like a contract, and be sure to mention in the preface that policies can be changed at your discretion.

Relationships with employees are governed by many laws, they apply to businesses with one employee or more. Take a look at the following topics to highlight in your employee handbook:

- ***Harassment and discrimination.*** State that you are an equal opportunity employer in every way, and be sure to clearly point out you will not tolerate harassment or discrimination. Outline steps an employee can take to report a violation, such as reporting it to two people. Explain how you respond to discrimination or harassment, and emphasize that the employee who makes the claim will not face retaliation.
- ***Workweek and hours.*** In general, list the days and hours of the workweek and rules for breaks and meals. State which employees are paid for overtime, and discuss the difference between an hourly worker and a salaried worker who is not paid for overtime.
- ***Safety.*** If workers operate equipment or work in a high-risk environment, a safety policy should be given that complies with the regulations in your area. Check with the Department of Labor in your state for further details.
- ***Attendance, tardiness, dress code, use of the telephone, personal use of the Internet and more.*** Don't address minor areas, but focus on your actual needs. Avoid reminding people of the punishment they face for each infraction. Have one category at the end of the book that details discipline.
- ***Paid time off.*** Rather than having separate sick days and vacation policies, some businesses offer "paid time off," which can be used at the employee's discretion. Unused days can be paid at the end of the year.
- ***Benefits.*** Some are specified by state and federal law, such as time off for jury duty and military service. Check the business laws in your area to ensure you are in compliance with the powers that be.
- ***Voluntary benefits.*** Tell about any health insurance plan, retirement accounts and other benefits you offer.

Each employee should sign a statement saying they have received the employee handbook to ensure the policies are clear and enforceable.

If you don't update...
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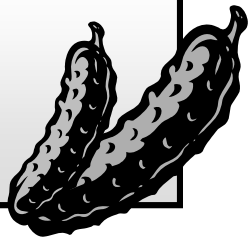
Don't put your company at risk, update your computers regularly to shield your network from vulnerabilities like viruses, worms and other threats. Even something as simple as updating your equipment can enhance the security and performance of all your computers. Need help? Give us a call today! As a business owner, you already have enough to worry about. We'll make sure everything pertaining to your network security and reliability is handled, so it just works when you need it most!

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