

# Triangle Tech Times

*"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably"*



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## Happy Holidays!

Around this time of year we like to look to the future and think about what's coming around the corner. Looking back, though, we realize that YOU made a difference in our company last year. We want to say thank you to our clients and newsletter subscribers. You are some of the most business-savvy individuals in the tri-county area. We love watching you grow your business, and we learn much from your commitment to YOUR clients, and your true understanding of customer service. From the blogs you follow to the books you recommend, we appreciate your desire to learn. We think of you each month when we write our newsletter. We want our newsletter to be full of information we pass along to you — to help you be a better boss, manager and business professional. And because of that goal, you (unknowingly) push us to excellence every month, as we plan articles for you. Happiest Holiday wishes to you and your family.

## December 2015



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Rob Downs, CEO and President of Managed IT Solutions

**Our Mission:** To build a community of successful minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.



## Missing Just One Of These Could Instantly Open Up Your Computer Network To A Cyber Attack

**W**elcome to the brave new world of cyber-warfare.

Gone are the days when software patches were just for nifty little feature add-ons or updates.

Today, a software update notice could mean your whole computer network is suddenly at risk. Dangers include data theft, crippling malware attacks and mischief you may not discover for months, or even years...

As with graffiti on your garage door, if you don't pay attention and clamp down on bad behavior, your problems have likely just begun, and, like those who hire a professional security firm to keep thieves out of the warehouse, thousands of CEOs and business owners are now waking up to the fact that it's absolutely imperative to hire a pro when it comes to securing your data network.

Here's why you need a professional handling this for you:

### #1: Speed is of the essence.

"If you didn't update to version 7.32 within seven hours, you should assume you've been hacked." That's what software maker Drupal told millions of its customers around the world last year. It's just one example of what can happen if you don't respond with lightning speed.

Once a security breach has been identified, hackers rush in. On "Day Zero," cyber-crooks around the world go after at-risk targets. You've got to be quick to patch the gap, or else you risk a system compromise.

Unless you have the time, knowledge, experience and tool set to respond instantly, you are far better off leaving this to a professional IT firm you can trust.

### #2: It's not just the big boys they're after.

Sure, the top news stories are about the attacks on companies like Target, Home Depot and Sony... Yet your business is just as

vulnerable, if not more so. Chances are, you simply do not have the resources that giant corporations have to manage a data disaster. The statistics bearing this out are shocking: more than 60% of small businesses close their doors following a serious data breach.

The threat is not confined to giant corporations.

Small and medium businesses are being attacked every day, and, unfortunately, your business is no exception.

**#3: Dealing with data breaches requires specialized knowledge, skill and experience.** Here are just a few of the things a competent data guardian must be able to do to effectively protect your systems:

*Review documentation and monitor forums.* Sometimes your software vendor doesn't tell the whole story. It's critical to check

online forums and other communities to see if anyone else is having issues with the new patch before jumping in with both feet.

**Know when to apply a patch immediately and when to wait.** Typically, somewhere around 95% of patches work hassle-free. The trick is to spot the 5% that don't — before installing them. This requires

identifying unique patching requirements, and applying exceptions accordingly. For instance:

*Does the patch deal only with a security issue?*

Or does it just add new features

or fix non-security-related bugs? Obviously, security issues get top priority.

*Is the system currently having issues?*

If not, and if the patch doesn't address a security issue your system is vulnerable to, it may be better to heed the old adage:

*"If it ain't broke, don't fix it."*

*What security gaps does it address?* How severe is the threat to your particular network? If, for example, the only way a virus can enter your system is through an e-mail attachment and this functionality has been disabled for all users, perhaps the threat needn't be a great concern.

**Keep options open in case of complications.**

Once a patch has been applied, if things aren't working, it's critical to restore the data network to pre-patch functionality, with little if any downtime. That means having good backups in place along with a tested and proven recovery process. Does just thinking about data security give you a headache? We strongly advise that you let us handle this critical part of your business for you.

Call **919-848-3259** and schedule our no-cost Security Update Audit today. You'll discover how easy it is to rest assured that your network is secure 24/7.

*"Chances are, you simply do not have the resources that giant corporations have to manage a data disaster."*

## Free Report Download: What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company's Critical Data And Computer Systems



### You Will Learn:

- 1) The only way to know for SURE your data can be recovered if lost, corrupted or deleted—yet fewer than 10% of businesses have this in place.
- 2) 7 critical characteristics you should absolutely demand from any off-site backup service.
- 3) Where many backups fail and give you a false sense of security.
- 4) The #1 cause of data loss that businesses don't even think about until their data is erased.

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## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



### iTranslate Makes It Easier Than Ever To Speak With Interesting People

Other than the occasional epic (and hilarious) fail, translation apps are getting pretty good. And one of the best, iTranslate, now gives you voice translations on the spot.

Here's an "at-a-glance" rundown of all that iTranslate can do:

Speak into your device and, with a tap or swipe, it recites what you just said in your choice of over 90 languages. That's twice the number of languages offered by Google Translate.

You can select a male or female voice, as well as dialect and speaking rate. It also turns Chinese characters into alphabet-based words in English.

And you can run it on your iWatch, iPhone, Android or Windows phone.

One downside is that the free version displays ads, but for five bucks you can upgrade and turn them off.

With this handy app, your world just got smaller — and, potentially, a whole lot more interesting.

### Your Accounting

■ *Time to put your books in the cloud? Want to save time and money on bookkeeping in 2016?* If your company hasn't already made the switch to a cloud-based accounting system, it may be time to migrate. Here's why: with a cloud system, you can outsource your bookkeeping, saving you staffing costs as well as office space. Plus, your team saves time dragging files back and forth and keeping current versions backed up and secure. And an added plus is that you and your team can enter expenses on the go via smartphone. Popular apps include QuickBooks Online, Xero, Zoho Books and FreshBooks. Choose based on robust feature sets, solid support, ease of use and, of course, time and money saved.

*Aggregated from recent issues of PC Magazine, Business News Daily and Merchant Maverick*

### Your Time

■ *3 Ways to End Holiday Overwhelm.* This holiday season, skip the stress with these time-saving tips: 1) Do your homework before hitting the stores. Catch coupons on sites like dealcatcher.com, couponcabin.com and retailmenot.com. Quality-check gift ideas at Consumerreports.org for expert reviews, or sites with user reviews such as Amazon.com or Cnet.com. Then, rather than drive all over town for the best deal, check out Pricegrabber.com. 2) Plan a trip — it's a great way to share experiences rather than acquiring more things. 3) For those on your list who already have plenty of "stuff," give a Good Card. The Good Card lets users give to their choice of over 1.2 million charities.

*Summarized from Family Circle, "Holiday Time And Money Saving Tips."*

### Your Health

■ *Eat, drink and be healthy this holiday season.* Here's how: keep the pounds down by knowing your number. Visit heart.org/explorer for a quick read on your recommended daily intake of calories. Think of it as your expense-account limit for holiday gatherings, and choose how much you want to spend on drinks, appetizer, entree, dessert, etc. You could even keep a food diary to help stay on track with your target weight goal. At parties, wear snug clothing and keep one hand busy. With a drink in your dominant hand, you'll be less likely to grab goodies. And your snug-fitting outfit will keep you so busy pulling your tummy in, you won't have time to feel hungry.

*Aggregated from recent entries: Heart.org and WebMD.com*

### Your Computer's Operating System

■ *Windows 10, Thumbs Up...* As even Microsoft admits, Windows 8 was a flop... So why make the leap to Windows 10? (By the way, in case you were wondering, for reasons we may never know, Microsoft decided to skip Windows 9.) To start with, the Windows 10 user interface just makes a lot more sense than W8's UI. It brings back the Windows 7 start menu, and key functions are accessed from the taskbar. It features a more refined design — for instance, smaller window borders. And, at least until July 29, 2016, you can upgrade your Windows 7 or 8.1 OS for free. So unless your Windows device is an RT version or is about tapped out on memory, we think you can feel pretty good about upgrading to Windows 10.

*Aggregated from Tech Radar and IB Times*

## 3 Things You Need To Know About E-mail Marketing Before You Press "Send"

It's everyone's favorite application. Since its introduction, it has revolutionized the way we communicate, both personally and professionally. It has had a major impact on how companies market themselves, communicate with vendors, send out press releases, rally employees and alert clients to their latest and greatest promotion. The ease, low-cost and speed of e-mail in marketing is the biggest reason why our inboxes are overflowing with spam.

In response to the ubiquitous outcry, "I hate spam," governments have crafted new regulations surrounding the use of e-mail; and if you are one of the millions of companies using it for marketing, then it's important that you familiarize yourself with these laws. But the danger doesn't stop there.

Even if you don't get caught by the feds for violating the rules of e-mail usage, you can still end up on a blacklist with the major ISPs such as Yahoo!, AOL, and MSN. Once you get blacklisted, you are considered guilty until proven innocent, and ALL the e-mail you send won't get through, even to people who want to receive it—a consequence that could end up hurting your business more than a fine.

### So what are the basic guidelines of e-mail marketing?

First and foremost, make sure you are only sending e-mail campaigns to people who have solicited (requested) to be on your distribution list. This is called "opting-in" or subscribing, and e-mails sent to these folks are considered "solicited e-mail." You are

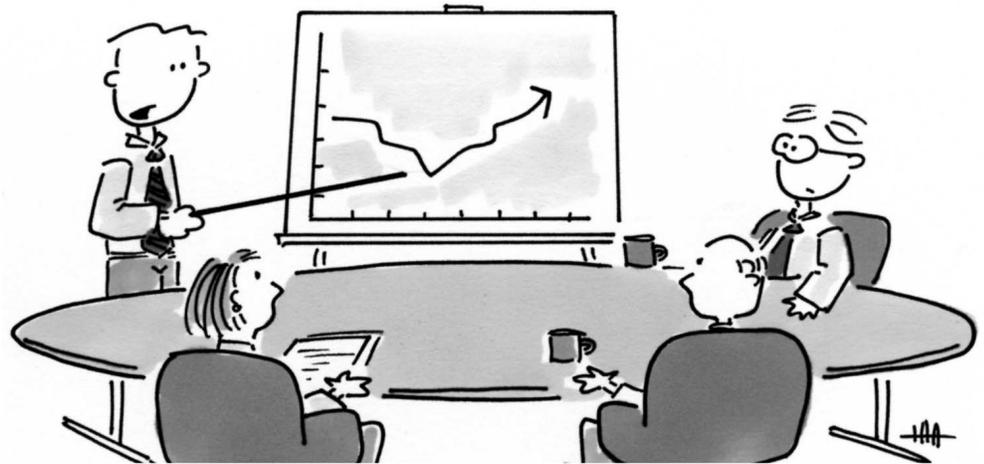
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perfectly within your rights to send them messages; but if you got their e-mail address by any other means and they did NOT specifically request to be on your list, that's considered "unsolicited e-mail" or spam. Sending promotional e-mails to people who have not requested it is not only illegal, but annoying...so don't do it!

Next, make sure you provide directions on how a person can remove themselves from your distribution list in EVERY e-mail. The best place to put this information is at the very bottom of your message. You should also include your full company name and contact information at the bottom so no one can blame you for cloaking your identity—another legal "no-no" of e-mail marketing.

Finally, when sending e-mail, we recommend using a service such as ConstantContact or SilverPop. These web-based applications will help you manage your e-mail distribution list with automatic opt-out and opt-in tools and will keep your e-mail server off an ISP's blacklist.

Naturally, you want to make sure the information you are sending is interesting and relevant. No one wants more junk filling up their inbox so the better you are at marketing, the better your results will be. E-mail is not a magic marketing bullet that will solve all your marketing problems, but used correctly, it can certainly help you reach more customers and build stronger relationships with the people you already do business with.



"So, as you can see, customer satisfaction is up considerably since phasing out the complaint forms."

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