ThinkTech
You have enough to think about

tech-ade
Turn your technology lemons into lemonade

Disaster *Recovery*: Are You Overlooking This Critical Part of Backups?

A few months back tornados ripped through Joplin, MO and Tuscaloosa, Alabama causing massive devastation. In fact, a colleague of mine who also offers IT services had his office in Joplin reduced to a pile of rubble (see photo). Within days, my husband, Nathan, got on a plane and headed out to Joplin to help our colleague and friend. During his week visit, he witnessed miles and miles of absolute destruction; businesses that once flourished were now completely demolished. Our colleague handles IT for mostly medical practices. No computer systems mean no crucial medications being prescribed, no medical records available…no nothing. But here's the amazing thing: Every single one of our colleague's clients were up and running within 72 hours of the tornado touching down. How? He used the same backup and disaster recovery solutions we do and he had a PLAN for his clients.

One of the MOST important aspects of this is the *recovery* part – if something happens, how are you going to get that data back onto a working platform that allows you to continue serving your customers and operating your business? The shocker for most business owners is that simply having a copy of the data does NOT guarantee a fast recovery. Let me give you an analogy to help you understand…

Let's suppose we put a disaster recovery plan for your home. Your house would represent the server and platform, and all your furniture and personal items would be the data. Now let's suppose we could make a backup of your home by making an exact copy of everything that's in your house (all your furniture, appliances, clothing, etc.) and storing it in a "backup" shed. Then the unthinkable happens: your house gets leveled by a tornado, flood or fire and everything is gone (or a critical part of it is damaged and needs to be replaced). You would think, "Well, at least I have a copy!" True, but the first thing you would need to do is replace the home itself (remember, that's the platform that everything resides on). Next you would have to "reinstall" the services like gas, electricity and water (let's call that the software). Then you would have to haul everything from the shed back to the house and "reformat" it by arranging it into the house. Depending on the extent of the damage done to your house, that could take days or weeks; chances are you'd have to find a hotel to live out of in the meantime. In addition, there's the time and cost of

moving everything back in and re-arranging and restoring everything to its proper place.

NOTE: This *assumes* you have a recent, working copy of your entire home and everything in it. If you failed to make a copy – or if the shed where you were storing everything had a water leak that destroyed everything inside due to mold – then you're really out of luck.

Bottom-line. You can backup your data and network so that recovery can happen in a matter of hours versus days or weeks. But if you simply think having a tape backup or an external hard drive is going to be your saving grace, you might be in for a rude awakening. I can't tell you the number of businesses who ended up losing incredibly valuable, irreplaceable data because they didn't think through the RECOVERY part of the backup equation.

So what do you need to think about? A few things.

(1) **Downtime**. How long can you be down before it starts costing you serious money?

(2) **Automation.** A recovery plan that has automatic elements will get implemented faster than one without.

(3) **Access.** Where (physically) will you be when disaster strikes?

FREE Backup & Disaster Recovery Assessment

Want a recovery plan for your business? Best way to start is with a recovery assessment. Call us now for yours, FREE.

(508)992-2541

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

"The 7 Keys To Unshakable Network Security That Every Business Owner Should Know"

Here are just a few of the things you will learn during this FREE educational event:

♦ **Low-cost, high-impact security steps** you can take right now to dramatically improve your network's security.

♦ How to meet the requirements of strictest Data Security Laws and **avoid hefty fines**.

♦ **Viruses: Overlooked gaps you must address** that the anti-virus companies don't want you to know about.

♦ **Where firewalls fail and give a false sense of security.** I'll reveal the top 3 mistakes most often made when setting up a firewall that practically invite hackers and spammers to attack your network.

♦ **Critical points every security policy should include** that most overlook.

♦ What you are and are not responsible for as the IT manager. I'll show you what you need to do to **protect yourself professionally in the event of a major security breach.**

♦ How to **prevent your server from becoming an open relay** for spammers.

REGISTER TODAY!

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month

EVERNOTE

Organizers unite! If you have a lot of "stuff" to organize – pictures, notes, reminders, and more – and want an easy way to capture and organize all of it, you should take a look at EVERNOTE.
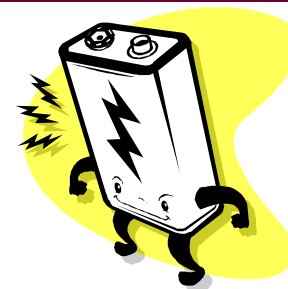
This cloud application allows you to type text notes, make lists, record voice notes, store photos, screen shots, travel receipts, itineraries and practically any other item you can think of.

Everything you capture is automatically processed, indexed, and made searchable. If you like, you can add tags or organize notes into different notebooks.

Populating EVERNOTE with content is simple. You can Tweet a note and have it stored, log in and type yourself a note, take a photo of a favorite wine you're drinking and upload it or clip web sites and upload them.

Best of all, as your "stuff" grows you can easily search and keep track of everything in one simple place: Christmas lists, to-do lists, good ideas you want to remember, grocery lists, pictures of things you want to purchase and much, much more!

The Top 5 Long-Life, Lightweight Laptops For Business Travelers

If you travel a lot and you're tired of anemic laptop batteries that make you hunt down a power outlet in the airport, you'll want to know about these new portables that can sustain you from LAX to New York. The top five netbooks/notebooks, arranged in order below from longest to shortest battery life, will keep you going for anywhere from 7 to nearly 9 hours. With battery power like that, you'll be able to keep your attention on your work and be very productive on the road.

Lenovo ThinkPad X200

This lightweight laptop offers maximum battery life of 8 hours and 54 minutes when tested with a nine-cell battery option. The battery adds less than a pound to the computer, bringing the total weight to only 3.7 pounds for easy carrying. The nine-cell battery upgrade costs only $50 more. The price for this laptop is under a grand.

Samsung N110

The Samsung N110 did a stellar job in PC World's battery tests, lasting 8 hours, 23 minutes on a charge. At 2.7 pounds, this netbook is easy to carry as well. Prices for this model have dropped, putting it in the $500 range.

Lenovo ThinkPad T400

ThinkPads are catnip to business travelers, thanks to their sturdy construction, solid performance, roomy keyboards, and – in the case of the Lenovo ThinkPad T400 – excellent battery life. The nine-cell battery added a bit of bulk but kept us working just shy of 8 hours. The T400 is available for around $1500 and up.

Acer TravelMate 6293

The Acer TravelMate may look a bit drab, but when it comes to long battery life, this one is a winner. In tests, it lasted 7 hours, 57 minutes; and for around $1000, the price is right too.

Samsung N120

This netbook not only has a great battery life but it also offers a very comfortable keyboard. In PCW tests, the N120 went for 7 hours, 43 minutes on a charge, which is excellent but not quite as good as its netbook sibling, the Samsung N110. The N120 is priced under $500 online.

Meet Our New Client Of The Month!

Every month I choose one very special company to be my Client Of The Month. It's my way of acknowledging clients and thanking those who support me and my business with referrals and repeat business.

This month's Client Of The Month is **Ellis Curtain, Inc.** Congratulations! You have won a $50 Gift Certificate to your favorite restaurant. *You might be my next Client Of The Month…watch for your name here!*

Groupon:

Good Idea Or Invitation To Price Shoppers?

Groupon, launched in November 2008 in Chicago, is a highly successful online marketing venue for businesses looking to gain more customers and for consumers looking for great deals on things they already buy. Here's how it works: Businesses wanting to reach more customers sign up for a "daily deal" promotion where they offer some product or service at half off the normal costs. Groupon then sends that offer out to a list of users who have signed up to receive these daily deals. But here's the "catch" (or the brilliance depending on how you look at it): in order for the deal to be "on," a certain number of people must buy the deal – otherwise it's off.

What this does is fuels people who WANT the deal to pass it on to friends and family to try and pump up the offer so they can get in on it. In doing so, Groupon naturally gets more users to sign up for their daily deal and keeps a hefty percentage of the sale. Also, the deal is only good for that day, building in an automatic urgency to buy. Clearly this is a good deal for consumers who get to buy products and services at deep discounts – but is it a good deal for the businesses that are using this as an advertising media?
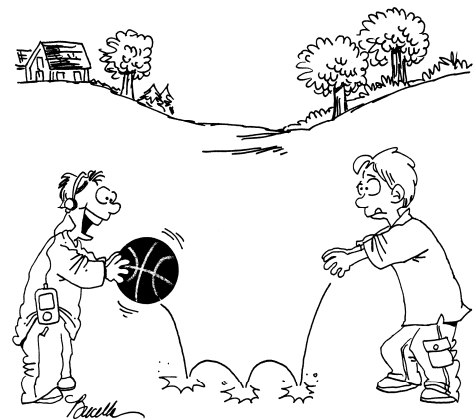
Some say yes because it allows a new startup business to gain actual buyers to their store or web site at a break even or loss. And if you are providing a service that people really like, chances are they'll come back and tell their friends. However, some say it only attracts price shoppers who have zero loyalty; and no business wants that type of customer, especially when you have to deliver the products and services at a break even or loss. So how do you find out whether or not it will work for you? The best idea is to run a test and track the results. Obviously if you offer a great service that begs repeat business, it makes sense to advertise using Groupon because the upfront loss will be more than made up from in long-term repeat business and referrals. But if you have a problem with customer retention and loyalty, Groupon might not be the best place for you to advertise. To learn more on how to become a featured business on Groupon, visit www.grouponworks.com.

The Tech Angel Takes To The Air!

"Cool! How long does it hold a charge?"