



Tim Gillen's Executive IT Report

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

4 Hidden Dangers Electricity Poses to Your Computer Network... And One Simple, Inexpensive Solution That Will Prevent Them All From Doing Damage

“As a business owner, you don’t have time to waste on technical and operational issues. For over 20 years I’ve been helping owners and managers make sense of business technology so they can focus on what’s important. Can I help you? Just give me a call.

- Tim Gillen,
Terrapin Networks

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Inside This Issue

4 Hidden Dangers Electricity Poses To Your Network.....Page 1

Is Best Buy’s “Buy Back” Program All It’s Cracked Up To Be? ..Page 2

Phishing - It’s No Longer Just Something You Do With Grandpa On Sunday Afternoon.....Page 2

Shiny New Gadget: How To Enable Legal, Electronic Signatures On Contracts Via EmailPage 2

Church Bulletin Bloopers.....Page 3

Six Things To NEVER Say To A Police Officer.....Page 3

4 Simple Ways To Prevent Heart Disease.....Page 4

How to Pick a Good Password.....Page 4

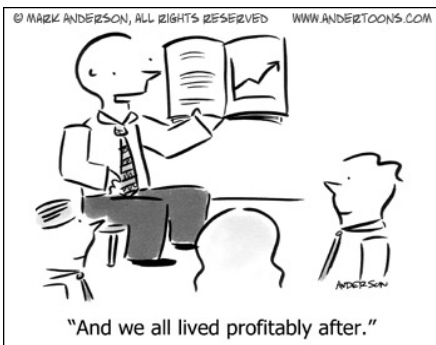
Is your computer plugged in? Do you use a power strip with a surge protector? If so, you are a heartbeat away from disaster and don’t even realize it. The same electricity you depend on to run your computer and network is also trying to destroy your data.

Believe it or not, electricity is one of the biggest threats to your computer network and the data it contains. Here are four computer power problems you must know about and how to prevent them.

- 1.) **Transients** - Commonly known as surges and spikes, these are caused by lightning storms, wind, squirrels shorting out power lines, auto accidents, etc. Several times each week these spikes can travel up the power cord into your computer damaging everything from power supplies to motherboards. Conventional wisdom says use a power strip with a surge protector and you are safe. As usual, conventional wisdom is dead wrong. After several months, these surge protectors become useless having been zapped by the surges they were designed to protect against.
- 2.) **Blackouts** - Whether momentary or prolonged, the sudden loss of power can corrupt your PC to the point of not being able to start up again when the lights come back on.
- 3.) **Sags** - This is when the power drops below normal. Have you ever seen the fluorescent lights flicker for a moment? Then you have witnessed sag. Sags are more common than surges and are caused when equipment like air conditioners, blow dryers, water heaters, laser printers, copy machines and other electrical equipment are turned on or come out of sleep mode. A typical small office will experience 30 or more sags each day. Sags cause many of the weird and unexplained problems computer users complain about every day.
- 4.) **Noise** - Ever been watching TV and seen fuzzy pictures and/or white lines or dots when you turn on a blender or vacuum cleaner? This is the result of electrical noise. While a fuzzy TV picture is an annoyance, this electrical noise causes many computer problems including loss of data.

So how do you protect yourself from electrical problems? The most simple and inexpensive solution to all four of these hazards is a battery backup. The battery backup senses when there are problems with the power and automatically switches to the battery protecting you from computer damage and data loss.

Choosing the correct battery backup for your computer or server can be tricky. Having one with a battery too small is the same as having none at all. For most desktop computers, a battery backup with a 500VA or larger rating should be sufficient to keep you going through momentary power problems. Protecting your server requires detailed knowledge of the server functions and power consumption in order to pick the right battery backup solution. If you want help in determining the right protection for your specific network, give us a call at 231-941-2100.



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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



If you're a business that is still faxing or mailing documents because you need a signature, you'll love this month's gadget, EchoSign.

Contracts have been faxed and mailed for years because of the binding laws associated with signatures. EchoSign allows the legal, electronic signing of documents to speed up the signing process - now you can e-mail a PDF, Word document or Excel file to someone and allow them to "sign" without printing it off, signing and scanning, faxing or mailing it back to you.

The free version of EchoSign allows the user 5 signatures a month, which may be adequate for those that only deal with contracts and other signed documents once in a while. However, for those that need to use the product on a daily basis, upgrading to the Pro version costs \$14.95/month, the Team version (2-9 users) is \$40/month and the Enterprise version for 10 or more users costs \$299/month.

In addition to speeding up the signing process, this app also allows you to track, organize and file your paperwork securely online, available for reference at any time.

For those who prefer to keep the paper trail organized in computer files instead of physical files, EchoSign would be a great help.

Is Best Buy's New Electronics "Buy Back" Program All It's Cracked Up To Be?



You may have heard about the new "Buy Back" program being offered by Best Buy. The premise behind Best Buy's Buy Back program is simple: Buy a technology product in certain categories - mobile phones (but not pre-paid phones), laptops, netbooks, tablet computers and TVs - from Best Buy, and the store will let you bring it back and receive a portion of the purchase price. Of course, there are "catches."

First, the Buy Back program isn't free. Its upfront cost is based on what you're buying. For example, the Buy Back benefit on a \$2,500 TV would cost \$349.99. New laptops can run \$70 and phones \$40 to \$60. Second, Best Buy won't give you the full purchase price back. The amount is based on the age of the device and the condition it's in. An item returned within six months will get you a maximum of 50% of the purchase price *provided* it's in good condition and you have all the parts. If you wait 18 to 24 months, you'll get no more than 20% and if you wait 24 to 48 months, you'll only get 10%.

Finally, you don't get cash but a Best Buy gift card, which, naturally, can only be used at Best Buy. So is it a good deal? Depends on how often you like to upgrade your equipment and how much you frequent Best Buy stores. If you like new things and love Best Buy, it's probably a great deal. However, there are many critics of the promotion who say the only beneficiary is Best Buy.

Careful! Phishing E-mails On The Rise

A phishing e-mail is an e-mail sent by a hacker designed to fool the recipient into downloading a virus, giving up their credit card number, personal information (like a social security number), or account or login information to a particular web site. Often these e-mails are well designed to look exactly like an official notification from the site they are trying to emulate.

For example, a recent phishing e-mail was circulated that appeared to come from Facebook stating that videos or photos of Osama Bin Laden's death were posted online. These e-mails looked exactly like a legitimate Facebook e-mail and even appeared to come from "Facebookmail.com." Once you clicked on the e-mail the phishing site would attempt to install a virus on your machine.

And now due to recent security breaches with Sony and e-mail marketer Epsilon, phishing attacks are going to increase - and they are going to get more sophisticated and harder to distinguish from legitimate e-mails. That's because the hackers that were able to access the private databases of the above mentioned companies now have the name, e-mail and interests of the subscribers, and in some cases birthdays, addresses and more. That means a phishing e-mail can be personalized with relevant information that the user provided to Sony, making the e-mail appear to be more legitimate and the user more likely to click on the links provided and take the actions requested. Now more than ever it's critical that you are wary of e-mail notifications and the actions they request you take. Even having good anti-virus software installed won't protect you if you give your account information away freely.

The Lighter Side... Church Bulletin Bloopers

The following are real messages that were posted on church bulletin boards:

- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It is a good chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.
- The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks On The Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching For Jesus."
- Next Thursday, there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- The agenda was adopted...the minutes were approved...the financial secretary gave a grief report.
- Barbara C. remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.
- The 'Over 60s Choir' will be disbanded for the summer with the thanks of the entire church.
- Missionary from Africa speaking at Calvary Memorial Church in Racine. Name: Bertha Belch. Announcement: "Come tonight and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa."
- Announcement in a church bulletin for a National Prayer & Fasting Conference: "The cost for attending the Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals."
- Miss Charlene Mason sang, "I Will Not Pass This Way Again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

Six Things To Never Say To A Police Officer During A Traffic Stop



Your chances of talking your way out of a traffic ticket are slim - but it's not uncommon for a driver to talk themselves INTO one by insulting the officer or annoying them enough to write a ticket when they might have otherwise let them off with a warning. Here are the things NOT to say:

1. "Whatever..." This disrespectful remark will almost always insult the officer and land you with a ticket. Same goes for rolling your eyes, arguing or making profane remarks.
2. "I didn't run that light!" or other denials of wrong doing. If you did something wrong, admit it; you're more likely to be given a warning. Of course, if you truly didn't feel like you did what the officer claimed, don't say you did something wrong just to agree with the officer.
3. "I know the mayor." Never pull a power play like this on an officer. They aren't afraid of who you're friends with if you broke the law. Remember, they're doing their job by stopping you.
4. "I'm calling my lawyer." Again, this won't threaten the police officer because they deal with lawyers all the time. Threatening an officer with your attorney is a no-win situation for you.

Client Spotlight: City of Manistee

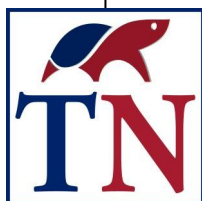
The City of Manistee is a burgeoning tourist and fishing destination, located at the mouth of the Manistee River. The municipalities of Northern Michigan have begun taking advantage of the improved productivity and efficiencies that technology can provide; and Manistee is no exception. Right now, Terrapin Networks is working with the City to implement a city-wide WiFi network, with public hotspots. Once completed, Manistee will be able to expand the services offered to residents, visitors and public employees.

Would you like your company highlighted here in our "Client Spotlight"? Email us at feedback@terrapinIT.com

Chew Gum And 3 Other Simple Ways To Prevent Heart Disease

In addition to avoiding the “big” things like smoking, obesity and high cholesterol, there are a few small things you can do to impact your cardiovascular health:

1. **Take two baby aspirin daily.** The American Journal of Medicine recently concluded that taking 2 baby aspirin a day can reduce the risk of a first-time heart attack or stroke by 30%.
2. **Chew gum and floss.** People with gum disease are three times more likely to have a heart attack than those without it. That’s because plaque, the sticky film on your teeth, harbor bacteria. That bacteria then enters the bloodstream and causes chronic inflammation that increases the risk for clots and other heart attack risk factors.
3. **Drink tea.** A heart specialists at Brigham’s Women’s hospital discovered that people who drank one or more cups of black tea daily were 44% less likely to have a heart attack than those who didn’t drink tea.
4. **Take a Vitamin D supplement.** Vitamin D is considered the “hot” new supplement for good reason; it’s considered that two thirds of all Americans don’t get enough of the critical vitamin. In addition to an increased risk for heart disease, vitamin D deficiency is also linked with insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, hypertension and diabetes.



How To Pick A Good Password

What’s the most common password? You guessed it...”password.” Obviously this is not the best way to protect yourself against hackers and online thieves. But even if you don’t use the word “password,” you might be using an equally easy password to decipher.

We suggest you DON’T use the following passwords for really important web sites, such as your online banking web site or other financially related sites:

- Your name or your spouse’s name.
- Your children’s names.
- Your pet’s name.
- Your birth date.
- The last four digits of your Social Security number.
- Your phone number.
- Your address.
- A series of consecutive numbers, such as “1, 2, 3, 4.”
- A single word that would appear in a dictionary.

Your best bet for creating a strong password: Use combinations of letters, numbers and special characters.

Who Else Wants To Win A \$25 Gift Card?

Take our monthly “Trivia Challenge” and you could win too!

The Grand Prize Winner of last month’s Trivia Challenge Quiz is **Craig O’Connor** from Traverse City Christian Schools! He was the first person to correctly answer the quiz question from last month:

What inventor averaged one patent for every three weeks of his life?

- a) Thomas Edison b) Benjamin Franklin c) Alexander Graham Bell

The correct answer is a) Thomas Edison. Congratulations, Craig, you’ve won a \$25 gas card!

Now, here’s this month’s trivia question. The winner will receive a \$25 gas card.

The word ‘patriotism’ comes from the Latin *patria* which means...

- a) Loyalty b) Homeland c) Pride d) Freedom

Be the first to email us the correct answer!
trivia@terrapiinIT.com