



# Tim Gillen's Executive IT Report

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

### Disaster Recovery: The Most Critical Part To Data Backups That Most Companies Overlook

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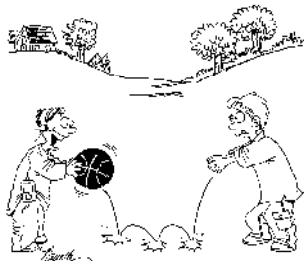
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"Cool! How long does it hold a charge?"

A few months back tornados ripped through Joplin, Missouri and Tuscaloosa, Alabama causing massive devastation. If you were fortunate, you only had to suffer through minor interruptions of utility services, with others paying a far steeper price. In fact, a colleague of mine who also offers IT services had his office in Joplin reduced to a pile of rubble (see photo). This got me thinking about how important disaster recovery planning is to any business. No one expects terrible things to happen, but when they do, having that plan in place can really save your bacon. And one of the MOST important aspects of this is the **recovery** part - 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.

Plus, the above *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.

Of course, this is a simple analogy - and there are ways to back up your data and network so that recovery can happen inexpensively in a matter of hours versus days or weeks. But if you simply think having a tape backup is going to be your saving grace, you might be unpleasantly surprised. 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.

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## 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!

*Cont...*

to be back up and running in the event of a disaster. If losing your data would only be a mild inconvenience and you could stand to be down for a couple of days, then tape backups may be okay. If that's not an option for you and there are certain critical functions that need to happen to keep you from getting into hot water with your customers and to prevent you losing a LOT of cash, then you want something more reliable than tape drives.

The BEST thing to do is contact our office to schedule a strategy meeting to go over your needs and expectations for what should happen in the event of downtime or an outright disaster. That way you know for sure what to expect and - more importantly - how to accurately prepare for a disaster.

## New Facebook App Lets You Leave Messages To Loved Ones (And Enemies!) When You Die

I suppose it was only a matter of time before someone came up with the idea of a Facebook application that allows you to record a message that will be shared with your friends and family after you die. While the concept isn't a new one, putting it on a social media site certainly is.

This new application called, “If I Die,” allows you record a video message directly from your webcam (you can also draft a letter if you prefer). After recording, you are prompted to select three trustees that will be appointed to hold your message. It takes all three of those trustees to say that you are actually dead before the message is released to all friends and family via your Facebook page. Not too surprisingly, some of the videos being recorded aren't very nice.





## Mozilla's new Add-on

Do you frequently use Google's online services such as Gmail, Calendar, and Reader? Do wish there were a way you could view all of these services in one page? If you use Mozilla Firefox as your browser, you're in luck. Firefox has a free Add-on called "Integrated Gmail" which allows you to view these services from one page.

Go to the [Mozilla Firefox Add-on page](#) and click the "+Add to Firefox" button for Integrated Gmail. Be sure to click on the Install button that shows in the popup confirmation dialog box. After the add-on installs, restart your browser and then log in to your Gmail account. Magically, new links to Reader, Calendar, and other Google services will appear in your page.

## What The Heck Is A Web Site Certificate And Why Should You Care?

If you ever make purchases online, you must know how to quickly determine if the web site you are about to buy from is secure.

A secure connection is an encrypted exchange of information between the web site you are visiting and the browser you are using. Encryption of data is simply a process of converting the information you type in (your name, address, and credit card number) into an unreadable format that only the receiving web site can decipher.

Encryption is done through a document the web site provides called a web site certificate. When you send information to the web site, it is encrypted at your computer and decrypted at the web site to prevent hackers from intervening and stealing your credit card information. So how do you know if a site has a certificate and a secure connection? There are two things to look for. Just note that these two checks only apply to the web page where you actually enter your credit card information, NOT the entire site itself.

Once you are on the actual order page, look for a tiny yellow padlock in the bottom right corner of your web browser. Depending on your browser version, the Security Status bar may be located on the top of the browser and to the right of the Address bar. The padlock should be closed (locked). Next, look at the actual URL. It should begin with "https" rather than the standard "http." If you are on a web site and you see these two things, the site will have a certificate. You can view the certificate by double clicking the yellow padlock. Upon clicking, a certificate dialogue box will pop up that contains information about who the certificate is issued to, who it was issued by, and when it expires.

Another way you can view a site's certificate is through your browser's menu options. In Internet Explorer, go to File, Properties and then click on the Certificates button. The same dialogue box will then come up for you. In Firefox, go to Tools, Page Info and then click on the Security tab. You can then click on the View button to see that site's certificate.

If you ever get a warning that there is a problem with the web site's certificate, it could be due to a number of problems such as the names on the certificates don't match up with the web site or the certificate has expired. If this happens, you may want to call the company and place your order by phone rather than going through their web site. Finally, make sure you check out every company's Privacy Policy. Even if they have a secure checkout process, they could give or sell your information to third party companies.

### Client Spotlight: BATA

BATA (Bay Area Transportation Authority) provides public transportation for all of Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties. The system offers scheduled and dial-a-ride transportation 365 days a year to any destination in the two counties. Terrapin Networks is currently assisting BATA in implementing a real-time logistics management system, providing the vehicles with up-to-date route and scheduling information.

*Would you like your company highlighted here in our "Client Spotlight"? Email us at [feedback@terrapinIT.com](mailto:feedback@terrapinIT.com)*

## Steve Jobs Is Building A Spaceship On Earth (Cupertino City, CA To Be Exact)

Steve Jobs is "selling" Apple again – only this time he's pitching the Cupertino City Council on allowing him to develop a 150-acre plot of land to build, "The best office building in the world." This building will be home to a new Apple Campus – and without a doubt it's a very ambitious plan.

This giant building would hold 12,000 people. But that's not what makes this project so interesting – it's the circular design that gives it a spaceship appearance. In fact, there won't be a single straight piece of glass on the outside.

During his presentation, it was reported that Steve Jobs wasn't in his normal "pitch mode" we're used to seeing on stage at Apple keynotes and events. During this presentation he was reported as being much more low-key because he knows the city council can say "No" to his project if they want to. He's still salesy, but doesn't use words like "magical" or "insanely great."

And yet you can still see a tough streak in his proposal. When a council member asked if Apple plans to give the city free Wi-Fi, he replied, "We're the largest taxpayers in Cupertino, so we'd like to continue to stay here and pay taxes." Obviously that can be both a benefit and threat that Apple would pack up its bags and leave if not granted this request. Other highlights about the campus:

- The building would use its own natural gas generator as its primary source of power and the city's power grid only as a backup.
- The building includes an auditorium for conferences giving them the ability to hold their events there instead of San Fran.
- Apple wants to break ground next year, and move in by 2015.

## 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 fuel 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](http://www.grouponworks.com)

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

Take my monthly "Trivia Challenge" and you could win too!

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Ron Robinson of Wicksall Distributing. He was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month:

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

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

The correct answer is b) Homeland. Congratulations, Ron, you've won a \$25 Gas Card !

Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a \$25.00 gas card.

**Prince Charles once said, "Diana only married me so that she could..." what?**  
a) Be a Princess b) Live in a palace c) Wear the family jewelry  
d) Go through red lights

**Be the first to email us the correct answer!**

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