



Tim Gillen's Executive IT Report

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

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we *shine!* Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"

- Tim Gillen, Terrapin Networks

September 2011

Inside This Issue...

We're Talking Cloud, And It Ain't About The Weather—Cloud Basics You Should KnowPage 1

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month: Magic Wand Universal RemotePage 2

4 Questions About BackupsPage 2

Are Digital Devices Dumbing us down?.....Page 3

3 Reasons to Have a BlogPage 3

How Is A Pawn Shop Like A Good Referral Process?Page 4

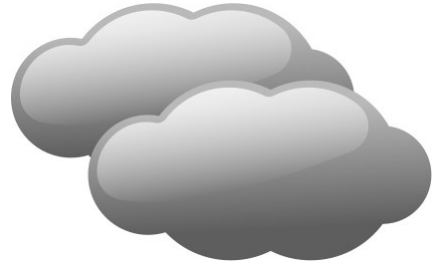
A Simple Way To Increase Employee ProductivityPage 4



"I wrote assembly instructions for Children's toys. What did you do?"

We're Talking Cloud, And It Ain't About The Weather—Cloud Basics You Should Know

With all of the buzz lately about everything being "in the cloud," you are probably wondering exactly what Cloud Computing is. First, take this easy 30-second quiz to determine if you are currently using Cloud Computing:



Question: Do you use any of the following services in your life?

- Gmail, Hotmail or other online e-mail services
- YouTube, Netflix or other streaming videos/movies
- Constant Contact, aWeber or other e-mail broadcasting services
- Salesforce CRM
- Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or other social media websites
- Just about any other website service that does not require you to install a program on your local computer to run

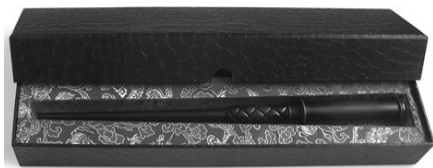
If you answered YES to any of the above services, then you are already using "Cloud Computing" today. Congratulations!

Basically, the web and cloud computing are to storing and processing data what the electrical grid and electric company are to plugging in your coffee maker: A more convenient, more reliable and less expensive way to access the "computing power" and resources you need to power the tools you use. You plug the coffee maker into the wall and everything just happens in the background to power the machine with electricity for a small fraction of the cost that you'd pay if you tried to generate electricity all on your own.

Just recently, Microsoft released Office 365, which is a cloud computing or SaaS solution. The idea is that instead of a business having to purchase one or more servers, heavy-duty computer workstations, the Windows Operating System software, Microsoft Office and the technical support to install, configure and support a network (which can be very expensive), businesses now have the option of simply paying \$6 to \$24 per user per month and to access Microsoft Office via the Internet. While this service appears to be cheap, it's NOT necessarily the best solution for most small businesses. There are elements of this offering that must be considered as well as hidden costs that could ultimately make this cheap offering rather expensive.

If you want to know if cloud computing is right for you, visit our website at www.terrapinit.com or give us a call at 231-941-2100...cont.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month: Magic Wand Universal Remote



Harry Potter might be over, but your magic show is just beginning.

This is no ordinary universal remote control. The Magic Wand Programmable TV Remote will learn up to 13 commands from your existing remote controls and map them to particular magical motions. The Wand can learn from any remote in your house, and once you master its 13 movements, you can mastermind a symphony of electronic enjoyment from the comfort of your couch.

With a little practice you can flip the channel with a flick of your wand and twist your wand to turn up the volume. It's compatible with almost all makes of TV, DVR, or really anything with a remote!

No more boring channel changing, now you can be the wizard you've always dreamed of being! Bonus—this one is a lot easier to hide from the kids than a regular-sized remote.

You know you want one...learn more and order yours at www.thinkgeek.com.

during the month of September for a **free**, no-pressure, no-obligation **cloud readiness assessment**.

4 Questions About Backups That Business Owners Should Know The Answers To

The old saying, "Pack your own parachute," comes to mind when I think of data backups or, more specifically, data RECOVERY. However, how many people actually know how to pack their proverbial data backup "parachute" and instead rely on someone else - be it an employee or vendor?

If that's you, read on. Since the absolute WORSE time to check your backups is AFTER a data disaster, all company CEOs ought to know the answers to the following questions NOW so they aren't unpleasantly surprised later when data gets erased and they're scrambling to get back up and running:

1. Where EXACTLY is your data being backed up, and how do you get access to it? If it's being hosted in a remote place, you ought to have the account information and a direct contact you can call if your vendor or employee goes missing with this information. Ideally, It should be in your network documentation that is kept in your operations manual or somewhere you can easily access it if necessary.

2. Who's responsible for monitoring the backups to make sure they are working? When data is lost, the finger pointing starts. It's not uncommon to hear, "Well I thought (they/he/she) was in charge of our backups!" only to discover that this person (be it a vendor or employee) actually has no idea that they had such an important responsibility. Keep in mind that many offsite backup companies allow you to store your data there, but they won't agree to ANY responsibility for whether or not the data is being backed up correctly, completely or in a format that can be restored.

3. How often do you run a test restore? The only way to know if your backups are working properly is to conduct a test restore or "fire drill" of your data. We recommend running this once a month at a minimum to verify that you can actually restore from your backups in an emergency.

4. If your data is lost, what's the process required to restore it? some business owners don't realize that their raw data backups would take a LOT longer to restore than they imagine. If you are not "imaging" your data (a process that takes a snapshot of your server as is) you will have to reload all of your software, set up the network, reconfigure your settings and THEN restore the data - a process that can take the better part of a week PROVIDED you still have your original software discs and licenses.

Our Free Backup Audit will give you the answers to these critical questions. If you don't know the answers to these questions, give us a call to schedule a FREE inspection of your backup process. At a minimum you'll know for sure that your data is safe and in a format that can get you back up and running again FAST. Call: 231-941-2100 or e-mail us at: terrapin@terrapinit.com

Are Digital Devices Dumbing Us Down?

Cell phones, which have become full-fledged computers with highspeed Internet connections, let people relieve the tedium of exercising, the grocery store line, stoplights or lulls in the dinner conversation. Now, instead of having a moment of downtime, every waking second can be filled with text messages, e-mail, Internet connectivity and games. But is this constant digital connection harming us?

According to scientists, the answer is a resounding "yes." One of the unanticipated side effects of not giving your brain a break from the constant "noise" of PCs, cell phones, iPods, Blackberry and other digital devices is brain fatigue. People who keep their minds busy with constant digital input are not allowing their brains much-needed downtime. One study conducted by the University of Michigan showed that a person was more effective at learning, retaining and processing information after a walk in nature versus a walk in a high-strung, noisy urban environment because the constant stimulation fatigues the brain, making it more difficult to be effective. One neurologist was quoted as saying, "People think they are refreshing themselves when they are actually fatiguing their brains."

So the next time you have a minute waiting in line or at a stop light, resist the urge to pick up your cell phone and text someone!

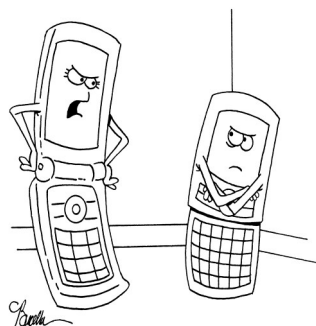
3 Reasons To Have A Blog (Even If Nobody Reads It)

Building a massive following online is no easy task. But before you give up on your company blog due to the disappointing number of all who read and comment on it, here are 3 reasons to reconsider:

Search Engine Optimization. If for no other reason, blogging weekly about a particular topic will work wonders for your search engine optimization. Make sure your blog entries frequently include the keywords that people are likely use when searching for your services online, but avoid spamming the blog (overusing the words). There's no scientific percentage here; just don't repeat them so often that your writing seems unnatural to your readers.

Free PR. The media is constantly surfing the web for content and for experts who can provide content and commentary. All it takes is one reporter to find you online and you could get tons of free publicity. You can bolster your chances of getting mentioned by writing about current events in the world or local news. For example, if you sell insurance and a hurricane or other natural disaster hits your town, you should blog about useful tips for people submitting claims to their insurance agents or how to determine how much insurance you should have, etc.

Indirect Selling. Writing stories about projects you are working on, clients you're serving or case studies is a great way to showcase your expertise and "indirectly" sell services. Of course, you can also use your blog for new product or service launches and get direct input from clients and prospects on new products and services they want to see.



"Don't use that ring tone with me, young man!"

How Is A Pawn Shop Like A Good Referral Process?

Have you noticed lately how more and more reality shows are cropping up about finding treasures in your rubble and selling old items for quick cash? Shows like "Pawn Stars" and "American Pickers" have become very popular and are inspiring people to look through all the stuff they have piled up to see if they might have hidden gems they can cash in.

The guys who run the shops work hard. They run around nonstop looking for items to buy, purchase things they *think* they can sell for a profit and then hope for the best.

In many ways, these shop owners are just like you, working hard to find new customers and then taking a chance on new ones that you *hope* will become long-term clients. And this particular exchange of goods for money is similar to a business referral system.

How do you find the treasures (customers) you want in your business? Here are a few ways to get "pickers" working for your business:

- Set up a referral system that encourages existing customers to spread the word about you.
- Run a monthly referral contest that rewards those with the most referrals.
- Include a referral notice and incentive in every invoice or communication with your customers.

Just like the pawn shop owners need to know what they are looking for in a pile of rubble, you need to be sure that your "pickers" have a detailed description of what a good customer looks like for you.

With these systems in place, you'll have new treasures in no time.

A Simple Way To Increase Employee Productivity

According to a University of Utah study, you can increase your efficiency (or your employees' efficiency) by 25% just by adding a second monitor. With multiple monitors, you can get more done since you aren't minimizing and maximizing all day long. Therefore, adding monitors can be a money maker for your company.



The study documentation states that 108 university and non-university personnel participated in a comparison of single monitor, multi-monitor, and multi-monitor with Hydravision display configurations. Respondents edited slide shows, spreadsheets, and text documents in a simulation of office work, using each of the display arrays. Performance measures—including task time, editing time, number of edits completed, and number of errors made, as well as usability measures evaluating effectiveness, comfort, learning ease, time to productivity, quickness of recovery from mistakes, ease of task tracking, ability to maintain task focus, and ease of movement among sources—were combined into an overall evaluation of productivity. Multi-screens scored significantly higher on every measure. Respondents got on task quicker, did the work faster, and got more of the work done with fewer errors in multi-screen configurations than with a single screen.

Consider trying this in your office. Add a monitor or two to your desk and to those of your employees. See what kind of feedback you get and how much more efficient and productive they become when they have the ability to move quicker, use multiple applications at once and no longer have to constantly minimize windows.

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 Geoff Harris of Harris Agency He was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month:

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

The correct answer is d) Go through red lights. Congratulations, Geoff, you've won a \$25.00 gas card.

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

Which of these great construction and engineering achievements in American history was unofficially opened on August 15, 1914?

- a)The Panama Canal b)Alcatraz c)Mount Rushmore

Email your answer right now to trivia@terrapinit.com