



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. 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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The Top 5 Worst High-Tech Habits To Break In 2012

Admit it; you have some bad habits when it comes to maintaining the security and "health" of the high-tech tools you dearly depend on. Since it's a fresh, new year, we thought it would be appropriate to point out the top 5 bad habits you should work on fixing in 2012.

1. **Not backing up your data.** Funny how most people start their confession of not backing up their data with the words, "I know it's bad, but..." If you know, then why are you still doing it? There's absolutely no good reason to let this one continue. Call us and we'll hook you up with a solid backup plan that will make sure you can be back up and running again FAST.
2. **Relying on tape drives to backup your data.** This is almost as bad as bad habit #1. Why? Because tape drives have an average failure rate of 100% – and that's not a typo. It's not a matter of "if" but "when" is your tape drive going to fail. Trash 'em and get a better system in place!
3. **Using weak passwords.** If you've ever used the word "password" as your password, we're talking to you! A good password should contain a combination of numbers and upper and lower case letters.
4. **Not installing the latest security patches and software updates.** Once a new patch is released by a software vendor, it acts like a green light for hackers who instantly implement viruses and scams to take advantage of those individuals who don't regularly update (patch) their system.
5. **Printing and storing paper documents for everything.** The cost of installing a document imaging (also called document management) solution has come down dramatically, and it is now easier than ever to implement. Plus you get the added benefits of saved storage space, saved time in searching for documents, instant access to any paper file via the Internet, fewer lost files, less chance of losing critical documents to fire, water, or wear and tear, AND a cost saving on paper and ink. With all these benefits, why on earth would you still stick to your Stone Age paper filing system?

Want help in breaking any of these bad habits? Call today for a no-obligation, no-pressure consultation on how we can help you break these bad high-tech habits for good!

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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month: Quirky Ray Solar Powered Charger Have Sun, Will Travel



It happens all the time...you are out at a meeting, traveling or running errands, you look down and realize your smartphone is on its last bar of battery.

No need to fret when this happens again! Charging on the go has never been easier. With the Quirky ray solar powered charger, you simply connect your phone and suction the device to a nearby window (in your office, your car or even on an airplane) and it will begin to charge using the solar power surrounding you.

The charger measures 2.5 X 2.5 X 3 inches. Its suctioning stand absorbs solar energy while its battery stores the power. It provides enough energy to fully charge a mobile phone. The solar powered device has an LED indicator and also comes with a USB port to facilitate connections to electronic devices.

The flexible suction cup can be attached to any window to absorb solar energy. This is perfect for car and airline travel. Pre-order yours for around \$40:

<http://www.quirky.com/products>

Humble Beginnings

In the early 1960's, Phillip Knight and his college track coach, William Bowerman, sold imported Japanese sneakers from the backend of a station wagon. They invested \$1,000 in start-up costs to get their company off and running.

In 1907, two teenagers from Seattle began a message-and-parcel delivery service for local merchants. The total investment to get their company started was \$100.

With \$900, Tom Monaghan and his brother bought a small pizzeria in 1960 and expanded their company using a simple strategy: locate their stores near college campuses or military bases and deliver their pizza within 30 minutes of receiving an order. Tom Monaghan didn't finish college, but as he would note, he stayed long enough to learn that college kids eat a lot.

In 1933, with \$923 of their own money and \$5,000 that they borrowed, two brothers with no business experience, rented a warehouse in Modesto, California and launched their business. Not only were they lacking business experience, they learned their new chosen profession, wine-making, by studying pamphlets at the local library.

An old, white-haired man drove around the country, giving out samples to people, of what he had cooked in the back of his station wagon. He wanted to show people just how good his fried specialty tasted.

Michael started his company in his college dorm room and ended up dropping out of college. Harvard college drop-out Bill and his high school friend Allen, moved into an Albuquerque hotel room, started a little computer software company and went bankrupt. Restarted it again, with a slightly different name, and the rest is history.

Today might not be going so well for you ... and you or your company might be facing challenges or competition that seem to be overwhelming. I think it is safe to say Nike, United Parcel Service, Domino's Pizza, E & J Gallo Winery, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Dell Computer, and Microsoft all felt the same way numerous times. Success comes to those who will persist, fight, challenge, and change when times get tough. Nothing worthwhile ever comes easy. If those great companies can come from such humble beginnings and make it work ... so can you.



Guest article provided by:

Robert Stevenson is a highly sought after, internationally known speaker. He is the author of the best-selling books "How to Soar Like An Eagle in a World Full of Turkeys" and "52 Essential Habits For Success." Robert is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and is a former All-American Athlete. He started his first business at 24 and has owned several companies. Robert has international sales experience dealing in over 20 countries and his client list reads like a Who's Who in Business. He has shared the podium with such renowned names as Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf, Former President George H.W. Bush, Anthony Robbins and Steven Covey. www.robertstevenson.org/

Should You Leave Your Computer On At Night Or Turn It Off?

We've been asked by customers whether or not they should leave their computer on all the time or turn it off when they are not using it.

Several years ago I would have told my clients to turn their machines off to save power. But with the proliferation of viruses and threats over the last few years, I have changed my mind.

Today, anti-virus programs and anti-spyware application need regular updating. These updates are often scheduled to run in the wee hours of the morning when you are not using your computer.

Windows also needs to be updated whenever a new security patch is released. This is usually not daily, but it may happen several times a month. It's important to update your operating system as soon as a patch becomes available because hackers move very quickly to reverse engineer Windows updates. As soon as an update is released, they create a virus specific to that vulnerability and start looking for unprotected machines to infect and invade.

In addition to the above, you should be backing up your data every day, and the best time to do this is at night when you are not using it.

So bottom line, leave your computer on all night and restart it two or three times a week to clear the memory.

The 15 Most Important Rules Of E-mail Etiquette

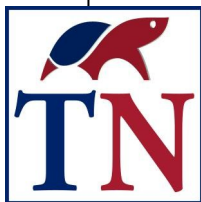


More than 80 years have passed since Emily Post wrote her first book on etiquette. Back then, the rules had more to do with how to properly introduce someone and which fork to use at a dinner party. But with the introduction of new communication tools comes new rules of engagement. Here are 15 quick tips and rules for what is—and isn't—acceptable behavior when using e-mail.

- 1) Be concise and to the point. Read your e-mail to make sure it makes sense before sending to avoid e-mail “ping-pong.”
- 2) Slow down with the CC option—CC is overused as a way to keep people “in the loop”, and in fact just adds to inbox overload.
- 3) Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation. This is still a communication and a representation of YOU. Sloppy spelling and punctuation looks unprofessional.
- 4) Don't use e-mail to deliver bad or personal news. If you need to discuss a serious matter with someone, only use e-mail to request a face to face meeting or phone call, not to deliver the news.
- 5) Do not attach unnecessary files, especially large ones. Sending big files can cause someone's e-mail system to clog, shut down or crash. Instead, use www.yousendit.com for large documents.
- 6) Do not overuse the high priority option. Use it only when something is truly critical and time sensitive.
- 7) Do not write in CAPITALS—it's the equivalent of shouting.
- 8) Don't leave out the message thread.
- 9) Give your recipients an easy way to opt-out or remove themselves from your list.
- 10) Do not overuse “Reply to All.” If you have a message for the sender that is not relevant to everyone else, make sure you only send it to that person.
- 11) Do not “CC” everyone when sending a broadcast to multiple people. Instead, use the bcc (blind carbon copy) to keep everyone's e-mail private.
- 12) Don't overuse abbreviations and emoticons.
- 13) Don't use neon colors, hard to read fancy fonts and background images. They make it difficult—if not impossible—to read your message.
- 14) Only use rich text and HTML messages when you are certain the recipient can receive that type of message. Many people can only open text messages, and most rich text and HTML messages don't convert well.
- 15) Do not forward a message that was sent to you without permission from the original sender.
- 16) Do not use email to discuss confidential information. If you don't want the entire world to see it, then don't put it in an e-mail.

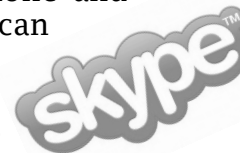
10 Easy Ways To Keep Your Computers Safe

1. Be sure you have a good anti-virus program installed that includes anti-spyware.
2. Make sure all of your security programs have real-time updates and scans to check for viruses on a continuous basis.
3. Check regularly to be sure your virus scan programs are up-to-date and the most recent versions.
4. Have a firewall installed and make sure it is properly configured.
5. Make sure your browsers have the latest security patches installed.
6. Avoid downloading applications from the Internet. Free games and applications often contain unwanted spyware and malware.
7. Be careful when you open e-mail attachments. Even if you know the person sending it to you, scan the e-mail before you open it.
8. Install a spam filter or delete spam e-mail as soon as it arrives in your inbox. Do not be tempted to open spam as such messages can often contain links that lead to phishing sites or viruses.
9. Beware of virus hoaxes. If you receive an e-mail that says certain files on your computer need to be deleted because they have been infected with a virus then search the web for sites that write about hoaxes to see if the message is genuine or not.
10. Always choose secure passwords. Do not use names of relatives, birth dates or anything else that can be easily guessed. Use a combination of letter, numbers and symbols to strengthen passwords.



Skype – It's Much More Than Video Chatting

When most people think of Skype, they think of video chatting. The truth is, Skype is much more. Skype works on your computer, regular phone, or cell phone and runs off your Internet connection so you can talk, IM, send pictures, videos and conduct live video conferences for free with anyone else in the world that also has Skype. It even works on various game consoles.



You can also use Skype to make calls, texts, and video conferences to phone numbers that do not have Skype. Because of its versatility, ease of use, and low-cost, many businesses are adopting the technology to help them communicate with their mobile workers and with vendors from around the world.

To set up Skype on your computer, simply go to www.skype.com and click on the "Download" tab. To install on your mobile phone, open up your phone's web browser and go to skype.com/m.

Merry Christmas And Holiday Blessings!

We have had a great year here at Terrapin Networks and because of that we'd like to spread the goodwill—and we're enlisting your help, being as we had this great year together. (It's OK you don't know anything about this—we're handling everything!).

We have partnered with the Father Fred Foundation here in Traverse City on two initiatives, both of which are done in the name of Terrapin Networks and our clients:

1. We are donating and delivering an All-In-One computer and a copy of Microsoft Office Home & Student to a local needy family. This will be delivered Friday December 23. A family in Mancelona was chosen; it's a grandmother who is raising two boys.
2. We are donating a turkey to a needy family in the name of each of our Terrapin T-Net clients. The Father Fred group will be dispersing these before Christmas.
(Note: We purchased the turkeys from Oryana Natural Foods, a great place to buy local food and a Terrapin T-Net client!)

Info on the Father Fred Foundation: <http://www.fatherfred.org/>

So, we have to warn you: No candies and peanuts this year...just a helping hand to those in need.

Thank You for a great year...here's to a prosperous 2012!

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