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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.

A good example of this is 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, businesses now have the option of simply paying \$6 to \$24 per user per month and to access Microsoft Office via the Internet.

You still need to have a properly functioning network and there are a number of issues with Office 365, but it does mean you should be keeping an open mind when it comes to Cloud Computing. There are Cloud options hosted in Canada to look at and the most important thing is to make sure it makes sense for your business.

If you want to know if cloud computing is right for you, give us a call at 416-913-8998 during the month of September for a free, no-pressure, no-obligation cloud readiness assessment.

Recent post from www.tdcnet.ca/blog

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.

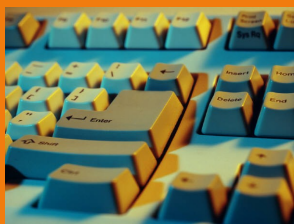
Consider trying this in your office. Add a monitor or two to your desk and to those of your employees. See what kind of feedback you get and how much more efficient and productive they become when they have the ability to move quicker, use multiple applications at once and no longer have to constantly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



TECH TIP OF THE MONTH

Keyboard Shortcuts

Want to open a new document or internet window without using your mouse? Press Ctrl + N and voila, a new document or internet window magically appears.



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Techie Dictionary

Random Access Memory: The working memory of the computer. RAM is the memory used for storing data temporarily while working on it, running application programs, etc. "Random access" refers to the fact that any area of RAM can be accessed directly and immediately, in contrast to other media such as a magnetic tape where the tape must be wound to the point where the data is.



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

A few months back tornados ripped through Joplin, MO and Tuscaloosa, Alabama causing massive devastation.

The fortunate ones 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



This is the office of a colleague in Joplin who we meet with regularly as part of group of IT business owners we belong to. Last meeting he shared his experience having his office reduced to rubble.

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 or hard drive 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.

So what do you need to think about? First, the way you backup your data should be based on how important your data is and how fast you would need 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.

-Brendan Howe

NEWS & NOTES FROM THE TDCNET TEAM



John Harte & his new wife Nicole walking out of the church just after their wedding ceremony.

John & Nicole Tie The Knot

August was an exciting month for the TDCNet family! One of our own was married in a wonderful ceremony in St. Catharines.

John Harte, our Problem Prevention Team Lead, tied the knot with his beautiful wife Nicole. John wore a traditional Scottish kilt and looked pretty good as well.

Many members of the TDCNet team were on hand with our significant others to lend our support and join in the celebration. And it was quite the celebration!

After a trip to a local winery between the ceremony and reception, we all partied well into the night, even drinking a mystery drink out of a bucket that John said was a family tradition. We all survived it whatever it was!

Nicole and John spent the two weeks after their wedding honeymooning in Jamaica, getting a well-deserved rest from all the wedding planning and hard work at the office.

We're happy to have John back now. We hope you will join us in congratulating both him and Nicole!

Trivia: Do You Know the Answer This Month?

Prince Charles once said, "Diana only married me so that she could..." what?

- a) Be a Princess
- b) Live in a palace
- c) Go through red lights
- d) Wear the family jewelry

Remember, first person to call in with the correct answer wins a Tim Horton's gift card! (416) 913-8998

Last Month's Winner

Catherine Sewell from IBM called in with the correct answer again, way to go Catherine!

In Michael Bay's summer blockbuster Transformers: Dark of the Moon, which two IT brands are marketed in the movie through the use of product placement?

- a. Cisco & IBM
- b. **Lenovo & Cisco**
- c. Microsoft & Lenovo

The correct answer was **b. Lenovo & Cisco**.



Managing your connections

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