



“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!”  
 - **Matt Weaver, Echo Systems**

**August, 2011  
 Bridgeville, PA**

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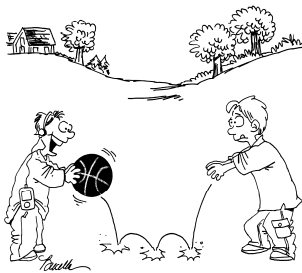
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“Cool! How long does it hold a charge?”

*“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**

A few months back tornados ripped through Joplin, MO 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.

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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!

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.

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 weeks, 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 or simple file copies.

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 En- emies!) 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.

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*The Lighter Side...*  
**Caught...**  
 By A Gravy Ladle?

In France, the young assistant priests do not live in the main rectory. That is reserved for the priest and his housekeeper.

One day the priest invited his new young assistant priest to have dinner at the rectory. While being served, the young priest noticed how shapely and lovely the housekeeper was and down deep in his heart he wondered if there was more between the priest and the housekeeper.

Annoyed by what he saw and emboldened with youth, the young priest asked the older priest if in fact, there was something going on between him and the housekeeper. The middle-aged priest assured the young priest that everything was purely professional...that she was the housekeeper and cook and that was that.

About a week later the housekeeper came to the priest and said, "Father, ever since the new assistant came for dinner I have not been able to find the beautiful silver gravy ladle. You don't suppose he took it, do you?" The priest said, "Well, I doubt it but I'll write him a letter."

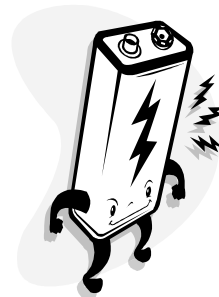
So he sat down and wrote, "Dear Father, I'm not saying you did take the gravy ladle and I'm not saying you did not take the gravy ladle. But the fact remains that it has been missing since you were here for dinner. Can you please write back and clarify this matter for us."

The young assistant received the letter and he answered it as follows:

"Dear Father priest, I'm not saying that you do sleep with the Housekeeper, and I'm not saying that you do not sleep with the housekeeper. But I do know for sure that if you slept in your own bed you would find the gravy ladle."

## The Top 5 Long-Life, Lightweight Laptops For Business Travelers

If you travel a lot and you're tired of anemic laptop batteries that make you hunt down a power outlet in the airport, you'll want to know about these new portables that can sustain you from LAX to New York. Of course, between the time I write this article and print—these models just might be outdated. The top five netbooks/notebooks, arranged in order below from longest to shortest battery life, will keep you going for anywhere from 7 to nearly 9 hours. With battery power like that, you'll be able to keep your attention on your work and be very productive on the road.



### Lenovo ThinkPad X200

This lightweight laptop offers maximum battery life of 8 hours and 54 minutes when tested with a nine-cell battery option. The battery adds less than a pound to the computer, bringing the total weight to only 3.7 pounds for easy carrying. The nine-cell battery upgrade costs only \$50 more. The price for this laptop is currently around \$951.

### Samsung N110

The Samsung N110 did a stellar job in PC World's battery tests, lasting 8 hours, 23 minutes on a charge. At 2.7 pounds, this netbook is easy to carry as well. Prices for this model have dropped, putting it around \$410.

### Lenovo ThinkPad T400

ThinkPads are catnip to business travelers, thanks to their sturdy construction, solid performance, roomy keyboards, and – in the case of the Lenovo ThinkPad T400 – excellent battery life. The nine-cell battery added a bit of bulk but kept us working just shy of 8 hours. The T400 is available online for \$1289 and up.

### Acer TravelMate 6293

The Acer TravelMate may look a bit drab, but when it comes to long battery life, this one is a winner. In tests, it lasted 7 hours, 57 minutes; and for \$999, the price is right too.

### Samsung N120

This netbook not only has a great battery life but it also offers a very comfortable keyboard. In PCW tests, the N120 went for 7 hours, 43 minutes on a charge, which is excellent but not quite as good as its netbook sibling, the Samsung N110. The N120 is priced around \$410 online.

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## 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

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