



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

“The Top 5 Worst High-Tech Habits To Break In 2011”

“As a business owner, I know 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

January, 2011
Bridgeville, PA

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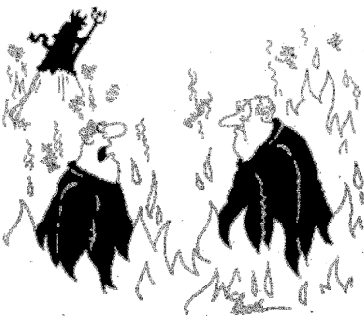
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“I wrote assembly instructions for Children’s toys. What did you do?”

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 2011.

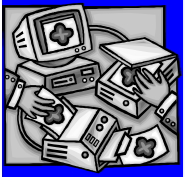
- 1) Not backing up your data.** Funny how most people start their confession of not backing up their data with the words, “I know it’s bad, but...” If you know, then why are you still doing it? There’s absolutely no good reason to let this one continue. Call me and we’ll hook you up with a solid backup 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?

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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month HP ePrint



Although companies with a properly configured network and remote-access have been able to print remotely for years, HP is making it simpler for the home office user to this as well!

The new HP ePrint lets you print documents and images from virtually any PC or phone simply by e-mailing them to your printer. If you can send an e-mail, you can use ePrint. Here's how it works:

First, you assign an email address to your printer and connect it to the Internet through either a wireless or wired connection. To print something, simply send an email containing your document to your printer's address – it's that simple! You can print images, Microsoft Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, PDFs, and photos. You can view and manage print jobs sent to your printer using your printer Job History that is available on HP's ePrintCenter.

One downside is that some documents printed with ePrint may appear different from the original in style, formatting and text flow. For documents that need to be printed with a higher quality (such as legal documents), you might want to go the traditional way of printing directly from your PC. The HP ePrint service is available free of charge with your HP ePrint-enabled printer and doesn't require any special software or smart phone apps to work.

How To Stop Employees From Indulging In Excessive Personal Cell Phone Use At Work

Thanks to smart phone technology, it seems like everyone is "plugged in" to 24/7 web access, texting, and e-mail; not to mention phone conversations. In some cases, people have become so addicted to their phones that they're texting constantly, even while driving, having dinner with their families or using the bathroom!



Clearly these devices can become a major distraction at work, causing major problems with productivity, especially if you want your staff to be focused on getting critical projects completed accurately and on time. But mandating a "no cell phone" policy may be too harsh. So where's the balance? Here are a few tips:

- 1) Implement a personal cell phone usage policy in writing. Taking a personal call from the daycare about a sick child may be acceptable, but spending 3 hours plus organizing a wedding is not. This should include certain etiquette rules, such as turning the ringer off during meetings or speaking softly to avoid disrupting others. If possible, get your employees involved in creating the policy; explain why you are doing it and that you want to make it fair and reasonable. Usually there are only a small percentage of employees who truly abuse the system, so you'll find most employees will be on board with the policy and happy to provide input.
- 2) Post this policy throughout the office as a reminder.
- 3) Review this policy with each employee and have them sign it.
- 4) Provide some flexibility for those in unusual circumstances, such as an employee with a sick child or with a recent death in the family.
- 5) Enforce the policy so everyone knows you are serious about it. One of the best ways for management to do this is by walking around. Since personal cell phones are not connected to the company's network, you really won't know if anyone is violating the policy unless you physically walk around to check on them from time to time.
- 6) Lead by example! Don't expect your employees to stay off their cell phones if you are constantly texting and talking on yours.

Attention: Your cell phone policy can be included in your AUP (acceptable usage policy) that directs how employees may or may not use company resources (Internet, e-mail, etc.). For more help in creating these policies, contact me!

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The Lighter Side...

Following IT Requirements?

During a recent password audit, the IT director discovered a new employee was using the following password:
MickeyMinniePlutoHuey
LouieDeweyDonaldGoofy
Sacramento

Out of curiosity, he asked why she was using such a long password, to which she replied, "I was told that it had to be at least 8 characters long and include at least one capital!" ...get it? Took me a moment, too!

Fake-Meanings

Coffee (n.), a person who is coughed upon.

Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you've gained.

Abdicate (v.), to give up hope of ever having a flat stomach.

Willy-nilly (adj.), impotent.

Gargoyle (n.), an olive-flavored mouthwash.

Flatulence (n.), an emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.

Balderdash (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.

Rectitude (n.), The dignified demeanor assumed by a proctologist immediately before he examines you.

Circumvent (n.), the opening in front of boxer shorts.

January Is National Clean Up Your Computer Month

(Something You'll RUSH To Do Once You Read This Survey That Reveals Just How Dirty Your Keyboard Is!)

Since there's a holiday or month for just about every cause imaginable, it should come as no surprise that cleaning your PC now has its own official month, awarded by none other than "The Vinegar Institute." But before you dismiss this one, consider this little factoid:



ABC news reported that a study in England revealed that the average office keyboard had bacteria and germ levels up to five times higher than those commonly found on a toilet seat.

The study, headed up by Dr. James Francis, a British microbiologist, took culture samples from 33 office keyboards in London, and compared these samples to swabs taken from toilet seats in the same office buildings, containing nasty germs such as e-coli and staph bacteria. It gives new meaning to the term, "computer virus!" So how do you not only disinfect your keyboard but also get those annoying smudges and fingerprints off your monitor? Here are a few tips:

- √ **Turn off the monitor.** It's not required, but it makes smudges and smears easier to see.
- √ **Use compressed air to get rid of light dust buildup in your keyboard and screen.** Never use a dish rag or paper towel to clean your monitor since they can scratch the screen; and you never want to use water on your keyboard if it's wireless! Wired ones might put up with this, but I don't recommend it. Unplug it first...
- √ **Don't use products with ethyl alcohol or ammonia based products to clean your monitor.** Products like Windex can yellow flat-screen or laptop monitors. Instead, use a cleaning product designed for monitors and use a lint-free cloth designed for the job. Note: Each monitor manufacturer has its own special instructions for cleaning so make sure you read what those are before attempting to clean up anything.
- √ **Lightly moisten your cloth with rubbing alcohol or cleaning solution to wipe off your mouse or keyboard areas.** Never apply the liquid directly to the screen, keyboard or other electronic parts.
- √ **A Q-tip dipped in alcohol will quickly clean your keyboard.** Just make sure you don't drip the liquid down between the keys. Personally I've found keyboards to be cheap—if it's too dirty, you can simply replace it.

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Text Messaging Used To Defeat The Taliban

According to an article in Network Computing Magazine, British Intelligence is using text-messaging spam as part of their PsyOps campaign to defeat the Taliban.

When they discover a Taliban fighter's cell phone number, they bombard it with spam messages such as "We know who you are, give up," and other demoralizing messages. They also send wrong information by pretending to be other Taliban fighters. The logic? Spam tends to enrage the user receiving it. Is it working? There was no report of the results, although I would imagine the Brits are having a good laugh over this.

The BIG Cost Of A Tiny Typo

A casino in Illinois wanted to reward its best customers and get them to come back for a repeat visit. To get this done they mailed out 11,000 coupons which included a few featuring cash prizes of \$525.

But thanks to the mistake of a third party printing company, ALL 11,000 coupons were printed with the same cash offer, obligating the casino to a total payout of \$5.8 million dollars in prizes. Although the contest rules included a disclaimer giving the casino the option to change or cancel the offer, the Illinois Gaming Board ordered the casino to honor the coupons. Now there's one marketing campaign that had the owners of the casino praying for a poor response!

Why Your "Not-To-Do" List Is Just As Important As Your "To-Do" List

One of the New Year's resolutions I often have is to get more organized and better manage my time. After all, who doesn't want to get more done? But a big mistake many people make is thinking ONLY in terms of "more" when it comes to getting things done. Why is this a mistake? Because chances are your plate is already full of to-do items; if you want to accomplish MORE, you'll have to actually start thinking about what you are going to STOP doing in order to fit in the more important tasks that move you closer to your goals.

As we all know, only about 20% of the things you do deliver 80% of the results you want to achieve. Therefore, in order to "get more done," you have to clearly identify what that 20% is and focus on doing more of those activities, and delegating or ignoring the 80% of time-wasting "stuff" we all get caught up in doing. What are some big time wasters?

- √ Not having a plan for your day and reacting to whatever shows up.
- √ Constant texting or online surfing. For many, this is a huge addiction and distraction that can waste HOURS.
- √ Checking e-mail every 5 minutes.

The last one (checking email) has been a big one for me. I'm "overly connected" between my web-enabled phone, and email on no less than a dozen computers. In the past I would have a window popup when a new email came in—and would often respond to it immediately. This resulted in my switching tasks constantly. The fact of the matter is that if something is truly urgent, someone will call you or find another way of contact than an email. I now look at my email 2-3 times a day and respond during those times. This allows me to focus on those communications better, as well as not constantly shift my mindset whenever those "popups" occur.

If you use Outlook (or something similar) I suggest you turn off the popup notifications—liberate yourself from the constant nagging of one email after another, and hopefully you will find yourself writing more thought-out responses when you do respond, as well as find yourself getting more done during the day. I know I have!

~Matt Weaver

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