XperText

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

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Time To Upgrade Your Network? Here Are 4 Things You Should Know

It's that time of year again when business owners from all over are scrambling to make any last minute purchases they can to lighten the tax burden for 2012. One of the things many tax-savvy businesses do is purchase new office and computer equipment that will be needed within the next few months NOW so they can deduct the expense on the current year's taxes. But if you're planning to upgrade your server, here are 4 things you might want to look into before making any decisions:
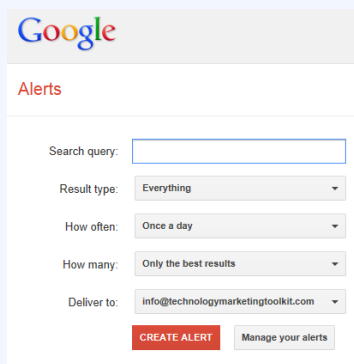
1. **Cloud Computing.** Cloud technologies are far beyond "hype." They offer real, tangible benefits to businesses, including improved disaster recovery and backup, easier access to data remotely, reduced IT complexities, fewer problems and, in many cases, a cost savings because you don't have to buy a server and keep it in your office closet anymore. Cloud is definitely not a right fit for everyone, but you should at least consider this as one of your options.

2. **HaaS.** In case you haven't heard enough acronyms in the IT industry, let me give you one more: HaaS, or "hardware as a service." Simply, HaaS is an option to "rent" hardware on a low monthly basis instead of purchasing it outright. This eliminates the hefty cash drain for a network upgrade and allows you to pay for hardware as a service. It also puts the burden of repair and replacement on the shoulders of your IT company (us) to keep your equipment up and running. You do end up paying more in the long run (as you would if you leased a car or bought a house on payments) but the ease on cash flow makes this a better option for some people.

3. **Windows 8.** Microsoft's latest operating system is making headlines with its completely new look and feel. I recommend waiting for the next updated version of the operating system, so that all the "bugs" are fixed before you make the move.

4. **Our Year-End Bonus Program!** All during the month of December, we're offering clients who upgrade their network with a new server a FREE month of our XperCARE Managed Service solutions. This will save you hundreds, possibly thousands, of dollars in IT services and support. But to get it, you MUST upgrade your network THIS YEAR. For the full details, visit us online at **www.XPERTECHS.com** or call us at (410) 884-0225.

Are You Doomed If Your In-House Computer Expert Quits?

Here's an important question most businesses don't think about: what would happen if your in-house IT guru suddenly quit? Most business owners think it would only be a temporary inconvenience when, in fact, the opposite is usually true. Want to know how much you are at risk?

Ask yourself the following 7 questions:

1. Do you know all the passwords? Every machine and Internet related device on your network has (or should have) a password. If you don't know what they are, you cannot view, change, or update the system settings. You should also know the password to your company's database and accounting package.

2. Do you know where your backup files are stored and if they are being stored properly? If you are like most business owners, you're too busy dealing with the "crisis of the day" to think about system backups and probably leave tasks to your internal expert. If your database gets fried and your tech is nowhere to be found, you might be in a lot of trouble.

3. Do you have all the product keys to your software? Product keys are long, alphanumeric codes, usually printed on the back of the software's packing material, that are required to install the software. Once installed, you don't need them again...UNLESS your system becomes unstable and you need to reinstall the program. Always make sure you have these stored in a secure location.

4. Do you know where all the software disks are stored? Bad things can happen to computers, and the situation can be made worse if you are not prepared. Taking a minute to organize and store your software disks in a secure place can save you a considerable chunk of money in the event that you need to restore a program on your computer. If you don't have the disk, you might be forced to buy the software again.

5. Do you know what routine maintenance must be done to your network? I know that the very idea of learning about and keeping track of all the servers, workstations, and peripherals on your network probably gives you a major headache, but it is important information to maintain. If your in-house expert leaves, who will take over?

6. Do you know how to protect yourself from an ugly security breach if your in-house computer expert leaves? What happens if your in-house expert splits with no warning AND has access to your company's network? As soon as humanly possible, you should disable his or her access, including remote access to your network.

7. Do you know all your vendor contact and account information. This would include telephone, internet, copier, printers, network support, web hosting, and DNS etc…

So how did you do? If you answered "no" to even one of these questions, you need to get the answers now before it's too late.

A Note From Michael's Desk...

Well the holiday season is once again catching me by surprise. It still seems like summer vacation at the beach was just last week. In any case, the busy season is already here and I have way too many things on my plate to address before the year ends. If you are like me, the years are short but the days are long. But it is this time of year that I reflect back on the many blessings that have come my way this past year.

XPERTECHS is growing with new clients and adding employees as we continue to change our business model to the XperCARE Proactive Managed IT Services business. This means that we become much more business focused and less technology driven. Our approach allows us to remove the operational hassle of technology so that you can focus on your business and clients. If we do this right, we become your "Trusted Advisor" and begin to take the mystery out of technology and make it an integral part of your business. In addition, you no longer have to worry about your technology investment.

This month is a great time to focus on your technology needs and start planning to upgrade your computer network. Here are four reasons to start **NOW**:

1. **You get to take the investment off your taxes THIS YEAR!** Thanks to "Section 179 Election" you can buy up to $560K in new office and computer hardware/software and write-off the entire amount on this year's tax return.

2. **We can get the work done FAST this time of year**. Our schedule is lighter than usual and we can get you project scheduled and completed before end of year.

3. **You get GREAT discounts**. Because most vendors are trying to make their numbers, they are willing to give bigger discounts on products and services.

On a personal note, I would like to express my gratitude to each of you for allowing XPERTECHS the opportunity to earn your business this past year. I look forward to continuing our "Trusted Advisor" role in helping you make 2013 the best year ever.

Looking For The Perfect Holiday Gift?
New Ultrabooks Will Score You BIG Points With That Special Someone On Your List This Year

It's becoming common for business folks to have multiple devices these days: a laptop for work, a tablet to travel with plus your smartphone to play Angry Birds and text—or even to make the occasional phone call (yes, we still use it for that too). But thanks to the new ultrabooks inspired by Intel, you'll be glad to know you can now get the best of both worlds in one super cool, ultra-portable, lightweight device.

The new ultrabooks were created to provide key features everyone wants: a thin and lightweight device (less than 1 inch and 2 lbs.) without sacrificing power and speed, a large, brilliant screen, a large keyboard (for those of you, like me, who would actually like a keyboard when typing long documents) or battery life of 6 to 7 hours. Whew! And coming soon, the newest versions of ultrabooks will give you the ability to flip the screen—and even detach it—to use it like your average touch-screen tablet.

Top Tech Gadgets for the 2012 Holiday Season

<u>The Smart Phone Edition</u>

Undoubtedly, there are technology lovers in your family, and tech gadgets on your list this holiday season, so we wanted to share some of the hottest new tech gadgets as we kick off the 2012 holiday season.

iPhone 5

Apple's newest release of the iPhone has been flying off the shelves. The iPhone 5 boasts a larger screen, iOS 6 operating system, an even better camera and so much more.
$450 without contract

Samsung Galaxy S III

Quite possibly the most popular Android phone on the market today, the Galaxy S III is available via most U.S. wireless carriers. The Galaxy boasts a 4.8" display screen and fits well in the palm of your hand.
$200 price range

HTC 8X

The HTC is one of the very first Windows 8 smartphones. The new HTC includes a 4.3" LCD display screen, comes in several bold colors, and a great camera.
$99-$150 price range

Right now, most ultrabooks are coming in about $1,200 and range upwards to over $2,000; but, like all new gadgets, the prices will continue to drop while the features continue to increase. Naturally, with the holidays here, many retailers will be running promotions and discounts, so watch for the best deals online. For our clients who need network upgrades (see the first article in this newsletter!) we're recommending these devices for those who are heavy computer users who travel.

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3 Simple Tricks To Get More Done Every Day

In today's crazy-busy world, who doesn't want to cram more "done" into your day? We've got 3 really simple things you can do to get more work done for the hours you're putting in.

1. **Use dual monitors.** According to a University of Utah study, you can increase your efficiency by 25% just by adding a second monitor. Performance measures included task time, editing time, number of edits completed, 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. All of these factors combined show truly increased productivity.

2. **Block social media sites and/or other non-work related content online.** THIS one won't be popular for a lot of people, but if you want to get more done, then take the distractions out of your day. Of course if your job is "social media director" for your company, this doesn't apply; for all the other workers in your office who don't NEED to go on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to do their job, this will remove the temptation to "snack" on social media sites throughout the day, which add up to hours wasted on entertainment surfing. Content filtering software can easily manage which sites you can and cannot go online to view, also keeping employees from gambling, searching for jobs, reading the news or visiting sex sites.

3. **Set up remote access.** It's incredibly easy to access files, e-mail and programs from home (or while on the road) these days using cloud technologies or other remote access applications. Not only does this allow people to keep working when forced to stay home with sick kids or to wait for the plumber to show up, but employees would also put in several more hours of work on their own initiative if they could easily jump on their home PC and put in a few hours.

Each of these is an EASY fix for us to implement. If you have 15 plus PC's and want more details on how to get these implemented into your business, just give us a call at **(410) 884-0225** or shoot me an e-mail at **chris@xpertechs.com**

Get More Free Tips, Tools, and Services at our Website: WWW.XPERTECHS.COM