



▶ ARE YOU PAYING YOUR EMPLOYEES TO CYBERLOAF?



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▶ SHINY NEW GADGET: NEST PROTECT

MARCH 2014

# XperText

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

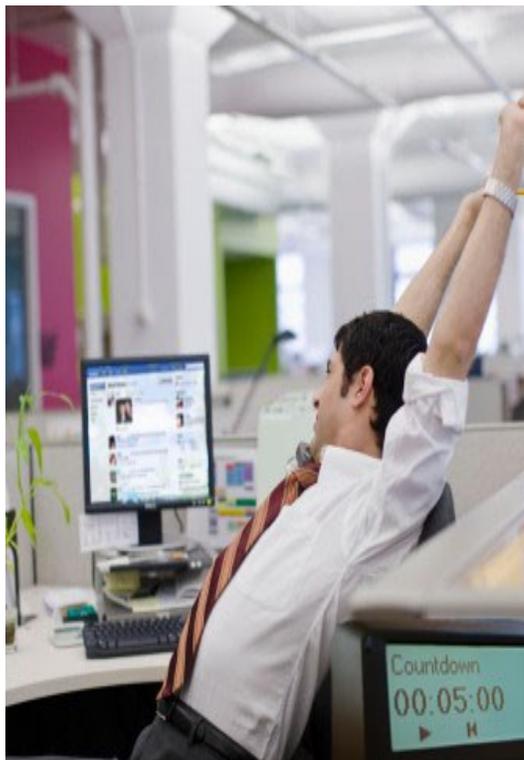
XPRIENCE THE DIFFERENCE. WE'LL MAKE ALL OF YOUR COMPUTER PROBLEMS GO AWAY WITHOUT THE COST OF A FULL TIME IT STAFF

## Are You Paying 80% Of Your Employees To “Cyberloaf” On The Internet, Watching Cat Videos, Searching For A Better Job Or Accidentally Downloading A Virus On Your Network?

Recently, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of local businesses suffering significant financial and productivity losses due to employees inappropriately using their Internet access during work hours – and much of this is fueled by social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube. Studies have shown that between 60 and 80 percent of people’s time on the Internet at work has nothing to do with work!

What makes this situation so dangerous is that the majority of business owners don’t even realize that it’s going on until it’s too late. By then they have found themselves in the middle of a costly and embarrassing lawsuit because an employee posted something inappropriate online OR downloaded a virus.

In other cases, the owner NEVER finds out, but is inadvertently losing THOUSANDS of dollars because employees are spending 2-3 hours a day goofing off online – and you’re footing the bill.



And age of the employee doesn’t affect an employee’s ability to waste time on the Internet. Older employees do things like managing their finances while younger employees check social media.

### A Company Internet Policy Is NOT Enough

A recent study showed that the presence of a strong Internet policy at work was not enough to curb activity, as many employees don’t think it’s wrong to surf the web and a policy was not going to change their minds. Unfortunately, the only way to curb this activity is not only to threaten consequences, but to actually take action and reprimand employees.

Our Free Internet and E-mail Usage Audit gives you the answers to whether you have a problem on your hands.

**Schedule your Internet and E-mail Usage Audit today by calling our office at (410) 884-0225.**

## Would You Rather Text Than Talk? Essential Tips For Business Texting

You use your iPhone or Android for everything else. Your spouse even texts you to grab some milk at the store or to tell you they'll be gone when you get home. It's quick, easy and gets the job done. Why not in business too?

Follow these 7 texting tips to keep it professional:

### Consider if your message is urgent.

Your text may interrupt your recipient...be sure there's a good reason for that interruption.

**Is e-mail better?** Most people prefer business communications via e-mail as it better respects their time and ability to respond appropriately. Text messages are also easily lost if sent at a bad time.

**Do they only e-mail you?** If yes, respond to them in the same way. If they e-mail, send an e-mail. If they call, call them back.

### DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS.

DON'T YOU FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS YELLING AT YOU WHEN THEY TYPE IN ALL CAPS? DON'T SEND E-MAILS OR TEXTS IN ALL CAPS.

**Proofread your message.** Ever hear of "Auto-Correct" in text messages? Some can be downright embarrassing. If you're taking the time to write the message, take the extra seconds to proofread.

**No abbreviations!** Your recipient shouldn't have to decipher your text message with a decoder ring. Be as clear as you can with proper grammar and pronunciation. No sense in risking losing a customer who gets fed up with your messages.

### Include your name in the message.

Not everyone knows who you are simply by your cellphone number. Assume that the person doesn't know who the message is coming from.

If you do text a customer or prospect, follow these 7 tips to ensure that you are perceived as the true business professional that you are!

## The Lines In Your Business

I have been working on my new book, which, most likely, will have the word "Line" in the title. So, I decided to do a little research on the word "Line." I had no idea there were so many words that have "line" in them ... that have a great deal to do with being successful. Let me give you a few examples:

- ◆ **Discipline** – Discipline and success go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other.
- ◆ **Streamline** – The successful companies today are doing everything they can to streamline operations. Complicated policies, procedures, rules and regulations are being simplified, replaced or deleted. Subtraction (simplifying) is the exercise of genius ... addition (complicating) is the exercise of fools ... so streamline your operations and your life every chance you get.
- ◆ **Deadline** – A goal without a deadline is just a wish, so it is important to set deadlines. But also understand that a missed deadline is more than a disappointment, it is a statement to your client or boss that you can't be counted on.
- ◆ **Online** – Being online can be a useful tool for productivity but also a terrible distraction to productivity if something else catches your attention ... so be careful and stay focused on the task at hand.
- ◆ **Guideline** – If it was important enough to establish a guideline, then it should be followed.
- ◆ **Bottom line** – Companies that don't make a profit will eventually fail. It is not how much money a company takes in (revenue) that will make it successful ... it's all about profitability. To sustain success, you must always control your bottom line.
- ◆ **Frontline** – The problem with so many companies today is those making the decisions are so far removed or have been away from the frontline for so long that they haven't a clue what the true consequences of their decisions are until it's too late. If you want to be successful, then you need to stay as close to the frontline as possible. Get out from behind your desk and get on the frontline to see what is really going on in your company.
- ◆ **Laugh line** – While you are doing all of this, it is important for you to keep your sense of humor and have some fun. Any wrinkle I have on my face caused by my laughing or smiling is a welcomed wrinkle. As far as I'm concerned, laugh lines are signs you are living a happy life.
- ◆ **Lifeline** – You have no idea how long or short your lifeline is, so make the most of the time you have. Keep asking yourself ... "Is what I am doing taking me where I want to go?" Your lifeline is a finite amount of time ... there are no "do-overs" or recouping of moments lost ... so make the most of the moments you have.
- ◆ **Sideline** – The sideline is not where you want to be. Get in the game. Learn the necessary skills and have the courage to be a player. To paraphrase former President Theodore Roosevelt ...

This is all about **YOUR TIME LINE** so ... pay attention to how you are handling the **LINES** in your life.

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*. For more on Robert, visit: [www.robertstevenson.org/](http://www.robertstevenson.org/)



### A Special XPERTECHS Welcome!

We are proud of the growth that our team continues to experience and are excited to welcome Josh Noren, our new Service Desk Specialist to the XPERTECHS Team. Josh is a recent graduate from Towson University with a dual degree in E-Business and Computer Information Systems.

**Welcome, Josh!**

## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

### Nest Protect



The Nest Protect Motto: Safety shouldn't be annoying.

We have all experienced it. That annoying low-battery chirp that 9 times out of 10 wakes you from a dead sleep. Why is it that the smoke alarm battery inevitably runs low in the middle of the night? Then it happens...in your half-awake stupor, you rip it from the wall with intentions of re-hanging it in the morning. More times than not, you forget to replace the batteries and re-hang it and then there you are with no warning system should a fire break out in your home. This annoyance has now become a safety issue.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), almost two-thirds of US home fire deaths happened in homes with no smoke alarm or no working smoke alarm.

The Nest Protect smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarm comes without that annoying chirp or the threat of false alarms. It's unique structure and settings give you quiet, visual low-battery reminders and allow you to relay to the alarm when the smoke is from that burning grilled cheese versus an actual fire. Its remote features also allow you to manage your alarm and receive alerts via your smartphone.

This innovative device gives you all the protection and security you need, without the annoyances.

Get yours today at:  
<https://nest.com/>

## Taking Time Off The Field To Help Others

Michael and Kathy Mellott recently attended the Paul Rabil Foundation's Annual Holiday Magic Gala in Baltimore. This event is hosted by Paul Rabil, Major League Lacrosse First Team All-Pro and All Star! Proceeds from this event are distributed to 12 deserving children as scholarships to attend the Lab Schools in Washington D.C. and Baltimore and the Jenicy School in Baltimore.



The Paul Rabil Foundation is committed to helping children across the country realize their full potential, especially those with learning differences. They support programs and partnerships that advance the lives and opportunities of these students through sports.

XPORTECHS is proud to be a sponsor of this exceptional foundation! To learn more, visit <http://www.labschool.org> and [www.paulrabilfoundation.org](http://www.paulrabilfoundation.org)

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## Another Reminder Of Why You Can't Use Home Routers In Your Business

This past Christmas, a hacker reportedly stumbled upon a back door to Linksys and Netgear DSL modems that allow an attacker to reset the router's configuration and gain Admin access. Not good!

Some routers have this "back door" open to the local computer network while others are open to the Internet side of things, opening up users of these devices to remote Internet attacks. This essentially means that someone could easily gain access to the network and all files located on it.

In the past, this may have taken weeks or months to get out, leaving plenty of time for the manufacturer to get in contact with their clients, right? Not anymore. In this instance, the exploit was promptly posted up to GitHub in a PowerPoint explaining all of the details and how to exploit the devices. Many others started trying this out (just for fun, of course), and confirmations started flooding in immediately for all to see.

**The Bottom Line:** If you are concerned at all about the security of the data on your network, you need to have a real, business-class firewall and router in your office. These days, it doesn't pay to go cheap on IT security.

**Password Tip!** Want an easy-to-remember password that's super-secure? Try mixed-entry passwords. While JohnSmith12345 could fairly easily be broken, J1o2h3n4S5mith (inserting the same numbers between each letter in the password) would take about 1,800 years to crack, and is almost as easy to remember!



## Customers Are On The Move!

Visual Connections recently won a government contract with CMS and has opened a new office near Social Security Headquarters in Woodlawn, MD. XPERTECHS created a new network for the office.

**Network Building & Consulting, LLC (NB&C),** Due to significant company growth, NB&C has to move from their current Hanover, MD headquarters, to a larger office space in Elkridge, MD. XPERTECHS will be assisting in the technical aspect of the office move.

## 3 Easy Ways To Go GREEN

Save money on utilities, overhead and IT services while cutting down on waste and environmental pollution.

Here are 3 simple ways to do this:

- 1. Go Virtual!** Desktop virtualization (sometimes called client virtualization) is a process of replacing your expensive, power-sucking computer workstations with a less expensive “thin-client” option. This not only cuts down on the power needed (and your electric bill), but also reduces hardware and maintenance costs!
- 2. Go Paperless!** Why keep printing, filing and shuffling all of those paper documents around when document management systems are so easy and inexpensive to implement? Making it easier to file, find and share documents.
- 3. Go Remote!** Working from home, even a day a week, will cut down on gas and emissions. In fact, most of our computer repair & support is delivered to our clients remotely thanks to our XperCARE Managed Services.

# Connected TVs, Fridges Aid In Launching Global Cyber Attack?

We have all heard of identity thieves trying to scam us with cruel messages sent from PCs. Now we need to be concerned about being targeted by our household appliances. An Internet-security company exposed a global cyber attack occurring between December 23 and January 6. The attack was launched from more than 100,000 everyday consumer gadgets, such as home-networking routers, televisions and at least one “smart” refrigerator. It is being referred to as possibly the first proven cyber attack to originate from connected appliances-the so-called “Internet of Things.”

The attack featured waves of malicious e-mail pursuing businesses and individuals worldwide. In a post on the Proofpoint site, the company said the scam involved more than 750,000 e-mails from more than 100,000 appliances that had been commanded by “thingbots,” or robotic programs that can be remotely installed on digital devices.



It still hasn't been released which victims were targeted and whether the scammers were successful in collecting any personal information. “Bot-nets are already a big security concern and the emergence of thingbots may make the situation much worse,” said David Knight, general manager of Proofpoint’s Information Security division. “Many of these devices are poorly protected at best and consumers have virtually no way to detect or fix infections when they do occur. We may find distributed attacks on the increase as more and more of these devices come online and attackers find additional ways to exploit them.” In the past few years we have seen a huge increase in the number of devices fitted with internet connectivity, from eyewear to toothbrushes to refrigerators and beyond.

Earlier this week, Google paid \$3.2 billion to acquire Nest, a company that makes smart home thermostats. The International Data Corporation (DC) predicts there will be more than 30 billion connected devices in the world by 2020. Proofpoint’s findings suggest that just as personal computers can be unknowingly compromised and used to launch large-scale cyber attacks, so can any smart household appliance. And poorly protected “smart” devices may be easier to infect and control than PCs, laptops or tablets.



A sophisticated hack was not necessary to compromise the appliances in this attack. Instead, the use of default passwords left the devices completely exposed on public networks, according to Proofpoint. The company also noted that connected appliances typically aren't protected by anti-spam or antivirus software, nor are they routinely monitored for security breaches.

For more, visit: [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)



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