"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!"
- Michael Mellott, XPERTECHS

XPERTECHS®

Volume II, Issue 1
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Inside This Issue...

"Oh, the usual stuff. Spam from the Joker, another e-mail virus from the Penguin, an illegal chain letter from Cat Woman...."

XperText

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

2009 New Year's Resolution!!!

Now I know that most of us make New Year's Resolutions that involve our personal lives and setting goals for our businesses. For 2009, I have decided to make your business one of my New Year's Resolutions.

What?

Why would I make YOUR business one of **MY** resolutions?

Honestly, because last year XPERTECHS changed our business model to a Preventive Maintenance program called Xper**CARE**. AND as one of the main services we provide under our Premium Service Plans is our 24/7 Data Protection and Disaster Recovery Protection service.

Why Is This Important To You?

In November of 2008, we met with a local company that was looking to replace their current IT Services firm. During our initial meeting, we uncovered what I considered to be a rather disturbing fact. Several months prior, this company experienced something that all of us dread but hope will never happen-- they had a hard drive failure that cost them to lose their server and data. They needed to replace the hard drive and then recover data from their backup tapes. Unfortunately, the process to complete the Disaster Recovery was more complicated than the current vendor could manage. It took over 9 days to partially recover the applications and data. As we were meeting with them months later, there were still problems with their systems.

HELLO!!! Colleagues, data backup, data retention, and disaster recovery are one of the 6 CRITICAL measures you must have in place for your business. And if you don't know what the other 5 are you need to read my recent article in The Business Monthly (which I have inserted in this newsletter). Just because you have a backup procedure in place does NOT mean you have adequate disaster recovery. Consider these points:

1. Do you check you backup logs to see if they were successful?
2. Do you regularly verify by restoring files from your backup system?
3. Do you routinely replace your tapes (expected life is 6 – 9 months)?

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There's More.... (continued from front page)

4. Do you keep a copy off-site?
5. Are you including system configuration in your backups or are you only backing up data?
6. Are you able to have a server restored in hours or days?
7. Do you have a Business Continuity Plan in place?

If you answered "NO" to any of the above questions you are in luck!!! My "August FREE Data Security Audit" offer was so popular that I've decided to bring it back! For the first 12 people to respond to this offer I will conduct a 27-Point Data Security Audit for FREE! Normally, I charge $995 for this Audit, but it's yours **FREE**. But you have to hurry… this special is only good for the first 12 people to respond, so call me TODAY at **(410) 884-0225**!!

You will be receiving many reminders from me on this Critical Data Protection Measure over the next few months. After that I move on to the next Critical Measure!!!

Believe It Or Not – It's National Clean Up Your Computer Month

I didn't believe it either, but after some research it's official…an authority no less reputable than "The Vinegar Institute" declared January as a national holiday to clean up your computer.

In light of this holiday, I thought I'd take the time to answer a small but nagging question, "How do I get those smudges, dust, and fingerprints safely off of my flat screen monitor?"

Although each monitor manufacturer has its own special instructions for cleaning, there are some common guidelines you can use to get your screen looking like new in no time.

Turn off the monitor. It's not required, but it makes smudges and smears easier to see.

Use a cotton cloth or compressed air to get rid of light dust buildup. Never use a rag or paper towel to clean since they can scratch the screen.

Don't use products with ethyl alcohol or ammonia based products. Products like Windex can yellow flat-screen or laptop monitors.

Use water or a homemade mix to clean grungy surfaces. If water is not enough, concoct a cleaning solution of 1 part water, 1 part isopropyl alcohol, and 1/2 part vinegar.

Lightly moisten your cloth with the cleaning solution. Never apply the liquid directly to the screen.

Wipe the cloth in one direction – from top to bottom. This method will ensure grime and dust move to the bottom of the screen surface where it can be wiped away.

One final guideline, never touch or press on your LCD screen with your fingers as this can cause the pixels to burn out. Happy cleaning!

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"Would You Like A $25 AMEX Gift Card?"

Take my monthly Trivia Challenge and you could win too!

The first 3 people to respond correctly will receive the gift card.

Which State has more tornadoes per square mile than any other?

a) Kansas   b) Arkansas   c) Florida   d) Texas

Go to our website and register your answer! **www.xpercare.com/Trivia**

Turn Your Car Into An Internet "Hot Spot" – Good Idea…Or Bad?

One of the up and coming trends is Internet access in your car; at least that's what the auto industry wants us to believe. In fact, both Audi and Chrysler are already offering options to make their cars Internet hotspots.

The auto manufacturers tout the ease with which you'll be able to have an Internet connection on the road ready to perform virtually any office based computer task without having to leave your car.

Admittedly, the car companies believe the mobile hotspot concept will be most attractive to parents attempting to keep their children occupied with movies, music downloads, social networking access, and other teen oriented activities.

Access fees for in-car Internet networking will total about $60 per month after paying a hefty installation fee.

Given the low cost options to connect at home, on buses, in cafes, and with mobile broadband services, the automobile WIFI hotspot concept will have an uphill battle. We'll have to watch this one closely to see how the value proposition plays out.

Client Spotlight: CUMMINS-WAGNER

Cummins-Wagner Co., Inc. is a distributor for industrial and mechanical equipment covering the mid-Atlantic states with leading brands of compressors, pumps, and heat transfer equipment.

Last month we were able to provide Cummins-Wagner with several Thousand $$$$ in rebates for taking advantage of the Microsoft "Big Easy" promotion. Way to Go Mark!!!

Would you like your company highlighted here in our "Client Spotlight?" Then give us a call today at **(410) 884-0225**

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Vista Vulnerability

Researchers recently found vulnerability in Windows Vista (with or without SP1) that could allow an attacker to remotely take control of a PC.

The problem can be exploited in two different ways to cause a buffer overflow that can corrupt the memory of the operating system.

The good news is that the primary method of exploiting the problem requires one to have administrative permissions, thereby diminishing the risk.

There are experts that believe it might be possible to exploit the problem without administrative rights.

The Windows XP operating system is not affected by the issue.

Microsoft plans to release a patch for the vulnerability in Service Pack 2 which is scheduled to be released in mid 2009.

These types of vulnerabilities continue to underscore the importance of keeping your systems updated with the latest security releases. Gives us a call at (410) 884-0225 or at www.xpercare.com

Please Welcome My Newest Client!

Harry Santucci, III
CBO Financial
Columbia, MD

Microsoft: Malware Threats Up 43%

The software maker says that the spread of unwanted software is growing faster than ever.

The spread of malicious software that can harm computers and open gateways for hackers and identity thieves is on the rise according to Microsoft.

The amount of so-called malware and other unwanted software found on computers rose 43% in the first half of the year, the company said Monday. More than 90% of the vulnerabilities affected applications, while only about 10% impacted operating systems, according to Microsoft, which released the data in its Security Intelligence Report.

The report also showed that trojan downloaders and "high-severity vulnerabilities" are on the rise as well. Most hackers are motivated by financial gain, Microsoft said.

There are a number of steps that computer users can take to help protect their systems from external threats. They should frequently check for, and apply, security updates including updates from third-party application providers. They should make sure that their firewall is enabled and install up-to-date antivirus and anti-spyware programs.

And, PC users should use caution when opening links and attachments embedded in emails, even if the e-mail is from a trusted source. Hackers often use links to direct users to phony Web sites in a technique called phishing.

A copy of Microsoft's latest Security Intelligence Report is available for download at http://www.microsoft.com/security/portal/sir.aspx

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Did You Ever Want To Have Lunch With An IT Specialist?
What would you ask? What would you share?

Now's your chance! Find out about the latest tools, ideas, products and guidelines! Ask experts your best questions and find out about their best practices.

XPERTECHS is hosting a "Lunch and Learn" session on February 12th. There are no formal presentations, no PowerPoint slides, no laser pointers. It will just be Michael, Slade, Thomas, and selected guests facilitating discussions and sharing their knowledge on the topics you selected as the most pressing.

Topic: **Backup and Disaster Recovery – Are You Protected?**
When: **Thursday, February 12th   11:45 am – 1:15 pm**
Where: **Greystone Grill – Ellicott City, MD - Complimentary Lunch**

SPACE IS LIMITED to the first 12 people who sign up. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Call: (410) 884-0225
or Email: mmellott@xpertechs.com

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