

April Newsletter 2012

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TechSolutions' Employees And Families Were Out In Force To Support The American Lung Association

The American Lung Association held their annual Caesar Rodney Half Marathon on Sunday, March 25. The TechSolutions' staff along with their families decided to support this wonderful cause by manning one of their Water Stops. So up bright and early Sunday morning the TSI Water Stop team arrived at the 9 mile mark located at Delaware Avenue and Bancroft Parkway in Wilmington.



Before long, a steady stream of thirsty runners were jogging by. It doesn't take long to sink in that this isn't like manning a lemonade stand when you were a kid, but more like being in a relay race where you are running to hand off a cup of water instead of a baton. We soon realized this is hard work, yet a lot of fun. And one might think kids would be asking every 5 minutes when they were going home, but no way Jose... they had a blast, working relentlessly and inspiring the runners with their enthusiasm.

By late morning the race is over. The runners have completed the half marathon and our Water Stop team felt that together we almost ran a half marathon worth of short sprints. Of course we felt good supporting such an important event, but beyond that we had a terrific time. So we will enthusiastically help the American Lung Association again next year for the 50th anniversary of this marathon on

Sunday, March 17.

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Just What Is This Pinterest Thing, And What Does It Mean To Me?

Are you burned out on social media? Then you won't be happy to hear that a new social media site is gaining traction.

However, you might be interested to know that this new site, Pinterest, doesn't focus on the minutiae of day-to-day living as sites such as Twitter and Facebook seem to. Instead, Pinterest encourages users to share their interests with others. And in this way, at least, Pinterest does more to encourage creativity among its users than do such sites as Google+, LinkedIn, and Facebook.



The site's name gives a clue as to what it's all about: Pinterest is a combination of "pin," as in pinboards, and "interest," as in what you're all about.

Once you sign up for Pinterest, you create your own "pinboards" or categories. You then attach photos and images that fit within those categories, as if you were pinning these images to a bulletin board.

Creating Pinterest categories

For example, you might create the category of convertibles. You can then paste any images you find online of the new Volkswagen Beetle convertible, along with a link to the page at which you found them. You can also attach any photos of convertibles that you took yourself.

The social part of Pinterest

Of course, social interaction forms the heart of Pinterest. You can choose to follow people much like you would on Facebook or Twitter. But you can also choose to follow specific collections. Say a friend has a collection of old movie poster images that you find fascinating. But she also has a collection of images of her 3-year-old son that doesn't quite interest you as much. You can choose to follow her movie posters while ignoring her toddler. (Just don't tell her, if you want her to remain a friend!)

Joining Pinterest

The main challenge with Pinterest is getting an account: you have to be invited to join. You can request an invitation directly from Pinterest when you log onto the site, but it's uncertain how long you'll have to wait to receive an invitation using this method.

Far more reliable is to find friends or acquaintances that are already using Pinterest. You can then have them invite you to the site through e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter.

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Reduce Cord And Desktop Clutter Once And For All!

You know it's time to de-clutter your desk when there's not even enough room on it for your morning coffee. And what about under your desk? Does it resemble a snake pit of cables and wires?

It's not easy to work when you have to shovel past papers to reach your keyboard or when you have to knock away a pile of old magazines before clicking your mouse. Fortunately, there are simple ways to both reduce the clutter atop your desk and eliminate the sprawl of computer cables and wires under it.



First, tackle the wires. There are two good options here: one inexpensive, the other more costly. If you want to go the more affordable route, invest in a few large binder clips. These clips, of course, work great for keeping papers in order. You might be surprised at how effective they are for keeping computer cables under control too.

Simply clip your cables together with these binders. Before long, your mess of computer cables will be relocated to one central location.

If you want to go the more expensive route, consider purchasing wireless charging pads. These pads allow you to charge everything from a wireless mouse to a digital camera to your smartphone. No longer will you need dozens of wires to plug into your mobile and wireless devices. With a charger, you can simply connect these devices to one mat-shaped device, often called a powermat, to recharge them, again significantly reducing your reliance on computer cables and power cords.

Your desktop clutter, of course, is a different matter. The easiest way to reduce this mess is to rely less on paper. With so much business communication taking place through email, there's less reason than ever to clutter your desk with printed memos and messages. Refrain, too, from printing out news stories, time sheets, and other business communication. The more paperwork that you store electronically, the less paperwork you'll have to spread across your desktop.

For those papers that you absolutely must have, store them in binders or file cabinets and store them as soon as possible. The longer you wait to store such items, the more likely they are to become part of your desktop's growing clutter pile.

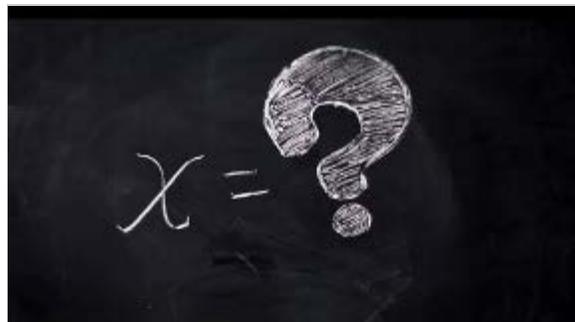
Become good, too, at throwing things away. If a client sends you a sample of a book that you'll never read, either pass it along to a fellow co-worker or donate it to your local Goodwill. If you receive a memo that you know you'll only look at once, recycle it. The quicker you move items off your desk, the less likely you are to clutter your workspace.

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Serious World Problems? Don't Worry, Google Is On It

Global warming? Poverty? Illiteracy? Debt crises? These are all huge global problems. And they've attracted the attention of the technology pros at Google.

Google recently unveiled its new "Solve for X" initiative, a project in which Google's greatest minds tackle the world's most vexing problems. The goal is for "Solve for X" minds to propose radical ideas for eradicating some of the biggest challenges facing the Earth.



Tackling the biggest global issues

Of course, it's not all that simple. The "Solve for X" brain trust will be tackling issues that have long befuddled world leaders. However, the folks behind this project are nothing if not eager. They compare the work taking place here as akin to the groundbreaking thinking that was needed to send humans to the moon.

On the "Solve for X" website, Google describes it this way: "This combination of things—a huge problem to solve, a radical solution for solving it and the breakthrough technology to make it happen—is the essence of a moonshot."

Tackling water scarcity

The Mashable.com recently ran an intriguing feature story on the "Solve for X" project. Mashable cited the account of a participant in a "Solve for X" retreat who said that the minds gathered with him were focusing on the huge issue of global water scarcity.

What kind of solutions are "Solve for X" members devising to deal with this issue? One involved forward osmosis with recycled ammonium salts. If you have no idea what that means, don't fret—the people at "Solve for X" do.

The need for technology brain trusts

Whether "Solve for X" does create any real solutions for the globe's biggest problems, the brain trust idea is certainly one with merit. Technology has the power to change the world for good. Yes, new tech entertains us. It makes it easier for us to enjoy our music, watch movies, and read our favorite magazines.

But technology can do so much more. Perhaps brain trusts like "Solve for X" will help us truly tap the potential of technology.

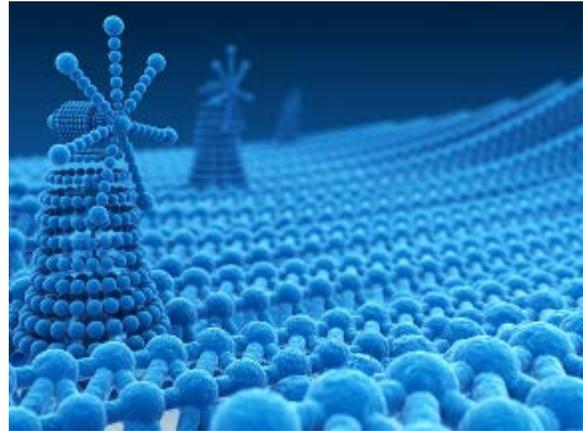
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Think Nanotechnology Is Science Fiction? Think Again

You hear the word "nanotechnology," and what do you think? It's the stuff of science fiction, right?

But in reality, nanotechnology is making life easier for all of us.

At its heart, nanotechnology is the science of working with matter on an atomic and molecular scale. The hope is that scientists can use nanotechnology to create new materials and products that boast a wide range of applications.



The practical side of nanotechnology

As an example, *Science Daily* recently ran a feature story on scientists developing a way to use nanotechnology to reduce the amount of friction in car engines and machines.

If this technology becomes widespread, it can help prolong the lives of machines and engines and help them operate more efficiently. This is an example of green technology — machines that don't have to work too hard consume less energy.

According to the *Science Daily* story, a team of scientists created tiny polymer particles that were dispersed in automobile engine base oils. When tested under conditions that simulated those found in car engines, these tiny particles were found to have an extraordinary ability to reduce friction.

More efficient motors

The story reported that even when these particles were dispersed at a low concentration, they boasted more powerful friction-reducing abilities than does the friction additive used by many industries today. The scientists found that their particles, measuring just nanometers in size, were able to reduce friction by 55 percent more than additives currently can.

Expect more discoveries such as this in the future. The field of nanotechnology continues to grow. It's growing so quickly, in fact, that the United States recently released a national strategy for making sure that environmental, health, and safety research needs are identified and addressed in the field.

The emerging world of nanotechnology

If you think, then, that nanotechnology is only good for Hollywood special-effects blockbusters, just take a close look at your car's engine. One day, nanotechnology may leave you with an engine that consumes less gas. That, of course, can leave you with a fatter wallet, and you'll be able to thank nanotechnology for this.

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Worried About Losing Your PowerPoint Presentations? Here Are Some Cloud-based Alternatives

When it's time to create a business presentation, most of us automatically turn to Microsoft PowerPoint. For as long as computers have taken up space in cubicles, PowerPoint has dominated the world of visual-based business presentations.

However, PowerPoint does come with a significant disadvantage: If your hard drive or thumb drive should get corrupted, you might lose that presentation on which you spent hours working. And when that happens, there's no avoiding that sinking feeling in your gut.



The good news is that there are several Web-based alternatives to PowerPoint. Because you'll be storing the presentations you make in the cloud, you'll no longer have to fret over losing or corrupting the drives containing your presentations.

Here, then, is a look at three Web-based alternatives to PowerPoint.

1. **Google Docs Presentations:** You knew that Google would have its own answer to PowerPoint, and it does with Google Docs Presentations. This program works much like its better known competitor, allowing users to add text, graphics, videos, and links to presentations.

Google Docs Presentations is free, a nice feature, and it's easy to share presentations online with other users through Google Docs.

2. **SlideRocket:** Unlike Google's offering, SlideRocket isn't free. There's a reason for this: This is a powerful Web-based presentation program that stands up to Microsoft PowerPoint. It's far from a clone of PowerPoint and allows users to comment and answer polls in real time. The program also comes with an analytics feature that gives creators at least some idea of which slides are most effective.

This collaborative program also works well with sites such as Flickr or Google Docs. This makes it easy for creators to incorporate live data and content into their slide-show presentations.

3. **Zoho Show:** Like other alternatives to PowerPoint, Zoho Show comes with all the functions you need to create a solid visual presentation. However, it does offer a neat feature that its competitors don't: live audio chat. This makes it easy for users to give presentations to clients who are sitting in meeting rooms across the country. It's also easy for Zoho Show users to embed their presentations in their blogs or Web sites to share the information with a greater number of users.

Like Google Docs Presentation, Zoho Show is free for personal use.

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