

June Newsletter 2012

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TechSolutions – Bits and Bytes

TechSolutions Staff Helps Make the Dog Days of Summer Something Cool

TechSolutions has agreed to collaborate with the First State Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators for their summer-time pet drive called “**Dog Days of Summer**” (although this is not limited to just dogs). As a First State Chapter of the ALA Business Partner, TechSolutions is answering the call to contribute items to Faithful Friends Animal Society, a local no-kill shelter. The mission of Faithful Friends is, “To end the neglect, abandonment and killing of pets in Delaware and enrich the lives of people by promoting and providing compassionate animal-related welfare and social services.”



The shelter is in need of a variety of items that enable them to directly or indirectly provide a safe, healthy and compassionate environment to the pets they serve. Our Business Manager, Tricia Monnig simply placed an empty tub by the front door, posted a Faithful Friends Wish List on the frig in our kitchen and mentioned the opportunity to help at our weekly team meeting. Before you know it, the tub was overflowing with donations from our employees consisting of everything from kitty litter to collars and copy paper. I would say a successful group effort on the part of the TechSolutions team as we join forces with the First State Chapter of the ALA in their support of Faithful Friends. If you would like to learn more about Faithful Friends and the ways you can help or contribute, visit their website at www.faithfulfriends.us.

TechSolutions' Walt Samuels Hits the 5 Year Mark

Employment anniversaries happen every month or two at TechSolutions, but when someone hits the 5 year mark we feel it is even more important to make note. As of July 9, Field Engineer, Walt Samuels will have been with TechSolutions for 5 years. One of our most skilled and experienced staff members, it is not surprising he has been with us for so long considering that he pursues every IT challenge with persistence and laser like focus. The TechSolutions staff would like to congratulate Walt on hitting the 5 year mark, and also express our appreciation to the contribution he makes to our effort of providing unmatched IT support.

Microsoft's Surface Tablet - A Long Way from Bedrock

As a kid, and admittedly sometimes as an adult, I've watched the Flintstones and recall that whenever someone had to write something, they took out a hammer and chisel and started chipping away on a stone tablet. Arguably the first tablet PC, they sure have come a long way since then. Furthermore, there weren't any revisions to the tablets in Bedrock, but now it seems like every week, or at least every month, there is a new tablet PC being introduced.

The latest, and yet-to-be-determined greatest, entry into the horde of tablet options, is Microsoft's just announced Surface. Although most tablet introductions don't initially warrant more than a quick glance, the Windows 8-based Surface may merit resting your fingers, stylus or hammer and chisel and taking a closer look. The attached "kick-stand" and combination keyboard cover are just two of the nifty features that have grabbed the attention of our TechSolutions techs. The TSI techies have not had the opportunity to test drive the Surface yet, so we suggest you check out the PCWorld article [Microsoft Surface Tablet: Initial Impressions](#) if you want to learn more about this innovative new kid on the block.

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CloudOn, OnLive Desktop Bring Windows 7, Microsoft Office to the iPad

The iPad is a wonderful tool, something that consumers already recognize if demand for this product is any indication. However, your iPad can be even more useful thanks to two programs that bring full Windows and Microsoft Office functions to the device.

Bringing Office to your iPad

OnLive Desktop Plus provides iPad users with a standard Windows 7 desktop, while CloudOn gives them the Microsoft Office suite of productivity programs.

Which program is better? They're both terrific, actually. It's best to try them both to determine which app is best for you.



OnLive Desktop Plus: The OnLive Desktop Plus app throws a complete Windows 7 desktop on your iPad screen whenever you open it. And this version of Windows 7 is actually superior to any version of Windows on your desktop or laptop computer. That's because it automatically updates such programs as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Internet Explorer every time you open it. Say goodbye to those aggravating pop-up balloons that constantly pester you to update your desktop version of Windows.

And in even more good news, you can nab OnLive Desktop for free. This version comes with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, along with two gigabytes of storage. It also comes with more basic programs such as Paint, Media Player, and Notepad.

CloudOn: CloudOn works in much the same way as OnLive Desktop Plus in that it provides you with feature-laden Microsoft Office services. You can use the program to create Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents.

You can also use CloudOn with the popular Dropbox app. CloudOn allows you to access the documents in your Dropbox app whenever you need to edit them. Once you're done, CloudOn will send the now-edited documents back to your Dropbox folder.

This app, too, has been popular. It's also free. However, that popularity has come with a price. In early 2012, the free version of CloudOn was yanked from the App Store because demand was so high.

Which service is best for you? Again, you'll have to decide that on your own. Just be happy that programs out there do allow you the power to truly turn your iPad into the powerful portable computer we all want it to be.

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How to Protect Your Mac from the Newest Viruses

Macs have always had the reputation for being less susceptible to viruses than are PCs. That doesn't mean, though, that Mac users can happily scour the web without any protection.

Hackers, cyber criminals, and spammers are clever. They know how to break into that Mac of yours. Fortunately, you can boost the security of your Mac by taking some fairly simple steps.

Install those security updates

First, always install Apple's security updates. Apple recommends these updates for a reason: They offer the latest protection for your Mac. Yes, installing these updates may seem like a nuisance. But if you don't, you run the risk of leaving your Mac vulnerable to the newest security threats.

The benefits of anti-virus software



It also makes sense to protect your Mac with private anti-virus software. You might think that your Mac is strong enough to resist hackers and viruses without spending money on anti-virus software, but why take the chance? The money you spend on this software — and you can find high-quality anti-virus software for free, too — will provide you with peace of mind as you browse the Internet. It's difficult to put a price tag on that.

Of course, you can protect your Mac, too, by being a wise Internet user. This means not opening files from users you don't know or trust. Spammers and hackers often infect computers by tricking users into opening files that contain malicious programs. Hackers will do this by making you believe that a file is either useful or, often, salacious. Don't be fooled.

Be a smart web surfer

You shouldn't download files, either, from websites that you don't trust. It's easy to infect the computers of gullible web surfers interested in downloading pirated or adult movies, for instance. Smart users only download programs from well-known and trusted sites.

Finally, make sure to update your passwords frequently. And use passwords that aren't easy to crack.

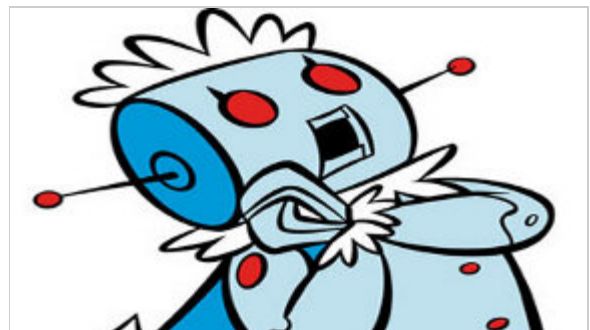
The truth is that most security breaches happen when computer users become overconfident. Failing to install security updates, running computers without virus protection programs, and blindly opening email attachments are the easiest ways to run into security problems, even when you're a Mac user.

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Where are Our Helper Robots?

Here's what we dreamed of as kids: jetpacks, entire meals that came in pill form, time travel, and, of course, helper robots.

That last idea was especially intriguing: What humans wouldn't want a robot to make their bed for them in the morning, go to work for them when they didn't feel like making the commute into the office, or vacuum the living room rug when they'd rather put up their feet and watch a little Judge Judy?



Unfortunately, this promised day of robot butlers, maids, and workers has never dawned. Sure, we have little robots that vacuum our rugs, but they're always bumping into things and don't tell us that they don't miss spots.

Can we do better than vacuum-bots?

And, really, are vacuum-bots the best that we can come up with? Where is the robot that's able to help our children with their math homework so we don't have to remember our freshman-year algebra?

A recent video on the BoingBoing website — "Thanks a lot, robot friend" — highlights the problem perfectly. In just 20 seconds, we see a tiny robot helper holding a beer in one claw and a bowl of strawberries in the other. A human hand appears on screen to activate the robot. However, as the robot pours the beer into a glass, he constantly misses the mark, spilling the liquid. Then, the robot's arm falls off, sending the beer can to the ground.

It's a perfect example of the state of helper robots today. In short, they aren't very helpful.

Washing your hair the robotic way

Panasonic, though, is stepping up. The company last year unveiled its Hair-Washing Robot. Really. This robot can wet, shampoo, rinse, and condition your hair. It will also give you a spot massage.

Of course, you can do all of this yourself, without the help of a robot. To be fair, the robot is designed for elderly residents who might need the assistance.

The robot bed

Panasonic also introduced its robotic bed last year. This nifty bed can transform itself into an electric wheelchair and then back to a bed again.

Again, though, this robot is designed for the elderly, not for the lazy, middle-aged homeowner who wants someone to mow his lawn or wash her clothes. So, again we ask, where are those amazing helper robots that the world of 1950s science fiction promised us? Heck, at this point we'd even take a robot that revolted and turned on us!

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Are Google Glasses and Augmented Reality on the Way?

We can already compute on the go thanks to our tablet computers and smartphones. However, Google isn't satisfied. The online search giant is in the middle of testing its Project Glass initiative, what you probably think of as the Google glasses.

Maybe you've seen coverage of Project Glass in the New York Times. You might even have seen the many photos of smiling folks wearing what look like futuristic wrap-around Star Trek glasses.



A computer above your eyes?

These are the famed Google augmented reality glasses that, theoretically, will allow users to read email messages, pull up online maps, take pictures, record video, and video chat with friends and family

members — all without the use of their hands.

A stream of useful information

Google glasses are designed to work with voice commands. If you're wearing the glasses, you can call for your city's public transportation schedule. Your Google glasses would then call up your local bus or train schedule. Or maybe you're looking for the new French restaurant in town. You can tell your Google glasses to find it, and when you do, the glasses will provide you with maps and detailed directions.

According to a video produced by Google, the company's augmented reality glasses would also allow you to check your day's schedule and revamp your plans if things change. For instance, in the video a Google glasses-wearing consumer is heading to the subway. As he hits the entrance, though, his glasses tell him that subway service is suspended. The glasses also calculate a walking route to his destination.

An unobtrusive technology?

According to a recent story in the *New York Times*, Project Glass isn't designed to bombard users with an unending stream of technology. It's actually supposed to make it easier for them to access the technology they want when they want it. For instance, a user might want to take a picture of his girlfriend standing on a bridge over the Chicago River. Instead of fumbling around for his camera or smart phone, he just presses a button on his Google glasses to snap the shot.

It's not clear yet just how close Google is to achieving its view of augmented reality. What is undeniable, though, is that for the right kind of tech-savvy consumer, Google's latest initiative holds endless potential.

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Looking for a High-tech Watch? Check out these Kickstarter Projects

You want your wristwatch to tell perfect time. That's reasonable, but what if your watch could do more? What if you could listen to all the music from your iPod on your watch? What if it could connect to your favorite apps? What if it could alert you to incoming email messages and phone calls with a silent vibration?

Well, two projects on Kickstarter are on track to deliver these high-tech functions to your wrist.

The power of Kickstarter

If you don't know, Kickstarter is a nifty website that allows inventors and creators to showcase their latest projects. Supporters from around the web can then donate money to help these creative types realize



their goals. Supporters can donate anywhere from \$1 to \$10,000 or more depending on the project.

Kickstarter is now featuring two nifty high-tech watches in development.

Pebble's E-Paper Watch for the iPhone and Android is one. With this customizable watch, consumers can download a wide range of watch faces and Internet-connected apps. The Pebble watch also connects to iPhone and Android smartphones through Bluetooth. This means that your watch can alert you to incoming phone calls, e-mails, and texts with a silent vibration.

Pebble's high-tech watch

The watch's developers say that cyclists, for example, can use the Pebble watch as a bike computer by accessing the GPS on their smartphones to display speed, distance, and pace data. Runners can do the same. Pebble will also include a golf rangefinder app that will work on more than 25,000 golf courses across the world.

Users will also be able to use their Pebble watch to play, pause, or skip the music stored on their phones.

Kickstarter is also featuring a project for the TikTok and LunaTik. This project transforms the iPod Nano into a multi-touch watch.

TikTok, LunaTik

The idea is fairly simple: With TikTok, users can easily snap their Nano into a specially-designed watchband. They can then remove it when they don't want their Nano to function as a watch. With LunaTik, users who want to transform their Nano into a watch in a more permanent fashion receive a conversion kit that allows them to do so.

As the designers behind this product say, it makes sense. The Nano itself, with its music-playing abilities, included games, pedometer, and clock, makes for a powerful multi-touch watch.

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