



ThinkTech
You have enough to think about

tech-ade

Turn your technology lemons into lemonade



July 2011

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Can You Really Get Microsoft Office For Just \$6 A Month?

Recently, Microsoft announced a real "game changer" for the IT industry and something that may mean the demise of the \$62 billion-dollar company's stronghold on the desktop. What is it? Office 365, which is their new cloud computing answer to Google Apps. Instead of paying \$300 per license, you can now access the entire Office suite of products via the Internet for \$6 to \$24 per month (like paying for a utility).

What Is "Cloud Computing"

Cloud computing or "going to the cloud" is very similar to the concept of paying for electricity as a utility rather than purchasing and running your own generator to power your home or office. Public utilities can provide a cheap, reliable, "pay as you go" service to anyone wanting water or power. Similarly, cloud computing means that the cost of hosting, securing and delivering services (like Office) is owned by the utility company (in this case, Microsoft).

Is This A Smart Move?

The cost savings with Office 365 are hard to ignore; however, there are a number of things to consider before you jump ship to cloud computing. You need to consider the reliability of your Internet connection, what type of help desk support you want, security, what other applications (accounting, CRM, line of

business applications, etc.) you need and which devices (scanners, printers, iPads) you need to use. Many people also have concerns about security and where their data is kept – all things that need to be addressed before you move to the cloud.

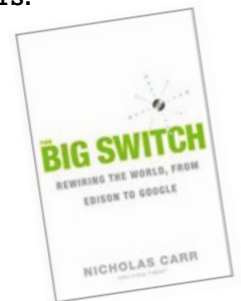
Free "Cloud Readiness" Assessment Will Give You The Facts

If you want to know if cloud computing is right for you, call us for a free, no-pressure, no-obligation cloud readiness assessment. We'll evaluate your current situation and provide insights and options for moving to the cloud. We'll also answer any questions you have and tell you the unvarnished pros and cons of choosing this option.

Plus, if you call us during the month of July to schedule this assessment, we'll send you a FREE copy of the best-selling book, "The Big Switch" by Nicholas Carr. This book talks about the massive technological revolution that is happening right now and what it means to businesses like yours.

Call Today To Book Your "Cloud Readiness" Assessment!

508-992-2541



The Woman On The Other End of the Phone Wept...

"The world is against me and I can't take it anymore!" cried the distraught woman. She had just called a crisis hotline desperate for someone to help her. "Last week I was in a car accident, my house was broken into, and now my computer has crashed and erased all of my business files!" This woman was already having a bad week, but it was that stupid computer that *finally* made her snap.

A New and Growing Anxiety Disorder Affecting Americans

According to a Washington Post report, there is a fast-growing disorder that is affecting millions of Americans called "computer rage" – and psychologists and crisis hotlines are starting to see more people and more computer rage cases cropping up. Kent Norman, a University of Maryland psychology professor, studies computer rage and its effects. According to Norman, "In the workplace and at home, we're smashing computer screens, beating on keyboards, and throwing equipment out the window." What's interesting about this phenomenon is that most people do not destroy, smash, or beat on non-electronic items like cars and furniture; it seems completely directed towards electronics, and more specifically computers.

Don't Be A Victim!

Since most people spend their entire day working at a computer, problematic PCs are certainly a huge contributor to stress and anxiety. If you already have enough to worry about and want to make sure your computer isn't adding to your stress and anxiety levels, then call us today about our TotalCARE service plan. For a flat-rate fee, we'll monitor and maintain your computer network to make sure you never want to throw your keyboard through your monitor!

Meet Our New Client Of The Month!

Every month we choose one very special person to be my "Client Of The Month." It's our way of acknowledging clients and thanking those who support me and my business with referrals and repeat business. This month's Client Of The Month is **Silver City Aluminum**. Congratulations! You have won a \$50 Gift Certificate to your favorite restaurant. ***You might be my next Client Of The Month...watch for your name and picture here!***



Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



EchoSign

If you are a business that is still faxing or mailing documents because you need a signature, you'll love this month's gadget, EchoSign.

Contracts have been faxed and mailed for years because of the binding laws associated with signatures. EchoSign allows the legal, electronic signing of documents to speed up the signing process – now you can e-mail a PDF, Word document or Excel file to someone and allow them to “sign” without printing it off, signing and scanning, faxing or mailing it back to you.

The free version of EchoSign allows the user 5 signatures a month, which may be adequate for those that only deal with contracts and other signed documents once in a while. However, for those that need to use the product on a daily basis, upgrading to the Pro version costs \$14.95/month, the Team version (2-9 users) is \$40/month and the Enterprise version for 10 or more users costs \$299/month.

In addition to speeding up the signing process, this app also allows you to track, organize and file your paperwork securely online, available for reference at any time.

For those who prefer to keep the paper trail organized in computer files instead of physical files, EchoSign would be a great help.

Is Best Buy's New Electronics “Buy Back” Program All It's Cracked Up To Be?



You may have heard about the new “Buy Back” program being offered by Best Buy. The premise behind Best Buy's Buy Back program is simple: Buy a technology product in certain categories – mobile phones (but not pre-paid phones), laptops, netbooks, tablet computers and TVs – from Best Buy, and the store will let you bring it back and receive a portion of the purchase price. Of course, there are “catches.”

First, the Buy Back program isn't free. Its upfront cost is based on what you're buying. For example, the Buy Back benefit on a \$2,500 TV would cost \$349.99. New laptops can run \$70 and phones \$40 to \$60. Second, Best Buy won't give you the full purchase price back. The amount is based on the

age of the device and the condition it's in. An item returned within six months will get you a maximum of 50% of the purchase price *provided* it's in good condition and you have all the parts. If you wait 18 to 24 months, you'll get no more than 20% and if you wait 24 to 48 months, you'll only get 10%.

Finally, you don't get cash but a Best Buy gift card, which, naturally, can only be used at Best Buy. So is it a good deal? Depends on how often you like to upgrade your equipment and how much you frequent Best Buy stores. If you like new things and love Best Buy, it's probably a great deal. However, there are many critics of the promotion who say the only beneficiary is Best Buy.

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Services We Offer:

- IT Consulting Services
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- Network Security
- PC and Server Maintenance & Support
- E-mail & Internet Solutions
- Helpdesk Support
- Managed Spam Filtering
- Storage Solutions
- Network Monitoring to Prevent Problems

Careful! Phishing E-mails On The Rise

A phishing e-mail is an e-mail sent by a hacker designed to fool the recipient into downloading a virus, giving up their credit card number, personal information (like a social security number), or account or login information to a particular web site. Often these e-mails are well designed to look exactly like an official notification from the site they are trying to emulate.

For example, a recent phishing e-mail was circulated that appeared to come from Facebook stating that videos or photos of Osama Bin Laden's death were posted online. These e-mails looked exactly like a legitimate Facebook e-mail and even appeared to come from "Facebookmail.com." Once you clicked on the e-mail the phishing site would attempt to install a virus on your machine.

And now due to recent security breaches with Sony and e-mail marketer Epsilon, phishing attacks are going to increase – and they are going to get more sophisticated and harder to distinguish from legitimate e-mails. That's because the hackers that were able to access the private databases of the above mentioned companies now have the name, e-mail and interests of the subscribers, and in some cases birthdays, addresses and more. That means a phishing e-mail can be personalized with relevant information that the user provided to Sony, making the e-mail appear to be more legitimate and the user more likely to click on the links provided and take the actions requested. Now more than ever it's critical that you are wary of e-mail notifications and the actions they request you take. Even having good anti-virus software installed won't protect you if you give your account information away freely.

I'd Love To Hear From YOU!

Is there an article you would like to comment on? Is there a topic you want me to research? Have a funny story or a resource you want to share with the other subscribers? Send it to me! We are always looking for new and useful content to add to Tech-ade.

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"And we all lived profitably after."