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“It’s Amazing! These Computers Are So Much Faster!”

United Way Upgrades Their Network With Help From Tech Experts

With some computers that were going on nine years old, the United Way of Monroe County knew it was time for an upgrade to their network. After a careful review of their requirements and several proposals, the organization chose Tech Experts as their trusted network service company.

“The United Way is an incredible organization, and accomplished amazing things with their technology,” said Thomas Fox, president of Tech Experts. “But it was clearly time for a technology refresh. We were very excited to work with them on the project.”

The agency had a mix of computers running Windows 2000 and Windows XP, and a file server running Windows NT Server 4.0. The workstation computers all needed upgrades, and were running various versions of Microsoft Office.

Like any small business, the United Way uses their computers for everyday business tasks, such as communicating with donors and volunteers, word processing, desktop publishing and book keeping. “I knew we needed new computers badly and had been searching for ways



The United Way Team, from left: Sandie Pierce, Rusty Davis, Mitzi Jondro, Lisa Hatala, Connie Carroll, and Mike Smith.

to accomplish purchasing them,” said Connie Carroll, United Way’s executive director. “We were able to secure a grant and with that and the help of Tech Experts, we were able to upgrade our technology.”

The new network at United Way is fast – consisting of an IBM eServer running the latest Microsoft Windows 2003 Small Business Server operating system. The workstation computers all feature 17” LCD screens and lightning-fast IBM/Lenovo computers with Windows XP Professional

and Microsoft Office 2007. It is a tremendous upgrade from their old technology.

Connie continued: “It’s amazing! These computers are so much faster! It has been a bit of a learning curve getting used to the new Office software, but I know we will be more efficient going forward.”

“We like that Tech Experts is a locally owned company with a track record of providing service in the community,” continued Rusty Davis, the United Way of Monroe County’s Program Manager. “We like the personal service we receive from Tech Experts.”

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Slowdown Means It's Time To Boost Productivity

We need to do more than fix your computers – we need to help you maximize your technology investment, reduce costs and lower overhead. You don't want computers – you want what the computers can do for you.



Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, southeast Michigan's leading small business computer support company.

I attended an industry summit last month in Orlando, Florida, sponsored by the company that develops the software we use to run our business. Over 750 of the computer industry's top service providers all converged in Downtown Disney for two days of training, sharing of best practices and panel discussions on the future of the computer service business.

Not surprisingly, a frequent topic of discussion among the attendees was the economy. While I know companies and people are struggling, I think in large part the media builds up the hype and frenzy to the point of near mass hysteria. "Bad news sells papers," as they say.

Being involved in these discussions at the summit did drive home the point that we need to be the trusted business advisor for our clients. This means we need to do more than fix your computers – we need

to help you maximize your technology investment, reduce costs and lower overhead. You don't want computers – you want what the computers can do for you.

This has never been more important than right now, as we're watching the economy rise and fall like a roller coaster.

This idea won't be popular with your employees, but one of the areas where we can help you make an immediate impact on your bottom line is by increasing productivity. The Internet has become a way of life for nearly everyone – and almost every staff person has Internet access right at their desktops.

If you have a medium sized company with 10 regular, work at their desk type employees. Let's assume, too, that each person makes \$20 per hour after taxes and benefits. If each employee wastes just five minutes per day on the Internet, your annual waste is over \$4,300. If they spend 15 personal minutes per day on the Internet, the annual cost is more than \$13,000. An hour per day? The cost skyrockets to more than \$50,000 per year.

There are plenty of options available to limit and monitor Internet usage at your company, and I'd encourage you to implement something immediately. There are some options that won't cost you anything more than an hour of one of our consultant's time.

If you know that employees are spending time on Myspace, for example, we can block access to that website. Or, you can make Myspace a hot monitoring term, and start recording a screen shot every second while an employee is on that site.

We also have the ability to block any external sites at the firewall level, so there's no need to monitor employee's computers. With a firewall, we can deny and allow sites based on their category (research sites are allowed, while lingerie sites aren't). Call me at the office (734-457-5000) and I'll be happy to discuss options with you.

If you're concerned about violating employee privacy, here's a little secret I'll let you in on: The good employees don't care. And secretly, they're going to be happy you're cracking down on the slackers.

The Value of Peer Groups And Partnering

I'm extremely fortunate to be involved in several peer groups, which helps put me in touch with the best and brightest in the computer service industry. In case you're not familiar, a peer group is an association of business owners, usually but not always in the same industry, who meet on a regular basis to network and discuss issues they're having in their businesses.

If you're not involved in some sort of CEO group or industry association, I encourage you to join one. It is invaluable to be able to network and talk with other business owners who understand my company and the challenges I face. And I'd bet you'd find the experience invaluable, too.

I was able to see two of my peer group friends at the Orlando meeting, David Bennett and Howard Cunningham. These are guys I admire a lot, not only for their business acumen but also for their willingness to share what they're doing in their businesses that make them successful.

Dave owns Connections for Business in Hollywood, Florida, and Howard owns Macro Systems just outside of Washington, D.C. These guys share my goal of growing my business and providing incredible service to my clients. They're at the top of their game in the IT services industry, and I'm really glad to be able to call them friends.



The Three Amigos in Orlando, Florida! From left, Howard Cunningham, David Bennett and me. I'm very fortunate to be able to call these guys friends.

Need help? Call the Tech Experts 24 hour computer emergency hotline at (734) 240-0200.



Do You Want To Be Able To Work From Home? Here's What You Need To Know!

There's a hot business trend that's become even **MORE popular with the rising gas prices: telecommuting.**

Whether you call it "working from home," or your "virtual office," the idea is the same: Your network is configured to give you and your staff the ability to work from some location other than the office.

While most business owners and managers pulling 60+ hour work-weeks love the idea, they often fear that



employees working from home won't be as productive, or won't take their job seriously, but this fear is on the decline.

The International Telework Association & Council (ITAC, www.telecommute.org) reports that the number of workers who telecommute

at least once a week has *topped 23 million and is continuing to grow.*

While telecommuting will not work in every situation, there is no doubt that technology has made working from home extremely practical whether a few times a month or every week.

Offering Work From Home Options Makes Your Company More Competitive

As a matter of fact, offering work-from-home options can give you a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining the best employees:

- Employees who are sick can continue to work without infecting the office or losing an entire work day.
- Employees forced to stay home to take care of sick family members can continue to work instead of taking off long periods.

- Inclement weather or heavily congested traffic won't shut down your office.
- Key managers with a heavy workload will actually be more productive if given the ability to work from home on evenings and weekends.
- Allowing employees flexibility during peak workloads (e.g. CPAs during tax season) makes employees happier to put in the extra hours from a home office.
- Employees with temporary or permanent disabilities can continue to be fully functional in a home environment.

Telecommuting Improves Employee Productivity And Retention

ITAC reports that enabling key employees the ability to work from home actually increases their productivity, leads to fewer sick days, and a better work/life balance which in turn, reduces turnover. After all, an employee who is given the benefit of working from home will often pass up higher paying job offers that will require them to be in an office 40 hours a week.

For the business, telecommuting saves on rent and utilities and can help avoid the heavy expense of renting additional office space or moving to larger locations.

Most business owners will test a "work from home" program by only giving themselves and a few key managers the ability to work from home. Often, this is for after-hours access. Once the technology is set up and tested, a few additional key staff can be permitted to work from home on special occasions, while traveling, sick, or otherwise unable to come in.

FREE: The Ultimate Small Business Owners Guide To Setting Up A 'Work From Home' Program Or Remote Network Access

If you are thinking about investing in the technology to allow your staff to work from home or a remote location—DON'T—at least not until you read this informative new report.

To secure your free copy, go to:
www.MyTechExperts.com/remotereport
or, call the office at (734) 457-5000.

"Enabling key employees the ability to work from home actually increases their productivity, leads to fewer sick days, and a better work/life balance which in turn, reduces turnover."



Contact Information

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Is Your Computer Acting Scary? Try These Tips!



Daryll Coon is a client service coordinator and technician with Tech Experts.

Has your computer been acting strange lately? Has it been popping up with funny messages, running slower than normal, missing buttons or cannot get on the Internet?

All of these things can be caused by malware and can do so without the computer user even knowing that they are being targeted.

Most effects of malware are just annoying to the user but some can attack your PC and cause the computer to be unusable or even to lose data.

The use of the Internet has caused an increase in this type of infection. What exactly are viruses, spyware, Trojans, worms, and adware?

- Viruses are computer programs that can copy itself and infect files increasing memory usage and slow-

ing down the system. Viruses can be opened by launching a file that has .exe on the end. Other people can be infected by contact to the file that was originally infected. The virus can do harm by attaching to an application, application file or by residing in the memory (RAM).

- Spyware collects information about the user's Internet activity or changes the configuration of the computer. They can change the home page that opens up when you start Internet Explorer or add buttons to Explorer. Also called adware.

- Trojans are, many times, a form on a web site that misleads you in believing that a program is used for a helpful purpose but instead has a malicious intent. You can be downloading a paint program to make artwork but instead you are really being infected by a Trojan that may harm your computer .

- Worms are like a virus but spread through a network of computers without a user doing anything. These will corrupt files and cause

the Internet to run slowly on your computer.

- Malware are any of the above types of infections.

Now that you know exactly what these pesky pieces of software are, it is time to modify your Internet habits. These are some tips to help avoid risky behavior on the Internet.

- Use a firewall. This will help block unwanted transmissions to your computer.

- Update your operating system when needed. Microsoft routinely releases updates for security fixes.

- Use an anti-virus software.

- Never open e-mail or attachments from anyone that you do not know.

If you have questions about computer viruses, or think you may have an infection, call the Tech Experts 24 Hour Computer Emergency Hotline at (734) 240-0200.

Halloween Holiday Trivia: Bet You Didn't Know...

Orange and black are Halloween colors because orange is associated with the fall harvest and black is associated with darkness and death.

Jack o' lanterns originated in Ireland where people placed candles in hollowed-out turnips to keep away spirits and ghosts on the Samhain holiday.

Pumpkins also come in white, blue and green. Great for unique monster carvings!

Halloween was brought to North America by immigrants from Europe who would celebrate the harvest around a bonfire, share ghost stories, sing, dance and tell fortunes.

The ancient Celts thought that spirits and ghosts roamed the countryside on Halloween night. They began wearing masks and costumes to avoid being recognized as human.

Halloween candy sales average about 2 billion dollars annually in the United States. Chocolate is #1.

Halloween is the 2nd most commercially successful holiday, with Christmas being the first.

Bobbing for apples is thought to have originated from the Roman harvest festival that honors Pomona, the goddess of fruit trees.



"Opportunity paged me, beeped me, linked me, e-mailed me, faxed me, and spammed me. But I was expecting it to knock!"