# Dual Monitors Helps Insurance Agency Boost Productivity

When Robert Leski and Timothy Wittman, owners of the Leski Insurance Agency, decided to upgrade their computer systems last year, they were looking for ways to improve staff productivity and enhance their customer service functions.

After evaluating their workflow, Tech Experts recommended they employ a dual monitor solution as part of the agency's technology upgrade.

Leski Agency uses an ACT! contact management system to keep track of all of their client's policies and information.

When customer service representatives (CSRs) are quoting new business, or changes to customer's existing policies, they will frequently need to refer to the information in ACT! in order to complete the quoting or change forms.

Before the dual monitor solution, the CSRs would have to toggle back and forth between screens. Now, ACT! remains active on one screen while the quote or policy change form is active on the other screen.

"We needed a way to streamline our customer service practices,"



*Timothy Wittman, co-owner of Leski Insurance Agency, finds working with dual monitors improves efficiency and customer service. He will typically have the ACT Contact Management System running on one screen, and use the second for entering data from ACT into web forms and Word documents.*

commented Tim, one of the agency's co-owners. "Tech Experts showed us a dual monitor system that lets our employees look up information faster."

The dual monitor solution was part of a larger technology refresh project the agency undertook last year. As part of the upgrade, Leski invested in a new, faster IBM eServer to store their customer data, documents and accounting information.

The agency also upgraded the staff computers to new Lenovo compact workstation computers. The compact workstation computers are about the size of a box of cereal.

"We really like working with Tech Experts," Tim continued. "Technology changes every day, and it has become increasingly harder for small business owners to manage their computer systems. With the Tech Experts team taking care of our technology, I can focus on what our agency does best - taking great care of our clients."

Leski Insurance Agency was founded in 1980 by Robert Leski, a now retired Monroe County Community College professor. The agency writes general lines property and casualty insurance, and specializes in the insurance needs of educators through the MEEMIC insurance company.

*"Technology changes every day, and it has become increasingly harder for small business owners to manage their computer systems. With the Tech Experts team taking care of our technology, I can focus on what our agency does best - taking great care of our clients."*

*- Timothy Wittman*
*Leski Insurance Agency*

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**Leski Insurance Agency**
2072 South Custer Road
Monroe, Michigan 48161
(734) 242-6759
www.LeskiInsurance.com

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

# Running Out Of Room: Server Storage Upgrades

## How Does Offsite Backup Work?

As your storage needs increase, you're faced with the challenge of managing and optimizing data protection processes. You may find that your data no longer fits on just one tape. On top of all of that, employees often forget to put in a new backup tape each day. That's when having a fully automated and backup solution is essential for your business.

This is where offsite backup comes in. Secure and reliable data protection is vital to your disaster recovery plan.

Whether you're backing up 5 GB or 500GB of data, offsite backup solutions allow you to maintain a current offsite backup at a secure remote facility.

A special software agent is loaded on your server, which compresses and encrypts your data before sending it via the Internet to the offsite backup storage facility.

Data is backed up while your servers are up and running. This reduces costs associated with server or application downtime.

In addition, application special software agents allow for real-time backup of Exchange, SQL, and other databases.

Your data is secure from the moment it's transferred to the storage vault, and it remains encrypted until it's restored on the client computer. Only those with a vault password can access the backup data.

*Robert Saylors is senior network technician and a hardware specialist with Tech Experts.*

We have all experienced this: The longer you own a computer, the smaller the hard drive seems be. This can be a problem not only for the home user, but a huge problem for business clients and their servers.

Just a few years ago, 100 gigabytes of hard drive space was more than anyone thought they would ever need. Today, laptop computers come with more than 500gb of storage, and terabyte laptop drives aren't far away.

As applications like Microsoft's PowerPoint become more powerful, the size of the files being saved grow larger and larger. If you are creating these files on your PC and saving the files locally to your hard drive you can quickly run out of space.

The ease and affordability of "thumb" or "flash" drives allows most users to save these files to removalable media and keep the local drive free to perform the other tasks required. Servers on the other hand are a different story.

Most servers are used for file storage. The data created by all the users on the network is stored on the server. This allows multiple users access to spreadsheets, Word documents or PowerPoint presentations.

They can open the file, make their changes, and save the file back to a common storage space on the server. Most, if not all, of these files are important and more than likely will be used over and over again.

I have found that most of my clients can not move these files to a removable storage device, as they need access to the file almost on a daily basis.



That means the file needs to be on the server and accessible to all users, all the time. Each of these files requires space on the hard drive.If you're using shadow copies to keep older files in case something becomes corrupt (or someone deletes something accidentally in the application), before you know it, your server is running out of room.

Most of the servers I deal with have separate areas of the hard drive called "partitions" that have the operating system ("OS" )separate from the data storage area. This allows technicians to come in, once the data area or OS partitions start to get full and install a new drive.

We have the ability at Tech Experts to take a server that may have originally had a 100GB hard drive and install a drive with a capacity that will allow you to store information for months to come.

Notice how I said "months to come." It never fails to amaze me how fast server storage can fill up with data. I have written in previous articles how important it is to back this data up, but it is just as important to make sure you have enough room on your server for both file storage as well as the OS.

Microsoft releases updates to all operating systems continually to keep your systems secure and operating at the best possible speed. Having the room required to install these updates is vital to the health of your network and the productivity of your business.

When it becomes necessary to upgrade your server's storage with more capacity, we can perform this task with minimal amount of downtime and with an eye toward the future to insure your investment in the server will be well worth it.

# Social Networking Boosts Your Business!

*Ryan Seymour is a PC hardware specialist and the Tech Experts client service coordinator.*

You can't turn on the television, read a newspaper, or even browse online without hearing about the business benefits of "social networking." What is social networking, and how can it help build your business?

Loosely defined, social networking is nothing more than a group of people who share a common interest getting together online. It gives you the opportunity to create a virtual meeting place where your clients, prospects, vendors and even employees can talk about things going on in your company, ask questions, promote products or sales, and announce special events.

Social networking eliminates time zone differences, a huge factor for many. People from all over the state, country, and even world can connect and communicate easily in real time, opening many doors that geographical boundaries once closed. In a nutshell: Social networking helps you stay in touch!

There are a myriad of social networking sites on the Internet, and each is geared toward a slightly different demographic or type of user. More than likely, you'll want to participate in a couple different sites to stay in touch with the most number of people.

The most used sites for business networking include Facebook, LinkedIn.com, and Twitter. Don't discount the value of participating in online forums and writing your own blog.

## Facebook

Facebook (www.facebook.com) has become one of the most popular online relationship building sites. It's a central point for a lot of different things, like posting status updates (what are you up to right now?), photo albums, and even videos. You can also keep up with what everyone else that you're "friends" with on the site is doing – and in this case, friends can mean true friends, or business acquaintances.

When you log into Facebook, you'll see all of your friend's latest updates about what they're up to – and when they log in, they'll see yours, mixed in with other friends they have. Some people post every small detail of what's going on in their lives, and others post infrequently or only when they have something truly important to say. Neither approach is right or wrong – what you decide to post is more of a personal preference.

## LinkedIn.com

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) is probably the largest online business networking site. You can post your resume, join special interest groups, search for people you want to meet, and request introductions from your friends to other people you want to meet. That may be the most interesting thing about LinkedIn - think of it as an online "six degrees of separation." Your LinkedIn network extends from your friends, out to friends they know, out several levels.

## Twitter

Twitter (www.twitter.com) is a very popular new online meeting place. Twitter is what's known as a "micro-blogging" site, because posts or updates you make are limited to 140 characters at a time. These entries are known as "tweets."

Ping (www.ping.fm) lets you tie it all together. Ping is a service that will take your update and post it to all of your social networking accounts at one time.
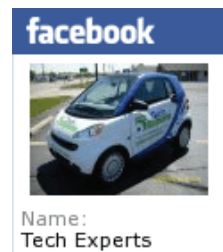
## Forums and blogs

Online forums are a great way to meet people who are interested in similar topics, and there are literally thousands of active forums online. It's easy to participate, and you'll find a lot of forums are incredibly active. To boost your online exposure, which boosts your company's profile, look for forums that focus on topics your clients care about. Then, post answers to other people's questions. You'll quickly demonstrate your expertise.

It is easy to say that everyone (and every company) should have a blog, but the reality is, in order to be successful, you'll need to blog regularly. You have to enjoy writing and be willing to commit to posting on a very regular schedule, or risk losing readers.

By becoming part of a social networking site, you're not only opening your business to all World Wide Web users, you're actually making your business more accessible to the public to be available to purchase your products and services. Connecting with other businesses also gives us the ability to share common ideas and practices in groups who share common ideas and business goals.

> *"Social networking is nothing more than a group of people who share a common interest getting together online."*

facebook

Name:
Tech Experts

*Join our page on Facebook.*
*www.FBook.me/TechExperts*

# Choosing The Right Antivirus Software

*Corey Bogedain is a network technician and web developer with Tech Experts.*

Protecting your computer from spyware, viruses, pop ups and malware is one of the most important things you can do as a computer owner. Not being protected can lead to stolen information or just plain harm to the computer.

Some infections can sit in the background and wait until the right time to deploy. By having a good antivirus program you can protect your computer at all times. Here are some tips to help you choose the right antivirus software for your system.

## Costs

When looking for the right antivirus software do not forget to compare pricing. Most antivirus software is fairly priced.  Some well known antivirus software can be very pricy due to the well known name that the company has.

One of the more affordable antivirus programs that I know is low priced, but has great quality. It's called Etrust, and it's made by Computer Associates (CA).

## Automatic Updates

You can pay all the money in the world for a good antivirus program, but if the antivirus signatures do not update automatically then it is not worth it. Almost every computer user does not even pay attention if the antivirus is on or not - most just assume it is taking care of business. By having an antivirus that automatically updates it can help keep the antivirus software up to date and protect you from the newest threats.

## Frequency of Signature Updates

An important part of the software is how often the software actually updates. They say that a new virus is created every four minutes. So good antivirus software sends out multiple updates every day to make sure the virus signatures are up to date on the most recent threats.

## Active Scanning

Active scanning is another feature that is very good to have. Some antivirus programs only protect the computer files as they're being used or access, and not all the files on the system. You want protection that is active all of the time, and scans files and programs as you access them.

By having it scan it will look through all files on the computer to make sure there are no sleeping threats on the system. Many infections will just keep coming back so having the computer scan every day helps protect from those types of infections.
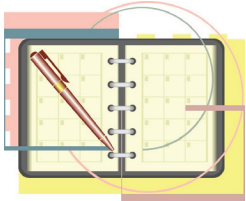
## Performance

When looking at antivirus software, you have to ask yourself: "Will it slow down my computer?"

If the software takes a lot of space and resources, you may find it will slow down your system when it's working. If you sit down and think of these topics before you rush into buying new antivirus software, I am sure you will get great software for your money.

Also there are many websites that will compare antivirus programs if you are worried about the safety of your computer.

If you have any questions or concerns about the best antivirus for you, please feel free to give us a call here at Tech Experts at (734) 457-5000.

## Mark Your Calendar!

**Tuesday, October 6 - Noon to 1:30**
**Lunch & Learn Program**
**Introducing Windows 7**

**Create new service requests, check ticket status and review invoices in our client portal: https://connect.expertsmi.com/support**