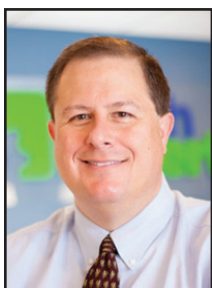# Five Simple Year-End Technology Tasks To Start 2017 Right

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

If you want to get 2017 off to the right start as far as your technology is concerned, do a little end-of-year cleaning with these five simple tasks.

Update all of your passwords

If 2016 taught us anything, it's that security and data infringement threats are at an all-time high. Most people don't bother to change their passwords until after they have been hacked, which beats the purpose.

Now is the right time to change your passwords. The longer your password is, the better. For added security, use a combination of upper and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols.

Clean up your hard drive

Get rid of any files you no longer need. Not only will this step reduce the number of files you store on your computer, but it will also make finding needed files much easier.

It will also free up your storage space. If you're not sure whether you need a file or not, archive it so that you can access it at a later time, if the need arises.

Reorganize your file structure

Once you have ditched the stuff you don't need, invest some time creating a robust and intuitive file structure so that you'll spend less time in 2017 searching for documents you know are there somewhere but just can't seem to find.

Ditch the applications you no longer use

No doubt you have downloaded a whole host of applications that you never use or that have since been replaced by better versions.

Uninstall any programs you are not using to free up space and declutter your computer or mobile device.

Check that your software is up to date

The start of the year is a great time to make sure all the applications and software programs that you use are fully up to date.

In addition to protecting your security by ensuring you have the latest secure versions of an app, keeping your software up to date will also help you to make sure you are not missing out on any great new features.

Now is the right time to change your passwords. The longer your password is, the better. For added security, use a combination of upper and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols.

happy holidays

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

Why Technology Is Important For Your Small Business

> *"Technology changes every day and it's important to stay up to speed with the latest and greatest tech in order to moveforward in the growth direction. In today's tech, there are even data growth solutions that will grow with your business automatically."*

Anthony Glover is a Senior Network Engineer and Service Manager at Tech Experts.

In modern computing, it is very important that you have a technological solution in place to allow smooth function at your small business. Here are 5 reasons why it's important to do so.

Business Growth

As your business grows, you're going to need a plan for expansion if you expect to grow. Technology changes every day and it's important to stay up to speed with the latest and greatest tech in order to move forward in the growth direction. In today's tech, there are even data growth solutions that will grow with your business automatically.

This not only saves time with expansion, but allows your business to save money in the long run. Technology is very important and should not be taken for granted in order for your business to thrive effectively.

On-The-Move Tech

As your business grows and you begin to move forward, you will need to be able to run your business from several locations. Technology allows you to do this from one central location. Utilizing tech makes certain that you're not only monitoring your business at all locations, but that it's more secure than ever.

From mobile devices to laptops to networking equipment, an IT professional will provide you with the best care needed to keep your business with you at all times.

Fewer Headaches With A Managed Plan

With a managed plan (such as the ones Tech Experts offer), your

computer problems are monitored and are taken care of by a tech professional.

This cleans your hands of computer problems and allows you to run your business more effectively — minus the technology headache — and keeps your business running much more efficiently.

All workstations will be managed and up-to-date, along with programs that normally would fall behind due to user awareness.

Our tech team can and will make sure that your workstations servers and network equipment will have the latest firmware and software updates available.

Automate Computation

In today's tech there are many ways to automate normally manual tasks. Such as automated password or online form completion.

Technology is designed to complete tasks for you while you sit back and save time and save money. Take advantage of a solution that is going to improve your everyday small business life on a colossal scale. Automation is domination in the computer world and should not be taken lightly.

Reduce Redundancy

Your data is a vital component to your business and it is very important that your data does not get overlooked.

When functioning in a business environment, the best practice is to not only have a backup of your data but prevent your data from being lost to begin with. This is when redundancy comes in.

Your server for your business should be monitored, verified, and managed by an IT professional. This will allow you to function throughout the day without worrying about your data being safe and secure, keep an increased outlook on productivity, and allow for a guaranteed solution for data retrieval.

Which Is Better - Ethernet Or Wi-Fi?

Luke Gruden is a Help Desk Specialist at Tech Experts.

To physically plug in your computer to the Internet or to use the air waves to connect to the net — more popularly recognized as Wi-Fi — is a good question to ask with many good answers, but it comes down to what you need out of your Internet connection.

An Ethernet connection is a wired connection from one network device (like your computer) to another network device. This wired connection is usually made of copper with some form of shielding.

Some Ethernet wires are even designed to take harsh weather conditions. Ethernet connections come in many different sizes and can be cut and made into any length you want, with 329 feet usually being the limit of a single long Ethernet cord.

A Wi-Fi connection is where one network device connects with another network device by sending wireless signals.

The distance that a Wi-Fi signal can travel is based on the strength of the signal, type of signal, and the objects and walls between both Wi-Fi devices. There are different type of wireless signals like N signal, G signals, and AC signals which can have a large impact on distance and quality of signal.

The benefits of using Wi-Fi are that you don't have wires restricting where you can place your computer. This is especially useful if you need to move to different locations in a home or office without losing your Internet connection.

Wi-Fi is easy to share with others as you don't need an Ethernet cord for each device that wants access. Your router can still have a limit of how many connections can connect, however.

The disadvantages of using Wi-Fi are that it can be very unsecure and have performance issues with maintaining speed or connections.

Public Wi-Fi connections can be compromised or falsified, causing everyone using the signal to have their data stolen. I avoid using public Wi-Fi signals as it can cost me all my credentials for websites I use. The benefits of using an Ethernet connection is that it is the most consistent and fastest connection you can have with another network device, providing consistent speed.

Ethernet connections are physical and can easily keep track of who is connected to the network and where. Ethernet speeds do not slow down with distance or obstacles. If you can plug an Ethernet cord in, the speed difference between a long cord and a small cord is negligible.

The disadvantages of using Ethernet cords is that if the cord is cut or damage, you most likely need to replace the whole Ethernet wire.

It can be tricky to conceal Ethernet wiring and require holes to be drilled throughout the building. You usually cannot move Ethernet wires along with you if you are using a laptop.

What it really comes down to between using Wi-Fi and Ethernet is if you favor security and speed or if you favor convenience and sharing.

If you need a secure environment with fast Internet speeds, you want to use a wired gigabit Ethernet connection.

If you need many strangers, family, or friends to connect easily and you need access in many rooms without hassle, you want to use a Wi-Fi connection.

Choose what is best for your business or home; if you have any questions, reach us at (734) 457-5000 and we can help you narrow down your choices.

> *"What it really comes down to between using Wi-Fi and Ethernet is if you favor security and speed or if you favor convenience and sharing."*

Create new service requests, check ticket status, and review invoices in our client portal:
http://www.TechSupportRequest.com

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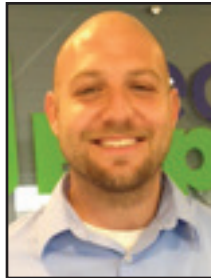
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Using Technology to Improve Your Business

Brian Poland is a network engineer at Tech Experts.

In this day and age, small businesses are facing a serious question: keep doing business as usual or try to adopt and incorporate a more relevant way of doing things.

Keeping the status quo may be one of the reasons the business has remained so successful, but it may also be one of the reasons it starts to falter in the future. There is a certain loyalty to small, local businesses, but speed, convenience, and consistence overrules loyalty after a while.

With a few simple changes, it's possible to keep the business running as usual (on the outside), while streamlining the way it operates from the inside. Ultimately, this provides the customers with the speed, convenience, and consistency they require to remain loyal.

The first change a business can make is to ensure a fast, easy way to accept credit cards as tender. A lot of small business still don't accept credit cards or debit cards because they simply don't have the means. Or, they accept these forms of payment, but rely on outdated, and time consuming methods, such as phone lines.

The solution to this is to utilize mobile devices to scan and authorize payments. More and more businesses are using this method and the trend doesn't seem to be slowing.

The second improvement that can be made is with accounting and bookkeeping. Using an accounting program that is not based in the cloud or using a program that the company has used for a decade may have worked in the past. However, as the business grows and taxes, payroll, and the bottom line increases, the business is going to be better off using a program that is constantly updated, constantly backed up, and that can be accessed from anywhere.

You move around a lot — and being able to access these important aspects of your business whenever you want and wherever you go becomes an important tool for managing your business on the go. The third and most important aspect of managing your business is providing your employees and customers with ways to contribute and feel valued.

A great way to do this is to keep an open line of communication with them. Implementing ways to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and feelings about their job and experience is becoming an important variable in employee and customer satisfaction.

In office settings, it can be very helpful to implement an instant messaging program between employees. This provides a way for everyone to communicate easily. In retail settings, employee text messaging groups can be utilized or social media groups can be used to let them feel a part of the team. Feeling a part of the team is crucial and feeling valued is even more important.

Social media can be huge when it's used to interact with customers. Asking a customer to share their experience on Google or Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. will always result in more and more people becoming aware of the services and experiences your business can provide.

These three changes can improve the way your business operates on a day to day basis, without having too much overhead costs, and without having to overhaul major aspects of the business. They can improve employee and customer satisfaction, as well as make them all feel included. In the end, the general sense from the customers will be one of "Whatever they changed, I like it, and it works."