

ALL THINGS TECH

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Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably

What's New

March—comes in like a lion and out like a lamb; we hope!

The days are getting longer; we move the clocks ahead one hour this month on March 12th; Mardi Gras celebrations and the beginning of Lent are upon us; and of course, St. Patrick Day celebrations and parades bring Shamrock shakes, green rivers, and green beer.

At Syscon, we just added some lighting-fast drives to our hosted environment. We're very excited to roll these out to our hosting clients and track the increase in speed and response!

We love taking care of your IT so you can take care of your business!

- Catherine Wendt

March 2017



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Catherine Wendt, President of Syscon Inc.

We love this stuff!

Our passion is helping businesses use technology to run their organization successfully and profitably.



One of the easiest ways to protect your investment in computer equipment is to be sure you have an Uninterruptable Power Supply between the computer and the outlet; UPS for short. You can purchase a simple power strip at the local store, all the way up to sophisticated UPS devices that can be programmed to shut down equipment in a specific order, and send alerts. People (including me) tend to use APC and UPS synonymously, but APC is a brand name for UPS devices. There are various size units to consider, so when should you use which devices, and why?

When the power supply is too high or too low, the UPS device will protect your equipment. Most people are aware of power surges and how risky they can be for electronics, but did you know that 'brown-outs' are also hard on the

Battery Backups: Why You Need Them!

equipment? That's when the outlet experiences a significant reduction in power to the equipment. A UPS device will also clean up the power before it hits your equipment, important since 'dirty' power can reduce the life of the equipment.

Sizing the unit is the key, so check on the wattage requirements of the equipment you intend to plug into the device. Do you have multiple computers or servers in the same device? Add up the wattage requirements and the expected battery life (time) when the power is lost. The most common issue we run into as an IT Service Provider is when we quote the right device size, then our customer purchases it on their own because they found a 'deal' that was much less expensive. When we arrive, the unit is not appropriate and will not support the equipment, so the client now has to spend time and money

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to return the device, we have to make another trip, and the original unit has to be purchased after all. When you ask an expert, especially someone you know and trust, it's better to ask questions about the differences, since ignoring their advice can be a costly mistake. I know our techs are more than happy to share their knowledge and appreciate the question!

So what equipment needs to be plugged into a UPS device? Servers are an obvious one. For a server, consider a unit that at least has the ability to send alerts via email or text. For many businesses, if there are multiple computers plugged into the same UPS, or multiple servers on a large hosting computer, we recommend a unit that can be configured to shut down servers in a specific order and within a specific time-frame keeping in mind the size of the battery so the server(s)

“Sizing the unit is the key, so check the wattage requirements.”

does not go down ‘hard’ during an outage.

Workstations should also be plugged into a UPS device. This protects them from power surges, brown outs, and dirty power.

Here are a couple of other things our Techs want you to know:

- When you have 3-phase power, UPS units will protect you and a surge protector won't; check your electrical panel or call your power company
- Triplite Units are NOT recommended to protect your computer electronics
- Plug printers into the surge port on the unit; these are clearly labeled on the device; different ‘plugs’ provide different protection, so don't hesitate to ask if you're unsure.

Considering how much money we spend on computer equipment, not to mention maintaining it, an APC device is a very worth-

while investment. You can count on your IT Company to be experts in computer-related topics, and battery protection of computer equipment is definitely one of them. We look forward to answering any questions you may have, and more importantly, are happy to set you up with what you need so you can protect your investment!



Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine attended a two-day IT owners event in Las Vegas. Our Client videos were a hot topic.

Larry is presenting statistical analytics and a custom programming tool that have been developed in the trading field.

‘I don't know' is not an answer – dig deeper

Boundaries for Leaders by Dr. Henry Cloud – Recommend!

Several years back, I read *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life*. It was a great book and very practical. I've shared this book with many friends since then, and I still highly recommend it. So when I saw the book *Boundaries for Leaders: Results, Relationships, and Being Ridiculously In Charge*, I just had to take a look – and I was NOT disappointed!

The quote that caught my attention in recent C 12 Business materials was **‘In the end, as a leader, you are always going to get a combination of two things: what you create and what you allow.’** Wow! What a great quote, and how terribly irritating at the same time! I just had to check out the book. Whether you lead the company, a department, a team in the field, or a volunteer effort, this book has something for you. What do I create? What do I allow? And how do I adjust my leadership accordingly? If you're intrigued, I recommend reading this book.

If you'd like to share your thoughts after reading it, I'd love to hear them.

Construction Corner

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Handheld? Console? No, It's...Switch!

Nintendo's long-awaited new gaming platform, Switch, should be available any day now, if it isn't already. It combines the best elements of handheld games with a home console. Handheld, the gamepad is the screen. Slip it into its dock and it plays on your TV.

The gamepad comes with two detachable "Joy-Cons." One player can hold a Joy-Con in each hand, two players can each take one, or bring in more Joy-Cons and multiple people can play.

If you're on the go, pull out the "kickstand" on the back of the gamepad and prop it up on an even surface for easy viewing. There's a slot on the side for game cards and a USB-C port for quick charging.

Because it has greater processing power than the Wii U, you'll have no trouble playing Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, Super Mario and a host of your other favorite Nintendo games.

Mobile Devices for your Field Personnel Part II: Managing, Tracking

In our Part I article, we discussed the different types of devices, and the pro's and con's within each group. We also reviewed internet access requirements, data plans, and made suggestions regarding cases. Now for the second part—managing these devices, keeping track of them, and maximizing the investment!

Data Packages and Internet

Access—When you set up these devices, be sure to have a company gmail or icloud account to log into the device for management and access. Avoid using a staff member's personal email account, since you won't have the log on information.

These plans vary by carrier, so consider how the device will be used, which apps, and how much data will be needed. The data will be driven by the type of device and what the user will be doing. If it's a Surface or Tablet, they might have video conferences, stream music, upload videos or other media, and that can add up. Consider the size of their company email. On the Tablet or Surface, be sure you have anti-virus installed.

Does the carrier have a Mobile Hot Spot option? For a short-term project, we had someone use their tablet as the local wi-fi connection, and we were surprised by the data usage. It was still less expensive than purchasing a temporary internet plan, but much more than we anticipated. Public wi-fi is becoming more common, but not everywhere, and phone signals are unpredictable on many job sites, or even in rooms with a lot of glass (reflects) or concrete (absorbs).

How to Keep Track of All of This—Consider a Mobile Device Management (MDM) tool if the devices are company-owned. By

installing the agent, you can track the GPS location, wipe the data on the phone remotely if it is lost or stolen, reset passwords, and other features that vary by provider. There is a monthly fee, but it's worth it!

There are some great new tools such as 'Find My iPhone' or 'Android Device Management' which can be installed when you setup the device. Specific apps allow access to the phone to make it ring or check its location.

Purchasing these devices is an investment that usually makes it to the Fixed Asset list. Consider an inventory list with quarterly updates from employees. We recommend assigning this to a specific person.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) - This is very common and has its pro's and con's. You won't have inventory to track, and there's no large investment, but you trade control of company data since you can't access the device, track it, or wipe data if it is lost, stolen, or the person leaves.

Some Great Software for These Devices: Navigation with step-by-step directions such as Google Maps, Apple Maps; local weather for that jobsite log; MS project, Trello, and Slack have apps. There's a new Syscon Field Integrated Time (FIT) System for job field time collection!

Where to start? Think through how you expect these devices to be used, then dive into what features or apps they'll need to get that job done.-
CMW



Other Stuff

Good Stewardship

I spend a lot of time with the office staff at our client sites, most often with the accounting and bookkeeping group. I'm always surprised to hear that payroll-related taxes are paid the same day the payroll checks are dated, rather than by the due date. Although I agree that it is better to be safe than sorry, positive cash flow is really important, too, and it's expensive to draw on that line of credit. Paying taxes on time is a responsibility and a necessity, but there's no good reason to pay them early! – CMW

Xfinity and Comcast – Free Public Wi-Fi

You've probably heard or seen the ads sharing the great news that soon, free public wi-fi will be available everywhere – what a dream! Unfortunately, what

they're NOT telling you is that they're using all of their customers' devices to make this happen. When a new device is installed, they enable the public wi-fi on the device, making it a local hot spot for anyone nearby. If you have Comcast equipment being installed, replaced, or swapped out for an upgrade, make sure this feature is turned off! Your office will thank you. - CMW

The Furbo Dog Camera lets you play with your pet from miles away. Missing your pup while you're at work or on the road? Pull out your Android or iPhone and check in. Furbo delivers 720p video in a 120-degree field so you see what's going on at home. Call your dog through the microphone and even flip her (or him) a treat for responding to your command. Just swipe your phone's screen in "Dispense" mode and Furbo launches a treat out onto the floor – or right into your dog's mouth, if she's clever

enough to catch it. Furbo can be placed anywhere with an electrical outlet nearby. And with its sleek white hourglass design and bamboo wood top, it blends in with any decor.

NerdTechy.com, 12.5.16



Syscon Website – Have you Tried our new Chat?

On our website, we have a new 'Chat' box that comes up when we have a Tech available. Check it out, even just to say 'hi'!

Uber has added a new destination: people. Let's say you just flew into Phoenix and you want to meet a friend there for drinks before heading to your hotel. It used to be that you'd ask them, "Where are you? ... Where's that again?" then try to quickly type in the address before you forgot any of the details, hoping you didn't misspell anything. With Uber's new "People" feature, instead of typing in your destination, you simply enter the person's name, skipping all the back and forth. Uber then locks in their destination and directs the driver to take you there. It also sends your ETA to the person you're going to see. Just sync your contacts with Uber before your next trip, and enjoy the ride. *Mashable, 12.21.16*

Who Else Wants To Win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card?

This month's trivia question:

Daylight Savings Time was originally dreamed up by whom, and why?

- a) Sir Isaac Newton b) Franklin Delano Roosevelt
c) Benjamin Franklin d) Thomas Edison

To enter: Go to www.Syscon-inc.com/Trivia and type in your answer. All correct answers will be put into a fishbowl and we'll randomly draw the winner. The Winner will be contacted shortly after the deadline and will be announced in next month's newsletter.

Deadline: March 20, 2017

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, **Alice Grant**, with

Temps Plus, Inc. in WI! Alice's name was drawn

from the fishbowl for last month's correctly answered question:

Who was the classic Hollywood film star and avant-garde composer who helped invent WiFi?: a) Hedy Lamarr