

## What's New

If April showers bring May Flowers, what do May Flowers bring? Pilgrims!

Happy May Day—I remember putting flowers on someone's front stoop, ringing the doorbell and running away. It's always encouraging to see the spring flowers, trees budding, and the local outdoor events gearing up.

We're updating a few of our APC Battery Backup Units. It's like periodically checking your smoke detectors—how old are your units? Are you ready for our Spring Storms?

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

- Catherine Wendt

## May 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.



**S**ummer is upon us. Time for a stroll in the park; softball; fishing; a few rounds of golf.

Yet how could you possibly relax if some random bit of malware, software glitch or cyber-attack catches you off guard just as you're walking out the door? A well-designed secure computer network gives you the confidence that "all systems are go," whether you're having fun in the sun, or just getting things done with your team.

Here's a quick nine-step checklist we use to ensure that a company's computer network, and the data for that business, is safe and secure from disruption, if not absolute devastation:

1. **A written recovery plan.** Simply thinking through what needs to happen when things go south, and documenting it all IN ADVANCE, can go a long way toward getting your network back up and running quickly if it gets hacked, impacted by natural
2. **Have a clear communication plan.** What if your employees can't access your office, e-mail, or phone system? How will they communicate with you? Make sure your communications plan details every alternative, including MULTIPLE ways to stay in touch in the event of a disaster.
3. **Automate your data backups.** THE #1 cause of data loss is human error. If your backup system depends on a human being always doing something right, it's a recipe for disaster. Automate your backups wherever possible so they run like clockwork.
4. **Have redundant off-site backups.** On-site backups are a good first step, but if they get flooded, burned, or hacked along with your server, you're out of luck. ALWAYS maintain a recent copy of your data off-site.

## Is Your Data Safe and Secure?

disaster, or compromised by human error.

*Continued pg.2*

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- 5. **Enable remote network access.**  
Without remote access to your network, you and your staff won't be able to keep working in the event that you can't get into your office. To keep your business going, at the very minimum, you need a way for your IT specialist to quickly step in when needed.
- 6. **System images are critical.** Storing your data off-site is important. But if your system is compromised, the software and architecture that handles all that data MUST be restored for it to be useful. Imaging your server creates a replica of the original, saving you an enormous amount of time and energy in getting your network back in gear, should the need arise. Without it, you risk losing all your preferences, configurations, favorites, and more.
- 7. **Maintain an up-to-date network "blueprint."** To rebuild all or part of

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- your network, you'll need a blueprint of the software, data, systems, and hardware that comprise your company's network. An IT professional can create this for you. It could save you a huge amount of time and money in the event your network needs to be restored.
- 8. **Don't ignore routine maintenance.** While fires, flooding, and other natural disasters are always a risk, it's more likely that you'll have downtime due to a software or hardware glitch or cyber-attack. That's why it's critical to keep your network patched, secure, and up-to-date. Deteriorating hardware and corrupted software can wipe you out. Replace and update them as needed to steer clear of this threat.
- 9. **Test, Test, Test!** If you're going to go to the trouble of setting up a plan, at least make sure it works! An IT professional can check monthly to make sure your systems work properly and your data is secure. After all, the worst time to test your parachute is

AFTER you jump out of the plane. Be sure you have all 9 steps fully covered. As you guessed, we can help with all of these. Too much to cover at one time? Choose the top two or three and let us help you knock them out!

## Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine directed a choir with orchestra for the Palm Sunday and Easter services in Arizona.

Larry's orchestral arrangement of *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* was performed on Palm Sunday at North Ridge Church in Cave Creek.

*'Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right thing.'*  
- Peter Drucker

## Team of Teams by General Stanley McChrystal, U.S. Army Retired

I had the opportunity to hear General McChrystal talk about his experiences and the war on terrorism. We were better funded, better trained, better equipped, but we weren't winning!

This book is eye-opening – not only does it discuss the challenges we faced and are facing waging this battle, it dives into the structures of our armed services and our businesses. Going back in time, the industrial revolution demanded new types of leadership, new structures for efficiency, and these changes are now part of the fabric of our lives. Now comes a new wave, a web-structure that takes advantage of social media and the internet – we have much to learn!

These changes are coming! Highly Recommended!



## News From Our Techs

### Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



### Surface Studio: All Beauty, A Little Brains

“We want to move from people needing Windows...to loving Windows.”

So said CEO Satya Nadella after taking over Microsoft. And their new Surface Studio takes a bold step in that direction.

In a bid to win over creative types, they designed the Studio with a gorgeous desktop screen that easily glides from vertical to almost horizontal, like an artist’s sketchpad. With its Apple Computer-like brushed aluminum finish and ultra-thin screen, it feels right at home in an open-plan office with microbrews on tap.

The guts of the machine are stuffed into a nine-inch-long base that’s joined to the screen with an überslick hinge design, allowing it to fold nearly flat for stylus- or touch-driven design work.

Downsides? Well, you’ll pay at least \$3,000. And it’s a bit underpowered to be in that price range. But all in all, even the graphically challenged will find this machine tantalizing.

### Security You Can Control

The number one recommendation from our techs is that you lock your workstation or laptop when you walk away! By leaving the computer unlocked, anyone can sit down and have access to anything and everything you have rights to see and do on that machine, on the network, on the internet, remembered passwords, etc. This is an easy one—Lock it!

So you get an email asking you to sign a document. All you have to do is enter your user name and password for your Exchange email account; what? This is a scam—they do not need your email password for you to sign an electronic document through DocuSign. Be suspicious! Don’t give passwords.

Cathy got an email saying her Office 365 email was full, so all she had to do was log in and get it resolved. Very interesting... Cathy doesn’t have an Office 365 account. This was a scam. Did you know that Office 365 hacking is one of the fastest growing scams right now? When they get in, they wreak absolute havoc with the account and all corresponding accounts in the group.

### Video Surveillance: Great Tool, big target for Hackers

These cameras are so helpful and growing in popularity. You can see your office at odd hours, check exterior doors before letting someone in, and they can be a deterrent, too.

However, these have become a favorite source of access when hacking into a company’s network. These video systems don’t usually have the same level of password protection (or any password

protection) because they’re not thought of as part of the network.

Hackers know this—they can see exterior cameras, park nearby and search for access.

Video systems should be segmented from your network to avoid others gaining access to your network. Setup sufficient security and passwords. Remember: the weakest link puts the entire system at risk.

### Microsoft Audit Notices: Did you get the Email?

We’ve seen a new round of Microsoft Audit email notifications. They seem to come in waves, and there’s a wave out there right now.

The first step is to make sure it is a legitimate request, not just a scam. If it’s from a legitimate source, and Microsoft uses third parties to perform these audits, it’s important to know that these are not mandatory. Of course, if you don’t comply, you are mostly likely higher on the list for a forced audit.

Either way, it’s important to know what you’re choosing. Better yet, get compliant and stay compliant. The rules can be complicated, so make sure you ask for assistance when adding staff or additional access to existing staff. This includes Operating Systems on computers, Remote Desktop licenses, Exchange Licenses, to name a few. If you use SQL, multiple servers, and virtual machines, there are still other licenses. Then there’s the most basic such as Office Standard; did you know that the Terminal Server needs sufficient Office licenses to cover all users with access? It adds up!



## Other Stuff

### Cloudflare Screw-up: Have your passwords been compromised?

Little bugs can cause huge problems. Like when web performance and security company Cloudflare's code upgrade leaked sensitive data to 3,438 unique domains this past February. Everything from API keys to personal data was exposed. And scariest of all is that any bot could have accessed every bit of it. The good news is that Cloudflare was alerted to the tiny leak before hackers discovered it. The bad news is, a more moderate -sized leak could bring down the web. It just brings home the point that you need to be more vigilant than ever. Change passwords routinely. Use strong passwords that hackers can't easily break. Upgrade to two-factor authentication. *Gizmodo, 02.17.17*

### Big Red is still the bid dog...but T-Mobile is nipping at its heels

In the battle to claim best mobile

network, the winner is arguable. RootMetrics says it's Verizon. OpenSignal says T-Mobile. Digging into their reports, you'll find that geographical factors determine the winner.

OpenSignal's crowdsourced data comes mostly from city dwellers. So their finding that T-Mobile wins most likely applies to urban areas. But that data doesn't apply if you're out in the sticks.

RootMetrics reports more on overall coverage, and they find Verizon at the top. So who's got the best network for you? At this point, it boils down to where you live and work. But stay tuned... this race is getting close.

*AndroidCentral, 02.24.17*



**Is our in-car GPS necessary anymore?** Smartphones offer turn-by-turn navigation, satellite-tracked speed readings, voice guidance and real-time, crowdsourced traffic alerts. So why dish out another 300 bucks for your own on-dash, in-car system? Well, those in-car systems have come a long way too... Having voice-command capability, Bluetooth connectivity, geo-based recommendations and a large fixed screen might be reason enough. But if your phone's monthly data allotment and battery life concern you at all, that in-car GPS, with its own data and power sources, starts looking pretty good. And with features like a streaming dash cam and sensor that warns you if you're following a car too closely, in-car GPS is definitely worth a second look. *DigitalTrends, 02.24.17*

**Get totally weird with new Virtual Reality (VR) tools.** You may not have a clue about how to draw at all, much less in 3-D. Doesn't matter... Whereas VR used to be a tool for techies, now amateurs can get in on the act. A-Frame by Mozilla, for instance, lets you easily type in commands that place 3-D objects like blocks, balls and more into a VR scene you create. Tilt Brush lets you paint in the air wearing a Google Vive headset. And Second Life inventor Philip Rosedale is building software that lets you invite friends into a VR world you design. Most of what any amateur creates will likely be grotesque, ugly or flat-out lame, but somewhere in all that mess, amazing new products will be born. *Wired, 02.24.17*

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

This month's trivia question:

**Which technology, developed in the 1940's, was inspired by Morse Code?**

- a) Zip Code   b) Bar Code   c) Braille   d) Tickertape

**To enter:** Go to [www.Syscon-inc.com/Trivia](http://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: May 19, 2017**

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, **Tim Holmes**, with **C 12 East Valley, AZ!** Tim's name was drawn

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

*Roughly what percentage of the world's money exists only in computers?:*  
d) 95%