

## What's New

Shopping is in full swing; we've already had some snow; and the daylight hours are dwindling to the shortest day of the year. That means it's definitely December!

Back at the office, we've upgraded our monitoring software, and it went very well. We're watching for the 2019 Federal tax tables to be published. And we've purchased a new HP G10 for our hosting environment!

As we wrap up another year, it's a time to reflect, and a time to plan for what's ahead. Our offices will be closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, then again on New Year's Day! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! - *Catherine Wendt*

## December 2018



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

We love this stuff!  
We are committed to helping businesses use technology to run their organization successfully and profitably.



## 2 Places You Should Never Cut Corners With IT

Today's technology empowers business owners in ways that would have seemed incredible even 10 years ago. With a humming network connecting your team to the rest of the world, and with just a few simple keystrokes, your organization can complete tasks that used to take days.

However, the endless possibility that accompanies technological advancement comes with a catch: to be truly effective, IT requires investment – not just of capital, but of time and attention, resources all too dear to the harried entrepreneurs of the modern age. Perhaps this is why, everywhere you look, small to midsize business owners are not only failing to realize the full potential of their technology, but are unknowingly leaving massive gaps in their systems and processes for malicious entities to exploit. And so, budding companies that would otherwise dominate the market are prematurely stamped out by

competitors with more tech savvy or are hamstrung by costly data breaches.

Even in the midst of this trend, we understand how easy it is to ignore your company's glaring technological gaps. You imagine that you don't have the time or money to address the issue, or that you'll do it down the road once your business is better established. But no matter how big or small your business may be, there are two foundational tech concerns that you should *never* cut corners on.

### 1. SECURITY

Pretty much every successful company today is intimately intertwined with the technology on which it depends. So it makes sense that your primary worry should be protecting what's yours from those who want to snatch it. Think of it this way: would you hire a \$5 locksmith

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to secure your office? Of course not. Then why do so many business owners put their livelihood behind a flimsy, \$5 firewall – or, even worse, a free antivirus? In 2018, it is more likely that your business will fall victim to a cyber-attack than it is that thieves will arrive at your office in the dead of night, according to a 2017 report from Kroll.

In 2015, SEC Commissioner Luis A. Aguilar wrote, “Cyber security is clearly a concern that the entire business community shares, but it represents an especially pernicious threat to smaller businesses. The reason is simple: small and midsize businesses are not just targets of cybercrime; they are the principal targets.” With this in mind, cyber security should always be one of your top priorities.

**“... you’re inviting a crisis into the equation that could easily have been avoided with a keen, proactive eye.”**

## 2. TECH SUPPORT THAT GOES BEYOND THE “BREAK-FIX” APPROACH

It’s difficult to overestimate the money, time, and stress it can cost you when your technology breaks down. Between server downtime, haywire software, connectivity issues, and myriad other potential problems, when your stuff breaks, it can cause more than a massive headache – it can put you out of business.

Most business owners realize this, but many still opt for the classic “break-fix” strategy. Unfortunately, “If it ain’t broke...” is a dangerous maxim by which to steer a ship. If you wait to address a problem until after it becomes an issue, you’re inviting a crisis into the equation that could easily have been avoided with a keen, proactive eye. And when your server fails, or your network experiences hiccups, or some other unforeseen issue rears its ugly head, an unfamiliar break-fix technician will take longer to fix the issue than an expert who’s been working with your specific network from start to finish and already knows it inside out. It’s just not worth it.

In addition, proactively managed service providers will consistently make recommendations to keep your company competitive. Whether it be

a small upgrade to software here, a patch there or an overhaul of your server system, these moves can be invaluable in the breakneck marketplace. And, of course, since they’re keeping tabs on your tech at all times, any potential problems get addressed long before they hit your bottom line.

By leveraging technology, you and your business can do amazing things. Partner with a team of IT professionals who are actively invested in your success and confidently push your company into 2019.

## Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine attended the TUG Regional event in a very cold and snowy St. Louis!

We attended a Veterans Day event where Captain Larry Ernst, former Top Gun, shared some stories, and shared some concerns. The Coast Card Band played, too!

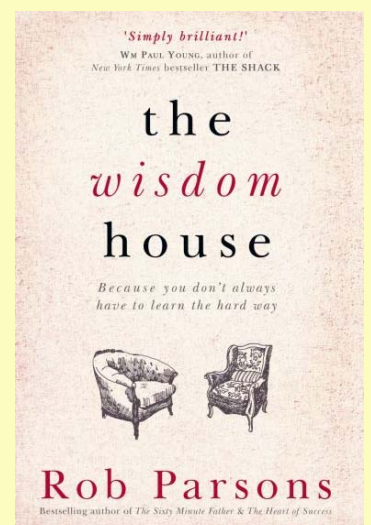
*‘If you can’t describe what you’re doing as a process, you don’t know what you’re doing.’*  
- Deming’s Law

## The Wisdom House by Rob Parsons

I heard Rob Parsons speak a few years ago and was very moved by his stories. I chose two of his books and have finally dug into this one. The premise is a grandpa who imagines fireside chats with his grandchildren, sharing bits of wisdom at various stages of their lives; ‘you don’t always have to learn the hard way.’

Here are some of the chapter titles: Life’s not fair; Keep on keeping on; Be the change; No regrets; Difficult people; Thieves of joy; An attitude of gratitude; Forgiveness; and there’s more! Each short chapter includes a story from grandpa’s life along with words of wisdom and encouragement. I found myself remembering various experiences in my life. I imagined having some ‘talks’ with my grandkids.

The final pages have words that were in Mother Theresa’s office. These alone are worth the time and are a great way to end the book. Recommended! - CMW



## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



### The Casio Pro Trek Smart A Watch Built For Adventure

Today, a lover of the outdoors needs to demand more from their devices if they're going to get the most out of their adventures. The best tech boasts robust, easy-to-use features for when you need them but gets out of the way, leaving you to focus on the grandeur surrounding you.

Luckily, the Casio Pro Trek Smart WSD-F20ABU watch does exactly that in one attractive, intelligent package. Every capability you'd expect from an outdoors-focused device is overhauled here - from the altimeter to the barometer and even the feature-rich compass. Perhaps the best tool is the full-color map you can display on its face, which detects and displays changes in the atmosphere and weather up to the minute. If you're looking for a sturdy, powerful tool to bring along on your next excursion, it'd be tough to do better than this.

## From the Techs

### What Do Techs Think of When They Can't Sleep?

Now as I lay my head to rest,  
My backups must withstand the test,  
Of silly users and deleted files,  
Of stacks of paper in messy piles.  
I hope that someday I shall be free,  
From all the users that enslave me,  
And as I try to get some sleep,  
My temper I will always keep,

A new day has risen and it's time to  
tend the sheep,

From Malware to Hackers and the  
worst the internet has,

I will protect my users to the very last,  
For they know not where they click,  
I'm very sorry but that link was a  
trick,

Here is how we clean up the infection  
and correct the error,

So business can continue in a normal  
manner,

When things go haywire you guys call  
us,

The company named Syscon with the  
blue ball named Gus! - *Lenny Palmer*

### Latest Scam—Blackmail!

This email scam starts by showing  
your password in the Subject line;

that'll get  
your  
attention! The  
email shows  
your address  
in the 'From' and 'To' fields.



In broken grammar and some words I  
think they mis-used, they tell you  
they're a hacker and that they have  
your password. They admit you've  
probably changed it, but they say  
they're still tracking you and have  
been spying on you.

Next, they say how shocked they are  
at some of the sites you've been  
visiting. If you'll send them \$729 in  
bitcoin, they won't send your whole  
contact list the screen shots and video  
of you visiting those sites. That's the  
blackmail part!

Someone with a guilty conscious  
might fall for this. It's definitely an  
attempt at blackmail. This is definitely  
an email scam and they're using  
Social Engineering to trick you.

Definitely change your passwords; use  
our handy camera cover gadget (rather  
than post-its and duct tape!); don't  
visit questionable sites; lock your  
computer when you walk away; be  
sure you're anti-virus is up-to-date;  
during maintenance, run malware  
scans. Be pro-active! - *CMW*

### Do you get our weekly email blasts?

These are short, **2-minute video updates** on tech-related topics. There's often a **short blog** if you want to read more on the topic. If you don't get these, **please call Jonathan** at our office and we'll make sure you're on the list. You might have to 'white list' us, and we can tell you how to do that, too!

## Construction Corner



### When Do I Have to Close the Payroll?

Hard to believe, but we're approaching the end of 2018!

There's some planning to be done as we wrap up the financial and payroll year end. Here are a few guidelines.

Let's start with the fiscal year. If you follow the calendar, then December is Period 12, the end of the accounting year. Each month, you should be running the soft close (1-6 screen) which runs an audit and rolls the posting period forward. When you roll forward to December as your default, it will open up Period 1 of 2019, the beginning of the new year.

When Period 1 of 2019 is finally available (sometime in December), you'll be able to enter the January rent and other January items, all set to pay on time. Again, you won't see January until December is your default posting period. Once January

is your default, the rest of 2019 will finally be available, as well.

So, let's talk about the payroll. The government tax reporting is based on check dates. Regardless of your Period start and end dates, the check date will drive the payroll closing decisions.

As soon as your last check dated December 2018 has been entered and posted, run the payroll audit one last time (5-3-7). Take care of any issues.

Gather information on the new FICA maximums; your state(s) unemployment rates and wage base criteria; any new maximums/minimums for Simple IRAs, 401k's, HSA's, and similar.

Do NOT create any 5-2-2 records for the first check to be dated January. These cannot be created until the 2018 payroll has been closed. You can have things in Daily Payroll (5-5-1), but no Timecards yet!

You'll log into the new Database Admin tool, create an On Demand

backup, and run the Payroll Close from there. We recommend that you keep all employees right where they are, rather than deleting them. We have many stories if you're interested, or just take our word for it!

After the payroll is closed, log back into the company dataset and confirm there are no records in 5-2-2. Update all the paycalcs that have any changes, and with great care and having read every description and prompt, push the updates to Employees. NOTE: there are several things to consider here, so be careful!

Join us **December 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 Central Time** for our **Yearend Planning webinar**, our most popular all year! We'll cover the yearend process, the payroll closing process, and the version 21 upgrade timing.



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FIELD INTEGRATED TIME SYSTEM  
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### Collecting Time From the Field Just Got Exciting!

We collect time, cost code information, work order numbers, phases, client signatures, and a whole lot more. Your field can use iPhones, Androids, or Tablets. All the info is sent straight to Sage 100 Contractor, no copy-paste! What a time-saver. Interested? Join us on Wednesday, **December 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am Central Time**.

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

This month's trivia question:

**Which of the following types of attacks do hackers use to gain information from you without the use of specialized computer programs?**

- a) ARP Poisoning b) Cross Site Scripting c) SQL Injection d) Social Engineering

**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: December 20, 2018**

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, **Lisa Feger** with **Mid-State Steel, IL!** Lisa's name was drawn from the fishbowl for last month's correctly answered Question:

*You just finished writing a term paper; which key can you press, on most PCs, for a spell check shortcut?*  
d) F7