

What's New

Now is the time to plan the yearend wrap up and open up the new year. That used to mean buying bankers' boxes and making new file folders. For our construction clients, we'll hold our Closing the Year webinar on December 3rd at 1:00 Central.

The techs have replaced our switches for better redundancy and speeds! We also took this opportunity to do some cable cleanup and rebalancing.

The programmers released two new FIT modules – Work Photos and Jobsite Scheduling. To get the link to the webinar, call or email and we'll send it.

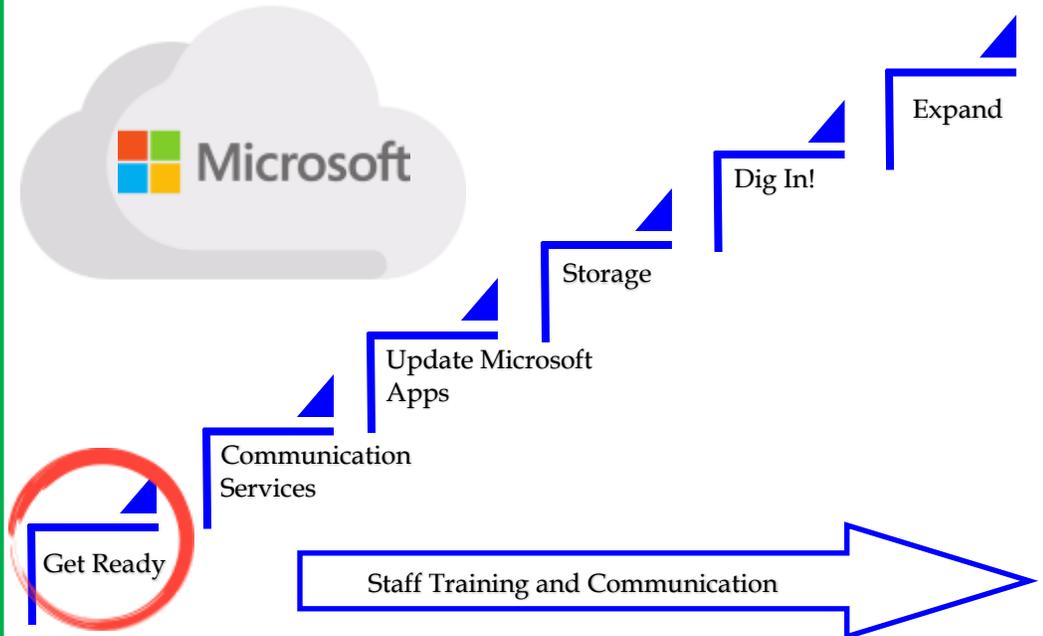
Have a wonderful holiday and we'll see you in the new year! -
Catherine Wendt

December 2020



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.



Microsoft 365 – Moving Forward Implementation Ladder

You might have attended our recent 'Tour de Microsoft' webinar where Chris walked us through a high-level overview of the Microsoft 365 product offering. Basically, it's a suite of products broken down into three groups that can be purchased a la carte (in most cases) or in packages to meet the business community's needs.

Let's recap a few points from Part I of this article, then we'll pick up with how and when to move forward with these amazing tools.

There are three (3) groupings, categories that make up the suite of offerings:

- 1) Business Apps – Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint (Office to you and me)
- 2) Cloud Services – Exchange,

OneDrive, Teams, SharePoint

3) Business Security – MFA (multi-factor authentication), Defender, Azure Information Protection, Intune, Conditional Access, Windows Virtual Desktop

With so many features and options, Microsoft continues to adjust its packaging names and prices. At a high level, these tools can be grouped into three (3) buckets:

By the Service – license for the specific service you want to use; not all services are available this way, 'a la carte'; this is the least cost-efficient way to purchase the core services.

M365 Business Packages – a wide array of apps and cloud services are included; great security features; designed for small to medium businesses; biggest bang for the buck;

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max of 300 licenses. This is our favorite.

M/O365 Enterprise – higher service limits (read ‘more money’); no limit on licenses

When should you consider moving to the M365 suite? What’s a good ‘trigger’ to take a look and get started? Where should you even begin?

If any of these apply to you, it’s time to get a little guidance (that’s what we’re here for) and make a plan to take the first step on the ladder.

Do your team members have more than one computer? The 365 licenses will cover up to 5 devices per named user. So your laptop, the workstation at the office, and your tablet would all be covered under one license.

I had to use a different laptop while my battery was replaced. Usually this is very painful for the techs and for me. But with M365, I couldn’t believe how quickly the other laptop was ready, with all my local documents, my email, everything I needed. We all saved a lot of time and a lot of frustration! Imagine the next time you have to (or want to) replace

your laptop. If you’re on M365, I think you’ll be writing us a thank you note!

Do you have an Exchange server at your office? This is a good time to look at what version you’re running, what software and license costs you would incur to do an upgrade, how much space the data is taking up on your network and backups, and time to maintain and keep it running.

“It’s very possible that a move to M365 is in your future.”

You probably pay for a third-party anti-spam service, too. It’s not a slam dunk, but it’s very possible that a move to M365 is in your future.

Are you already using Teams? If you already have Teams, you may already be paying for a few other tools, so let’s maximize what you’re already paying for! Before jumping in though, let’s figure out what’s next and how to keep it safe and backed up.

Are you paying for Dropbox, Zoom, or other shared document plat-

forms? The M365 license includes OneDrive and SharePoint for file sharing; there might be some savings here.

Some other things that take planning – Backups, Staff Communication and Training, for starters. If you host your server with us, there are some license considerations, as well.

When choosing the right level of licensing, we recommend you reach out to us so we can talk it through with you. There are quite a few things to consider, and we are totally prepared to walk you through it! - CMW

Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine and Mary took time for a Finance Department retreat in AZ.

Larry had successful knee surgery and is getting back on the bike.

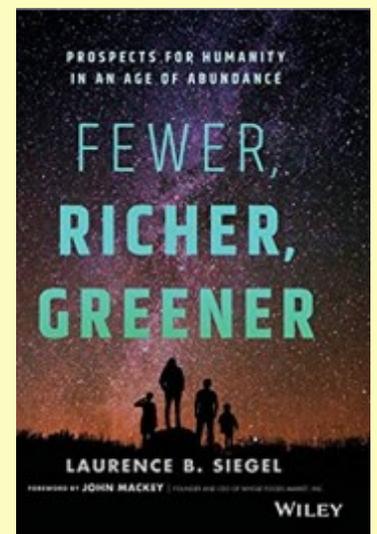
‘It is men and women of genius that are admired. Men and women of wealth are envied. Men and women of power are feared. But men and women of character are trusted.’
- James H. Amos, Jr.

Fewer, Richer, Greener by Laurence B. Siegel

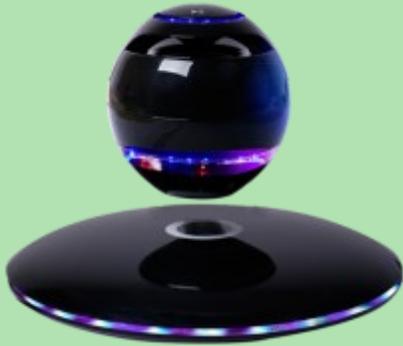
The subtitle, *Prospects for Humanity in an Age of Abundance*, is a nice summary of the book’s content. As an economist who clearly loves data, this book is filled with graphs, charts, and quotes from very interesting people all over the world, people who are tackling the topic of how we steward our planet and better humanity world-wide.

Mr. Siegel tackles the population explosion predictions and shares the latest data and predictions. He tackles the impact of our aging societies, a first-time phenomena. In a fascinating couple of chapters, he talks about the staggering rate of change in a short amount of time related to medicine, food production, and more recently in air, water, and forestry. As the leading countries gain in riches, he shows that less developed countries have greatly improving standards, while affirming that it’s not enough and we have to do more. The topics and examples just keep coming; fascinating!

As the book wraps up, he tackles the idea of ‘dematerialization’ and his record collection analogy is spot on. There are suggested follow up books and articles, and a call for continued nurture and care of our world by humans. Absolutely recommended. - CMW



Shiny New Gadget



Magnetic Levitating Bluetooth Speaker

It may look like a gadget out of science fiction, but it's a real product you can get today. The Infinity Orb Magnetic Levitating Speaker plays music up to eight hours at 70% volume capacity. The base illuminates with different, colorful LED lights. The Infinity Orb uses magnets (not magic or wires) to hover about half an inch above its magnetic base. Put it on a flat surface to levitate it properly.

It's wireless, so it will sync up to any device with Bluetooth capability. It does not need to be plugged in to play music. A lithium battery (included) powers it. If you are so inclined, you can just use the orb to play music – it doesn't need to levitate to play. Its wireless range is 10 meters, or 32.8 feet.

Learn more at:

<https://www.amazon.com/Infinity-Orb-Levitating-Bluetooth-Microphone/dp/B0748DN377>

From the Techs

Renewing Internet Service

Recently, a client renewed their AT&T service. They didn't know there's a better service available which would have been faster and less money.

You've probably heard it said, 'There is wisdom in a multitude of counselors.' There are definitely savings! Paying for a little tech advice would have saved a lot of money and frustration. Just give us a call!

Ugh! An Onslaught of Phishing

I have to say, we've seen an increase in phishing attempts. Here are a few examples – please share them with your staff, family, and friends.

Password scam – the 'From' was the right domain name, but the 'user' was 'sysadmin' which was fake. The

Bottom Line: They just want credentials. Network passwords may expire, but the email password by itself doesn't expire, and we're not sending these notices. DELETE!

OneDrive Scam – this one came from 'cs1.me@freightsystems.com' saying I had a new document from 'your contact' and had a link to View Document. DELETE!

Office 365 scam – this came from Syscon-inc <watanabe@rpj-co.com> and said 'We've restricted the delivery of 3 incoming emails.' There was a link to Retrieve_Messages. DELETE!

Zoom scam – this one came from Zoom Meeting <mfarese@mfareseagency.com> saying there was a Conference

If you have our anti-virus service, or our patch management service, **we need your help!** During the week, approved updates are downloaded to your machine, waiting for the schedule day and time to install. On Sundays, the anti-virus kicks off a scan of each computer and provides a report for you and for us.

Between office shut downs and staff working at home, many machines have been off—please **turn them on** so we can get things caught up. AND, please ask your team to leave their computers **powered on, but logged off** each evening and over the weekends so the updates can do their thing!



Subject starts with 'DO NOT REPLY – Password Notice' followed by a long string of numbers/letters. Then it said it was reported by syscon-inc.com.

In the body of the email, it says that my password expires today. Use the button below to continue with the same password. There's a colorful button I can click to 'Keep the same password.' Then there's another note that this is for user verification designed to shut down malicious users.

Meeting. The body of the email was filled with number strings and gibberish with a bright red bar that linked to the meeting. DELETE!

Sync Error scam – This one was also from someone being used as a spam relay. It said syscon-inc.com <mike@precisionalarminc.com>. The subject line said there was a Sync Failure and there was an attachment. You might really have a sync error, but if that's a possibility, call us; do not open the attachment; DELETE! - CMW

Construction Corner



S100C Users – 'Tis the Season for Upgrades

Get ready to see the 'scary' email messages from Sage saying you have to be on the latest version in order to close the year. That's only part of the story; here's the rest.

Sage supports the last two versions of 100 Contractor. There are a lot of good business reasons to do it this way. You really should be on the latest version (first two digits of the software release), and depending on what the year's updates contain, you might have needed to install those along the way. For instance, if you're in New Jersey and run your payroll in-house, you'll want to have installed the October update.

The difficulty for most of our clients is that the upgrades require Exclusive Access (everyone out of the program) and that's a work interruption. If you have an on premise network, you also have to update all the workstations and laptops (much easier these days). Lastly, you need to run the update on all the datasets; not too bad, just something that

has to be done.

If you're already running version 22.x, then you can probably wait until the release with the latest tax tables. No one is sure when these will be available, so you'll have to watch for the email.

When you're ready, give us a call to schedule the upgrade. It's usually an hour (or less), so with a little planning, there shouldn't be too much of an interruption.

If you absolutely have to have this done after the work day or over a weekend, there will be an additional fee. If you're T&M with us, the time will be billed as overtime. If you have a flat fee agreement with us, there will be a \$200 fee.

If we don't host or support your server, please be sure that whoever is doing the upgrade also updates the prior year archive datasets. These might be in a separate SQL instance, so make sure all of them are updated. Any questions, let us know. - CMW

Some Odds and Ends

Many of you with **salaried employees** don't use the grid of the 5-2-2 time card. Although that definitely works, we

strongly recommend you at least put the Sick, Vacation, and Holiday hours, with the appropriate type. That would have come in really handy for a client who was recently audited; they didn't track any of this and it was a nightmare.

In Excel, you can **drag a column of numbers** and see the total in the bottom right corner of the screen. Did you know that this works in S100C, too? No more copying into Excel or running totals on the calculator. Try it out!

Ready to wrap up 2020, open 2021?
Are you registered yet?
Attend our *Closing the Year Webinar*
Thursday, December 3rd
1:00 p.m. CST
Register at www.syscon-inc.com/events

Once you share the financials with your CPA so they can start on the taxes, be sure to **Lock the Posting Periods** for 2020. It's easy, right in the 1-6 screen. You can unlock when you get the adjusting entries.

A couple of clients have had odd issues with **emailing Direct Deposit** out of S100C. Sage is aware of the problem; it seems to be related to Office 365 and the end-of-life Office 2013. There are some work arounds, so let us know if this is a problem for you.

The latest **Sage error** is truly odd. When printing a report, a message box comes up saying 'InvalidArgument' followed by some numbers. Sage has been notified. Again, we have a work around, so just give us a call.

Some **good news** – if you're wondering how construction is doing right now, we've had several clients rolling out new companies in addition to their primary. These were in the northeast, but it seems to be a trend. Many of you are busy!

Those **W-2's will need a special code** for Employee Covid wages. As more info becomes available, we'll update you.

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

This month's trivia question:

What does ACH Stand For?

- a) Awesome Clearing House b) Acceptable Computing Hub
c) Allowed Cost Happenings d) Automated Clearing House

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: December 21, 2020

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, Deborah Sita with **MRM** in Phoenix, AZ! Deborah's name was drawn from the fishbowl for last month's correctly answered question:

Which of the following is NOT a type of cloud for data storage?

- d) **Gated Cloud**

Visit www.syscon-inc.com/Trivia for contest rules.