# Technology Update

### by B4 Networks

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

*"As a business owner, I know you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues.   That's where we shine!  Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"*

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## The End Of An Era... Take Action By New Year's Eve 2013!

As you may have heard, Microsoft has long ago announced the retirement of its most successful software platform of all time, Windows XP. Effective April 8, 2014, Microsoft will no longer support the Windows XP platform in any way, shape or form.

### What this means if you are currently running XP

This means any computer or server with Windows XP installed will be completely exposed to serious hacker attacks aimed at taking control of your network, stealing data, crashing your system and inflicting a host of other business-crippling problems you do NOT want to have to deal with.

This is such a serious threat that U.S. companies housing financial and medical information are being **required** by law to upgrade any and all computer systems running XP because firewalls and antivirus software will NOT be sufficient to completely protect them.   While Canada does not have a similar "LAW" yet, not upgrading from XP would be extremely irresponsible.  If  a breach were to occur on your XP system after April 8th 2014, and data that by law must be kept secure is stolen, it's highly possible your company would be at risk of large lawsuits and in breach of the Canadian Privacy Act.

Unless you don't care about cyber criminals running rampant in your company's server and workstations, you MUST upgrade any servers or workstations running XP no later than April 8, 2014.

### The Time To Act Is Now

As Windows XP comes to the end of its life, businesses with software applications dependent on XP will feel the effects. Not only will Microsoft stop supporting XP, so can any other company that still has software built for XP that they are currently supporting. The writing is on the wall and these companies will follow. Companies producing antivirus and firewall software will also have no reason to continue releasing updates for something considered to be dead.

Don't wait until the last minute to plan for an XP-free business existence. We fully expect to be extremely busy now through April 8. **Schedule your Microsoft XP Risk Assessment and Migration Planning Consultation today by calling our office at 905-346-4966.**

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"You should see someone about that."

# Backing Up Your Server Alone May Still Lead To Data Loss

Most business owners know that it is important for their server(s) to be backed up. But what about your computers (desktops, laptops, Macs)? Though it's true that quite a bit of your data is stored on your servers and backed up by your network, your computer itself (your icons, your background, all of your settings, your local files, music and pictures you have stored, and all of your software applications) is NOT being backed up.

If your computer were to crash, get a virus or simply die, all of that information could be lost. The company data that you've saved to your server would still be there IF you are saving everything to your server (a big if for many companies), but everything else would be gone. You would have to recreate that computer by reloading all of the software and settings. And if you've ever had this happen to you, you know it can take a significant amount of time to do. What a pain!

### So, How Do You Solve This Problem?

**Simple.** You use imaging software on your computer that automatically takes periodic images of important, irreplaceable machines and sends them off-site or to your server for safekeeping. For travel laptops, this can often be done via the cloud. Imaging software takes a "picture" or "snapshot" of your computer, recording it exactly as it is, with all of the software, settings and local files you have on it. This way, if your computer ever crashes, there is no need to reload everything onto it and reconfigure the computer. Simply restore your last "image" from before the crash and your computer can be back to its old self again. This is a huge time-saver and can be a lifesaver when something goes wrong.

### Protect Your Desktops And Laptops!

How are your desktops and laptops currently being backed up? Take action today. You'll be amazed at the peace of mind you find when you are **completely** backed up! Give us a call at 905-346-4966 to find out more details.

## Tek Tip of the Month

### Running out of hard drive space?

There is nothing more frustrating than when you run out of disk space on your or home computer, and you cannot figure out where all your space has disappeared.   Going through each folder looking for large files can be time consuming, and quite honestly, there's an easier and more effective method.

**TreeSize FREE**

When you noticed that your hard drive space is disappearing quickly or you would like to look for large folders TreeSize Free is a fantastic option for your home computer (not for commercial use). With a quick scan of your drive you will be able to check every folder's size in minutes. I don't recommend deleting one if you don't know what it is though. From the screenshot here I know I need to empty my Recycle Bin!

Steve Lamarre
Service Manager

| 265,385.0 MB  C:\ on [OS] | |
| --- | --- |
| 205,047.0 MB | Users |
| 19,975.1 MB | Windows |
| 14,137.3 MB | [5 Files] |
| 7,969.9 MB | System Volume Information |
| 5,912.1 MB | Program Files (x86) |
| 5,897.9 MB | $Recycle.Bin |

## The Lighter Side

### Things You Probably Didn't Know About December

December is known around the world as a family time of celebration honoring cultures, religions and traditions that have been with humanity for hundreds of years. See below for a mix of the weird and wonderful facts about this magical month!

1.  An almanac prediction states that if snow falls on Christmas Day, Easter will be warm, green and sunny.

2.  The name December comes from the Latin *decem* for "ten," as it was the 10$^{th}$ month in the Roman calendar.

3.  December 12$^{th}$ is Poinsettia Day.

4.  Saint Nicholas, who would eventually be called Santa Claus, was originally the patron saint of children, thieves and pawnbrokers!

5.  December 28$^{th}$ is considered by some to be the unluckiest day of the year.

6.  The first artificial Christmas tree was made in Germany, fashioned out of goose feathers that were dyed green!

7.  Spiders and spiderwebs are considered good luck on Christmas.

8.  "Jingle Bells" was composed in 1857, and not for Christmas – it was meant to be a Thanksgiving song!

9.  In 1647, Oliver Cromwell, English Puritan leader, banned the festivities of Christmas for being immoral on such a holy day. Anyone who was seen celebrating was arrested! The ban was lifted in 1660.

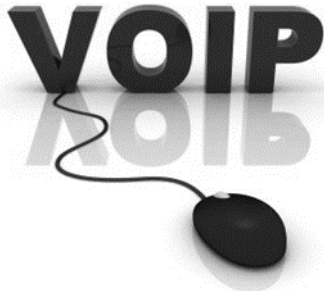10. An ancient legend states that forest animals can speak in human language on Christmas Eve!

# The Pros And Cons Of Switching To… VoIP

Since Alexander Graham Bell made the first phone call to his assistant Watson, the phone has come a long way. And now thanks to Internet technology, it's possible to make phone calls over the Internet using VoIP technology or voice over Internet Protocol (IP).

While there are a number of advantages to a VoIP system over a standard phone system, the biggest reason companies switch is to save money. It's not uncommon for a company making a lot of long distance calls to save 50% or more on their phone bill. Of course, there's no guarantee of this since there are a lot of different VoIP systems and the amount of money that you will save really just depends on which system you buy – and in some cases, no savings will make up for poor sound quality or dropped calls. So what are the pros and cons?

The upside is that most business class VoIP systems will offer you the same features you're used to with your current phone system, including call forwarding, call waiting, conferencing, voice mail, and (depending on what your current phone system is) additional features like the ability to share data, applications and even transmit video in addition to voice so that you can see and hear the person that you are talking to.

Of course, there are some downsides you need to consider before jumping on the VoIP bandwagon. The biggest problem with VoIP systems is the sound quality. In some cases, it's a bandwidth issue that will cause problems, but it's not the only one. Since the voice data is being broken up into a series of packets and transmitted over the Internet, there could be moments of silence, broken voice patterns, echoes, delays and static sounds. Sound quality is the #1 complaint most VoIP users have about the service.

Another issue is that VoIP systems cannot be used if there is a power or Internet outage. A traditional phone can function during a power outage because the phone company transmits electricity over the phone line. This electricity is used to power the phone (cordless phones being the exception). That way, even if the power goes out, the phone will usually still work because the phone's power is coming from a different source.

If your thinking of switching to VoIP, give us a call, and we can provide you with a cost savings analysis, and perform a VoIP Readiness Audit.

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## PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY
"What Every Business Owner MUST Know To Protect Against Online Identity Theft"

Discover What Most IT Consultants Don't Know Or Won't Tell You About Protecting Against Online Identity Theft

**If you want to prevent your personal or business identity from being stolen by a cyber criminal, this e-book is a MUST-read!**

You will learn:

1) The top 3 ploys used by online identity thieves to easily gain access to your business and personal information and how to avoid them.
2) 10 sneaky e-mails used to steal your identity that you should IMMEDIATELY delete if they land in your in-box.
3) One easy, surefire way to keep your network and computers safe and secure from online thieves.
4) Best practices to prevent your employees from inadvertently giving away passwords and other "keys to the castle" to Internet criminals.

**Claim Your FREE Copy Today at www.b4networks.ca/identitytheft**

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# !!!We Are Moving!!!

After many months of searching for a new office, we have finally found a new place to call home (well at least our home away from home!). Effective 1 January 2014, B4 Networks Inc., will be moving to our new facilities located in the beautiful Town of Pelham.

Over the past 3 years, we have expanded our staff, and our current space has gotten a little too small for all of us. With the new location, we have plenty of room, and plans to expand our service offering. More to come on that soon.

The new address is: 1462 Pelham Street, Fonthill, Ontario, L0S 1E0

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*Need Help Right Away?   Call our team 24/7 at 905.346.4966.*

# TRIVIA CHALLENGE

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is **Jeff Riley** from **Thorold Auto Parts**

This months winner will receive a $50 Gift Card to *Home Depot*

This month's trivia question is:

**The average human does this 15 times per minute**
a.   Breathes in and out
b.   Blinks their eyes
c.   Swallows
d.   All of the above

To enter, visit the website below or email me: bryan@b4networks.ca and answer the question below.

**www.b4networks.ca/trivia**

**Submit your entry by the 25th** of the month, and if your answers are correct, your name will be added to the draw for a $50 Gift Card.

*See website for full trivia rules

## Lachapelle Family Update

The holidays are here again and it feels like the year went by so fast. Nate and Aiden are anxiously waiting for Christmas and we couldn't resist snapping a few of them to celebrate the season.

# Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:
## Keyless Entry Using Your Phone

Hate taking your keys with you on a run? Have friends coming to visit and can't be there to let them in? No worries…

Now you can lock your door from anywhere in the world. Any smartphone can use Lockitron through its intuitive two-button app. With Lockitron you can instantly share access with your family and friends.

In addition to the convenience, Lockitron gives you peace of mind. Lockitron lets you see if your door is locked when you're gone. It will send a notification when someone unlocks the door using a phone or key.

Here are some of the key details (no pun intended):

♦   Any phone works – Lockitron is compatible with any smartphone, thanks to their mobile web site. Older phones can use Lockitron through simple text-message commands.

♦   WiFi built in – Lockitron connects to the Internet, thanks to built-in WiFi. You can control Lockitron and receive notifications from Lockitron anywhere in the world.

♦   Keyless entry – If you use an iPhone 4S or iPhone 5, you can enable Lockitron to sense when you walk up to the door and unlock for you using Bluetooth 4.0.

♦   Powerfully smart – Thanks to intelligent power management, Lockitron's batteries last for up to one year. Lockitron will even send you a notification when they are running low.

♦   Easily customizable – You can control your Lockitron through their incredibly simple API endpoints or program it directly, thanks to its Arduino-compatible ATMega microprocessor.

Pre-order your Lockitron today for only $179!   **www.lockitron.com**

## Services We Offer

- General Computer / Network Repair and Troubleshooting
- Network Design & Implementation
- Backup and Business Continuity Solutions
- Anti Spam & Email Solutions
- Virus and Spyware Protection
- Network Security / Firewall Solutions
- Commercial Wireless Networking
- Fixed Cost Monthly Managed Services
- Remote Monitoring and Diagnostics, Troubleshooting and Repair
- Project Management
- Technology Consulting
- Hosted Exchange Service
- Cloud Services

**B4**

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We Make Technology Work!