

November 2011

ITR Technologies, LLC
"Serving All Your Computer & Network Business Needs"

Tech Talk

THANKSGIVING FACTS

The first Thanksgiving celebration lasted for three days.

Thanksgiving was made a national holiday by Abraham Lincoln on November 26, 1863.

In 1939, when November had five Thursdays, the holiday was celebrated on different weeks in different states—some on the fifth (or last) Thursday, and some on the fourth. In 1940 and 1941, some states celebrated on the third Thursday.

On December 26, 1941, FDR signed the bill that made the fourth Thursday the official Thanksgiving Day.

Wishing you
a
Happy Thanksgiving.



Key Employee Just Quit? You're In Trouble Now!

— Scott Bernstein

Has that ever happened to you? A key employee who oversees your computer system, and knows all your passwords, decides to quit. Are you at risk? You better believe it, and if the parting was not on good terms, you'd better scramble to fix the situation.

That's exactly what happened to a client of ours recently. The key employee not only quit, he resigned via an email on a Thursday night, effective immediately. But he was gracious in offering his services as a consultant, for a fee.



To say the least, our client was not too happy, and didn't accept his offer! Instead, they sent us an email and that was enough to get the ball rolling to make all the password changes needed. ALL of the passwords had been documented in advance. Within a matter of hours, they were all reset, and the ex-employee was locked out from accessing anything.

The purpose of this article is not to showcase how fast we reacted. Rather, it is to illustrate the importance of having all critical passwords documented and readily but securely available. I refer to this as "Getting Control of Your IT".

(Continued on page 2)

Virtual Conference Saves Money

— Nancy A. Ridenhour

By attending a conference virtually,

I saved money in more than one way. First, attending via the Internet saved me the travel money. Second, I became aware of an industry trend that has changed how I spend the business money and my time.

In March there was a conference that I was interested in, but my only option was to attend the conference virtually. I would be able to hear some sessions as they happened, and I could listen later to any sessions that I missed. One session that I was able to listen to "live" has proven to be vital.

Since I was attending via the Internet,

I missed the personal contact and especially the discussions between sessions. Apparently this particular session caused a lot of controversy, and even anger. When the conference reconvened, a later session was being changed to answer more questions. I realized that I could hear that one live, and I'm glad that I did.

I decided that I needed to know more about this topic and signed on for more information. This meant webinars over a period of several months, and another conference in August. I checked the calendar to make sure

(Continued on page 2)

Key Employee Just Quit? You're In Trouble Now!

(Continued from page 1)

As the owner, manager, or IT Manager of your business, what passwords should you have? Most likely, once you start making a list, you'll be surprised at how many there are. It's more than just the administrator password for your network. See the box below for a checklist of the passwords we think you need to know and document. You will probably think of even more, as each company will have its own special needs. If you don't have a list like this prepared in advance, you may be left in a vulnerable position.

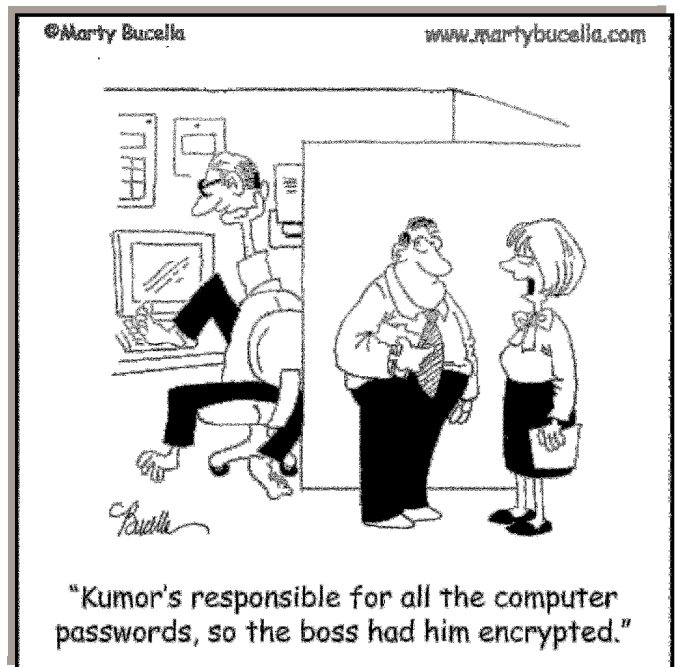
PASSWORDS CHECKLIST

- Network Administrator**
- Firewall**
- Router**
- Wireless router**
- Site hosting domain**
- Site hosting web site**
- Key application software**
- Antivirus software**
- FTP sites**
- Hosted application sites**
- Multifunction printers**
- Managed switches**
- Spam filtering hardware**
- Phone systems**
- Specialty hardware**

You should also know where the media is for all critical software: CDs, DVDs, downloaded software, or thumb drives with software. Having licenses and license keys is a must, in case software needs to be reinstalled or moved.

Trying to get this information AFTER someone leaves is difficult if not impossible. It's like rounding up the herd after the barn door has been left open. Protect your IT by having this information.

I'm sure glad our client had the foresight to do this!



Virtual Conference Saves Money

— Nancy A. Ridenhour

(Continued from page 1)

that I could physically attend the conference. Through the webinars and the conference I obtained a better understanding of the trend.

In October I was able to physically attend a third conference in my industry. During one session, one sentence was spoken that explained the original controversy. Had I not attended the first conference virtually, this sentence would not have meant much. Now it changes how I spend my time and money. I now have a clearer understanding of the impact of cloud computing.

The virtual conference experience also let me to pay more attention to information from other contact tools. My Outlook has become a great tool for checking who I know

that may be impacted by a trend or company change. LinkedIn discussion group notices are telling me about input others are seeking. Facebook is allowing me to keep up with the actions of others. Blogs provide me with detailed information on a thought or action.

I have also realized that I am using the "old media" to get more details. The Internet is great for getting one-minute news info, but I like the longer interviews and in-depth topic reporting on some TV networks, and in some of the newspapers and magazines.

With the industry changes, and in this economy, multiple information sources are an asset. Each source is like a piece of a picture. If just one piece is missing, the picture may give a different impression. I am thankful to have the virtual conference as one more piece of the puzzle.

Doing More With Lessig

— Tom Warfield

We don't cover politics in this newsletter, but once in a while we like to comment when a good idea comes along!

Remember when ... the presidential election cycle didn't actually start until the year of the election? Do you remember the last time a presidential candidate waited until spring to actually enter the race for the fall election? I think it was 1968—Robert Kennedy entered the race in mid March, and the eventual nominee Hubert Humphrey didn't get in until two weeks later.

Well, that was then, and this is now. These days, it seems like there is hardly a lull at all between two presidential campaigns. Here we are, a full year before the 2012 elections, at a time when many places are holding their off-year contests for local and state officials. Meanwhile, it seems like the campaigning for next year's presidential election is already in full swing. Public affairs network C-SPAN started its "Road to the White House" coverage in August. We see the candidates debating every other week.

The price tag for this extended campaign season keeps going up. Which means that candidates have to raise more and more money. This is the real problem—the influence of money, big money, on politics.

In the United States we can vote, and voters, at least in theory, have the ultimate power to affect policy. But that power is clouded, dissipated, and manipulated by the influence of money. Politicians seeking re-election are too easily swayed by well-paid lobbyists who can promise contributors and supporters.

The recent Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, makes things worse. The effect of the court's ruling is that any person or corporation, domestic or foreign, can give unlimited, anonymous contributions to support any political candidate.

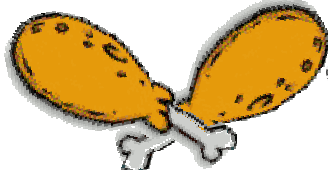
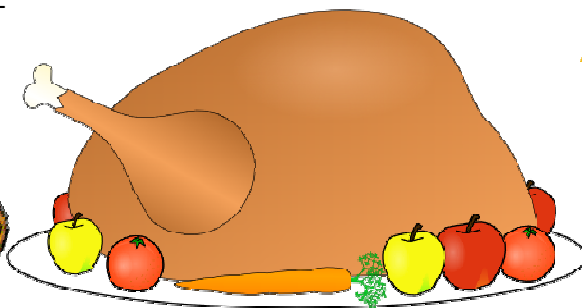
Money has always had an influence in politics, of course. But competition from other economic powers, the growing "wealth gap", Wall Street bailouts, the

"Occupy" movement, and the rise of globalization have all made the problem more noticeable than ever.

In the past, efforts at campaign finance reform have had some success, but always seem to get circumvented or rolled back over time—for example, the 2010 *Citizens United* decision overturned part of the McCain-Feingold Act of 2002. In the hopes that the pendulum is due for a swing back in the other direction, there is a bi-partisan effort in Congress to provide for a new method of campaign financing. It is based in part on the ideas of Lawrence Lessig, Harvard Law School professor and author of "*Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress—and a Plan to Stop It*". Lessig's proposal for "small-dollar election funding" encourages candidates to seek many small contributions, instead of a few large ones.

The Fair Elections Now Act would give candidates for federal office an option "to run for office without relying on large contributions, big money bundlers, or donations from lobbyists ... [they] would be freed from the constant fundraising in order to focus on what people in their communities want." If passed, the law would provide discounts, matching funds, and other incentives to candidates who opt-in to the program, and who are able to obtain the qualifying contributions from small donors. The bill has 13 co-sponsors in the Senate, and 78 in the House. Hearings in both chambers were held in April, and the current status of bill is "in committee".

You can find out more at www.fairelectionsnow.org, or read about Lessig's book at republic.lessig.org.



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computer problems go
away without the cost of
a full-time I.T. staff”*

*Ask us about our fixed price service agreements —
Computer support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for
just like rent!*

— David Do

Inquiring Minds...

I **recently decided** to make all my non-perishable purchases online. What I found was with a little bit of creativity and patience, I was able to get almost everything I needed through Amazon. Amazon offers the average Internet shopper an abundance of options to make their lives much easier, including flexible shipping options and a huge variety of wares. I was able to get everything I needed, from the comfort of my home, delivered within two business days. The flexibility saved me time and a lot of headache.

Amazon has changed the way we shop for almost everything (besides groceries), and it is often cheaper than retail stores. When Amazon launched in 1995, it was a fledgling online bookstore that sought to compete directly with stores like Barnes & Noble and Borders. As those “brick and mortar” stores began to close because of competition from online stores, Amazon picked up their market share, and currently has a net income of over \$1 billion. By comparison, Barnes & Noble has only an income of \$76 million.

Amazon's customer service is also one of the best. I live in Washington DC where there is heavy population density. Occasionally boxes that are left on my front porch succumb to theft. If this happens, I contact Amazon and they will quickly send a replacement—usually with next day delivery. In the unlikely event that they have committed an error, they will fix the problem and provide compensation like a gift certificate. They have a wonderful customer service model that makes it attractive for their customers.

Nowadays, Amazon sells more than just books. They have a host of things for sale, including home improvement supplies and household items. This is what gave me the idea: could I buy everything I need through

online stores like Amazon? As an experiment, I tried it for one month. What I found was that yes, it is possible, and also advantageous for a young professional like myself who lives in a city where transportation is a pain to use. I was able to find such unlikely items as toilet paper, Tide, Halloween candy, furniture, and many others. It was easy, simple, and straightforward.

Amazon continues to grow and expand its business. It has recently invested immensely in its media market, including e-books and streaming services. This service is directly competing with both Barnes & Noble and Netflix. In these new channels, it looks like Amazon may be beating out its competitors. It was the first service to get e-books to be widely used. And it has recently reached huge deals with the four major TV networks for its streaming services.

As long as the Internet is a viable option for people to shop and use as entertainment, Amazon is here to stay.



Thank You!

As busy as we are, sometimes we forget to say “Thank You” - but let us take the opportunity during this holiday season to send out a big *thanks*, to you, our customers and supporters!

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