

Tech Talk

Safer Internet Searching

Do you surf the internet? Few, if any, would answer "No". And if you surf, you probably search, using a search engine such as Google, Yahoo or Bing. But as you probably know, the web is not only informative and entertaining. It has its pitfalls as well. There are "Bad Guys" who want to take advantage of surfers, infect our computers, and profit from our curiosity. How do you protect yourself?

When you do a search, you get lots of hits, but you don't know which ones will be any good. It is not uncommon to find unsafe sites in your search results. There are now "add-ins" that can help your Browser (and you) identify safe and unsafe web sites.

These programs are not perfect. Like any good computer security, you should rely on more

than one layer. The add-ins give you a visual color indication of its rating of a site. I use three such add-ins for my browsers: McAfee SiteAdvisor (www.siteadvisor.com), Web of Trust (www.mywot.com), and AVG Link-Scanner (linkscanner.avg.com). I'll only visit a site if it has at least two safe (green) indicators.

To illustrate how these products work, try a search on "SCREENSAVERS" - but DO NOT CLICK on any of search results. Many of them are unsafe, and will download spyware or cookies to you computer.

(Continued on page 2)

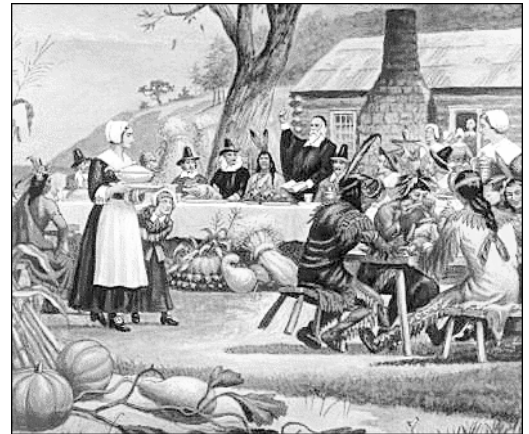
Are You and Your Technology Compatible?

We can all be like children seeing a new toy when we are around new technology. We see a new device or application, and how easily it can be used to perform certain tasks. We buy it. We start using it. Problems begin to appear. Our data is not storing and displaying as we expect. We realize that we are going to have to invest some time into learning this new "toy". We either decide to take the time to learn, or go back to the old "toy". Either way frustration has now set in. What happened? Let's see if we can prevent the frustration, or at least lower it, by applying the following six thought areas.

First, we need to stop and compare the data communication method of this new technology with the communication methods that work best for us

and those in our environment. Remember that technology is about communicating data, whether between people, from people to files, from files to people, or between files. The communication method may be dictated by the recipient, and may not be the one that we prefer.

Second, we need to understand how this new technology will record, store, interpret, and display our data. Each person has a unique set of data. Think about the different relationships that you have, and what you know about each relationship. These data differences can be a result of your learning and working styles, as well as your background, education and perspective.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving is one of our favorite holidays, not because of football or turkey, but because of the desserts. One dessert that always finds its way to our holiday table is apple pie. Check out these fun facts from the American Pie Council:

- ⊙ Approximately \$700 million dollars in pies are sold in grocery stores every year – that's a lot of pie!
 - ⊙ Pumpkin pie was first introduced to the holiday table at the pilgrim's second Thanksgiving in 1623
 - ⊙ What kind of pie is your favorite? According to a 2008 survey, nearly one out of five, 19%, of Americans prefer Apple, 13% Pumpkin, 12% Pecan, 10% Banana Cream, and 9% Cherry
- Make sure to check out www.piecouncil.org when planning your holiday, and find out what your favorite pie says about you. And have a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving!



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Safer Internet Searching

(Continued from page 1)

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Search results without add-ins


Now install one or two of the scanner programs noted above, and run the same search. Notice how many sites are labeled as not safe!


Now how secure do you feel, searching without one of these add-ins? It is possible you will see a slight degradation in your internet access. If so, uninstall one of the add-ins and see if it makes a difference.


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Search results with link-checking add-ins

The Bad Guys want to control your computer, steal information from it and make a profit in doing so. Don't be an unwilling pawn in their profit machine. Protect your system and your searches!



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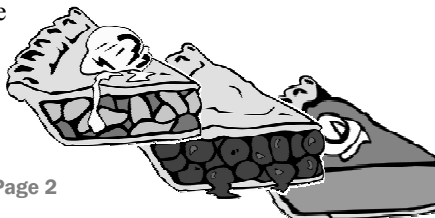
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Third, we need to have available time to learn the new technology and become comfortable using it. Everyone has 24 hours each day. However, everyone spends that time differently.

Fourth, we must consider if others must also learn to use the new technology. If so, then we need to consider the first three areas for each person affected.

Fifth, we need to review the demands of our industry and the government on our technology (I heard that "Oh no"). Yes, each of us is in an industry that is changing. We also have government regulations that continuously change. All of these external forces add to the data we need. They also influence the way we need to communicate that data.

Sixth, we must remember our customers. We have to consider the adverse impacts that change



can have on our service to them, and on their business, while we learn the new technology.

Finally, we can decide whether to purchase or not, and when is the best time. If the decision is to buy, then we can enjoy using the new "toy"!

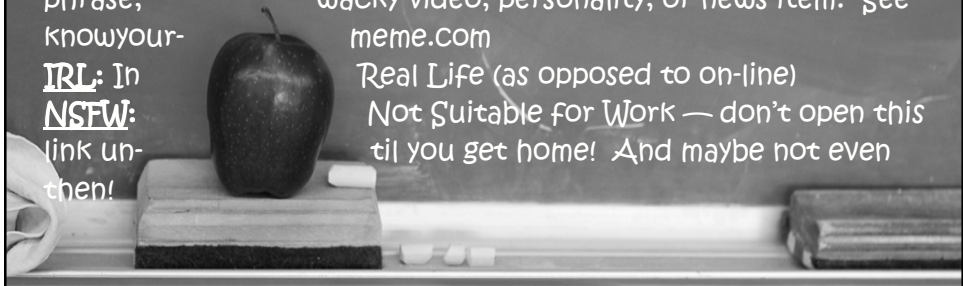
Internet vocabulary 101, terms unmasked

Trope: Originally a "turn of phrase" or "turn of thought"; on the Web it refers to a cliché or recurring theme — see tvtropes.org

Meme: A cultural idea or concept that spreads quickly throughout the Internet, sometimes mutating. May refer to a catchphrase, knowyour-meme.com

IRL: In Real Life (as opposed to on-line)

NSFW: Not Suitable for Work — don't open this til you get home! And maybe not even



Tales from the Trenches

This is a series that will allow you an opportunity to look into your colleagues' real world business lives, in order to learn from their mistakes - without having to make those mistakes! These are actual incidents from real organizations. No names or other identifying information is included.

ITR recently took on a new client. This client's chief complaint was: "We have to continue to restart our mission critical routers because our network keeps going down." This was keeping many of their employees from doing their work because of the lack of consistent computer access.

It turns out that this organization had numerous, rarely used, out-of-date PCs, that were out of sight and ignored. These systems were not being monitored, so they were not getting security patches and other updates. These PCs had become infected with the "Nimda" virus, which is very old (from 2001), and is normally easy to stop. The virus was the cause of the excess network traffic which was tying up the system and causing the network to go down.

This is a fairly common situation for both large and small organizations that have not automated their IT maintenance process. To conserve resources, an old PC is kept in service just to access the internet or to do other light tasks. Keeping these old systems rarely saves any money. They are slow and difficult to maintain with their out-of-date software. When they miss out on updates and patches, they become the "Typhoid Mary" of the network they belong to.

Without a process to ensure that basic IT maintenance is getting done properly, an organization can never be certain that they are actually protected. Viruses can easily creep in, and other critical events can happen, which will ultimately lead to employee frustration and downtime.

If our managed services had been put into use on this network, the shutdowns would not occur. Our monitoring process continually scans a network for all the devices connected to it, and provides alerts that catch service issues. This includes patches for out-of-date antivirus software, and updates that keep the network healthy and users happy.

Monitoring is pretty handy when you need to keep control of all the wired and Wi-Fi capable network devices that employees bring in to work with them: phones, PDAs, laptops, notebooks, and even game consoles. All of these devices are vulnerable to viruses, spyware, adware, and the like.

When technology problems interfere with the flow of work, and prevent or slow down the provision of necessary services, costly delays or disruptions occur within organizations.

Our managed services includes network monitoring and diagnostics. This automated system not only identifies every device on the network, but also automates basic maintenance tasks. It provides verification reports showing that the maintenance was done, along with hardware and software asset inventory management. Our system issues alerts so problems can be prevented or resolved quickly before they turn into a critical situation.



TURKEY BY THE NUMBERS

88%	Percentage of Americans who eat Turkey at Thanksgiving
16	Average weight of a Thanksgiving Turkey
16.9	Annual U.S. Per Capita Turkey Consumption in 2009
3,500	Feathers on a Mature Turkey
55	Top Speed (flying)
20	Top Speed (running)





November 2010

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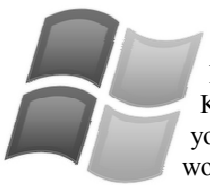
The first Thanksgiving football game was started in 1934 by which team?

- A. Pittsburgh Steelers
- B. Kansas City Chiefs
- C. Detroit Lions

E-mail your answer to info@itrtechnologies.com. All correct answers will be entered into a drawing for a \$20.00 Starbucks gift card.

Good Luck!!!

Inquiring Minds...



Have you ever wondered what that little key is with the Windows logo on it? Called the “Windows Logo Key”, or just the “Windows Key”, it’s your key to quickly doing things that would take quite a few mouse clicks or presses otherwise. For example, try Windows+L (that means, press and hold the windows key, then press the “L” key at the same time). This will lock your computer. It’s great if you are running out, and don’t want to take the time to close everything and log off (like you probably should). You will have to enter your login name and password to get back into your computer, but don’t worry, your system will be just the way you left it.

There are many other good uses for your Windows key. Have you ever needed to minimize all open windows, so you can check one thing (in your email, for example)? There may be a "Show Desktop" icon that does this, but you'd have to grab the mouse, find the icon, and click on it. It's much easier and faster to just press and hold the Windows key and “M”, and viola! All the application windows you had open are instantly minimized with just one simple shortcut key. To "un-minimize" and get back to what you were doing, use Windows+Shift+M. Try it, it’s really easy and very useful.

Another useful shortcut is Windows+F. This brings up the Windows Search window - or other integrated searching engine, such as Google Desktop, if you have it installed - so you can search your system for files & folders easily. If you need to get to the “My Computer” icon on the desktop (just called “Computer” in Windows 7 or Vista), pressing Windows+E will get you there in a flash.

If you have the “Quick Launch” bar enabled (little icons on the task bar, next to the “Start” button), there is a shortcut key that enables you to launch those programs easily. Just press the Windows key and the number key of the icon. My Quick Launch bar



looks like this: So if I wanted to launch Internet Explorer, the 2nd icon in this list, I just punch Windows+2 and away we go!

As I am sure you can see, that little Windows key can really help quite a lot. Enclosed please find a “Quick Reference Guide” to your Windows key. Why not keep it near your computer, for quick reference?

For a complete list of Windows keyboard shortcuts, see support.microsoft.com/kb/126449. And for the ambitious user who wants to modify their Windows key assignments, there is a handy shareware utility for this: WinKeyPlus (www.winkeyplus.com)

Many programs have shortcut keys. In future articles, we will look at shortcut keys for Microsoft Office and other commonly used Windows programs, so keep reading!

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!

(713) 344-1618

