

# Tech Talk

## 5 Reasons Your Business Needs a Network Health Check-up ....Today.

— Mark Taylor

Whether you have a full time employee, outsource, do it yourself, or have your brother-in-law provide you with your network & computer support, you should have a network "health check-up" performed by an independent IT company at least once a year. In today's business world, it is critical to have good, manageable IT support and the controls in place to make sure it is being managed properly.

Are you being told your backups are performing flawlessly? How about that you have a business class firewall in place that is offering you the best protection? Unfortunately being told these things doesn't make it true. Most companies find out that these things are not being done correctly when it is too late. Don't be the company that is reactive, be the company that is proactive and I guarantee it will pay off for you.

**Reason #1 – Simply put, it is free.** If you have nothing to lose and everything to gain, why would you not do it? There are a lot of good, reputable IT companies within 50 miles of your business that will come to your office and give you a free network as-

essment. A proper assessment can be done from start to finish within 1 week. This includes a couple of meetings with you, any time spent at your office, and the time it takes to compile your health reports. At the end of the process, your company should be holding a carefully laid out binder of about 50-60 pages with all of your hardware reports, software reports, security information, backup details, and a summary of overall recommendations.

**Reason #2 – Vendor Contract Reviews.** I can't speak for all service companies, but I do know that ITR reviews your other business vendors and identifies areas where you can save money. This includes your phone vendor, data vendor, business applications vendors, hardware and software vendors, cell phone vendor, and everything in between. Did you know that 70-80% of businesses should not be paying more than \$600-700 for a data T1 line + 8 phone lines per month? Data and phone vendor reviews are just one more way health checkups can help save you money immediately.

**Reason #3 – Employee Productivity.** Have you ever put a dollar amount of how much time is lost due to computer issues in your network environment? Here is a short breakdown that will give you a quick dollar amount on lost time due to IT problems: How many people within your company have computers? (lets use 10 as an example) How many minutes are lost each day (per employee) due to computer problems? For the sake of argument, let's give a low estimate of 20 minutes per employee,

(Continued on page 2)

### Who Wants to Win a \$20 Starbucks Gift Card?

What Beatles song is 7 minutes 11 seconds long, and hit #1 on September 28, 1962?

- A. Help!
- B. Hey Jude
- C. Penny Lane
- D. Yesterday
- E. Let It Be

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

Good Luck!!!

## What's in the latest version of BlackBerry Server ... and why you need it NOW

— Bob Jenner

Version 5 of the vaunted BlackBerry Enterprise Server is here! Research In Motion (RIM), maker of the BlackBerry, has made quite a leap with this version, adding many features businesses have been asking for. There is support for virtually ANY BlackBerry data plan.

The new version includes a web-based management console, with support for HTML based emails (emails with integrated pictures, etc. ), better Calendar and Address Book synchronization, and much more.

(Continued on page 2)



## Network Health Check-up

*(Continued from page 1)*

per day. That is roughly 3 hours. 3 hours x an estimated \$20 per hour = \$60 per day, \$300 per week, \$1,200 per month, and \$14,400 per year.....and this is a low estimate. Health check-ups identify problems within your environment to help you manage time better. Here are a few time consuming issues to consider - slow computers during boot up each day or that take forever to do simple tasks, applications not working right, applications not being used right or tasks being done manually, having to sift through hundreds of spam messages a day to read the 20 legit ones that are received, surfing the web, unnecessary downtime due to network or server related issues, and so on and so forth.

**Reason #4 – Better service, one way or another.** Whether you use the results of the health check-up to put your current IT provider “on notice” to do a better job or you replace them altogether, your service will be getting better regardless.

**Reason #5 – Customer Relations.** By understanding your network and how technology interacts with your business, it will help you build better relationships with your own customers. A health check-up is so much more than just making sure your basic IT support is being performed effectively. It gives you the understanding and freedom to let IT work with you and not against you. If your company uses technology the way it should be used, you will help give your own customers a better experience with your business.



Are you ready for your network health check-up? If so, give us a call at 713-344-1618, option 2 or sign-up online by clicking the “Free Network Assessment” button on our home page ([www.itrpro.com](http://www.itrpro.com)) and filling out the contact me form. We look forward to serving you.

## BlackBerry Server

*(Continued from page 1)*

**Now your users who have personal BlackBerry smart phones, but need access to corporate email, will no longer need to pay extra for an enterprise data plan in order to have access to your corporate Exchange server.** The new version 5 software supports both types of plans (BlackBerry Internet and BlackBerry Corporate), saving your users money each and every month.

Additional savings can be realized for companies that use BlackBerry Express. The Express edition is now available as a free download. That's right, you can use the BlackBerry Server Express in your organization, and not have to pay any per user or per server fees! BlackBerry Professional and BlackBerry Enterprise still require additional paid licenses, but Express does not.



**So I know what you're asking ...** If it's free, what is it lacking? The Professional and Enterprise versions have access to premium add-on services recently released by BlackBerry, including integrated VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) phone support for the Cisco/BlackBerry corporate VOIP solution, integration with enterprise communications products like Microsoft Office Communications Server, and high availability features that are not really needed in the small to medium business environment. If all you need is email, address book, and calendar synchronization that is absolutely rock solid, BlackBerry Express delivers just that.

BlackBerry Express now supports synchronization of corporate contacts in Exchange public folders, Calendar entry/edit including "Free/Busy"

search, native attachment support, and the viewing of email folders, all right from your phone.

**Native support** for .wav, .mp3 and .wma audio files is also included in this version. Some of the new features may require an update to the software on your phone, but don't worry. Upgrading the software is rather easy and painless. Just go to **[www.blackberry.com/go/softwareupdate](http://www.blackberry.com/go/softwareupdate)**, choose your carrier, and follow the simple download/install instructions.

The BlackBerry Express software can also be installed directly on your SBS 2003, SBS 2008 or Exchange (2003, 2007 or 2010) server. Installing on the Exchange server limits the number of users to 75, fine for most small businesses. Installing on a separate server permits up to a whopping 2000 users! All for Free!!

If you want to take advantage of all the great new additions in BlackBerry Express version 5, but this sounds too complicated, or you would rather let someone else handle it for you, just give us a call at 713.344.1618 and we will schedule one of our engineers to do it all for you. Get started with your own BlackBerry Express server today, and see what you have been missing on your BlackBerry Smartphone.

## 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.*

**When email stops working**, people get testy. Whether incoming or outgoing, email has become mission critical for many businesses. And virus infections have a tendency to wreak havoc on email.

A client called us several weeks ago. They were able to receive email, but their outgoing email was not getting delivered. A quick check revealed they had been blacklisted by a number of companies, which in turn caused their emails to be rejected or bounced back. An inspection of several email headers confirmed this situation.

**The main culprit was the CEO** of the company. His computer was generating spam emails, which led to the blacklisting. Several other computers were also infected. Why didn't their antivirus program protect them? In this case, the protection had not been updated in over 3 months. We also discovered there were over 100 Windows critical updates that needed to be installed. Talk about a pc waiting for a disaster!

**The clean up effort has so far cost the client almost \$4,000**, and it is not over yet. While running multiple scans with various programs can usually clean a PC, some infections can lay dormant and come back to re-infect again. If this happens, the only way to eradicate the infection is to wipe the PC clean, reinstall Windows and all applications, and start over. This process adds additional cost to the cleanup. And then there is the cost of business that may have been lost. Luckily, the customer was still able to send emails using personal email accounts.

### ***Client of the Quarter—Whiteside Energy LP***

ITR is pleased to recognize Whiteside Energy LP as our Client of the Quarter. Whiteside is an investment firm located in the Galleria area that specializes in energy trading. ITR provides a complete Managed IT Solution to Whiteside.

Thank you Whiteside for your continued business and the confidence you have shown in us!

— *Scott Bernstein*

Scanning and removing infections can be difficult, but with the many software tools we have available, the infections were eradicated. A more difficult task was getting the client off the many blacklists. This does not happen immediately - we had to email and call the blacklisting companies multiple times to get the client off their lists. One blacklisting company in Europe demanded money to be removed immediately - we let that go!

**The big questions are always: "How did this happen?"** and "Why didn't my virus program protect me?" The "Why" part is easy: The virus protection and Windows updates were out of date. The "How" is speculative: Opening an infected email attachment, or visiting a website that had been compromised - these are the most likely scenarios. We searched the customers mailboxes, but did not find any emails with virus attachments. So the exact cause remains a mystery. Another question is, "How could this all have been prevented?"

**The key to any computer protection is to have multiple layers of protection**, and to keep them current. While this client did have multiple layers, they were not kept up to date.

Are you protected? If you are not sure, let us perform our free Network Security Checkup. We come on site and determine if your network and desktops are properly protected. We even include a review of your backup procedures to be sure you are protected if disaster strikes. Call us today for more information at 713.344.1618.





September 2010

9601 Jones Road, Suite 234  
Houston, Texas 77065  
(713) 344-1618

www.itrpro.com



*“We make all of your 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!*

## Inquiring Minds...

— David Dennen

If you are a road warrior, Ford Motor Company has just made your job a lot more practical. Starting with select 2009 and 2010 Ford models, the "WiFi Hot Spot" will be integrated with the Ford SYNC feature, powered by Microsoft. If you have ever needed Internet connectivity while on the road, you know what a pain it is hunt down a WiFi hot spot at a cafe or book store.

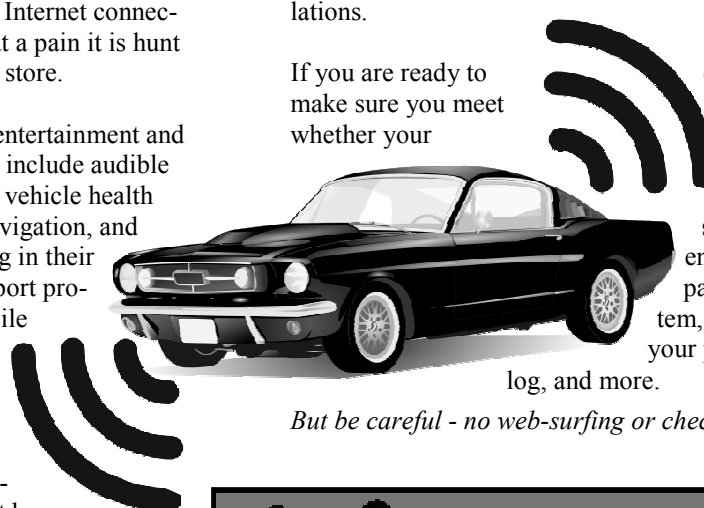
With Ford SYNC, the voice-activated entertainment and communications system will expand to include audible text messaging, news, real-time traffic, vehicle health reports, 911 assistance, turn-by-turn navigation, and WiFi for passengers. Users simply plug in their USB broadband modem into the USB port provided in the vehicle to provide the mobile broadband experience. The Ford SYNC system acts like an Internet connection sharing device, and uses WPA2 as the default security.

Randomly chosen passwords will be required for access, and each device must be given explicit permission by the driver in order to connect. This will prevent unauthorized near-by WiFi devices from hopping onto the access point at your expense.

The fact that your existing USB broadband modem can be used by the Ford SYNC system to share the connection means you will save money, because you don't have to pay another third-party provider for dedicated access solely for the car. Other manufacturers' systems from Mercedes, BMW, Chrysler and GM require additional equipment to be installed, and also require a monthly access fee.

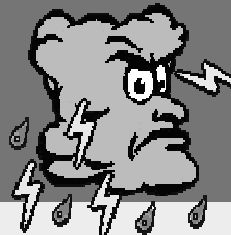
The upgrade capability of the Ford SYNC is also impressive. It is based on firmware that can be upgraded over the air. Because technology changes so rapidly, the Ford SYNC system can maintain a current level of features and benefits without costly dealer installations.

If you are ready to make sure you meet whether your



experience the Ford SYNC, the prerequisites. Check phone is on the compatibility list, at [www.fordvehicles.com/technology/sync/](http://www.fordvehicles.com/technology/sync/). Once your bluetooth enabled telephone has been paired to the Ford SYNC system, you can make calls, browse your phone book, see your call log, and more.

*But be careful - no web-surfing or checking email while driving!*



# Don't let Fall get you down!

Summertime is nearly over. But don't give in to the doldrums. We are here to provide year-round service, and to keep your systems running in tip-top shape no matter what the season.

Give us a call today!

(713) 344-1618