



“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!”
- Tim Shea, Alpha NetSolutions

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“With this approach, we just cut to the chase.”

AlphaNews

“Insider Tips to Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably”

Which Is The Smarter Decision: Buying Or Leasing Computer Equipment?

With everyone trying to save a buck these days, start-up companies with limited cash flow or companies needing to refresh and update their computer equipment are considering leasing their computer equipment over buying it outright. Is that a good idea? What are the downsides, and do they overshadow the upsides?

Computers and other tech equipment all become obsolete – and usually at a rate faster than we’d all like. Since this is a fast-depreciating asset, leasing the equipment puts the financial loss of value onto the leasing company. Let’s suppose you have a two-year lease on a laptop computer. After that lease expires, you’re free to lease whatever equipment is newer, faster and cheaper. And since technology is forever advancing and requiring the ‘latest and fastest’ machines, this is not a benefit to be overlooked.

In fact, having the latest, most up-to-date computer equipment is the #1 reason why companies lease over buying. Here are some other benefits:

- You’ll avoid a big outlay of cash for new equipment. With a lease, you pay a fixed, monthly fee which helps predict cash flow. If you want to keep the bank account as full as possible, then leasing is a great option for you for upgrading your network without tapping into much-needed funds.
- You’re able to implement more sophisticated (and expensive) technology, such as a voice over internet protocol (VoIP) phone system, which might be otherwise unaffordable. The result: You’re better able to keep up with your larger competitors and get advanced services and technology without draining your financial resources.
- You’ll save money on taxes. When you are in a lease, it is viewed by the IRS as a service and not an asset. Therefore, you can deduct 100% of the money you are spending on the lease.

Okay, so the upside is fairly clear. Now, what about the downsides?

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Hate Checking Your Voicemail?

Then You'll Love This New Service!

Phonetag.com is a new, monthly service that intercepts your cell phone voicemail, converts it to text, and then instantly sends the message to you as an email or a text message.

If you're the sort of person who doesn't like checking your messages, or would simply prefer them transcribed and e-mailed to you for easier storage and tracking, then this service is ideal for you.

Have you ever had a message where the caller leaves a long message with lots of detail – like a phone number or directions - but you're not able to write it down? With this service, that problem isn't a problem anymore.

A colleague has been using the service for several weeks and the quality of the transcription is amazing. He's had one message where it lost a few words, but even that wasn't a problem because the original voicemail was attached to the email as an mp3 file so he could listen to it.

As an alternative you can check your messages anywhere you can get online through the Phonetag website. They even offer a free seven-day trial so you can test it out before you buy it.



- You'll pay more in the long run. Unless you get a crazy, unheard of deal, leasing is always more expensive than purchasing the same equipment outright. For example, a \$4,000 computer would cost a total of \$5,760 if leased for three years at \$160 per month but only \$4,000 (plus sales tax) if purchased outright.
- You're obligated to keep paying even if you stop using the equipment. Depending on the lease terms, you may have to make payments for the entire lease period, even if you no longer need the equipment, which can happen if you don't need the equipment anymore.

Save money on your phone bill by switching to VoIP!

We've reviewed the phone bills of a half dozen of our clients, and everyone can save 50% or more on their monthly phone bill by switching to VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). We now offer two VoIP solutions, to meet everyone's needs. In these tough economic times, don't pass up this opportunity to save big! Call 508-797-0629 for details.

“Who Wants To Win A \$20 Dunkin Donuts Gift Card?”

Take my monthly Trivia Challenge and you could win too!

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is...drumroll please: Chuck MacFarland from Worcester, Mass. was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question...

What is the official last name of the doll Barbie?

- a) Johnson b) Roberts c) Meredith d) Thompson

The answer is “b)” – Barbie's Official Full Name is Barbara Millicent Roberts

Congratulations Chuck, you've won 4 Movie Tickets. Now...let's move on to this month's trivia question for a \$20 Dunkin Donuts Gift Card ...In honor of National Car Collector Month...

What year was the Corvette first introduced?

- a) 1943 b) 1953 c) 1963 d) 1973

Call me right now with your answer! 508-797-0629

Refer 3 People To Us In April And Receive A FREE iPod!!!

Refer 3 of your colleagues to us and we'll give you a FREE iPod...it's that simple! Your referrals aren't required to buy anything; they simply need to be a business owner with 5 or more PCs. Plus, we'll give them a FREE Network Tune Up (\$399 Value) simply because you referred them. To send us your referrals, call us at 508-797-0629 or e-mail me at TShea@alphanetsolutions.com.

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Some Taxing Facts For You...

There are at least 480 different tax forms, each with many pages of instructions.

The 1040EZ has 33 pages of official instructions.

The IRS sends out 8 billion pages of forms and instructions each year. Laid end to end, they would stretch 28 times around the earth.

Nearly 300,000 trees are cut down yearly to produce the paper for all the IRS forms and instructions.

American taxpayers spend \$200 billion & 5.4 billion hours completing federal tax forms each year.

The IRS employs 114,000 people - twice as many as the CIA and five times more than the FBI.

60% of taxpayers must hire a professional to get through their own return.

President Lincoln and Congress enacted the first income tax in 1862 to pay Civil War expenses. The Civil War income tax was repealed in 1872, revived by Congress in 1894, and ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1895.

In 1913, Wyoming was the deciding vote in the 16th Amendment which gave Congress the authority to collect income tax.

The first income tax was 1 percent on net personal income above \$3,000. There was a 6% surtax on income over \$500,000.

During World War I, the highest rate of income tax was 77 percent. Taxes were used to help finance the war.

In 1954, the tax filing date changed from March 15 to April 15.

A Warning To Parents With Kids Online: MySpace Has Become A Hunting Ground For Criminals and Pedophiles

While this is not a pleasant topic, I decided to include this article in my newsletter to warn my clients and friends of the dangers this web site (and other social media sites) poses to their children and families. In case you aren't familiar with MySpace, it's a phenomenally successful online network that enables users to post and exchange gossip, messages, pictures, personal information, and pretty much anything else that comes to their minds.

Although users are supposed to be at least 14 to register, it is easy to bypass this restriction, and an estimated 10 million of those members are under the age of 17. What makes this site so dangerous is that many children are posting pictures of themselves along with other confidential information such as the school they go to, where they live, personal schedules, and other contact information. It is this information that is placing them in danger, as online predators may use it to track down and harm these children. Just look at these horror stories:

14 Year Old Girl Found Dead: In January, a 14 year old girl in New Jersey was found naked and strangled in a garbage bin. Friends said she had been in contact with an older man through one of the social networking sites.

15 Year Old Sexually Assaulted: A 26 year old Houston man was charged with sexual assault, accused of luring a 15 year old girl into a relationship through MySpace.

37 Year Old Man Attacks 16 Year Old Girl: This man solicited a 16 year old girl by visiting MySpace.com. The man misrepresented himself as being younger, then tracked her down. Lafayette Sheriff Lt. Craig Stansbury said the man showed up at the victim's after-school job and followed her to the parking lot, where he forced her into his car and attacked her. The assailant knew where she worked because she posted it on her MySpace profile.

How To Protect Your Kids Online

For starters, keep your home computer in the family room so you can monitor what happens online. Second, frequently review the websites your children visit. If they have a webpage on MySpace, make sure they are not posting pictures or other confidential information such as phone numbers and addresses.

Also, educate your children about the dangers online and provide them with clear instructions about what they can and can't post or share online. Tell them to NEVER secretly meet someone they met online, and NEVER allow them to post information that would allow someone to track where they are or where they are going to be. Set time limits on surfing and restrict most computer use for specific purposes, such as school homework.

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You're Never Too Old To Have Fun

Words of wisdom from a retiree...

“Working people frequently ask retired people what they do to make their days interesting.

Well, for example, the other day my wife and I went to a shop in town. We were only in there for about 5 minutes.

When we came out, there was a cop writing out a parking ticket. We went up to him and said, "Come on man, how about giving a senior citizen a break?"

He ignored us and continued writing the ticket.

I called him an oversized jerk. He glared at me and started writing another ticket for having worn tires.

So my wife called him a power hungry tyrant! He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket.

This went on for about 20 minutes. The more we abused him, the more tickets he wrote.

Personally, we didn't care. We'd come into town by bus.

We try to have a little fun each day now that we're retired. It's important at our age.”



Do You Have A Lot Of Visitors, Delivery People, Or Maintenance Workers In Your Office? Then Read On...

Overlooked, Low-Tech Tips Everyone Should Know To Keep Confidential Documents...

Confidential!

As a smart business owner you have locks on all of the entryways into your office, you have surveillance cameras or security alarms in place, and your network security is bulletproof (especially if you're one of OUR clients). But another often overlooked security breach happens right on your own staff's desks. If you get a lot of in-office traffic, this could be one of the largest risks in your security plan. Here are four things you should avoid to keep your confidential information out of prying eyes:

- 1) **Writing passwords on sticky notes** - This is probably one of the biggest offenses -- passwords and key system information written on notes and stuck on computer monitors. Anyone in the office after hours can access confidential files, steal information, and use it to compromise an account. But if you just hate remembering all those passwords, then install the password management tool from roboform.com.
- 2) **Storing credit card orders or contracts in paper folders** – Not only does this expose you to having this information stolen, you could end up getting a lot of bad press if your customers' credit cards get stolen thanks to a security breach in your office. The safest bet is to scan, encrypt and store such documents electronically, and then shred the originals. Companies like Iron Mountain will store them for you off-site, but scanning and storing them electronically is a much more cost-effective means for not only keeping them, but accessing them later on.
- 3) **Leaving sensitive documents on the desk** - Many times detailed client contracts with billing terms or other critical data are left out overnight. The information might be used for ill-gotten gains by cleaning staff or staff in the office. What an embarrassing situation this could cause! Make sure you lock your office at night or when you're going to be away for any length of time.
- 4) **Forgetting the printer** - Most offices have printed documents sitting around all day and sometimes overnight before the owner picks them up. There are also sensitive documents that are forgotten and left to pile up. After your employees finish with printing jobs, they need to be mindful of any documents that were printed, even the ones that aren't needed, and dispose of them appropriately.

Whether formal or informal, training your staff to handle documents properly is important to avoiding a load of problems. If you'd like information or advice about virtual filing systems, password protection services, high-tech whiteboards, or using printers more effectively, contact us now at 508-797-0629 or via the web at <http://www.alphanetsolutions.com>. We can help you get started today.

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