



AlphaNews

“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!”

- Tim Shea, Alpha NetSolutions

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Inside This Issue...

How Secure Is Your Laptop? Read This And Surf Safely....Page 1

If Only Life Were More Like A Computer!Page 2

Longer Lasting Laptops....Page 2

Beat This Trivia Question And You Could Win 4 Movie Tickets....Page 2

Did You Know The 20th is President’s Day? Other Presidential Facts That May Surprise YouPage 3

How Secure Is Your Data? Four Simple Things You Should Do NOW....Page 3

If You Don’t WIKI Yet, Maybe You Should. Find Out How....Page 4



“I am sure you’ll appreciate our new policy”

How To Keep Your Laptop Secure When Using Public Wi-Fi Hotspots

They are everywhere these days. Wi-Fi hotspots for checking e-mail and hopping on the Internet can be found in airports, coffee shops, bookstores, and even most fast food joints. For the uninitiated, Wi-Fi hotspots are areas where you can use your wireless laptop to surf the Web and check e-mail.

But have you ever wondered, just how safe is it to connect? With the proliferation of hackers, viruses and identity theft at an all time high, you are smart to be concerned. Unfortunately, it is easy for a hacker to set up a Wi-Fi spot to access your laptop, called an “evil twin.” An evil twin is a wireless hotspot that is used to lure people from a nearby, legitimate hotspot. For example, when logging in at your favorite coffee shop, you may have inadvertently logged into an evil twin Internet connection set up by the person working on a laptop at the next table.

Just like legitimate sites, evil twins allow you access to the Internet, but in the background they record everything you are typing. Log onto your email, investment website, bank account, or buy something online, and they are recording your keystrokes.

You may be asking, “How do I protect myself at Wi-Fi hotspots?” First you need to make sure the hotspot is legitimate. You can do this by asking someone who works at the Wi-Fi location; in fact some businesses will give you printed instructions that include the hotspot name. Even here you need to be careful. Many times, in an attempt to make you feel comfortable, the hacker will use an evil twin name that mimics the legitimate hotspot and, on some occasions, the fake site may even show up at the top of your network list by having a stronger signal than the legitimate site.

The best protection you can have is connecting via your company’s VPN (virtual private network). A VPN protects your online information by encrypting your data and activity even if you’re connected through an evil twin. If you don’t have a VPN, the best protection is to surf the net, but never type in password, credit card, social security, bank account, or other sensitive information when connected to a public Wi-Fi hotspot.

Tip: Do you want an easy way to securely access your network and the Internet from anywhere? Call us today at 508-797-0629 about setting up a VPN for your office!

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IF ONLY LIFE COULD BE LIKE A COMPUTER!

If you messed up your life, you could press "Ctrl, Alt, Delete" and start all over!

To get your daily exercise, just click on "run!"

If you needed a break from life, click on "suspend." Hit any key to continue life when ready.

To get even with the neighbors, turn up the sound card.

To "add/remove" someone in your life, click settings and control panel.

To improve your appearance, just adjust the display settings.

If life gets too noisy, turn off the speakers.

When you lose your car keys, click "find."

"Help" with the chores is just a click away.

You wouldn't need auto insurance. You'd use your boot diskette to recover from a crash.

You could click on "send" and the kids would go to bed immediately.

To feel like a new person, click on "refresh."

To undo a mistake, click on "back."

Is your wardrobe getting old? Click "update".

If you don't like cleaning the litter box, click on "delete."

Better Batteries For Your Laptop

Hewlett Packard recently announced the release of a unique, fast-charging laptop battery that will last at least three years without any degradation in performance. The battery is now offered as an option with select HP laptops and will be offered as a retro-fit during the second half of 2009.



The battery was developed by a long-time, original equipment manufacturer, Boston-Power, and will be offered by HP under the "Enviro" nameplate.

The battery can be charged to 80 percent of capacity in 30 minutes, which could be useful for those who only have a limited amount of time near an electrical outlet, and will go 1,000 charges before the battery's capacity begins degrading. For the record, that's a charge a day for three years, so it should last the average life of a business laptop.

Most current laptop batteries degrade after 300 charges lasting on average just 2 years. Longer life means more productivity and less battery landfill waste.

The "Enviro" battery technology is also safer than conventional batteries offered today; a relief given recent "fire hazard" battery recalls from other major laptop manufacturers.

If you're looking to take advantage of the newest offerings in equipment, contact us first. By calling 508-797-0629, we can provide you with great advice on productivity tools and make sure you don't spend more than absolutely necessary!

“Who Wants Four FREE Movie Tickets?”

Take my monthly Trivia Challenge and you could win too!

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is...drum roll please: Dr. Albert Sandler of Methuen, MA, was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question...

Which state has more tornadoes per square mile than any other?

a) Kansas b) Arkansas c) Florida d) Texas

The answer is "C" – Florida

Congratulations Dr. Albert Sandler, you've won 4 Movie Tickets! Now...let's move on to this month's trivia question for 4 Movie Tickets...

How many children did U.S. President John Tyler father?

a) Eight b) Eleven c) Fifteen d) Seventeen

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

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Presidential Facts For President's Day February 20th



One President Short

Barack Obama is the 44th President of the United States, but how is it that only 43 men have occupied the office? Grover Cleveland was elected for two non-consecutive terms and is counted twice, as our 22nd and 24th President.

Foreign Born Presidents

Eight Presidents were born British subjects: Washington, J. Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, J. Q. Adams, Jackson, and W. Harrison. An exception to "natural born" status was included in Article 2 of the constitution.

Born In The USA

John Tyler was the first President born after ratification of the constitution (1790).

No College

Nine Presidents never attended college: Washington, Jackson, Van Buren, Taylor, Fillmore, Lincoln, A. Johnson, Cleveland, and Truman.

Religion

The most common religious affiliation among Presidents has been Episcopalian, followed by Presbyterian.

Presidential Age

The oldest President inaugurated was Reagan (age 69); the youngest was Kennedy (age 43). Theodore Roosevelt, however, was the youngest man to become President (42) when he succeeded McKinley, who had been assassinated.

Storm Season Is Just Around the Corner...Are You Protected?

Even though the first day of Spring is not until the 20th of next month, it's never too early to prepare for those pop-up storms that occur randomly at this time of year often resulting in everything from ice damage to lightening fires. During this time of year the threat of fire, flood, severe storms, water damage from office sprinklers, and even theft is very real.



One of the most valuable assets for any company is its data. Hardware and software can easily be replaced, but a company's data cannot!

As a reminder to all of our clients, here are some simple things you should do to make sure your company is ready for any natural disaster.

1. **Back Up Your Data Remotely!** Everyone knows that data should be backed up on a daily basis, but many people still use in-house tape drives that will get damaged in a natural disaster or fire, and can easily be stolen. We recommend backing up all data to an off-site location, and we offer this as a service to our clients.
2. **Use a Quality Surge Protector With Uninterruptible Power Supply Battery.** A high quality surge protector combined with an uninterruptible power supply battery backup will go a long way in protecting sensitive electronic equipment from surges and other electronic irregularities that can destroy your computer's circuitry.
3. **Make Sure Your Servers Are Off The Floor.** If your office gets flooded, having your equipment off the floor will prevent it from being completely destroyed. Server racks can be purchased and installed very inexpensively.
4. **Have A Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan.** Every business should have some type of plan in place for continued operation after a disaster. Would people know where to go? Who to call? How to log in and access data remotely? Hopefully you'll never need it, but having a simple plan will make you sleep a lot easier at night knowing you have a way to continue to operate when disaster strikes.

If you need help in any of these areas, give us a call! We can not only get you prepared, but also back up and running fast in the event of a disaster.

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More Presidential Facts

Not Elected

For 2 years the nation was run by a President and a Vice President who were not elected by the people. After Vice President Spiro T. Agnew resigned in 1973, President Nixon appointed Gerald Ford as Vice President. Nixon resigned the following year, which left Ford as President, and Ford's appointed Vice President, Nelson Rockefeller, as second in line.

Height

The tallest President was Lincoln at 6'4"; at 5'4", Madison was the shortest.

1849

The year the term "First Lady" was first used.

Single

James Buchanan was the only President never to marry.

Died In Office

Eight Presidents died in office: W. Harrison (after having served only one month), Taylor, Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Harding, F. Roosevelt, and Kennedy.

Runner Up

Vice Presidents were originally the presidential candidates receiving the second-largest number of electoral votes. This was the practice until adoption of the 12th amendment (1804).

We Want Your Input!

Do you have an idea to make this newsletter better? Would you like to submit a story, article, or trivia? We'd love to hear from you!

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Do You WIKI?

WIKI is a Hawaiian word for fast, but in Internet speak has become a "backronym" for "What I Know Is". Certainly we're all familiar with one of the world's most prolific wiki sites, Wikipedia, with more than 10 million entries and 684 million visitors each year. But why is it so popular and why should you care?

First of all, what is a wiki anyway? A wiki is a page or collection of web pages designed to enable anyone with access privileges to contribute or modify content, using a simplified markup language.

Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites. Wikipedia has been able to maintain the latest and best knowledge by allowing millions of people with specific knowledge to contribute to its database without losing control.

So what does this have to do with you? Most businesses maintain information about customers or projects in various software formats in multiple places, making collaboration nearly impossible. Wikis are being used in small businesses to provide Internet and knowledge management systems.

Wikis provide a central repository with a common language allowing you and your employees to easily contribute to, or access, the latest information from phone numbers to key sales strategies and everything in between.

Even though wikis are generally collaborative, you don't have to share access. You don't even have to have it on the Internet, and if you keep your wiki to a single file you can easily email it, put it on a web server, or share it via a USB thumb drive.

There are several providers that offer wiki sites with varying service options ranging from free to very low cost and are easy to use such as tiddlybackpack.com, jotspot.com, sitground.com, and courseforum.com. Most services offer video tutorials and should have you up and running quickly.

By having a wiki, you'll be more efficient by having a centralized, up-to-date, and easily accessible information point.

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