

"Insider Tips from Connectability to Make Your Business Run Faster,  
Easier And More Profitably"

# IT Insight

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## If disaster strikes, will you be ready?

About a year ago, I was on my way to an appointment when I saw an enormous plume of dark black smoke rising into the sky directly in front of me. As I got closer, I found that all of the roads leading in that direction had been blocked off by the fire department.

As it turned out, a mattress factory - Foamco Industries - had caught on fire. Ultimately, their building burned right to the ground and it left me wondering: how many businesses could survive such a disaster?

The truth is that unless you have a written and **implemented** disaster plan, it's unlikely that **your** business would survive.

Now, many of us ask ourselves: what's the actual risk of a fire, or flood, or even a tornado? The fact is, such disasters are rare. Still, no business would operate without insurance against these events even though the likelihood of needing it is exceedingly small.

But those aren't the only disasters that could cripple your business. Events like *theft*, *vandalism*, *Ransomware*, and *power surges* among many others are much more common and could ultimately do **just as much damage** to your business.

So let's think the unthinkable. If a **real** disaster hit your business tomorrow, would you be ready for it?

It's safe to say that, for most small-to-medium sized businesses, the answer would be: NO. And here's the scary thing:

- 30% of all businesses that have a major disaster go out of business within a year.
- 70% fail within five years. (Home Office Computing Magazine)
- 60% of companies that lose their data will shut down within 6 months.

But there's some good news: Connectability can help you, and it **won't cost you a dime!**

We've created a free **Disaster Planning and Recovery** template that you can use to build a plan for your business. And while we can't offer advice on how to get your business operations running again, we **can** provide you with the know-how to make sure that all of your critical business data is safe and ready to go when you need it in an emergency.

For instructions on how to download this free document, and for an **even better offer**, please see the back page of this newsletter.





## The 7 Deadly I.T. Sins

Over the next 7 months we'll be featuring a segment called **The 7 Deadly I.T. Sins**. We'll review the "I.T. sins" that every business owner should know about and why they are so important.

This month's "sin" is unsecure Wi-Fi.

Most businesses have a wireless network for laptop computers and mobile devices. Unfortunately, many businesses leave their networks unsecured or use minimal Wi-Fi security, because they either lack the technical know-how or they're unaware of the danger.

Here's just one example that illustrates the dangers of unsecured Wi-Fi. If a customer visits your office and connects to your Wi-Fi they could potentially access your company's private data without your knowledge.

To prevent threats like this, it's important to make sure you are doing the following:

- 1) Use strong network passwords. Weak passwords can be easily hacked by experienced thieves.
- 2) Avoid using WEP authentication. WEP is old fashioned and easily broken with the right software. Use WPA2 instead.
- 3) Finally, use a business-grade device. In our experience, many businesses use consumer-grade routers that don't offer the necessary security measures for a business. Upgrade your device to protect your data.

Failing to protect your wireless network can open the door to serious threats. You can learn more about avoiding these threats by following our segment on **The 7 Deadly I.T. Sins** in the coming months.

## 3-D Printing: What Does The Future Hold?

3-D printing may not have arrived at most small and medium sized businesses yet, but with costs decreasing and quality improving almost daily, it's only a matter of time before they become ubiquitous. Considering the profound effect 3-D printing will likely have on the economy and the world in general, we thought it was time to provide our clients with more information on the opportunities and challenges that this exciting new technology brings with it.

Traditional models of production revolve around the idea of economies of scale. Companies aim to produce a standardized product in a specific manufacturing plant. When you standardize a product and produce a high volume in the same location you are able to reduce costs. With the advent of 3-D printing it will become possible to customize goods to a much greater extent (with minimal effect on cost) because altering won't require retooling; only tweaking the instructions in the software (Harvard Business Review).

And as businesses move away from traditional production methods they will be able to manufacture goods much closer to the point of purchase. Although this may result in higher production costs, they will be offset by the reduction in shipping and transit costs (Harvard Business Review). You could, for example, apply this technology to making car parts at dealerships and repair shops, thus reducing the need for complex factories and supply chain management.

The uses of 3-D printing are seemingly endless. You can produce almost anything, from something as simple as a paperweight, to a drone with a built in camera, to a clock robot that writes and erases the time every minute. Regardless of how wacky or novel the product, it's likely a 3-D printer can make it. If your business normally gives out small promotional materials or you give a yearly gift to customers you can now insource the production and save time and money.

This is a very similar situation to the one the printing industry faced a decade ago. Consumers had such easy access to high quality printers that it became almost unnecessary to rely on custom print shops. Companies were finding they could print their materials more cheaply, easily, and conveniently in house. This is likely to be repeated at the outset of consumer level 3-D printing. We recently stopped outsourcing our printing and the savings were remarkable.

A few years ago 3-D printing was expensive and only accessible to universities or large corporations. Now 3-D printers are easily affordable even for home users. With many different options available in the \$300-\$1000 range, every business owner should begin considering the relevance of 3-D printing for their business. Prices for 3-D printers keep coming down so if you're at all interested in the technology make sure to keep your eyes peeled for new and innovative products.



Photo: Floris van B



## Gadget of the Month: Amazon Echo

The pace of change seems to increase daily. Twenty years ago when you needed to do research you went to the library. Ten years ago you grabbed your computer and looked it up online, albeit at slow speeds. Five years ago you would take out your phone and look it up in a matter of second. Now we have the next evolution in search and convenience technology. The Amazon Echo.

The Echo is an internet ready speaker that acts as a personal assistant. Say you're leaving the house but aren't sure whether it's going to rain. No problem! All you do is say "Alexa, is it going to rain today" and it tells you whether you need a raincoat.

Or a recipe uses an unfamiliar measurement, so you ask Alexa what the conversion is. Or you want to know when your favourite team is playing next, what the current score is, or you want to find out about a specific player. It's capable of all of that.

The applications certainly don't stop there; Alexa is also capable of playing your music through the iTunes cloud, Pandora and Spotify, and even has some home automation features that would allow you to adjust lighting.

Amazon releases frequent updates that encompass functions relating more to The Internet of Things. In the future it may be possible for Alexa to lower the temperature, turn on the oven and even start the washing machine, all without touching a button. For the \$200 price tag we believe the Echo is a steal.



## Client Story of the Month:

We recently got a call from a new customer looking to resolve some technical issues. Their network was down, they had permission problems, needed to replace an old server, and had generally slow performance. It was a mess!

Unfortunately, the problem in many IT environments is not simply slow performance or network issues; those are symptoms of deeper problems. And, as a result, fixing most problems can end up taking a lot longer than the average client estimates, leading to frustration and unplanned costs.

In one week of service the customer incurred nearly \$2,500 in costs, and the project isn't complete yet. On a Managed Services plan the same customer would pay \$1,000 per month, with the added benefits of AntiVirus software, AntiMalware software, RMM Software, Remote Access Software, Email Hosting, Cloud Backup and UNLIMITED onsite and remote support.

That's why we recommend Managed Services. With Managed Services you never have to worry about IT problems developing because your network is remotely monitored and managed 24/7. No worrying about how long a particular project will take because all the labour is included. And no need to be afraid of support bills because all your costs are planned.

You also get unlimited consulting time, maintenance, project work, moves, and regular meetings with our team to discuss areas of improvement and technologies that offer tangible benefits. If you need a new line of business software and want help choosing a vendor, we're there. Or if you need to move offices, no problem. Or you need to re-engineer your entire network, we're just a call or email away.

We've analyzed a number of different environments to determine which solution is best, and every time Managed Services is more consistent and cheaper. In our study, one client saved 79% by choosing Managed Services and the very least a client saved was 34%. As business people we understand the temptation to compare short-term costs when choosing a provider, unfortunately when you do that, you miss the predictability, peace-of-mind, additional software that must be purchased, and, most important, the long-term cost savings.

## Connectability's Referral Program Help us help you!

As many of you know, we get most of our customers through referrals and we're always looking for ways to grow our business.

To entice you to spread the word to friends, family, and business contacts we'd like to offer **\$100** for making an introduction with a bona fide business prospect. If they sign up you'll get **\$1,000** as a thank-you for putting us in touch! Simply by helping us you can reduce your IT costs!

For details about what constitutes a business prospect please go to our website at [www.connectability.com/referrals](http://www.connectability.com/referrals)





## Joke of the Month

Here's a short joke that pokes fun at programmers. It's entitled:

### An Engineer, a Manager, and a Programmer

An engineer, a manager and a programmer were driving down a steep mountain road.

The brakes failed and the car careened down the road out of control.

Half way down, the driver managed to stop the car by running it against the embankment narrowly avoiding going over a cliff.

They all got out, shaken by their narrow escape from death, but otherwise unharmed.

The manager said "To fix this problem we need to organize a committee, have meetings, and through a process of continuous improvement, develop a solution."

The engineer said "No that would take too long, and besides that method never worked before. I have my trusty pen knife here and will take apart the brake system, isolate the problem and correct it."

The programmer said "I think you're both wrong! I think we should all push the car back up the hill and see if it happens again."

## Offer of the Month: Don't be unprepared for a disaster!

In this issue we've talked about the importance of being **prepared** if disaster strikes. In fact, if you're in a government-regulated business or you have significant bank financing, you may be **required** to have a disaster recovery plan.

But even if it's not mandatory, having a plan can mean the difference between surviving a disaster and a total business failure. Think about it: if you were unlucky enough to experience a fire, flood or vandalism, wouldn't it be nice to have the comfort of knowing that you've planned for just such an eventuality? Wouldn't it be reassuring to know that, by following a simple document, you can put your business back on its feet?

### Disaster Plan



Connectability wants to help you prevent a disaster - large or small - from turning into a **total business failure**. Of course, we can't find you new premises, or replace your mementos. But we **can** help make sure that all of your business-critical data is safe and ready to use within hours of a disaster so that you can continue looking after your customers without missing a beat!

And because *our* business is helping *your* business, we are offering our **Disaster Recovery Template**, absolutely **free of charge**. To download your free copy just go to:

<http://www.connectability.com/dr-template>

Now here's an even better offer: we'll *help you* complete your plan. If you're on a **Managed Services** plan, it's totally free. If you're not, we're offering a 35% discount off of our regular rates, but **only** until the end of June.

Don't wait until it's too late. Download your plan right now and sleep easier!

## Connectability to the Rescue!

This past Friday afternoon, we received a panicked call from a new client in urgent need of help with their VoIP phone system. We were onsite within 2 hours to diagnose the problems and recommend a solution. A service appointment was scheduled for early the next week.

We understand that a lot of businesses don't work bankers' hours, and neither do we. That's why we make ourselves available whenever you need support.