

# Computer Issues for Small Business Owners

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# Save Time with Broadband

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## □ DSL (Digital Subscriber Line)

- Connection through existing phone lines
- Dedicated speed to your house
- Speed varies based on line quality and distance to central office

# Save Time with Broadband

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## □ Cable

- Connection through Cable TV signal
- Usually faster than DSL
- Shared speed with others in your area

# More than One Computer? Network Them.

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- Wired (traditional) Network:
  - Computers have a physical cable connection from computer to Internet Source
  - For computers in separate rooms, wires must be run through walls, ceilings, and floors
  - Speed varies, but faster than wireless connections
  - Secure. You must be physically plugged in to a wire at the house to gain access

# More than One Computer at Home? Network Them.

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## □ Wireless Network

- Computers can be anywhere in house and still connect to each other and to the internet. Speed deteriorates as you move further from the Internet source
- Each computer needs wireless card (<\$70) to connect to the source of the Internet access.
- Be sure to get hardware capable of the standard “802.11b” or higher.
- Less secure. Since signal is broadcast in open air, your network is open to others in very close proximity (steps can be taken to improve the security)

# Rough Cost for Networks:

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- Wired
  - Router -- \$50-\$75
  - LAN (local area network) Cards for each computer that needs to be installed on each PC that will access the internet - \$20 (slightly more for laptops)
  
- Wireless
  - Wireless Access Point / Router – combines the router above with antennas to broadcast the signal throughout your house - \$75 - \$150 (depending on speed you choose)
  - Wireless LAN access card – for each computer that will connect to the internet. (\$60 - \$100)

# Domain Names / E-mail

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## Why do I need a custom domain name?

- ❑ More Professional appearing than personX@aol.com
- ❑ “Permanent Email” – Use ANY Internet Service Provider you want and keep the same email.
- ❑ Custom Addresses (info@, feedback@, sales@)
- ❑ Less than \$15 a year to own a domain name
- ❑ Approx. \$20 a month to host website / E-mail

# Great! How do I get this done?

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## Selecting a domain name.

- Domain Name:
  - www.123cheapdomains.com, www.godaddy.com, www.dotster.com, www.netsol.com -- search for available names and register them instantly
  - What if mine is taken?
    - Other extensions are available outside of .com -- (.net, .us, .biz, .info)
    - Acronyms or abbreviations: ie; Business Benefits Group becomes www.businessbenefitsgrp.com
    - Offer to buy the domain from the owner (I recommend legal counsel)
    - \* I do not recommend the user of services that offer to "squat" on domains and try to purchase them away from people when they expire.

# Great! How do I get this done?

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## □ Web Hosting:

- Offered by company above you buy domain from.
- Check with local ISP's (Internet Service Providers)
- Find a business specializing in Internet Development that may offer hosting to their customers. (many do)
- Check references with other small businesses.

# I need a Website!

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## **Do Your Homework.**

- Check similar sites in the industry and note what you like and do not like about their website.

## **What do you want your website to do?**

- What can you place on your website that might alleviate unneeded phone traffic?
- What can you place on there that would increase your credibility?
- Will clients be interested in signing up to receive a newsletter from you?
- Do you need to automatically email your customers via the website with changes?

# I need a Website!

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- Hiring Others to create a professional image:
  - What to look for in outside providers
  - Be cautious about “5 page websites with 2 monthly updates for \$ XYZ”
  - Resources to help you – Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, Word of mouth.
  - Ask them for customer references. Don’t just view the website they “say they created”. Often times, a website will move between companies and it’s important to know how much of the current site (if you like it) was done by the provider you are working with.
- What can I do myself?
  - If you are willing to invest the time, you can typically learn a website software package.
  - You can make changes to your site (Microsoft Front Page, Macromedia Dreamweaver)

# I found a company I to do my website, now what?

Approach the website in phases, if time permits

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- Launch your new site and logo along with general information, contact information, news releases, etc.
- Determine programming features that might add to your visitor experience
  - \* Do you have articles on your website that need to be searchable?
  - \* Do you need a method for customers to send you files through the website?
  - \* Do you need a way to automatically e-mail your customers via the website?
  - \* Do you want the ability to let people sign up for a newsletter on your website?...
- What can you place on your website to alleviate unneeded phone traffic?

I found a company I to do my website, now what?  
Approach the website in phases

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## **Your Budget**

- ❑ \$1000 - \$1500 for logo, business cards, letterhead, rolodex cards, etc. Designed with a professional website.
- ❑ Keep expenses down where possible. You may find adding a costly enhancement looks great, but does little to bring in additional revenue or increase your overall productivity.

# Security and Protection

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## **Keep your work computer for work use when possible.**

- Avoid Kazaa, eMule, and other file sharing programs
- If an unknown popup window appears and says “click here for free security scan” – click anywhere else but “here”

# Security and Protection Products to invest in

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- Virus Scan
  - An absolute must! – Symantec (Norton) and McAfee
  - After installation, schedule a full system scan to run at least one time a week.
  - Always scan incoming email, and outgoing email to further protect yourself from viruses.
  
- Software Internet Firewall
  - Optional, provides more security against hackers.
  - If you have DSL or Cable Internet, investigate this.

# Security and Protection Products to invest in

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## □ Spyware Protection

- Spyware - A general term for programs that monitor your activities.
- They may be innocuous, but still intrusive.
- Ad-Aware ([www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com))
- Spy Sweeper (<http://www.webroot.com>)

# Help Stop E-mail Clutter

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- ❑ Viruses and Email hoaxes cause extra SPAM and traffic on the internet
- ❑ If you get an offer that is too good to be true, check to see if it's a Hoax:
  - <http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html>
  - <http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/>
- ❑ Outback will not send \$20 to you in the mail
- ❑ Microsoft is not going to send you \$5 for each person you email this to
- ❑ The GAP is not doing any email tracking and sending out gift certificates
- ❑ You do not have a huge inheritance to claim in India if you send this guy \$1000
- ❑ If you get emailed a file with an attachment saying "load this onto your drive and replace the existing file", send it to the Recycle Bin

# Backup and Archiving

## Make it a Routine Practice

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- Use External Media
  - Get a CD /DVD Burner or External Hard Drive -- and regularly backup important documents and emails
  - Choice of above depends on your system. If your system supports USB 2.0 or "Firewire", external hard drivers are extremely reasonable in price.
  
- Buy a program to perform FULL system backups.
  - Don't waste time having to reinstall everything in the event of a disaster.
  - Full system backups can easily complete overnight while you rest easy)
  - 3 Popular System Backup Programs: Norton Ghost, Acronis True Image, Powerquest DriveImage
  
- Take the Data Off-Site?
  - Off site protection? If it's important enough, look into off site protection. This could some place as reliable as your spouse's desk at their office