

Computer Issues for Small Business Owners

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Save Time with Broadband

□ 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

□ Cable

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

More than One Computer? Network Them.

- 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.

□ 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:

□ 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

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?

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?

□ 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!

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!

- 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

- 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

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

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

- 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

□ Spyware Protection

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

Help Stop E-mail Clutter

- ❑ 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

- 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