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READY NET GO ... NEWS

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Tip of the Month

Win 9x and ME – End of Support

As we mentioned several months ago, Microsoft is **ceasing support** for the Windows 9x and Windows ME Operating Systems.

Paid incident support and **online security updates will be available through July 11, 2006**. After this time, only online self-help support will be available through July 10, 2007.

Security updates are critical for computers running Microsoft products that are attached to a network or have Internet access. Therefore, these systems will **need to be removed** from business and home networks. Without security updates installed regularly, these computers will have the potential for serving as a backdoor for viruses and Malware into your network.

Vista Update

The new OS from Microsoft is scheduled for release in early winter 2006 for businesses and the beginning of 2007 for the general public. If you're thinking of upgrading, you'll have to analyze your computer to make sure you can run this robust program.

Recommended requirements for a computer to run Windows Vista:

- 1 GHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor
- 1 GB of system memory
- Graphics processor that is DirectX 9 capable (enhances multi-media)
- 128 MB of dedicated graphics memory
- 40 GB of hard drive capacity with 15 GB free space
- CD-ROM or DVD-ROM Drive

Network Scanning and Digital Archiving for a Paperless Office

Would you like to be able to print and scan to one device from any desktop in the office? Are your file cabinets bursting at the seams? Would you like to reduce the amount of paper floating around the office? What would you do if a fire or flood destroyed all of your paper documents? We'll address these questions in this newsletter and offer suggestions on how to improve your business workflow.

Network Scanning

Multi-function or **All-in-One** devices allow users to print, scan, copy and fax all from the same unit. Gone are the days, thankfully, of separate devices scattered about the office taking up valuable desk space. You can now have one unit, depending on the number of users in your office and the amount of expected workflow. Not all multi-function units have the same features however, especially in regards to scanning.

Inexpensive all-in-one devices **will not scan over the network** despite the fact that they can print over the network. Manufacturers do not readily admit that scanning can only be accomplished from a computer that is directly attached to it. This information is not found easily on their specification sheets. They are networkable for printing but in order to scan, the all-in-one device must have a network scanning driver not just a print server.

So if you are in the market for a new All-in-One device that will satisfy your needs, give us a call and we can offer recommendations suitable for your workflow. There are reasonably priced solutions on the market today that will fit in any office.

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.ibhs.org/ - Institute for Business and Home Safety. Check out their **Open for Business** publication which includes an assessment tool and suggestions for disaster preparedness.
2. www.onebag.com – Going on a trip this summer? Learn how to pack lightly wherever you go.

Other Scanning Options

If you already have a scanner and want to increase its functionality, **check the manufacturer's website** for updates to its software. For instance, Umax improved one of its drivers to accommodate network scanning. If you have a particular model that uses the revised driver, you can update your hardware to take advantage of this new feature.

Another option is to **purchase third-party software** that will enable multiple computers on the LAN / WAN to remotely connect to the scanner (you'll still need someone to feed papers into the scanner but the reviewing and modifying can be accomplished at a remote workstation). You can even purchase software that will install on a server running Terminal Services. Give us a call if you are interested in learning more about third-party software solutions.

Archiving Documents

If you have a large amount of scanning to do, you'll want to purchase a dedicated scanner. Most scanners connect via a SCSI connection although some connect via USB. SCSI is the best option for speed and performance. **Most scanners have specific hardware requirements** so remember to check the specifications of the existing computer it will be connected to or when looking to purchase a new computer.

Document capture has improved greatly since the 1990s. The scanners are smaller, easier to operate and are less expensive than their earlier counterparts. With document management software, files are captured as PDFs (images) that can be **fully searched by keywords and phrases**. Pages are indexed as well making it effortless to find what you need. Some document management applications come pre-installed with the scanner or you can purchase third-party software. Scanned files can be stored on the network, a dedicated internal drive, on an external hard drive, or CDs or DVDs (especially beneficial for off-site disaster recovery).

Whichever method you choose, **archiving your infrequently used documents will:**

- 1) Reduce physical storage space needs whether in house or off-site
- 2) Reduce labor from manually entering data
- 3) Reduce labor from filing and retrieving duties (especially for missing or lost files)
- 4) Aid in disaster recovery efforts especially if the archived data is kept off-site in multiple locations

Disaster Prevention

With the weather patterns that we have been witnessing lately, preparing for a disaster should be on everyone's mind. From floods, fire, hurricanes, and electrical storms, our weather can have a significant impact on our personal and business lives. Keep in mind that preparing for the worst will **always be more cost effective** in the long run. Fortunately, technology is keeping pace. There are many solutions available now that will help manage workflow and keep your business running smoothly.

Suggestions include:

- Battery backups for computers and hardware
- Inventory all equipment / take photos of hardware/furniture for insurance purposes
- Fireproof/waterproof filing cabinets or safes
- Scan paper documents to eliminate clutter
- Backup generators for long outages
- Off site storage of important electronic data

Since every business, whether for-profit or non-profit, operates differently, contact us for specific recommendations for your particular needs. Most importantly, create a disaster recovery plan and make sure everyone in the office is aware of what to do, whom to call and where to go in an emergency.