

TechTip Newsletter

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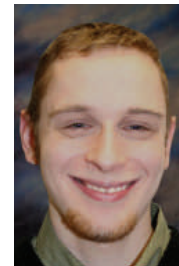
10 Early Warning Signs Of Impending Computer Disaster

Computers rarely stop working overnight. In most cases, there are early warning signs that problems are brewing. Below are 10 surefire warning signs that indicate you need to get a professional to investigate your network ASAP:

1. Your workstation or server starts running very slowly, freezes up, or crashes.
2. Your web browser has been changed to another strange browser you've never seen before.
3. You are getting an unusual amount of pop-up windows, even when you aren't surfing the web.
4. You don't know if every computer on your network has the most current virus definitions.
5. You don't know if you have a firewall in place or the last time it was updated.
6. You haven't attempted to restore your data from a backup tape or other storage device in awhile, and you aren't checking your backup log for errors.
7. You receive e-mails accusing you of sending spam, and/or you find e-mail messages in your "outbox" or "sent" folder that you didn't send.
8. Your computer starts making a grinding, clicking, or loud whirring sound.
9. The fan is constantly running.
10. You are getting a growing number of error messages, and you are forced to create work-arounds to complete certain work tasks.

If any of these warning signs are present, you should contact a professional immediately to investigate further!

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Who Is George ???

"George's Password Tips,"
"George's Email Tips" *Who the heck is George??*"

George Whitcher is a 22 year old computer whiz who is the technical backbone of the ACTSmart Web Team.

George has been with us since July 2007 and has steadily become our "go to" person for all web programming issues. He's also our Cartmanager shopping cart guru who knows the inside-out of all the special features such as multiple shipping choices and other product variables. Sound complicated? It is! And George knows how to figure all these problems out.

Outside the office, George owns his own online game "cheat code" community website and is often asked to consult by popular game companies including Sega and Square Enix to help find bugs in their games. He also likes snowboarding and has a cat named Hamlet.

Watch for George's helpful articles in future newsletters— he'll become your "go-to" person too!



Our Client of the Month

It's no secret, we absolutely love WATD! We advertise with them, have won 3 awards for their website, take care of all their computer systems

and in general love their staff and the owners Ed & Carol Perry!

WATD is generous and supportive of the South Shore Community and we are very grateful for their tireless efforts!

We just finished our annual redesign of the award winning 959WATD.com website. This year, the biggest changes were in functionality.

When we first designed their website, we had custom programming created that allowed them to update some areas of the website themselves. This system has worked well for them over the years; allowing the busy news and weather departments to update the website.

Our new CMS programming allows much more functionality: the news department can update the website with photos as well as their often exclusive stories, the weather department can now

add more that just the temperatures; they can add commentary that shows their local weather expertise.

The new programming allows much more functionality: the news department can update the website with photos as well as their often exclusive stories, and the weather department can now add more that just the temperatures; they can add commentary that shows their local weather expertise.

The DJs have gotten in on the act, too. Rob Hakala is able to update his morning guest information and his popular "What To Do With The Kids" segment himself, allowing him the flexibility to change information whenever he wants.

Liz Raven is excited to be able to not only put information up about her guests on the spur of the moment; she's really excited to have an area on her web page that allows her to blog!

Cathy Dee loves her new dessert-themed webpage and her "Fun Fact Of The Day."

WATD is also taking advantage of our new **Business Continuity Program**. This is our (BDR) Backup and Disaster Recovery Solution which protects their critical business data from loss.

Our "Incremental Forever" methodology captures all changes to the initial image in 15 minute increments. The Incremental Forever technology not only backs up recent datasets but also allows end users to reconstruct the state of their data as it existed at the end

of various 15-minute restoration points.

If any of their servers fail, our server virtualization technology allows their servers, data and applications to be restored and rebooted within two hours. With tape and external drive backups, it could take several days in order to receive replacement servers and restore from tapes. Our BDR solution will have their business up and running. It even multitasks so that, while functioning as a virtual server, it will continue to back up data from other devices plugged into it. Our technology allows them to remain in business without any significant loss of data backup, server functionality, or application downtime!



Do you want the ability to update areas of your website yourself?

Our new CMS program allows us to configure specific areas of your website to be editable. We set up the fields that you want available, grant access to only those areas with a unique username and password and you are ready to go! You can feel comfortable that you can't corrupt the site's design and functionality while having the freedom to change information whenever you want!

Who needs this new feature? Restaurants that want to post their daily specials, stores that want to change their "On Sale" items themselves (even posting photos!), service sites that want to edit their "Thought For The Day," those who want to update their simple class information or calendar and many more businesses that have specific changes in mind. It's now affordable and very easy for you to use!

Call us today for more information! 781-834-9208



Is YOUR Critical Business Data safe?

With our Backup and Disaster Recovery (BDR), we generate an image of all hard drive partitions via an agent, which is warehoused on the NAS (Network Attached Storage) device physically located at your location. The data is stored AES-256 bit encrypted and compressed, reaching efficiencies as high as 2:1.

We employ a block-level (not file-level) backup, which means that data is captured at the level of 1s and 0s. Block level data is raw data which does not have a file structure imposed on it. Database applications such as Microsoft SQL Server and Microsoft Exchange Server transfer data in blocks. Block transfer is the most efficient way to write to disk and is much less prone to errors such as those that result from file-level backups. Additionally, block level backups are not affected by open files or open databases. The block-level image is an exact digital duplicate of the on-site server.

A good backup system should allow for quick and flexible restores. Our solution allows for recovery of files, folders, partitions, mailboxes/messages, databases/tables using a quick and intuitive process. In case of a complete server failure we support a bare metal restore to new hardware which has a different configuration, hardware and drivers as compared to the failed server. Our 15-minute incremental based backup allows restores to be done from any point in time, allowing for multiple versions of files, folders, messages/mailboxes, database/tables to be restored.

Our 24x7 Completely Managed Solution:

Our 300+ person Network Operations Center (NOC) monitors your NAS units and the attached servers 24/7. Failed processes generate immediate alerts to our engineers, who often remotely correct errors within minutes of receiving notification.

Call today to find out more about our BDR service!

Welcome



Mark!

Please join us as we welcome Mark Murphy, the newest member of our Technical Services team.

Mark is responsible for our Intelligent IT Management and Monitoring Infrastructure, watching over our NOC (Network Operations Center) and our client's networks 24/7. He also has the responsibility of coordinating and scheduling our NOC engineers and any network services performed for our Intelligent IT clients.

Mark has a strong background in Customer Service and is currently working towards his MCSE certification. Over the past 16 years, Mark has worked in many small business environments managing project based work. It was from this experience that he developed his customer service and management skills.

This is one of the primary attractions in joining the ACTSmart team, helping customers on an individual basis, developing relationships and partnering with them and taking a personal interest in their success and satisfaction with the services we provide.

Mark is a very family oriented guy. He also plays guitar and sings in an acoustical guitar duo, playing out at local pubs. Mark also enjoys drawing, reading and movies.

He can be reached at Mark@GoAmerican.com and 781-834-9208 Ext. 203



I'd Love To Hear From YOU!

Is there an article or a feature you would like me to include in this newsletter? Do you just want to "sound off" about something or share your opinion with my other subscribers? Let me know!

Contact: **David Snell**

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The old saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is especially true in the world of computers and all things digital; and if you are like most businesses, your computer network is critical to the operation of your business so make sure you don't procrastinate if any of these warning signs are present.

Ideally, you should perform regular health checks and maintenance on your Network, Server and Workstations to make sure problems don't crop up.

Here's why:

- Critical security updates need to be applied at least once a month to protect you from a constant flow of new hacker attacks.
- Firewall, virus and spyware protection need to be monitored and updated on a daily basis because new attacks are released daily.
- Your data backup system needs to be monitored and tested frequently to ensure easy data recovery in the event of loss. The rate of tape drive failure is 100%; that's why you need to frequently monitor your backups.
- Servers and workstations need regular tune-ups to keep them running fast and error free.
- Monitoring of disk space is important to avoid data loss, crashes, and storage problems. Server event logs need to be monitored for early alerts to network issues.

One of the biggest mistakes business owners make is taking a reactive approach to network support and maintenance rather than a proactive one.

In other words, they wait until something stops working and THEN they call in the professionals to fix it. This approach not only costs more in the long run, but it also leaves you vulnerable to more devastating crashes such as data corruption and loss, virus attacks, and extended downtime. Even NEW computers and equipment need regular maintenance because new threats are constantly evolving.

Fortunately, there is an inexpensive and easy way for you to completely avoid - even anticipate and prevent - these problems while making your network far more secure, reliable, and problem free.

We call it our **ACTSmart Intelligent IT Plan** and it's designed specifically for the small to medium business owner that doesn't have the time, expertise, or skilled technical staff to perform this regular network maintenance.

Thanks to advancements in support technology, we can now monitor your network 24/7/365 days a year and provide all the maintenance your network needs for a fraction of the time and cost.

For a flat, monthly fee, you'll get 24/7 remote monitoring of your network to not only ensure that it is running at peak performance, but also to guarantee that your data is being backed up and secured, that your virus definitions are up-to-date, that your firewall is configured properly, that your server is optimized, as well as keep an eye on over 100 system processes and alerts that could indicate that potential problems are brewing.

If you hired a technician - even a junior one - to perform these basic network tasks, it could easily cost you \$40,000 in salary, insurance, and hiring costs. If you were to outsource this type of service, it would easily run you \$800 to \$1,000 a month in just hourly, on-site fees. However, thanks to the remote management infrastructure we've invested in, we can deliver all of these services to you for as little as \$300 per month.

For even greater savings, ask us about our PLATINUM level **Intelligent IT** service.

This **ALL INCLUSIVE** level of support provides our highest level of service. **EVERYTHING is included at NO ADDITIONAL COST** beyond the low monthly cost of the program.

As a PLATINUM level subscriber you can actually budget your technology cost on an annual basis and you NEVER have to pay for a Onsite service call again. Give us a call today to discuss your individual needs. We will be happy to provide a custom proposal based on your unique business environment.



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