This Issue:

3 Ways to Prevent a Smartphone Thief From Also Stealing Your Data

While it's certainly a bummer to have your smartphone stolen, it's even worse if the thief accesses your data. To help prevent this nightmare scenario, security...

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About Pulse

We are a technology consulting firm specializing in technology implementation and management for businesses. We're known for providing , Enterprise-Level IT services for big businesses, small businesses, and medium-sized businesses.

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How to Break the Cycle of Your Technology Breaking Down

No technology is stagnant. Either it improves, or it is replaced by something better. But what if the people who are in charge of improving your solutions were too busy rectifying issues to ever get around to making the necessary improvements? In a situation like this, you'd soon have to make do with insufficient systems, which would only lead to more issues that would eat up IT's time. This would, in turn, keep them from solving the root problem.

Finally, you'd ultimately be unable to work around the issue and be placed in a position with two pretty lousy options: either you finally bite the bullet and update everything, or you wait for your company to slowly be pigeonholed into providing a few very basic services until the effect it has on your business can no longer be ignored.

However, there is a third option that could help prevent you ever reaching that point in the first place: Managed IT Services.

A trusted managed service provider, or MSP, can help you take back control of your IT strategy by supplementing your internal team's efforts with their own. Is your team overwhelmed by service requests? An MSP can take some of that burden from their shoulders, freeing them up to innovate and improve your business' network and infrastructure. Alternatively, your MSP could devise and implement a strategy to help keep your systems on the cutting edge, while your internal team runs interference on any issues you might encounter.

Want the Best IT Support? You Need Exceptional Availability

When your technology breaks down, can you rely on your IT provider to be there in a moment's notice? What if you need someone to talk you through a troubleshooting procedure? During the weekday you expect them to be available, but what if you're burning the candle at both ends over a weekend to finish an important project? Furthermore, your office might be closed, but your IT infrastructure still needs to be attended to.

Most organizations would prefer that their technology infrastructures be available and functional to their employees at all times. This includes someone keeping tabs on the infrastructure during off-hours. Can you reach your provider after-hours and on weekends or other times that you may not normally need assistance?

Why You Need 24/7 Support

Countless problems could occur when you least expect them to, especially when nobody is in the office to respond to them. What happens if you're hit with a sudden DDoS attack, or a piece of hardware experiences some sort of critical failure? Such a large issue could cause widespread damage and downtime that places your budget and reputation at risk.

Be Deliberate About Cybersecurity and Avoid the Worst Attacks of the Web

If 2016 was any indication, there are a few things that will be of most concern to IT professionals and end users.

Ensuring All Endpoints Have Appropriate Security Measures

It's staggering to consider how many end points any given business could have, each providing a route in for threat actors. Between company-provided devices, personal mobile devices, and Internet of Things devices, there are plenty of opportunities for a company to be attacked.

As a result, as 2017 progresses, businesses must be aware of what threats exist, as well as better prepared to protect themselves against them. This includes strategies that ensure your organization's digital protections are properly maintained while remaining cognizant of physical security best practices. Pairing encryption and access control, as well as mobile device management, can create a much safer environment for your data.

Getting Back to Basics With Security and End User Education

While it may sometimes be tempting to focus on the massive attacks and breaches that too-often dominate the headlines, no business can afford to devote their full attention to those vulnerabilities and overlook the more common threats. This is primarily because once they do, they become exponentially more vulnerable to these attacks through their lack of awareness and preparation.

Part of being prepared for the threats of the coming weeks and months is to make sure that your employees are also up to speed where security is concerned. Educating them on best practices before enforcing these practices can help to shore up any vulnerabilities you may have and maintain your network security. This includes restricting employee access to certain websites, requiring passwords of appropriate strength, and encouraging your employees to be mindful of exactly what they're clicking on.

Continuing to Improve Security Measures

Finally, it is important to remember that implementing security features isn't a one-time activity. Threats will grow and improve in order to overcome existing security measures, and so if they are going to remain effective, these security measures must be improved as well.

While regulatory requirements can provide an idea of what security a network should feature, they shouldn't be seen as the endpoint. Instead, those requirements should be the bare minimum that you implement, along with additional measures to supplement them.

2016 saw many IT security issues. Pulse Technology Solutions is out to ensure a safer 2017 with comprehensive solutions to alleviate you network security concerns. For more information, reach out to us at 239-362-9902.

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Want the Best IT Support? You Need Exceptional Availability

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Most importantly, however, you need to consider just how your employees or customers will react if they try to access your services and are unable to do so. If you don't have someone to resolve the issue, chances are that you're going to be the one taking that 3:00 a.m. phone call telling you that your server is down. Really, it's in your best interest to make sure that someone is on-hand and ready to fix the issue so that you don't have to.

Network Monitoring is Also Crucial

Of course, not every IT provider will want to make this sacrifice for your company; though any who dare to call themselves an IT service provider will put their sleep schedules on the line to make sure you don't have to. At the very least, you need an IT provider that can offer your organization 24/7 network monitoring in some capacity. This type of monitoring can be accomplished by having a dedicated technician keeping a close watch on your infrastructure for any oddities. In situations like this, a technician is contacted to resolve a problem remotely should there be a problem. It's about as easy and hands-off as you can get.

To learn more about proactive monitoring and management, or to understand your technology support options, contact us today at: 239-362-9902.

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4 Ways the Cloud Enhances How You Do Business
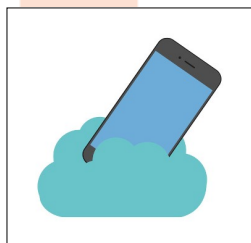
Boosted Mobility

One of the most significant pain points that businesses have experienced in the past is a lack of access to their files. Unless there were multiple copies of a file floating around (which increases the risk of data leakage and inconsistency) an employee would have had to remove the business's sole copy of a file to work on it, greatly increasing the risk of data loss.

However, the cloud mitigates these potential issues almost completely by allowing documents and data to be accessed from anywhere that an Internet connection can be established. As a result, there is a greatly reduced risk of data loss due to misplaced files. Another consideration is that if your organization gets hit with a disaster, a secondary workplace is much easier to set up.

Business Continuity and Data Backup

On the subject of disasters, cloud technologies also enable businesses to better ensure their ability to continue their operations should something befall their physical office. In cases such as floods, fires, or other destructive forces, it is much better to have your data safely stored in an offsite location, rather than keeping your critical files in a filing cabinet that gets damaged in a disaster.

The cloud also allows businesses to add another layer of data redundancy to ensure that it protected if something terrible happens. It accomplishes this by storing the data in multiple off-site locations, so when it is time to recover data, it is accessible and easily restored.

Collaboration

When was the last time that you wasted reams of paper, as employees who were working on a project printed out copy after copy, only to scribble all over them, crossing out things, and annotating others? This approach is inefficient, wasteful, and expensive.

The cloud, on the other hand, allows these documents to be shared and edited online, ensuring that all of your resources have the same version to reference and...

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Forget Sherlock Holmes, IBM's Watson Can Solve the Mystery of Your Tax Refund
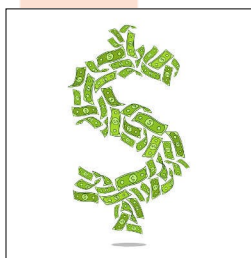
In 2011, the world was introduced to IBM's supercomputer Watson after it handily won the television quiz show Jeopardy!. Since then, Watson has been utilized in a variety of helpful ways, including customer service for Macy's and Geico, as well as medical research. Today, Watson is being tapped by H&R Block to assist the public with an issue that affects every American, their taxes.

To be clear, H&R Block isn't replacing its 70,000 tax professionals with Watson, but rather, Watson is being utilized to assist H&R Block's staff best serve its 11 million customers.

In a statement, Bill Cobb, a chief executive of H&R Block, says that he hopes the partnership with IBM will "reinvent the retail experience for taxpayers." For IBM's part, they're looking to showcase how AI technology can benefit corporations--a profitable market that has yet to be fully realized.

### Learning Tax Codes is Elementary, My Dear Watson

As you can imagine, turning Watson into a tax expert took some teaching on H&R Block's part. In order to prepare Watson for the tax season, the supercomputer first needed to process and learn 74,000 pages of the federal tax code, as well as the thousands of tax-related questions accumulated by H&R Block over six decades of tax preparation. As is the nature of AI, every question and interaction processed by Watson makes it more knowledgeable of the given subject, so it will be interesting to see how valuable Watson proves to be in a real-world tax scenarios (which tend to be rather unpredictable).

In Watson's case, the supercomputer is specifically designed to handle such a task, seeing as its primary function is to process and classify vast amounts of data using natural language. During the training period, H&R Block's tax professionals from nearly 100 locations...

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8 Essential Questions to Ask of Your IT Provider
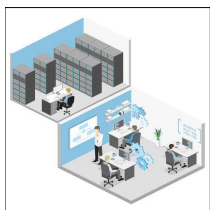
When was the last time that your organization had an unexpected technology expense blast your IT budget out of the sky? Surprise issues that you don't plan for could potentially derail your budget for months, or even years, depending on the severity of it. Having a clear idea of what your IT service plan covers is a great way to make sure that you don't get hit by surprise billing.

We've put together a list of scenarios that you'll want your IT support to cover. This way, you can avoid situations where you get unexpected bills from IT work performed on weekends, during off-hours, or on holidays.

Situations You Want Your IT Provider to Cover

When you sign up for IT support, you sign what's called a service level agreement. This determines what type of service you receive throughout the course of your relationship with the managed service provider. Of course, this could change depending on your provider's business model, but there are some specifics that you want to keep an eye out for. Trust us when we say that your budget will thank us later.

Here are a few questions that you should ask when determining your service agreement with your IT provider.

- Can your employees submit a support request without worrying about exceeding the IT budget?
- Will you be charged more for after-hours support? Are you covered on weekends and holidays?
- Is there a maximum amount of support that you can receive and would there be any excessive charges if you went over?
- Will you be charged for data recovery in the event of a disaster scenario?
- Will you have the flexibility to add more users and...

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(Continued from page 1) Adding to the benefit of the MSP is the fact that their services are delivered at a steady monthly rate. This allows you to incorporate the expense of professional IT support and management into your budget with confidence, while also providing budget flexibility.

The expert IT technicians at Pulse Technology Solutions can help you design and implement an IT management strategy.. For more information give us a call at 239-362-9902.

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We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.

James Ritter
Founder & CEO

Tech Trivia
A dentist named Alfred Southwick invented the electric chair.

IT SAYS, "IN CASE OF DATA LOSS, POUR YOURSELF A DRINK..."

THAT'S NOT REALLY AN EFFECTIVE DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN...

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