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Why Cloud Computing May Brighten Your Future

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Small businesses often face a sobering reality: they know there are technology applications that could make their business more efficient, but the cost of implementing and maintaining the IT hardware and software is prohibitive. That's where cloud-computing can actually bring a sunny forecast. By shifting the IT infrastructure and management burdens to a third-party, cloud-based provider, a small business can get enterprise-class technologies delivered as a subscription service.



Recycled Energy Development (RED), a small business that helps industrial manufacturers convert their waste energy into recycled electricity and heat, faced just such a dilemma. RED had a document management problem: keeping track of their numerous clients and all the associated contracts, engineering specs, and project plans.

PointBridge, a Microsoft certified partner, proposed a custom-built document management system, based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007, that would keep track all the documents and their many versions.

Aaron Walters, RED's CFO, was excited by the potential of the proposed system. But the price tag for an on-premise system—well, that would have been too much red ink for RED. Walters didn't have the budget for an in-house Office SharePoint Server installation, and RED didn't have the IT staff required to support such a system.

That's when cloud-computing, in the form of Microsoft Business Productivity Online Suite (BPOS), came to the rescue. BPOS provides enterprise-class software hosted on Microsoft servers and sold through partners on a subscription basis. BPOS includes Microsoft Exchange Online, Office Live Meeting, Microsoft Communications Online, and, most critical to RED, Microsoft SharePoint Online. What's more, BPOS subscriptions are highly affordable, costing just \$10 per user per month for the full suite.

The customized document management applications were implemented using Microsoft SharePoint Online, freeing RED from the upfront infrastructure costs and the ongoing IT management burden. The company was delighted with how simple it was to deploy and utilize the solution through SharePoint Online—employees were up and running without a lot of time for set up and training. Now RED has the sophisticated document management tools to store contracts and maintain full version histories. RED employees can check documents in and out, and multiple people can work on contracts without getting in each other's way. The system tracks every change, so revisions are easily identifiable.

The new services have helped RED's business in a number of different ways. "They have enhanced collaboration within our different internal divisions," explains Walters, "and they have helped increase our productivity and helped manage the business process involving our clients."

What's more, the BPOS-based solution was not only highly affordable, but as a per-user subscription, it can readily scale to the size of RED's business.

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Strategies for Conserving Battery Power

Why Hackers Hate Windows 7

by Lyle Epstein, Kortek Solutions



A lot of the focus is on security and ways of protecting the network and threats from inside and outside. Every day, hackers work on finding exploits and unpatched systems to break into. In the 1990's, virus's were written by kids, and college students more for an annoyance than what they are doing today. Today, groups of hackers usually hired by organized crime purposely write programs to steal data, including credit cards, banking information, or other sensitive data. The landscape has changed, and will keep

changing as technology does. As a systems engineer, part of my job is protecting computers and networks from these threats.

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Business Continuity Tip

Keep it simple.

Be realistic about who and what you will need during a recovery. There is no sense in trying to bring everyone back to work and have all systems back up if you can survive on less; especially in a short-term recovery. Identify your critical people, teams and define your business critical systems. These should be the focus and your top priority in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Keep it simple. Simple works.

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Quote of the Month

You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Have you ever run out of battery power on your mobile PC during a meeting or a class? Have you worried about running out of power while waiting to meet with a client? Have you asked yourself how much longer your battery will last? Sufficient battery life is a persistent challenge for mobile PC users. But Windows offers several ways to help maximize the battery life of your mobile computer.



In this article, I'll discuss how to take advantage of Windows settings to manage power more efficiently. I'll also introduce some non-software related tips that you can use to extend battery life.

Optimize your power settings

The display and hard disk on your mobile PC are the two biggest consumers of battery power. By choosing a power plan (called a power scheme in Windows XP) you can extend your battery life. A power plan is a collection of hardware and system settings that control how your mobile PC manages power.

Windows 7

Windows 7 has two default power plans:

- Balanced: Automatically balances performance with energy consumption on capable hardware.
- Power saver: Saves energy by reducing your computer's performance where possible.

Change your power plan

- 1.Click the battery meter icon, located in the notification area on the Windows taskbar.
- 2.Select either the Balanced or Power saver power plan.

Windows Vista

Windows Vista has three default power plans:

- Balanced. Offers full performance when you need it, but conserves power when the computer is idle.
- Power saver. The best choice for extending battery life. The cost? Slower performance.
- High performance. Maximizes system performance at the expense of battery life.

Change your power plan

- 1.Click the battery meter icon, located in the notification area on the Windows taskbar.
- 2.Select the Balanced, Power saver, or High performance power plan.

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Don't Focus on the Black Spot

used with permission from Joel Weldon, www.successcomesincans.com

Leader says "Look for the good" -- managers learn to find it.

Speaking to her department managers, a young, dynamic executive tacked a huge sheet of white paper on the wall behind her. Then, with a felt-tip marker, she made a black spot in the middle of the paper.

"What do you see?" she asked someone in the front row.

"A black spot," came the reply. She asked the same question of every manager, and received the same answer each time.

Quietly, slowly, and with great emphasis, she then said, "You're all correct, there is a little black spot up there. But not one of you mentioned the big sheet of perfectly clean, white paper! And that is my speech."

She went on to guide her organization from near collapse to record profits. Best of all, she helped her people develop positive attitudes toward themselves, their company, and their customers.

She attributed her success to the practice of requiring each manager to submit each Monday morning a



LOL

report of all the good things that happened in their department during the preceding week.

Here's what you can do: *Be on the lookout for what's right. Encourage the people on your team to do the same. Initiate a cycle of positive attitudes, thoughts, ideas and action that will make it easier to handle the "black spots."* When you find something that's good, recognize and reinforce it.



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