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Computer Consulting

TechAdvisor Newsletter

April 2013

Your Small Business Technology Information Source!

This Issue:

3 Benefits of Using Server Racks

The largest and most important components of your network is your servers. Technically, you can line up your servers on a big table and they will work, but if you want to get the most out of your servers, then we recommend using a server rack.

Maybe your servers are tucked away in a closet and they are out of sight and out of mind, but setting up your servers with nice racks does more than just increase aesthetics. . .

Read the rest Online!
http://bit.ly/YzrUlf

About Paradigm

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

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Use Spaghetti to Improve Workflow
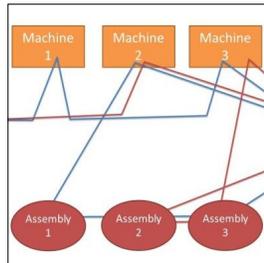
Typically, the only way that spaghetti improves the office is by providing a low cost meal during a lunch break. As it turns out, spaghetti can be used as more than lunch; spaghetti charts are a great productivity tool that can improve your workflow, eliminate transport waste, and save you money.

A spaghetti chart is a tool used to diagram workflows and identify waste that has been used by engineers and productivity experts for a long time. We are sorry to the disappoint anybody who is craving spaghetti by now, but the spaghetti chart is purely a chart, there aren't any noodles involved. The spaghetti chart gets its name because it uses curvy lines to connect points of the workflow for the sake of research. When the chart is finished, and you take a step back to survey your project, you will have before you a graph with so many layers of lines that your final product will look like a bowl of spaghetti.

In order to streamline your own operations by using a spaghetti chart, you will first want to decide on which workflow you will want analyzed. It can be something complicated like determining how many different people handle a product before it has shipped, or something simpler like how much movement is involved for employees to send a fax. For illustration purposes, let's use the simple example of employees using fax machines.

To make a spaghetti chart of the fax machine scenario, you can use several different mediums; any software that has a chart and graph making capability will do (like Microsoft Publisher or Gliffy). Although, if you want to get the full spaghetti chart experience, then it is always fun to go old school and use a tabletop, Post-it notes, and different colors of string.

Who Can You Trust with Your Data?

Your company's information on your network is labeled as "sensitive" for a reason. The files on your servers contain the secrets to your success, along with financial records about you, your employees, and your customers. When trusting sensitive data to a third party, make sure that it is someone you trust.

The ability to store your data to the cloud makes trust a relevant issue. There are many different companies competing to store your data on their servers, and every one of them claims that their data storage system is secure. While it is true that the majority of IT companies have security measures in place, based on the size of the company, some data storage companies are bigger targets than others. The bigger a target a data storage company is, the more attacks they will face from hackers.

Technology giants like Google and Microsoft are large enough to have some of the most extravagant IT security systems in the world. This is necessary, because as far as the world of hackers is concerned, these companies have the biggest bulls eyes painted on their backs.

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"640k ought to be enough for anyone"
- Bill Gates 1981

Let us Help Your IT Department

If your business is large enough to have its own IT department, then you know firsthand how valuable it is to have a knowledgeable technology professional on the premise. Being IT technicians ourselves, we experience this appreciation all the time from helping our clients. Sometimes, a technician's popularity can be almost overwhelming, and for times like these, it is nice to have backup.

An in-house IT technician can work their magic and repair many of your broken technologies -- ranging from removing viruses to rebooting servers You may not know exactly how they do it, but you have come to rely on them and you trust them. As your company grows, you are faced with tough decisions like, when is it the right time to hire a new staff mem-

ber for the IT department? As much as you care for your IT staff, let's face it, they are not the money makers, and given the chance, you would rather spend your money attracting new sales rather than adding personnel to the IT department.

As a business owner, you have a natural perception about how much longer your IT department can hold out without adding a new staff member. Whenever your normally upbeat IT department begins to show signs of stress and fatigue, then you know that it's time to post a job opening. (Although, before you commit to hiring, it is a good idea to check first and make sure they are not stressed out about a new detail that has emerged from Disney's acquisition of Star Wars.)

If this hiring scenario is where you find yourself, then Paradigm can help by giving you the ability to outsource your IT. Hiring Paradigm to come alongside your

IT department will complement the stellar service that your IT staff already provides. We are able to provide assistance to your techs with our remote monitoring and maintenance services. By having Paradigm remotely handle many of the IT problems that distract your staff from working on your company's goals, your IT department will be able to do bigger things than just fixing broken computers. By having Paradigm remotely take care of software updates, security updates, scanning for viruses, and daily clearing out of caches and temporary files, not only will your staff not have to do these tasks, but it will also prolong the life of your computers. With your PCs running optimally, your IT staff will be freed up thanks to far less computer repairs on their hands.

Outsourcing your IT services will be a big boost to your IT department. When you go with Paradigm, you are essentially

How Can Terminal Services Help Your Network?
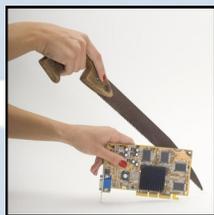
Thanks to the cloud computing, there's a lot of chatter these days about doing your work remotely. The idea of accessing your data from anywhere on any device is an exciting prospect, but it is not a new one. Windows Terminal Services (renamed Remote Desktop Services in Windows Server 2008 R2) has had this ability for many years, and it is still a great remote service option for your network.

Even though Terminal Services have been around since Windows NT (circa 1996), new advancements in hardware technology have really opened the doors and allowed for Terminal Services to upgrade and do more for your network.

For example, the old standard for networks used to 10 Mbps, which is barely enough juice to run multiple applications. Server hardware has grown to the point where it can now run multiple operating systems. Thanks to more powerful network hardware, Windows Terminal Services can pull off these four services that can enhance the productivity of your network.

Servers Handle the Workload
Terminal Services allow servers to handle your company's heavy computing workload. This means that your desktops processes less data, and can accomplish more with less. As much as every employee would love to get a new computer, purchasing a new workstation is a major expense. If you can extend the life of your computers by letting Terminal Services take the load, then your bill to

replace hardware will be much smaller. When it is time to foot the bill for new hardware, using Terminal Services means that you will not need to buy expensive high-performance machines. Also, setting up a new PC is easier and more cost effective.

Minimal Configuration Setting for Desktops
With Terminal Services, you can improve the performance of your workstations across your entire network by configuring each desktop to run at a minimal configuration. When adjustments are made, like media files minimized to their smallest size, desktop provisioning (the providing of data to a user's. . .

Read the Rest Online!
http://bit.ly/Yzq1VQ

Use Spaghetti to Improve Workflow

You will start by making a diagram of your work area. It does not have to be precise, but the more accurate your model is the better. To get a better feel for the workflow area that you are modeling, take a walk around the office and make mental notes about how many footsteps there are between each important station, like from an employee's desk to the fax machine. Technically, you can make a spaghetti chart on your own, but it is beneficial to include others because this will bring more insight and different perspectives that can lead to greater efficiency. If you are including others, then include everybody on this pregame walk.

Going back to your diagram, you will add Post-it notes to symbolize the major stations in the work flow, be sure to label your notes with "desk" and "fax machine." You will now want to illustrate different workflows from different employees using lines of different colors. Colored pencils or markers will accomplish this, but there is just something quaint about using yarn, perhaps because it looks most like spaghetti noodles.

After you and your team have visually mapped out your current workflow, you may be taken aback with how many curly Q's are tangled before you. All of these loops and detours represent what is known as transport waste, which is time lost by not having an efficient workflow.

You and your team can now unwind workflow routes by taking simple actions like rearranging the furniture, creating new roles and policies, or relegating all faxing responsibilities to the employee sitting nearest to the fax machine. A spaghetti chart might even reveal that your current workflow is such a mess that you need to seek out an entirely new solution, like upgrading to a fax server for your network. This will eliminate the need for employees to leave their desk thanks to faxes being sent straight to their inboxes.

The workflow of using a fax machine is just one of the uses of a spaghetti chart. You can also use this chart to improve every type of communication, workflow, and day-to-day process within your company.

If you are having workflow issues that are causing you a bigger mess than eating spaghetti with chopsticks, and you are looking for a hearty solution that is packed full of carbohydrates, then give Paradigm a call at 603-647-8614 and we will give you a bib, wipe up the tomato sauce, and find you technology solutions that that will satisfy your appetite.

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Schedule Your E-mail and Increase Productivity

At work, it takes discipline to avoid distractions and stay on task. Thanks to mobile devices notifying you of every update from every friend, distractions at the office are at an all-time high. By scheduling the times to check your messages, you can stay connected, lessen distractions, and maximize productivity.

This principle applies to all digital communications, but we are going to focus on e-mail as our primary example. Having your e-mail inbox open and alerting you to new messages while you are trying to accomplish work is distracting. Even though the incoming messages may be more interesting than your task at hand, constantly checking and replying to your e-mails will prolong the amount of time it takes you to complete a project.

If you are trying out scheduled e-mail communication for the first time, then we recommend checking your inbox twice in one workday. Pick two times that work best for you, preferably once before and after lunch, like 10am and 3pm. If you are successful with this model, then you can increase your productivity even more by checking it only once per day. Sticking with this new schedule will require a fair amount of self-control, consider this a fair warning for all you tech addicts out there.

Because this will be a drastic change to the way that you communicate, you will want to inform your coworkers about your new goal--they can even help you stick to it! You will especially want to let your boss know about your intentions. Your boss might even like the initiative and be happy that you are putting a priority on getting your work done.

To make scheduled e-mail communication go smoother, you can take advantage of the autoresponder tool provided by your e-mail service. You can use this to automatically reply to every new message with a preset message. You can make it say something to the effect of, "As a productivity measure, I only check my e-mail twice per workday. . .

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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.

Who Can You Trust with Your Data?

(Continued from page 1)
We would like to think that every major company is bulletproof and "too big to fail," yet it seems like every week we hear about another major data breach of a large company that results in the theft of valuable customer information. Evernote is the most recent example of this.

Now, we are not advocating that you avoid Microsoft, Google, and any other major technology company, the size of these companies actually comes with many advantages when it comes to doing business. We are just trying to make you aware of the hacker's perspective. They will go after the big boss before going after the little guy. If data security is an important concern of yours, then you need to go with a company you know that you can trust. Choosing a cloud storage solution solely based on a brochure or commercial claiming that they are the biggest and the best might not be in the best interest of your company's data.

At Paradigm we have a hands-on approach. If you have done business with us, then you already know how hard we work at maintaining your trust. With the backup solution that we provide, you can be confident that it is a solution that we have chosen because we feel it is the most secure available. Plus, with Paradigm, you have a point of contact that will answer the phone who knows much more about your business than your account number.

Trust. This is the advantage of partnering with IT professionals out of your local New Hampshire and Massachusetts area. Give us a call at 603-647-8614 and trust us to find a secure data storage solution that you can feel good about.

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Shawn Walsh
CEO

Let us Help Your IT Department

(Continued from page 2)
adding a new experienced technician to your department at a fraction of the cost. While at the same time, you will be able to retain the IT staff that you already have, and benefit from their intimate knowledge of your business and computer systems.

At Paradigm, we work with IT departments on a regular basis. It is a pleasure to work alongside such knowledgeable men and women. This working arrangement works out great for both parties. We like it because whenever we contact your IT department to take care of an issue, we have a single point of contact. Business owners like this arrangement because it saves them money. The time it takes to make repairs is reduced, it costs significantly less than hiring a new staff member, and IT departments are freed up to work on big projects. Call Paradigm at 603-647-8614 and give your IT department the help they have been asking for while freeing up payroll money. This makes outsourcing your IT services with Paradigm a classic win-win!

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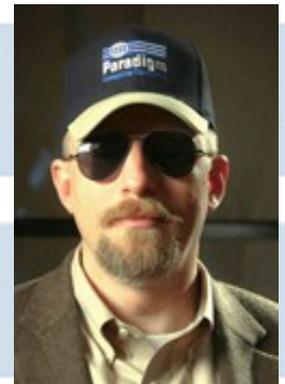
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