MAY TECH NEWS   **630-236-6625**   **Issue: 5**

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Why You Should Switch to VoIP Phones for Your Small Business

VoIP is now within easy reach for everyone-including small businesses. Here are the top ten reasons you should switch to using VoIP and VoIP phones for your business. Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) is basically technology that allows you to make and receive calls over data networks.

Instead of traditional phone services which channel analog signals such as the sound of your voice over copper wires, VoIP converts these sounds to digital form first-so that they can be sliced, diced, packaged, and routed over a digital network.

Because VoIP technology uses the same ideas behind data networking, and allows the use of the same networks used by computers, voice traffic can also be routed through the Internet as well. Suddenly you can now dramatically reduce the cost of voice communications, as well as achieve creative combinations of both services to create new applications for use.

With today's advancements in technology, and the constant lowering of prices as technology achieves mass adoption, VoIP is now within easy reach for most businesses-even small ones. In fact, many have already made the switch to an all-VoIP infrastructure, using a combination of VoIP phones and VoIP communication systems.

Here are ten reasons why you may want to consider switching to VoIP for your phone and office communication systems:

1. VoIP can allow you to dramatically reduce the cost of communications, especially for interstate or international communications, since everything can go through the Internet instead of having to go through expensive long distance toll charges.

2. You can make and receive calls from multiple devices-for instance, on a dedicated phone, your PC via a software-based phone, or even a mobile phone with VoIP capabilities.
3. It's easier to add extensions to your phone. You can provide a local number or extension for all your staff without additional costs or cabling.
4. VoIP allows companies to maximize investments already made in their network infrastructure. The same network that handles the flow of data such web access and email can now accommodate voice as well-no need to add and maintain additional wires and devices.
5. VoIP allows your employees to be more productive and efficient by giving them the ability to receive and make calls anywhere with a data connection.
6. VoIP reduces the complexity associated with having to manage multiple networks and devices for communication. A company can potentially set up their office network so that each employee can use a single device such as a computer or a smart fixed or mobile phone to handle everything from email, chat, messages, faxes, and more.
7. You can use VoIP as a tool for real-time collaboration along with video conferencing and screen sharing.
8. You can potentially unify your communication channels, streamlining communications and information management-for instance, marrying email with fax and voice in one inbox.
9. You can employ presence technologies that come standard with VoIP phones and VoIP communication systems. This technology can tell colleagues about your presence or give you info on the status and whereabouts of your staff.
10. You can employ intelligence into how your calls are handled, such as: providing automatic call routing based on the number, time of day, etc; providing an interactive voice response when a call comes in, such as voice prompts that guide callers; call reporting; and more.

VoIP is certainly a technology that has come of age. It's cheap, ubiquitous, and easy to use. Interested? Contact us and we can help you make the switch to VoIP for your business today! 630-236-6625

Your $100 Router/Firewall Might Not be the Good Deal You Think

While it is the concern of every business to be as cost-effective as possible, it is not a good idea to skimp on your investment in a proper and solid security system for your business data and information. For instance, cost-cutting on your router/firewall might seem like a good idea at the start, but in the long term, it's a risk you cannot afford to take.

In business, protecting important information and data is paramount. This is why it is recommended for any sort of

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Entries are judged by date/time received and correctness. Include your name and phone number, the question number and the answer.

1) What famous document begins: "When in the course of human events..."?

2) What current branch of the U.S. military was a corps of only 50 soldiers when World War I broke out?

3) What game was created by French mathematician Blaise Pascal, which he discovered when doing experiments into perpetual motion?

4) Who said: "I'm the president of the United States and I'm not going to eat any more broccoli"?

business to invest in a security system that will prevent any cyber-attacks that might be launched against you. Unfortunately, though, it's lost on many that a security system is not just made up of one single thing - software, better staff, better hardware, et cetera. A good and solid security system is composed of several factors working together to create a virtual chain that envelops your business and keeps it safe.

And one of the most underestimated links in this chain is the router/firewall. Many businesses are content using the most basic and cheapest option available on the market, without realizing that their security chain is only as strong as its weakest link. And if you make do with a cheap router/firewall, odds are you'll get what you pay for - not much.

While basic routers might work fine for homes or individual users, it is a much different scenario when it comes to business operations where basic just doesn't cut it. Plus, there's more at stake with business data, so why take the risk with cheap routers that lack the proper security features?

With viruses, malware, and the cyber thieves behind them continuing to grow and evolve, it is important that you understand what it takes to protect your system and your data - and invest in the best solution. Remember that it can take only one incident, one infiltration, to bring your whole business down.

We realize that every system is different and every business has its own specific needs, so if you want to know more about getting the right router/firewall for you, please don't hesitate to contact us 630-236-6625

Small Firms Need Security Too

Despite the real threat of hacking and online thievery, a lot of small businesses do not consider themselves affected by it, says a report by StaySafeOnline.org. While dependent on their computer systems for data storage, few realize that all it takes is one breach to destroy a cultivated relationship with clients and the company's own financial status.

StaySafeOnline.org, a website of the National Cyber Security Alliance, has recently released a study that chronicles the cyber security practices and attitudes of small businesses. Conducted in partnership with Visa, the study shows some interesting, if not disturbing, results.

It turns out that many small businesses (about 65% of the respondents) are highly dependent on their computer / IT / data systems, where they store important information, from sensitive company financial records to personal client information such as credit card info, addresses and phone numbers, and more. However, as many as 85% believe that they will not be targeted by hackers and online thieves, and less than half have data security systems in which they are confident. In general, small businesses have, at best, a mediocre security system.

Few realize, though, that it only takes one breach to compromise a company's finances and relationships with clients. And if you have less than stellar security, stealing from you is easier. You might not have as many online assets as big businesses, but hackers can make a hefty profit by victimizing several easy marks as opposed to bigger and riskier efforts with more secure systems of larger firms.

Don't take a risk with important data, and don't compromise the relationships and reputation you've built with your clients over the years. Good security is always worth it. If you're interested in knowing more about beefing up your security through company policies, software, and user education, please don't hesitate to contact us. We'd be happy to sit down with you and discuss a security blueprint that's cost effective and custom built to meet your specific needs. 630-236-6625

Turn off Flash in your Browser on Android

The big difference between Android and the iOS is the fact that, on an Android device, you can play Flash videos. There are times however when this seeming advantage can be a disadvantage as Flash (such as Flash ads) can slow down your browsing experience or even crash your browser. There is a solution.

You can turn off Flash if you choose to. Simply go to your Browser's Settings by pressing on the Menu/Options button, then go to Advanced and change 'Enable plug-ins' setting from "Always on" to "On demand." Flash applications will now appear as an arrow that you must touch to start.

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