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Have a Backup for Your Backup



We often talk about the need to back up your data, but did you know that it is also a best practice to back up your hardware? Backing up your hardware works differently than data backup; whereas data backup involves network devices and a cloud, backing up your hardware is a simple matter of having extra computer components on your premise.

If your IT budget is tight, then the thought of having a closet full of spare equipment may seem a bit . . .



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About Directive

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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CEO Chris Chase Named to SMB Top 150



Chris Chase, CEO and Founder of Directive, received the prestigious SMB Nation Top 150 award at the SMB Nation Spring Summit. Held at the Microsoft Conference Center in Redmond, Washington, SMB Nation 150 List recognizes individuals who are highly influential and respected among their peers in the technology industry. This is the third consecutive year that Chris received this honor.

Having been recognized in the 'Expert' category, Chris was selected by a panel of his peers for his expertise and achievements in regards to IT and the Managed Services Community. Chris is also involved in a variety of industry related peer/user groups, including SMB Nation, HTG, and ConnectWise. To keep up with the latest technology and procedures, he attends trade shows, learning academies and success summits across the country.

In addition to the professional recognition, Chris was awarded a Blackberry X10 as a gift from the Small and Medium Business community.

"I am honored to be recognized by the SMB community that I am a part of," said Chris Chase, CEO of Directive. "It's always an honor to be recognized but to be recognized by those who are your peers is truly an accomplishment. It's really recognition for our entire team, they rock."

Understanding the Makeup of Websites



We're all familiar with the "Dummies" book series, they are helpful when it comes to understanding specific topics, but not all of us have the time to read a manual of information. We want to dumbify web knowledge regarding the web's ever changing buzzwords and platforms. This will help educate you on what web services and products are available for your company's website. Every business owner should at least be aware of the website platform they are using and be fluent enough to understand its capabilities. If your website breaks, then having at least a basic understanding will make interacting with your website maintenance team go smoother, and give you a foot in the door if you ever want to take the plunge and learn more.

BASIC TERMINOLOGY

It's important to understand the terminology used in the industry before you make a decision, otherwise you will come off as a dummy. Here are some terms that you will frequently run into when talking about websites.

Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML): The code that all websites are built upon, kind of like the foundation and structure of a house.

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3 Communications Boundaries Destroyed By VoIP



Do you feel tied down by your phone system? Traditional phone plans can be expensive and your phone bill will grow if you try to do

more, like add lines and use extra features. One of the ways that the Internet can help your business save money and grow is by replacing expensive phone plans with Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

You are already using the Internet for many of your crucial business operations, and you already have a computer network in place, migrating your communication needs to the Internet with VoIP is therefore a logical next step. To sweeten the deal, not only does VoIP open up new communications possibilities, but VoIP will also provide your business with savings of 50-70% on your phone bill.

A standard VoIP package comes with dozens of features that a traditional

phone company would charge extra for. Here are the three most ground-breaking features that destroy communications boundaries set by phone companies.

Long Distance Boundaries Broken!

By transferring your service area to the Internet, it now becomes virtualized which means that it's not subject to the geographical restrictions that apply to phone lines. With VoIP, things like area codes and even country codes are just formalities. This will especially come in handy for businesses that have people spread out around the globe. A salesperson on a business trip halfway around the world would be able to use the VoIP network to make a phone call back home using their home phone number. A business that is seeing money fly out the window every month because of long distance phone calls will experience the biggest savings with VoIP.

Mobility Limitations Obliterated!

With a traditional phone system, you have to leave the features of your phone plan at the office when you go home. Sure, you can use call forwarding to take

calls, but you still have to leave behind all the features that you are used to. With VoIP, wherever you go, you can use your IP-enabled phone to access all VoIP features and services. This includes features like voicemail, call logs, security settings, and more.

Technology Collaboration Barriers are Taken Outside and Taught a Lesson!

Forward-thinking businesses that see the value in synergizing all of their communication efforts will love how VoIP is designed to work harmoniously with other Internet communication applications. VoIP protocols run on the application layer that enables it to integrate and collaborate with your e-mail service, web browser, instant messenger, social networking apps, and whatever else the Internet comes up with to help your business communicate better. To learn more about how VoIP can revolutionize the way your business communicates, and to give your phone bill a good pummeling, call Directive at 607.433.2200.



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Technology as Easy as Turning a Key



Isn't it nice to have everything prepared for you? Of course it is. Whether it's having your dinner made for you when you get home, or

having your car turned over to you fueled up and cleaned out, everybody appreciates having everything taken care of. In the world of technology, we take care of everything with our turnkey business management solutions.

The idea of using a key may seem out of place with technology. You may use a

key to lock up the server room or even the server rack, but other than that, it's not like you need a physical key to access anything on your computers. The term turnkey is actually borrowed from the construction industry, today's leading market of key utilization.

One of the biggest jobs that involve solutions is house building. Between framing, electrical, plumbing, flooring, cabinets, and dozens of other tasks, constructing a house involves the coordination of one solution after another. The developer is the one to take care of everything, sometimes even the financing. These completed houses are sold as "turnkey homes" because everything is

included and finished, down to even the furniture, which means all that the buyer has to do is "turn the key."

Computers and computer networks are like houses in their own right. IT networks can be a complex web of cables that can rival the electrical and plumbing systems of homes. Just like you would prefer not to buy a home that looks good on the outside, but on the inside the walls are stripped down to the studs, so too would you prefer not to buy a workstation with the parts and the . . .



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Understanding the Makeup of Websites

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Cascading Style Sheet (CSS): If HTML is the house structure, then the CSS would be the plaster, paint, and walls. Using CSS is how the builders know what to color the walls in each room (the website pages), how high to make the ceilings (how big the page is), and what photos are to be hung on the wall (where your images go).

JavaScript (JS): The term “script” is like a movie script. With our house built, we can now start filming a movie in it using a script. When the director yells action (or you click on a button), the actors begins acting a scene. When you command a slide show to move, a menu to drop down, or ask the website to move anything else, it’s JavaScript that’s causing the movement.

Hypertext Preprocessor (PHP): In its most basic form, PHP is logic; if = then, and true = false. You use PHP when you go to pay a bill on a company’s website. You will login by submitting your username and password, in the background of the site the system checks your username against what’s on file. If the password and username are correct,

then the PHP triggers a return value of “true.” The site will now let you in like a key to your house.

Now that you have a working knowledge of website terminology, we can move on to website platforms. You can think of your website platform in relation to the terminologies we have just used to build our house. What do you want your house to look like and do? Did you want a cabin in the woods or an elaborate mansion? Picking out your platform is like choosing the house that best suits your needs.

TYPICAL HOUSES/PLATFORMS ON THE WEBSITE MARKET

Cabin/Plain Website – HTML & CSS includes very few frills. You get the framework and it can look pretty (with a good graphic designer), but beyond that, it has little else going on. Visitors can look but they can’t touch. With a plain website, you can expand and make it larger, but the more you add, the more maintenance you will need. For example, when you want to repaint one room, it’s up to you to gather all the needed supplies to do the work. Plain website platforms require so much maintenance that they

can be hard to upkeep therefore stick out like a sore thumb.

Apartment/Standard Website – A standard website is the minimum platform that you will encounter on most websites. Typically, it will include HTML, CSS, and JS which will allow for some interaction and movement. With a standard website, you won’t be able to have guest in your apartment and throw a party, but you can hang up Christmas lights that will be visible to your neighborhood. The downside to a standard website is that you’re still making these changes manually. You will need the services of a website designer to take your website to the next level and make it look professional.

House/Web 2.0 – Web 2.0 represents anything that’s not a plain or standard website. With the addition of the PHP/logic functionality, visitors can interact in real time and create accounts, comment on blogs, and more. You will still need to make changes manually, but with PHP you can paint the entire house in one shot rather than going room by room.

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Servers and Energy Costs are Shrinking with Microservers



Servers have always been one of the more expensive yet crucial pieces of your IT infrastructure. A new development in servers

is the microserver, which is a stripped down version of a server. The appeal is that they can be designed to handle one task efficiently, and therefore, use fewer resources while costing less to purchase and maintain.

Microservers are not meant to be a substitute for traditional servers as much as they are designed to be complementary and alleviate them from resource-draining tasks. Microserver sales are growing and shaking up the server market. Within 2-3 years, Microservers are expected to account for one-fifth of server sales. This demand is driven primarily by the booming data center industry--aka, the companies that offer cloud computing.

The tasks that microservers are great at require little computing power. A server

hosting an HTML website is a great example of this. Using a full-fledged server to do something simple, like host several HTML websites, is overkill to say the least. Dave Chalmers, chief technologist for HP's enterprise group EMEA, describes to Zdnet.com this underutilization of server resources when doing simple tasks:

If you think about how an x86 processor is typically built today, there are hundreds of millions of transistors on there. A huge chunk of the real estate is involved in cache management and

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Understanding the Makeup of Websites

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The platforms above may be suitable for some businesses depending on their needs; but for companies looking to upgrade to a mansion website, they will want to consider a content management system (CMS).

CMS/Mansion -- CMS platforms give you everything you need right out of the box. With CMS, it's like you will never again need to go to the store and buy housing materials because you have a contractor onsite. Most CMS systems use an editor that functions similarly to Microsoft Word, making it easy to do maintenances. With CMS,

visitors can also create their own keys to the house in order to access needed information, while allowing you to setup permissions that will lock visitors out of certain doors.

THREE COMMON CMS PLATFORMS

Wordpress -- Wordpress has done a fantastic job of saturating the website market, but it's rare for Wordpress to call their systems a CMS. This is because Wordpress originated as a blogging platform. Wordpress inherently is a CMS because it allows you to edit without needing a web designer and users can leave comments.

Drupal -- Drupal has its roots in a more typical CMS platform, but it's difficult to manage as a plain HTML website. There are people that prefer it as a platform, and it does have its pros, but it's one of the more difficult platforms to manage

Joomla -- Joomla goes above and beyond any other CMS system. Comparing Joomla to other CMS platforms is like comparing a castle to a mansion! The Joomla community offers thousands of extensions for adding new...



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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.



Chris Chase
Solutions Integrator

Servers and Energy Costs are Shrinking with Microservers

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providing performance enhancements for the processor. When you're doing web page serving you don't use any of those transistors, so that's effectively cost and power consumption that give you no benefit.

Full-sized servers are notorious for being energy drains. Powerful processors are one reason, requiring around 90W of thermal design power (TDP). Microserver boards will operate at TDP levels below

45W. They even have the potential to dip below 10W. Even if you have no idea what a TDP is, it doesn't take a computer genius to see the difference between 90W and 10W will translate into big energy savings.

A microserver uses a single integrated circuit and has been stripped down to include a CPU, memory, and a system Input/output. This means that microservers are dramatically smaller in size.

Not only do they take up less physical space, but they also don't produce nearly the amount of heat as a traditional server. Less heat means that it will cost less to cool a server room.

Because microservers are small and put out little heat, they can be packed together in existing server chassis. This means that the existing...



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