



“As a business owner, I know you don’t have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That’s where we *shine!* Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!”

-Michael Mellott, President



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“Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably”

Attention Facebook & Twitter Users: Hackers Are Now Using Your Friends

“Hey, I have this hilarious video of you dancing. Your face is so red. You should check it out!” If you've received a message like that through a Facebook or MySpace friend, you may have been exposed to the "Koobface" virus. Here’s what’s going on...

Hackers have now made a new cozy home for themselves on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Disguised as one of your friends, they’ll send you a direct message with a video link attached. If you click on the link, you’re prompted to update your Flash player to see the video, and therein lies the virus, cloaked in a "flash_player.exe" file. Once installed, this worm transforms your computer into a Zombie machine as part of a botnet (a network of computers that are controlled and used by the originator of the worm for unscrupulous purposes).

Are You Really At Risk?

Unless you are aware of these scams, it is very easy to become infected. Some of the direct messages and tweets have titles that are very deceptive. Some of the more common messages will say, “Here’s the video I mentioned...”, or "LOL," or "My friend caught you on hidden cam," or "My home video :)" These messages are followed by a link directing you to a page to watch the video. These seemingly harmless messages can quickly infect your entire office network, allowing hackers a free pass in. In addition, they can block you from accessing important security updates, making your network even more susceptible to hacker attacks. In some cases, they use their free access to your computer to steal bank account information, credit card numbers, social security numbers and other confidential data.



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www.XPERTECHS.com

Shiny New Gadget of the Month

First there were smart phones. Now, there are smart pens.

The new smart pen by Livescribe (called the "Pulse") electronically records all the words you write and simultaneously records the audio as well. Here's how it works...

While you're taking notes on its special dot matrix paper, the Pulse's microphone records the presentation or speech going on in the room. If you want to review a section of your notes, simply hold the pen over that area of the paper and the smart pen will replay the section of the audio recording that coincides with those notes.

The pens cost \$200. The paper can be printed for free from a Color LaserJet Printer that is Adobe PostScript compatible and can print at 600 dpi or higher. You can also purchase the dot paper notebooks for around \$14. Now there are no excuses for missing any part of a presentation!

Refer A Friend

Starting this month, refer a friend or business associate to us and receive a **FREE 22" widescreen LCD monitor!!**



How To Protect Yourself

Awareness is the first step to protecting yourself. Make a copy of this newsletter and hand it out to all your coworkers and your friends and family so they don't get infected or infect you. Next, follow these three simple steps:

- 1) Frequently Change Your Password And Don't Use Easy To Guess Combinations.** I know, it's a pain in the neck to change your password frequently, especially when you have dozens to keep track of. But this really is one of the best ways to avoid compromising your account on social media sites. Additionally, don't use simple passwords like "password" or "123abc." Include lower case and capital letters, as well as numbers. If a hacker is trying to crack your password and you never change it (or if it's super easy to guess), you make your account a prime target.
- 2) Avoid Downloads.** Avoid downloading anything from messages on Twitter or Facebook, even if the message is from someone you know. As a general rule, never download any file if you are not 100% certain it is secure and virus free.
- 3) Get A Beefy Firewall.** If you or your employees are using any social media sites for personal or business connections, a strong firewall will protect you from getting infected. That way, even if you or your staff inadvertently opens a dangerous message from one of these sites, your firewall can prevent it from bringing your whole network to a grinding halt.

If you'd like more information on the importance of securing your network against social media threats, please e-mail us at info@xpertechs.com or call us at 410-884-0225.



Client Spotlight:

Mt. St. Joseph Success Story:



For the past few months, Mt. St. Joseph Catholic High School in Baltimore, MD has been constructing a new educational area for The DePaul Program. This program is designed for college-bound students with specifically diagnosed mild learning/language disabilities such as, dyslexia, dysgraphia, or other language-related difficulties. XPERTECHS has been privileged to provide technology assistance with 48 new desktops, network integration and wireless capabilities for this endeavor. We look forward to the formal opening of the new DePaul Center in January.

Would you like your company highlighted here in our "Client Spotlight" section? Then give us a call today at 410-884-0225!



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The Lighter Side... What That High-Tech Computer Sales Jargon Really Means:

NEW: Different color from previous design.

ALL NEW: Parts not interchangeable with previous design OR the old one was so bad we had to trash it and start over.

UNMATCHED: Almost as good as the competition.

ADVANCED DESIGN: The advertising agency doesn't understand it.

IT'S HERE AT LAST! Rush job; nobody knew it was coming.

FIELD-TESTED: Manufacturer lacks test equipment.

YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT: We finally got one that works.

BREAKTHROUGH: We finally figured out a way to sell it.

FUTURISTIC: No other reason why it looks the way it does.

MAINTENANCE-FREE: Impossible to fix.

PERFORMANCE PROVEN: Will operate through the warranty period.

MEETS ALL STANDARDS: Ours, not yours.

BROADCAST QUALITY: Gives a picture and produces noise.



The Great Debate: iPhone vs. BlackBerry



With hundreds of cell phone companies and countless cell phone models available, no two cell phones go head to head more often than these two. The iPhone (by Apple) and the BlackBerry (by Research in Motion) are hands-down the two most popular phones sold today. So, how do you know which one is right for you? See how each one ranks in the following categories to help you decide:

Applications – If having lots of software options on your phone is important to you, then the iPhone is your clear choice. The iPhone has over 1,000 application options available and easily trumps the BlackBerry's very small list of programs that only include a word processor, a spreadsheet, and a PDF application. Granted, many of the iPhone applications are frivolous, like the "How Old Are You In Neanderthal Years?" calculator, or the daily horoscope update; but some are actually useful for business purposes, such as the available project management, time tracking, or financial calculator software. Both the BlackBerry and the iPhone have software that allows you to use them as mini computers; but if you want to be able to convert your phone into a remote for your stereo, only the iPhone can do that.

Durability – From all the research we've done online, the BlackBerry wins in this category. The BlackBerry was actually created with business users in mind and therefore is a sturdier phone. If you have traveling sales people or remote users who need to stay connected to the office, the BlackBerry is less likely to get damaged than the iPhone. Although the iPhone has made definite strides in this area, dropping that phone on its face assures that you'll have to get a new one.

Business Functionality – In the not too distant past, the iPhone didn't have the business functionality of the BlackBerry. However, iPhones now integrate with Microsoft Exchange, which is one of the most common e-mail applications for small and mid-sized businesses. Both the BlackBerry and the iPhone have the ability to synchronize your contacts, calendar, and e-mail. Apple is also making attempts to ramp up the security of their iPhone; and as it stands today, the BlackBerry is the most secure of the two phones.

Phone Service – iPhones are available only with AT&T wireless while BlackBerrys are available with multiple carriers. Die-hard fans of Verizon or other wireless carriers won't have the iPhone option available to them. Some business owners are happy with the wireless service they currently have and do not want to risk "dropped calls" or dead zones that may come with switching. Most carriers provide a very extensive network and are constantly improving their coverage; but if you don't like AT&T, then iPhone is NOT the phone for you.



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How Windows 7 Helps You Monitor And Control Your Children's PC Usage

Although most of the hype around Windows 7 revolves around its ability to make your daily activities more intuitive (like making it much easier to search for documents, giving you the ability to manage multiple screens, or helping you to switch more quickly between multiple open programs), Windows 7's biggest benefits may come from its security features.

Since it allows you to create different accounts with different permissions, you have the ability to set specific times of day that the computer can be used, how long it can be used for, and what games you will allow each family member to play (based on game ratings).

This means you can prevent your kids from downloading or installing inappropriate games or staying on their computer until midnight. Simply set the system to automatically shut down after a few hours of use. You can also set up filters so they'll get an error message if they attempt to access an "adult" rated game.



From Michael's Desk

WOW, Another Year OVER....

...and a fresh, new, exciting one about to begin. Although I think it's a bad idea to only "check in" on how you are doing once a year in January, I can't help but be a bit more reflective at the end of the year, looking back over the events that have happened and asking myself three things:

- What did we do RIGHT and want to do more of?
- Where do we need to improve?
- What mistakes did we make, what did we learn, and how are we going to use this information to improve next year?

This is a helpful exercise to conduct after every major event, client project, sales call, etc. As a team, we do this as a practice after every event, and every new client install; and it's incredibly valuable. And as the owner of a business, I think we ought to do a deep dive every year to reflect back on these things. So, if you have not had the opportunity to review your technology requirements for 2010, then give me a call and I will offer you a **FREE** two hour Audit and evaluation of your existing IT infrastructure and discuss with you areas that might need improvement. I can also offer you possible solutions to save you 20 – 40% on your technology expenditures while increasing your reliability and performance.

What are you waiting for? Call me **TODAY** to schedule your technology review!

Lunch-and-Learn Webinar Update!

If you missed our Lunch-and-Learn Webinar in December titled: *"What Every Business Owner MUST Have In Place NOW To Guarantee A Fast, Easy, And Painless Recovery Of Their Data After A Disaster"*

You can watch the webinar online by visiting:
www.xpertechs.com/lunch-and-learn

Who Else Wants A Win A \$20 Starbucks Gift Card?

"Take my monthly Trivia Challenge and you could win too!"

With New Year's resolutions fresh in everyone's mind, how many people are estimated to sign up for gym membership this month?

- a) 4 million b) 12 million c) 30 million d) 18 million

Go to our website and register your answer:
www.xpercure.com/Trivia



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