



# TECHNOLOGY TODAY



## *Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably*

*October 2015*

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October is a fine and dangerous season in America. a wonderful time to begin anything at all. You go to college, and every course in the catalogue looks wonderful.

Thomas Merton

## **Basic set up recommendations for a small business**

We had a customer come in recently, a friend of mine, who is working at a small business. The business had a computer that crashed with hard drive could not be accessed. They had no way to get to their data. A normal hard drive is electronic hardware spinning at 7200RPMs or more and over time things happen. That should be expected. She was asking for recovery options.

We sent her ailing drive to our partners [Flashback Data](#). I highly recommend them, tell them we sent you.

Whether we recover the computer data or not she's got some decisions to make. Replace the PC? Or just the hard drive? If the decision is to replace the PC, then what to get? And what to put on it to help from this kind of thing in the future.

We get this a lot and I've never written about it before. This issue really plays into my basic recommendations for small businesses with regard to purchasing and setting up their PCs.

So, that's the gist of this month's newsletter. A primer on:

- 1—PC
- 2—Backups and Monitoring
- 3—Antivirus

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# Electronic Health Records: A Promising Prognosis

Until quite recently, digitizing health records was not a common practice. However, that all changed with the passage of the 2009 *Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act*, which included \$25.9 billion of funding for the modernization of health information technology systems. Now electronic health records are increasingly popular. So what are the advantages of using them? And are there any compelling reasons for you to think twice before digitizing your own health data?

## Easy to read

In 2009, a team of Austrian researchers published a study that looked at "errors in the administration of parenteral drugs in intensive care units." For 24 hours, they monitored 1,328 patients in 113 intensive care units across 27 countries. During this period, they detected 861 medicine errors, which affected 441 medication errors, causing permanent harm for seven patients and death for five.

In many cases, the errors were caused by illegible written records and prescriptions. Electronic health records eliminate this risk by ensuring that all patient data, including medical histories and prescriptions, are stored in a standardized format and are readable by everyone.

## Easy to share

Electronic health records are also much easier to share. For example, in 2004 the Department of Defense implemented a centralized electronic medical records system that allows its 9.2 million potential patients to access crucial information wherever they are, whether in a hospital in an American city or a medic's tent in the field.

This speeds up treatment by freeing doctors and nurses from chasing up patient histories. It also makes it easier to monitor patients' medications, symptoms, immunization histories, and more. It can even issue automatic alerts and reminders if, for example, a check-up is due.

## Easy to analyze

One of the most exciting advantages of using electronic health records is that they bring together vast amounts of data that can be analyzed to identify trends and other insights. This has the potential to reveal new drug interactions, suggest better treatment options, and even allow practitioners to compare the efficacy of different modes of therapy.

## Privacy and disaster prevention

A common concern with electronic medical records is privacy and security. The 1996 *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act* (HIPAA) included national guidelines for protecting private health information. These have since been expanded in several states so that, for example, in New Jersey, electronic health records must be encrypted whenever they are saved, archived, or sent.

The other major perceived disadvantage of electronic records is that they're vulnerable to data loss. If, for example, a server is destroyed, so, potentially, are the records stored within it. One increasingly common solution is to use a cloud-based storage system with multiple fail-overs. With such a system in place, if one server or data center is compromised, the health data will still be available from other locations.

Medical records are essential for good patient care, and digitizing them allows for far greater accuracy and efficiency. Of course, there are some risks involved, but properly managed, there's no reason for you and your patients not to take advantage of electronic records.

# Basic set up recommendations for a small business

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## 1—PC

PC Choices: A small business will spend about \$170 a year on a PC. That's just the PC itself. I derive this figure from 17 years of watching PC's come and go. The price is remarkably consistent considering that the capabilities of business level PC's always go up while the price remains about the same. Here are the two baseline choices, consider them the minimum. Please consider the prices to be approximate. They change slightly over time but are always in the same ballpark.

*Choice one:* Refurbished Dell Optiplex PC. They are workhorses. We've sold hundreds over the years and hardly ever have a problem with them. Cost is \$325. If you get two years out of it, then you are ahead of the game.

**Advantage:** Lower front end cost.

**Disadvantage:** Older technology, less capable, slower than the new PC's. Likely to last two years. Warranty for 90 days (but we have Friendly warranty plans that can extend that).

*Choice two:* New Lenovo small form factor PC (proven to be a workhorse also) at \$649. Lots of technical stuff I could throw at you but bottom line: a good computer for the price. This obviously costs about twice as much as a refurb but the ROI is much better and while you are working with it the experience is better than a refurb.

**Advantage:** Likely to last five years. Should be replaced around four. Warranty is for one year (but we have Friendly warranty plans that can extend that too). Runs faster than refurb, more USB and video connection choices. Supports two monitors out of the box.

**Disadvantage:** More cost up front. That's really the only disadvantage.

**Recommendation: Get the new PC. Better results over time. Better experience working with it. Only get the refurb if you just don't have the cash. And in that case, start putting money aside for a new PC immediately.**

NOTE: A small business is not a home. It is a business. Do not get the consumer version of anything (ie—Windows Home....). Get the Business version. It makes a difference and it matters.

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## Friendly Monitor

We have partners we take care of. Quite a few of them. We've got some customers who bring in their equipment to be fixed but mostly we have partners.

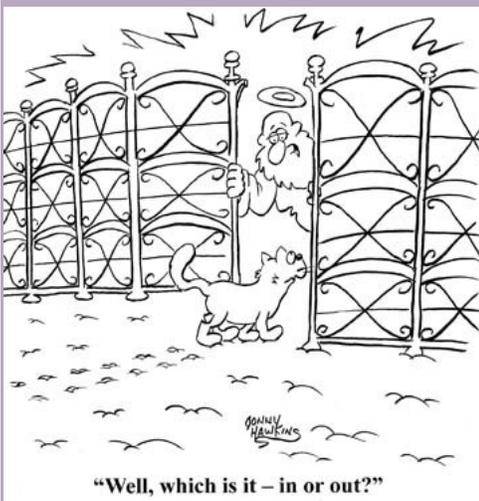
If you are a business, for \$10/computer/month you can be a Friendly Connections IT partner and

- we will monitor your computer 24x7
- automatically apply updates
- automatically fix many common errors
- let you know when there is a bigger problem.

We call it

## Friendly Monitor PLUS

Give Thomas a call at 512-931-4134. He can tell you all about it.



## Basic set up recommendations for a small business

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### 2—Backups and monitoring

Backing up data is getting it off site. Out of the building. Monitored by someone and ready to be restored. *Friendly Connections IT sells a backup package. All the data you have on one PC for \$30/month.* This includes our assisting in the setup, daily monitoring by Friendly Connections IT, assistance if you ever need it restored and all the questions you can ask. Flat rate. Friendly Backup Service. You need it. Really.

**Recommendation: Running your business without backups that are monitored and verified is like taking a trip cross country on bald tires. You might make it.**

### 3—Antivirus

We have been working with AVG for ten years now and with **AVG CloudCare** since it first came out three years ago. We have about 700 clients on it right now and it just works. Period. The cost is around \$40/year/computer. Friendly Connections IT puts CloudCare on your computers and we monitor it remotely if needed. It updates automatically and never needs to be reinstalled. We invoice in December for the following year. It could not be easier or more effective.

**Recommendation: It is an unfortunate truth that every PC needs solid antivirus. Businesses can be liable for the results of NOT having it. The first domino in the Target credit card data loss was a PC in a small business that worked with Target. The PC did not have a proactive antivirus on it. Forty bucks a year is cheap insurance.**