

The Tech Tribune

Anniversary

Congratulations to Ryan Austin! Ryan has been at our company for 3 years. He is our VoIP guru and understands the VoIP solution inside and out. He has grown into an indispensable part of our team. His current position as IT Support Specialist allows him to effectively manage our VoIP infrastructure, while effectively meeting the needs of our clients. Thank-you, Ryan, for your service and dedication to Acts360!

July 2016



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Greg Sweers, CEO of ACTS360.

“As a business owner, 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 worries and frustrations!”



Is the cloud a good fit for your company or not? On the one hand, taking full advantage of today’s cloud capabilities could be key to becoming a top player in your market. On the other, without proper oversight, just one cyber-break-in could bankrupt your organization...

Feeling a little confused, or perhaps even overwhelmed, about your company’s cloud options?

Don’t worry, you’re not alone. In this article we’ll help you unravel your choices so you can make the most out of this game-changing technology.

To really take full advantage of the cloud, there are (at least) three things to consider:

1. Whether to use a public or private cloud network - or both.
2. Which cloud-based apps deliver the best value for your organization.
3. How shared servers can help you save time and cut costs.

Navigating The Cloud: Gold Mine...Or Minefield

So just what is a “public” versus “private” network, or cloud? Simply put, a public cloud serves many organizations, while a private cloud is proprietary to just one. We’ll cover each so you can more easily navigate the pitfalls and possibilities each one presents.

Which Is Best For Your Network: Public, Private...Or Both?

One advantage to using a public cloud is that you can start using it in just minutes. It allows you to easily scale up or down, as your business needs change. And, with pay-per-use pricing, you only pay for what you need.

However, compliance with government regulations often can’t be achieved in a public cloud. Also, public networks don’t offer the same degree of control that a locally based private network can

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provide. And in a public cloud, you never know who you're sharing a server with.

All that being said, a hybrid cloud may be your best model. For instance, compliance-controlled work can be handled in a private network, while less restricted tasks can be done over a public one.

Cloud-Based Apps: Microsoft Office 365 vs. Google Apps For Work

You'll find countless cloud-based apps for business. However, Office 365 and Google Apps For Work are two of the most popular cloud-based productivity suites in the market today. Both allow you to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations on your own, as well as in real time with team members. They also provide video conferencing and cloud storage. Here's a quick rundown:

Storage – At a paltry 30GB, the storage you get with the basic version of Google Apps For Work

pales in comparison to the 1TB you get with the Office 365 Business Essentials plan. Yet, moving up a notch to the Google Apps “Unlimited” plan gets you unlimited storage, beating Office 365 hands-down.

Collaboration – Both Google Apps For Work and Microsoft Office 365 make real-time collaboration with team members in different locations easier than ever. Due to its simplified features and web-based origins, Google Apps may be easier to work with. However, users accustomed to Microsoft Office may prefer the more familiar feature set of Office 365.

Then There's Amazon... Amazon-shared servers allow you to grow and shrink your web presence with demand, easily store and retrieve data from a super-reliable network of worldwide data hubs and deliver content at blazing speed – all at minimal cost.

While Amazon has led the field

in this new type of service, companies like Microsoft, Google and IBM, as well as niche players like Rackspace, Salesforce and Oracle, have all jumped into the fray.

Each offers a varying range of toolsets that can make your network more productive and reduce overall operating cost.

Navigating your computing choices in today's cloud-driven world can be complex. And it isn't getting any simpler as the field rapidly evolves. Not sure what to do? We can help!

Receive a Customized Cloud Assessment, Valued at \$297 - FREE When You Call Today!

You don't need to navigate the cloud alone. Let one of our experienced professionals analyze your organization's use of today's cloud technologies. We'll help you boost productivity and cut costs. Call 813.699.5356 or e-mail me direct at getacts@acts360.com to book the valuable free service today!

“Amazon-shared servers allow you to grow and shrink your web presence with demand.”

Free Report: What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company's Critical Data And Computer Systems

PROTECT YOUR NETWORK
 “What Every Business Owner Must Know About Protecting and Preserving Their Network”



Don't Trust Your Company's Critical Data And Operations To Just Anyone!

This report will outline in plain, non-technical English common mistakes that many small business owners make with their computer network that cost them thousands in lost sales, productivity and computer repair bills, as well as providing an easy, proven way to reduce or completely eliminate the financial expense and frustration caused by these oversights.

Download your FREE copy today at <http://acts360.axionthemes.com/protect/> or call our office at 813.699.5356

To Cloud Or Not To Cloud

If you are like many of our clients, you've probably heard some of the buzz about "The Cloud" – the IT version, that is – not one of those puffy white objects up in the sky.

So, what exactly is "The Cloud"? And should you go there? Cloud computing is simply a way to "rent" the computing you need – by getting it over the Internet – instead of buying your own hardware and software. A lot of businesses like "The Cloud" because they only pay for what they need and they don't have to worry that their IT investment ever becoming obsolete. ActsCloud from Acts360 is:

SCALABLE- Our offering allows your capabilities and applications to grow as you do.

MOBILE- Allows you to collaborate from any internet-enabled device.

CUSTOMIZED- We meet the unique needs of your business.

COST EFFECTIVE- Our efficient technology improves your bottom line.

Here is what one satisfied customer had to say..

"A great cost-effective solution that allows our team to be on the same page. Overall the ActsCloud platform has been fast and seamless." Charisse Pacheco-Pathway Biologic

So, is cloud computing right for you? We can help you find out. Download your free report here:
www.acts360.com/cloudreport/ or call us direct at 813-699-5356.



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The Biggest Problem In Business Today

In an October 2006 cover story, "The Search for Talent," The Economist reported that finding the right people is the single biggest problem in business today:

THESE are heady days for most companies. Profits are up. Capital is foot-loose and fancy-free. Trade unions are getting weaker. India and China are adding billions of new cheap workers and consumers to the world economy. This week the Dow Jones Industrial Average hit a new high.

But talk to bosses and you discover a gnawing worry – about the supply of talent.

"Talent" is one of those irritating words that has been hijacked by management gurus. It used to mean innate ability, but in modern business it has become a synonym for brainpower (both natural and trained) and especially the ability to think creatively. That may sound waffly, but look around the business world and two things stand out: the modern economy places an enormous premium on brainpower, and there is not enough to go round.

The best evidence of a "talent shortage" can be seen in high-tech firms. The likes of Yahoo! and Microsoft are battling for the world's best computer scientists. Google, founded by two brainboxes, uses billboards bearing a mathematical problem: solve it for the telephone number to call. And once you have been lured in, they fight like hell to keep you: hence the growing number of Silicon Valley lawsuits.

I doubt that surprised most readers. The fact is, virtually every manager struggles to find and hire the talent necessary to drive his or her business forward.

We've all been there. We've all heard the horror stories of the CEO who sank a multibillion-dollar public company, the district manager who allowed his region to fall behind competition, even the executive assistant who couldn't keep a schedule. Most of us have lived those stories and could add dozens more to the list. Even we ourselves in some cases are the ones who made bad "Who" decisions.

A few years back, my wife and I hired a nanny we'll call Tammy to look after our children. Unfortunately, I had what my six-year-old calls a "space-out moment," and when I hired her I neglected to apply the methods I've written about in all my books, lectures and consulting.

Not many months later, I was on the phone in my home office when I saw my two-year-old running naked down the driveway. I immediately hung up on my client and raced outdoors to stop my daughter before she ran into the street.

Fortunately, the FedEx truck was not barreling up the driveway at that moment. Then I went looking for Tammy to find out what had happened. All she could say was, "Well, it's hard to keep track of all of the kids." It is, but, as I explained to her, that's exactly what she had been hired to do.

Sometimes a "Who" problem can mean life or death.



Geoff is Chairman & Founder of ghSMART. Geoff is co-author, with his colleague Randy Street, of the New York Times bestselling book *Who: The A Method for Hiring* and the author of the #1 Wall Street Journal bestseller *Leadocracy: Hiring More Great Leaders (Like You) into Government*. Geoff co-created the Topgrading brand of talent management. Geoff is the Founder of two 501c3 not-for-profit organizations. SMARTKids Leadership Program™ provides 10 years of leadership tutoring and The Leaders Initiative™ seeks to deploy society's greatest leaders into government. Geoff earned a B.A. in Economics with Honors from Northwestern University, an M.A., and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Claremont Graduate University.

Has your business fully harnessed the power of social media?

By 2018 the number of active social media users is expected to grow to 2.55 billion. If your customers are there, and if you intend to grow, that's where you need to be. Step 1 is to become visible. Once you have a good presence, here are six things you can do next: 1) Promote your products and services. 2) Provide personalized offers to your consumers based on how they behave online. 3) Build channels with influencers. 4) Engage your followers with quizzes and contests. 5) Put buying options on your social media pages. 6) Gather customer feedback. Above all, make sure your website comes across great on cell phones and tablets. That's where users are accessing social media.

-SmallBizTrends.com

Google Home vs. Amazon Echo: This should be good...

The battle for an always-listening virtual assistant has begun.

Scheduled to launch this fall, Google Home seeks to unseat Amazon Echo, which launched in 2014. Both devices act as personal assistant, music hub and smart-home control point. Echo has a big head start in smart-home control, breadth of features and "charm." It answers to the name "Alexa," whereas Home's "OK Google" just doesn't have the same appeal. Yet Home has a more attractive, customizable look. And, unlike Echo, Home can carry on a more intelligent conversation with you, answering questions in context rather than having to ask for more information each time. All that, plus Home's connectivity with streaming devices, makes it a formidable challenger.

-Cnet.com

Smart-chip credit cards may actually cause fraud to increase in the near term.

Yes, you read that right... A recent study from anti-fraud company Iovation and financial

industry consultant Aite Group shows that a mad rush in the dark web has begun. Fraudsters want to get the most value from stolen data before newer systems recognize the old magnetic-strip card numbers as clearly fraudulent. These attacks can be especially hard on merchants. Average losses range from \$980 to \$2,379 per incident, according to Javelin Strategy and Research LLC. To avert losses, businesses can use fraud-detection software, 3-D Secure or "tokenization" - the core of ApplePay and Android-Pay. But the problem won't just go away with the new chip cards. Cyberthieves aren't about to get honest and get new jobs... It pays to remain vigilant.

-CNBC.com

Curl up in your hammock this summer with these three tech-savvy books.

Don't Make Me Think Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, by Steve Krug, focuses on intuitive navigation and information design. It's short, witty and packed with illustrations and a good dose of common sense. Dot-Com Secrets: The Underground Playbook for Growing Your Company Online, by Russell Brunson, shows how low traffic and conversion may just be symptoms of a bigger problem. The good news is that the real problems are easier to fix. And finally, How to Shoot Video That Doesn't Suck: Advice to Make Any Amateur Look Like a Pro, by Steve Stockman, helps you create amazing videos you'll be proud to show the world.

-AlleyWatch.com



"Well that's not good."