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## TECHNOLOGY UPDATE 2012

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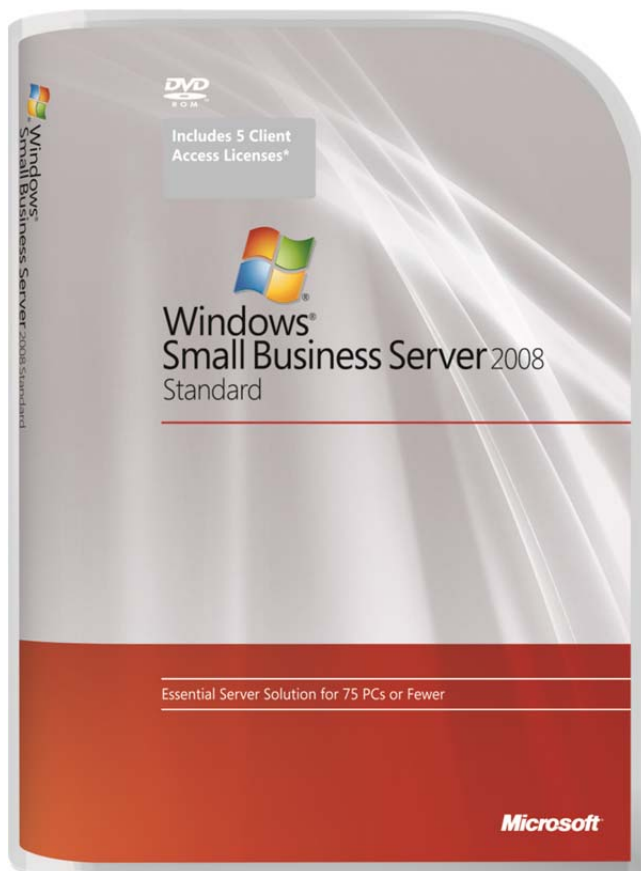
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## Introduction

Business's today need to operate as lean and efficiently as possible. The best way to do that is through the use of technology. Technology is key to operating efficiently and productively.

Small & medium size business owners typically muddle their way through technology because they cannot afford to have IT specialists on staff or have a department dedicated to IT.

As a Microsoft Small Business Specialist, I can help you with networking products such as servers, like Microsoft Small Business Server 2008, and desktop computers running Windows 7. I can also help you integrate other Microsoft products such as Exchange Server, Office Professional, etc.



I can assist in helping you choose the proper licensing options, upgrading decisions and training so that you and your employees are as productive as possible.



We can order the hardware you specify, and because we are a Microsoft partner, we can arrange for special financing of hardware, software, and our fees too.

Hardware should be replaced and upgraded every five years. Software should be updated frequently and kept current to the vendors update schedule.

Please use this guide to help steer through the maze of hardware, software and other technology products.

We are here to help. If you have any questions, or would like to meet to discuss your options, please do not hesitate to call at 609-620-0011 Ext 208.

Thanks,

*Tom*

Thomas H Judge, MCP

## Hardware Guidelines

### Desktops & Laptops

Memory:	Minimum of 4 Gigs of Ram
Hard Drives:	1 160 Gig Drive or higher
Processor:	Dual Core or better Processor from AMD or Intel
Other:	1 Read/Write CD/DVD Drive

### Servers

Memory:	Minimum of 8 Gigs Ram
Hard Drives:	160 Gig Drive Raid 5 (Requires 5 Drives) or Raid 1 Raid means Redundant Arrays of Independent

#### Disks

Processor:	Quad Core or better Processor from AMD or Intel
Other:	1 Read/Write CD/DVD Drive

If you choose a desktop or server with greater than 3 GB of Ram, then you need to get a 64-bit version to take advantage of the ram over 3 GB.

In a network environment, make sure you are using at least Cat 5 or higher Ethernet cable and update your old hubs to switches. If you are using a switch more than 3 years old, replace it with a new one.

If you have been using a peer to peer network, and you have more than 5 workstations, move to a dedicated server network as soon as possible.

Buy a Backup Power Supply and make sure it comes with monitoring software for the server. In the event of a power loss, this equipment should automatically keep the server running until it can shut down properly. For examples, go to <http://www.apc.com/products> .

### Back-Ups

Daily back-ups of your system are critical. You need to have a tape back-up system on the server or you should maintain online cloud backups. If you use a tape back-up, someone needs to replace the tapes each day and take them home at night. Backing up to another hard drive does not help if there is a fire, robbery or some other catastrophic event. This makes backing up to

the cloud more attractive. For those of you who utilize our portal service, you can back up your data files to your folder on our portal each night. (Limit in space is 150MB)

## Operating System Software

### Desktops & Laptops

Windows 7 for business.

It is the most stable of the Windows products I have seen yet. You will have a problem if you are using old software programs. Upgrade work software and special applications to vendors who have upgraded their systems to work with Windows 7 drivers.

**DO NOT UPGRADE AN OLDER VERSION OF WINDOWS TO WINDOWS 7.** Always start with a clean install.

### Servers

Microsoft Small Business Server 2008 R2.

Small Business Server 2008 comes in the Standard Edition or the Premium Edition. For most small business clients the standard edition is fine. The reason we recommend Small Business Server 2008 R2 instead of Windows Server 2008 is you get so much more for your money. With SBS 2008 R2, you get the Windows Server 2008 R2 operating system, Exchange Server 2008, SharePoint and much more. It's everything a small business needs at a great cost.

## Other Needed Software

Anti-Virus:                   Microsoft Security Essentials

Anti-virus software is critical on every machine.

Anti-virus software should be configured to download and install updates automatically, scan servers and desktops/laptops daily and check email files continuously. The scanning and updates should be done at night.

This brings up the question of whether you should leave your workstations on every night. There are pros and cons to this decision. The benefits are that your updates, scanning and other network updates can be done when you have the least amount of people working because such activity slows down the system. On the other hand, when no one is there, problems such as electrical power outages, power surges, etc can harm equipment.

## Adobe PDF

Most of today's Internet documents and most business documents are viewed and prepared in the Adobe PDF format (.pdf). You can get the Adobe Reader for free by downloading it at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com). This lets you open and read pdf documents. However, if you want to create documents in pdf format, you must own the software. (Adobe Acrobat Professional). That being said, you can now publish documents to PDF from version 2007 or greater of Microsoft Word and Excel.

Software companies have tightened their licensing and it is now almost impossible to load a piece of software from a CD more than twice. (The first copy is for your desktop. They allow a second install for your laptop or home computer). Even if you uninstall it, you will probably have to call the vendor to get an OK to reinstall a third time. (Ex. Your computer crashes and you get a new one or have to start over on the old.)

## **Microsoft Office Professional 2010**

If you have not done so already, upgrade to Office Professional 2010 as soon as possible. It is rich in new features, and when used properly, can enhance everyone's productivity. Recently, Microsoft released Office 365 which is their equivalent to Google Docs. We will discuss this in more detail next year after it has been reviewed and tested.

## **Accounting Software**

I recommend two accounting software products to our clients; QuickBooks Pro or higher, and our own client bookkeeping modules from Thomson Tax & Accounting called Client Bookkeeping Solution.

QuickBooks is used by more than 75% of all small businesses in the U.S.

If you are using QuickBooks, please upgrade to QuickBooks Pro 2012. You can get this from me, or from Staples, Best-Buy or Intuit. You should upgrade your software every two (2) years.

If you need multiple users for QuickBooks, the costs can go up to \$500 to \$700 depending on how many licenses you need.

You should also consider using an on-line version of QuickBooks through our Net Client Portal. Although a little more expensive, you can work from anywhere you have an Internet connection and you don't have to worry about updates and backups as they are done for you automatically.

If you think that you might want to try an on-line version, give me a call so we can discuss our Client Bookkeeping modules. You pay no upfront costs, the monthly fee is around \$35 per month, and the interface between your data and my software is seamless and allows us to have better interaction with your business. In addition, your files are backed up automatically, you never have to upgrade the software and maintenance is done automatically.

## Virtual Office Applications

We now have the ability to provide you with virtual office programs and connectivity. Through your private secure portal with us, we can authorize you to use QuickBooks, Microsoft Office and File Cabinet CS. By having these applications hosted on the Internet, you can login 24/7/365 to all of your work from any place that has an Internet connection. No more worries about backing up files, no need to be concerned with updates to your software and no need to be physically present at your desk. All of this for one low monthly fee.

## Communications & Training Tools

It is not necessary to travel today in order to have meetings, training events or other communication issues. The three products below will be able to handle all of your conferencing and training needs.

**Skype™:** Skype allows you to have a conference call over the Internet with or without video. You can download the software for free at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). You can call other Skype users for free. You can use Skype to make Internet phone calls to non-Skype users for a fee. The Skype web site gives you the details for “Pay As You Go” or for a “Monthly Subscription”.

**GoToMeeting®:** GoToMeeting allows you to host an online meeting with up to 15 people – so you can do more and travel less. Using their web conferencing tool you can share any application on your computer in real time. Attendees join meetings in seconds. [www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com)

- Hold unlimited meetings for one flat fee.
- Collaborate with remote colleagues.
- Host and attend from either a Mac or PC.
- Save with integrated audio conferencing (via computer and telephone).

**LogMeIn®:** Access and back up your home or work computer from anywhere with an Internet connection. Even access your desktop from your iPhone or the dash of your Ford truck. It's fast, easy and secure. This is one of the best programs for remote desktop connections. Most people will be

happy with the free version, but for more sophisticated uses go to [www.logmein.com](http://www.logmein.com) to see the variety of programs and the jobs they can fulfill.

## **iPad™, iPhones™, Android™ & Windows Smart Phones**

The world of mobile technology is speeding along. Many of tomorrow's applications will be more geared to the mobile world than to the office or home. The iPhone™ has changed the way people interact not only with other cell phone users, but also with the Internet. This technology, with the use of thousands of apps, can keep you update no matter where you are. No need to bring that laptop if you have one of these.

Smart Phones are making gigantic headway with the iPhone™ and can pretty much do all of the same things if you are using one of the latest Smart Phone models.

With the introduction of the iPad2™, it has become the most popular device for people on the move. It is fast becoming the desktop on the road. It has built-in wireless technology and mobile connectivity and you can utilize most software as if you were on your desktop.

## **Internet & E-Mail**

If you do not have an email address, please get one. If you do not have a web site, set one up. Why? Because communication to customers, vendors, consultants and a host of other people important to your business is critical. E-mail is an accepted and common form of communication. By not using it, you are not getting the most efficient use of information and communication from sources critical to your business.

A web site is not just an electronic brochure anymore. To be effective and utilized, use your web site as a source for customers, employees, consultants and vendors to go to get up-to-date critical information. Find a way for them to do business with you on your site. You can set up portals so that authorized people can get price lists, proposals, files or any other document you want to make available. In your marketing campaigns, you need to drive customers, and potential customers, to your web site. Once there, you need

to provide them with information, proposals, coupons or ideas that they can use.

## **Social Media**

It's not enough to just have a web site anymore. You should have a presence on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and have those sites integrated with your web site. The world today has turned to networking for people to communicate. People use these social networking tools to stay in touch with friends and family, to find jobs, help businesses find employees and, if done properly, help businesses build trust and confidence among their customers and prospects.

Social media sites are commonly used as reference tools to help people find professionals, contractors and other businesses through referrals and word of mouth by talking to one another in these social networks.

Businesses should not directly sell their products or services through social networking sites. Rather they should voluntarily post information on their sites that would benefit the reader and give the impression, over time, that people reading this information on their sites would eventually feel comfortable with the Company. Once a level of confidence has been established, visitors may start using the Company's products and services.

## **Document Management**

Document Management is a euphemism for the "Paperless Office". There is software readily available today, at reasonable prices, that can greatly assist you in reducing huge amounts of paperwork. Typically, these products set up a special print driver that sends your document to the electronic file cabinet. Any document that you can create on the computer can be printed and filed right from the source document. For documents that you did not create, you can scan them directly in to the electronic file cabinet. The next time you get a copier, make sure it also has a scanning feature. These can be stand alone or network based. We can show you how the File Cabinet CS software and portals on a web site work together to push documents to the site with very little effort on your part. That way they can be shared with authorized users safely and securely. You should consider going paperless as much as possible.

## **Wireless Desktops & Laptops**

Wireless technology is here to stay. However, to use it properly and safely, you need to have very tight security, encryption and excellent firewalls. We do not recommend wireless desktops in the work place unless you are prepared to spend the time and money on the appropriate security hardware and software so your IT environment is not compromised by unwanted outside intruders.

When you are travelling, or out of the office, a good solution for wireless is to purchase a wireless mobile “Hotspot”. Verizon has one that can connect up to five devices. It is password protected and is small enough to sit in your shirt pocket.

These devices come with different monthly service usage plans and you typically have to sign a one or two year service contract. Contact us if you want more detailed information.

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