SmartPath TECHNOLOGIES
Business Computer and Network Specialists

"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!"

270-238-8997

SmartPath Employee Spotlight

This month the SmartPath Employee Spotlight shines on one of our most important folks, our General Manager and CFO, Kristy Kerns. Kristy brings years of management experience to the heart of the SmartPath Technology organization and has a widely varying background of professional know-how to solve any problem. Kristy built her skills from being a Top 40 radio dj at a local station, increasing her understanding of public relations and marketing. Her tenure as a licensed insurance adjuster enhanced her use of detail oriented processes and her involvement in retail management proved to provide Kristy with an understanding of what the consumer wants. Her proficiency in the office keeps SmartPath running smoothly. When she is not at work, Kristy enjoys spending time with her daughter Brooke, pup Jenni Sue and couponing.

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

The Smarter Path

3 "Gotchas" Most Sales Reps Won't Tell You When Selling You Their Cloud Solution

Are you using any cloud applications to store data? Then listen up! There are a few "gotchas" you need to know about 3rd-party cloud apps that most sales reps will NEVER tell you.

1. **They aren't responsible for keeping a backup of your data.** If you read the small print of your contract, you'll see that in every way possible, your cloud provider is NOT responsible for data loss or backups – even if it's their fault. In fact, several cloud-based email providers will only keep 3 days' backup of your data; so if you delete or overwrite a file and don't notice it until 4-5 days later, it's GONE. If your data is important, you need to implement a backup solution that works with cloud applications.

2. **What you see may NOT be what you get.** There's nothing more frustrating than an incredibly slow application when you're trying to work; and the salesperson demoing the application or platform is going to make sure you only see the BEST-case scenarios for performance. But there are a lot of things that can determine how fast your cloud applications run, such as the file size you're working on storage, time of day, day of the week, your Internet connection and the number of users accessing the application. Make sure you get some verification of the speed in YOUR specific environment before spending a lot of money, time and aggravation moving to a new cloud application and how powerful the computer hosting the service is as well.

3. **What if they cancel you?** Here's a scary situation: what if your cloud provider decides to shut down your account because they go out of business or simply decide not to service you anymore? Or what if YOU want out? Make sure you have in writing what happens if YOU cancel your contract AND what your cloud provider can and cannot do if they go out of business, cancel your account or have any other issues that would cause service interruption. Moving a network from a cloud platform is NOT a simple task but if we help you plan the transition, it will be a smooth one.

Need help interpreting any of these scenarios? Give us a call at (270) 238-8997 and we'll help you put in place a solid "Plan B" for any of the above issues.

- The first actual computer "bug" was a dead moth stuck in a Harvard Mark II computer in 1947.
- Big banks don't process checks and debit card charges to your account in the order they're received, but instead use a computer program that selects the biggest amounts first and charges them against your account, emptying your account faster and resulting in more overdraft fees (profit).
- In September 1956, IBM launched the 305 RAMAC, the first "SUPER" computer with a hard disk drive (HDD). The HDD weighed over a ton and stored 5 MB of data.
- A computer as powerful as the human brain would be able to perform about 38 thousand trillion operations per second and hold about 3,584 terabytes of memory.
- The first entirely computer-generated movie sequence in cinema history was the Genesis Device demonstration video in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan.* The studio that made the scene would later become Pixar.
- CAPTCHA is an acronym for "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart."
- MIT has developed computer software that can identify and distinguish a real smile from a smile of frustration.

How To Make Yourself 'Invisible' To Hackers

There's an old joke about two men hiking in the woods when they come across a big, grumpy black bear. Scared silly, one of the guys starts to run but notices his buddy stopped, bent-over, changing his shoes. He shouts to him, "Dude! What are you doing?!?! Why aren't you running?" to which his friend replies, "I'm changing my shoes because I don't need to outrun the bear – I only need to outrun YOU."

This is a perfect analogy for what's going on in small businesses: the "slow," easy targets are getting nailed by fast-growing cybercrime rings that are getting more sophisticated and aggressive in attacking small businesses. Last year, the average cyber-attack cost a small business $20,752, a substantial increase from 2013, when the average was $8,699. That's because most small businesses don't have the security protocols in place or the manpower and budget to implement sophisticated security systems. While there's absolutely no way to completely protect yourself other than disconnecting entirely from the Internet, there are several things you can do to avoid being easy pickings. Here's how:

1. **Lock your network.** While WIRED networks make you invisible to WiFi snoops because you have to be physically plugged into a network jack, your wireless network can be invisible. Instead of seeing your wireless network name when connecting a device to WiFi, you don't see any networks.   You must manually type in both the hidden network name and then security key to gain access.   Make sure you consult us for special precautions if you want to offer WiFi to visitors in your building – it's safe (and probably a good idea) to do, but it has to be done correctly so those users aren't on the same wireless network as your office computers and equipment.

2. **Encrypt your data.** On your desktops, turn on the full-disk encryption tools that come standard on most operating systems: BitLocker on Windows-based PCs and FileVault on Macs. There is no noticeable performance lag; however, the encryption only applies when users are logged out of the system. So setting computers to automatically log out after 15 minutes without use is a good idea. And for mobile devices, use a VPN (virtual private network) to encrypt data traveling to and from your mobile devices and limit your employees' access to only the company data that they must have to do their jobs.

3. **Install firewall and anti-malware applications** on all of your equipment, including mobile devices.

4. **Disable features that automatically connect your mobile devices to any available network.**

5. **Disable printer and file-sharing options on mobile devices before connecting to a hotspot.**

6. **Check before connecting to hotspots.** If there is an unusual variation in the logo or name on the login page, beware…this could mean it's a fake hotspot designed to steal your data..

Could You Use a Little Help in the Court Room?

Where Technology and Dependability come Together: www.smartpathtech.com

Shiny New Gadget of the Month

All This… For Just Five Bucks???

If you haven't tried Fiverr.com yet, you're in for a treat. Fiverr is a global online marketplace where freelancers offer to perform an amazing variety of tasks and services, starting at just $5.00.

Need a whiteboard-style video for your website? A new logo? Help creating a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation? Then you need to check out Fiverr.

To get started, just go to Fiverr.com. And for best results, follow these five rules:

1. **Steer clear of bad gigs** – Buying hundreds of backlinks for your website might sound cool… Then again, you might be in for a nasty surprise. If a gig *seems* fake, it just might be… Find another gig.

2. **Shop around** – Compare different sellers and use the "Favorites" feature to build a shopping list before you buy.

3. **Examine closely** – Check reviews, response time, number of gigs completed and gig details. Questions? Ask the seller *before* buying.

4. **Communicate clearly** – Save time by spelling out in exact detail what you want in your order.

5. **Accept nothing less than perfection** – Top sellers are often happy to make revisions until you're happy.

Okay? Ready, set…go save a boatload on your first Fiverr gig!

Four Ways To Get More Performance, Productivity And Profit From Your Team

1. Your Team Needs To Learn Together

Rarely do teams learn together. Too often, increases in skill are confined to individuals. Sometimes that can become a barrier to teamwork: because there are dramatically different knowledge and skill levels, some team members aren't able to keep up. When an individual attends a course or discovers a useful practice, he or she should be encouraged to share it with the team. And periodically putting the entire team into a learning environment is critical.

2. Peer Recognition Is Powerful

If you're a team leader, understand that despite your best efforts, you will be incapable of adequately recognizing every team member's efforts and contributions. Good work will slip by and go unrecognized. If this happens often, the team member may well become disillusioned. Relieve yourself of the burden to be the sole dispenser of recognition: ask team members to recognize each other. Make it a team expectation to thank other team members for their assistance and to look for opportunities to catch each other doing something praiseworthy.

3. To Win More Together, Think Together More

Have you ever held a team retreat? When was the last time your team came together for the express purpose of thinking about the work you do? Do you periodically pause as a group to reflect on what you've learned and internalize the lessons? Do you meet to consider opportunities, and not just to solve problems? The team that thinks more wins more.

4. You've Got To Expect It And Not Tolerate It If You Don't Get It

Some managers, knowing how difficult it can be to create great teamwork, undermine their efforts by making teamwork "optional." That is, they appreciate the people who are good team players but they tolerate those who aren't. As the old adage goes, what you allow, you condone. Those on the same team should know that figuring out how to get along and work with other teammates is their responsibility. Those who refuse to be team players should at the very least not enjoy the same benefits, and at worst, should be removed. It might sound harsh, but it is necessary if you want teamwork to work.

Where Technology and Dependability come Together: www.smartpathtech.com

78 Ash St
Calvert City, KY 42029
(270) 238-8997

SmartPath Technologies Will "Show You the Money!"

Our business is built off of referrals – it's the best "atta boy" we can get, and it lets us know our clients see enough value in what we do to recommend us to someone else who is suffering from IT and technology woes. The best part is – we'll pay for your referrals, no strings attached. Not only will we pay for them – we'll pay ANYONE in your office who refers us….it doesn't matter if it's an assistant, receptionist, or janitor. They can all get free money just from telling other businesses about SmartPath! Here's how…

Refer another business with at least five computers to us. We'll immediately send the referrer a $25 gift card AND we'll provide the business they refer to us with a free network audit and two hours of free service, a combined value of almost $500. We'll then analyze and review the audit with the business. It get's better…

If the business you refer ultimately decides to retain us and signs a service agreement, we'll pay $25 for each computer at the business. If they have 5 computers, you get $125. If they have 15 computers, you get $375, and if they have 20 computers you get $500 in CASH. There is no limit to the amount of money you can make from a single referral AND you can make as many referrals as possible every month.

Please make sure all members of your staff are aware of our referral program! It's been a great way to provide some much needed extra $$$ to staff members whom can really use it. Most office staff aren't aware they can have this opportunity, so please make sure they are informed.