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The Importance of Proper Data Cabling

In this day and age, everybody needs data cabling in their offices, but many don't even think twice about its importance. A poorly designed or installed cabling infrastructure can lead to significant loss of data, dropped phone calls and inefficient employees. What kind of issues cause these problems? Cables that are kinked or bent too much, those that run parallel to electrical conduit or are draped over fluorescent light fixtures, runs that are too long and those that aren't certified, to name a few. (Curious? If you have an open ceiling in your office, look up and see what you see.) Additionally, cable runs that aren't properly labeled, those that use poor quality cable and/or hardware, or those installed by someone who doesn't know what they're doing will invariably lead to problems down the road. So what are we getting at, here?

If you notice issues with data transfer or phone call quality, it may well be the quality of your cabling infrastructure. If you're moving to a new office space, expanding your existing space, or tired of slow networks, now's the time to consider your needs, and realize the importance of good cabling.

[Learn More Here! http://bit.ly/2pjZMJd](http://bit.ly/2pjZMJd)

The Cloud: What Is Missing?



Cloud computing has been a godsend for many businesses by providing the flexibility and scalability they need to grow and enhance their offerings. Cloud computing, of course, also provides some capital cost reduction. There is no question that the cloud brings plenty of benefits to companies small or large-- they now have the ability to pay per month for the computing resources they were making hefty capital investments for not too long ago; and, by-in-large, these investments pay off.

One problem we've seen over the years is that companies are so enthusiastic about the prospects of moving data and business process to the cloud that they don't properly plan their implementations. This can present organizations with wild scenarios where data is all over the place and that their once-reliable in-house computing environment is now disjointed and not working in concert with cloud-based resources.

In order to keep this from happening, organizations need to do their due diligence and find the cloud platform that is right for their needs, while proactively considering the threats their business faces by performing a hasty migration.

What's missing from the cloud? For many businesses, proper planning.

Migration tips to consider

When moving to the cloud, you have to evaluate how you are going to get there with what you already have. Unfortunately, many businesses don't consider their data, their applications, and their in-place integrations before committing, and pay for it afterwards.


- **Start small and work from there** - You wouldn't dump everything on your on-premise network infrastructure, so why would you do it in the cloud? After all, these are still physical machines somewhere. Businesses should start with a single application, or process (like storage), or a new Internet-based application that is not critical for business use. Once this is successful, and you show clear metrics of success, you can start amping up your cloud migratory projects.

(Continued on page 2)



Our Top Tweets

@Ashton Meeting this morning in the tallest building in Shaker Heights.



@AshtonSolutions Cryptocurrency botnets are rendering some companies unable to operate. <https://t.co/tl1aH8eQgV>

@AshtonSolutions We love good feedback; "Anthony was a total rock star yesterday! It was nice collaborating with him on the tasks we needed to complete and he's a fan favorite with the staff. We had a good ol' time catching up and laughing. Glad you snatched him up." Thanks, Dena! #Testimonial

@Ashton It's never a good idea to leave your workstation unlocked when you step away from your desk, if you work at an IT company.

Our Sales Team Contact Info

Jim Abbott
jabbott@ashtonsolutions.com
216-539-3685

Chuck Penzenik
cpenzenik@ashtonsolutions.com
216-245-0159

Visit us **online** at:
newsletter.ashtonsolutions.com

Get the Best of Both Worlds with a Managed Private Cloud



The cloud is a great asset for any business, whether you're a major enterprise or a small family-owned operation. However,

there are different types of hosted solutions, and they all offer various benefits and hindrances for your business.

What's the best type of cloud for your organization, and how can you protect the security and integrity of the data stored in it?

There are generally three types of clouds: public, private, and hybrid. Each of these has their own distinct benefits, and depending on the type of business you run, you might be more inclined to select one over the other.

Public

There are many reasons for a small business to select a public cloud as its preferred solution. For one, it removes the responsibility of management and

maintenance from your company's shoulders, allowing you to focus on operations. It has gotten to the point where public cloud solutions are both affordable and quite secure (for the most part), which means that even small businesses with limited budgets can take advantage of the basic aspects of a public cloud-hosted solution.

The main issue that businesses have with public clouds is that they don't have as much control over their data--or the management of it. Basically, the public cloud is secured and maintained by those hosting it, which limits the ability of companies to implement secondary or more advanced security features. Consider whether your organization wants and needs this additional customization and security before investing in a public cloud.

Private

A private cloud, however, is generally hosted in-house on your company's hardware, which enhances the security of your cloud system. As long as you have the computing resources, you can

customize and control your cloud solution as you see fit. This is the preferred method of cloud management for organizations that have in-house teams dedicated to maintaining advanced computing infrastructures.

Of course, for companies that don't have internal IT departments, the lack of regular maintenance and management can lead to wasted resources and crippling disasters. If you don't take care of your technology, it can come back to bite you when you need access to it most. Thankfully, there is a middle-ground solution that works for both small businesses and larger enterprises: a managed private cloud.

Our Managed Private Cloud Solution Small businesses can take advantage of a private cloud solution without the need to maintain the server hardware or other technology required, and it's all thanks to modern managed...



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<http://bit.ly/2ER82Wc>

The Cloud: What Is Missing?

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- **Augment your existing infrastructure** - A powerful benefit of the cloud is that it can extend what you are already in to. You don't need to move all of your data and infrastructure to the cloud. Most businesses will benefit most from the hybrid-cloud platform. Moving non-essential infrastructure to the cloud can be a great way to utilize the power of hosted computing, without putting your business in jeopardy.
- **Hosted solutions are hosted somewhere** - You'd be amazed at how many people don't consider how there is a physical data center hosting their "cloud-based" data and computing infrastructure. By selecting a cloud provider that uses industry-best practices in their management and security systems, you will know that your hosted data and infrastructure are kept on reliable and effective platforms.
- **Cloud security has changed** - Things

have changed substantially in the past few years. Cloud computing has changed things in administration, but it has also changed things in security. With hosted computing that supported remote workers and anytime, anywhere access, network security couldn't adopt the old "castle and moat" strategy because there were always too many holes in the firewall. This created the new security model where administrators and solutions focus on protecting data and providing managed access. If you are able to see the cloud as an extension of your on-premise infrastructure and create a model to ensure that data is secure and accessible, you are doing more than the typical organization who jumps into the cloud with both feet, only to fall right through. By looking at how you share and access data on your current infrastructure you will begin to understand where the

potential security gaps in your system are, and then focus on patching them.

Call the Experts

If you are looking to move some or all of your computing resources to the cloud, you have to be more careful than you may think. The IT professionals at Ashton Technology Solutions can provide you with the resources you need to make a successful cloud migration--protecting the data and applications your staff depends on. For more information about hosted computing options in the cloud, or to talk to one of our knowledgeable technicians about moving some or all of your business' data and infrastructure offsite, call us today at 216-397-4080.



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How to Protect Your Business with BDR



How would your company react to the worst-case scenario of your technology failing during a critical moment?

By this, we mean a server unit failing or a hardware failure causing a catastrophic loss of data. There are other situations where you experience a similar loss of data, including natural disasters that completely destroy physical infrastructure; yet, the end result is the same, and it keeps your business from functioning as intended.

Even something as simple as a hacking attack or user error could create complications for your company, impacting operations to the point where your

organization can't even run. In situations like these, it's imperative that your company has a data backup and disaster recovery solution put into place. In practice, however, data backup and disaster recovery are two very different things. Both of them are crucial to the continued success of your business, though.

Data backup has traditionally taken advantage of magnetic tape that stores data. The reels are then kept on-site where they can be used in the event of an emergency. While these might sound adequate on paper, tape is actually one of the most inefficient ways to back up your data. In a worst-case scenario, you could lose as much as an entire day's worth of data, and it could take hours to fully restore operations. Of course, all of this is still assuming that the natural disaster or data loss event wasn't also enough to destroy the tape that you rely

on to initiate a restoration. All of these combined factors make for a horribly inconvenient and difficult way to back up and restore data.

The ideal solution to your business' data backup and disaster recovery woes is to implement a cloud-based backup and disaster recovery (BDR) tool from Ashton Technology Solutions. Cloud-based data backups can happen more frequently because they take advantage of what are known as snapshot-based backups. These backups only occur for information that has changed since the last one was taken, which means you get more frequent backups throughout the day--often as every fifteen minutes. Since you're taking backups more...



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Boost Productivity with Better Internal Communications



Without a reliable way to stay in touch during office hours, your business can suffer from miscommunications

and other, worse consequences. With so many communication solutions available to the average business, how can you help your business be as productive as possible? It all starts by making sure that your employees stay connected.

A Social Intranet

An intranet can be used to stay connected to your staff and all of its resources. It works like a portal where any assets used by your company can be easily located. Imagine having one infrastructure dedicated to keeping your employees connected to each other, as well as where they can access important software, online resources, links, documents, and much more. You can even include a phone number or a link to your managed service provider's help desk, making it easier than ever to take

advantage of technology help and assistance when in a pinch.

Instant Messaging

If you have ever sent an email with the hopes of getting an immediate response, you'll know the frustration that comes from waiting hours and hours just to get a response that has come far too late to do anything about. Instant messaging is a valuable tool that can help to alleviate this issue considerably. It's perfect for the moments where an immediate response is needed. Many instant messaging applications also allow you to create group chats or private rooms where you can collaborate on projects.

"Without a reliable way to stay in touch during office hours, your business can suffer from miscommunications and other, worse consequences..."

Internal Blogs and Documentation

Your employees should want to do a better job than what they are currently doing, and in order to guide them toward this lofty goal, you should make

internal blogs and other documentation available that they can consult for any information about a specific task. In fact, blogs and documentation can significantly cut down on any time spent training employees. After all, the best way to help someone do their job is to help them help themselves.

Discussion Boards

Just like with internal blogs and documentation, you can foster a conversation about ways to improve workflows or brainstorm new ideas through the less formal medium of discussion boards or open forums. Discussion boards are generally implemented with the idea of creating consumable and accessible content for your employees.

A Ticketing System (or Help Desk)

Chances are that your employees might be somewhat technologically savvy, but they are certainly no IT technicians. This can lead to wasted time and energy. It's more efficient to simply reach out to...



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How the Business Software Alliance Will Come After Your Business



As a business owner, you should know that you shouldn't abuse

the software licenses that your business relies on to function, or use pirated software to fulfill that need. While there are many people who do such things, the response from software companies in an attempt to stop such activities has created a system that can award those who exploit it.

First off, we want to make it clear that we don't condone software piracy or the use of pirated software. Having said

this, we also can't--in good conscience--condone the strategies used by those who fight software piracy, either. A prime example is the track record of BSA | The Software Alliance.

Who We are Dealing With BSA is the title of an international advocacy group that fights for the proper licensing of software solutions meant for business purposes. Members of this group include many well-known faces, including IBM, Adobe, Trend Micro, Apple, and Microsoft. According to the organization's website, BSA "pioneers compliance programs that promote legal software use

and advocates for public policies that foster technology innovation and drive growth in the digital economy."

Admittedly, this mission seems perfectly fine, even admirable, at first glance. However, BSA undermines their mission statement through the tactics they have been known to use to accomplish their less-publicized, primary goal: stomping out pirated software by any means necessary, while making any business that possesses unlicensed software pay...

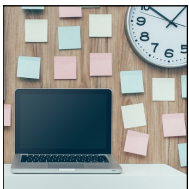


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At Ashton Technology Solutions, we don't think of ourselves as computer guys, geeks or techies. Instead, we're problem solvers in the business of helping clients leverage technology for lasting business results. We just happen to have some serious technical skills as well. Of course we can talk geek with the best of them, but that's just the starting point for what we do, not the heart of it.

While we do take pride in delivering the most technically elegant solutions, at Ashton, we get the biggest satisfaction from integrating into our clients' processes, helping them look ahead, avoid trouble, and find better and more cost-effective methods of operating. In other words, we become partners in their growth. Ultimately, we earn our real enjoyment by watching our clients grow and prosper right along with us.

Your Productivity Doesn't Depend on the Internet



It is an expectation for the modern business to rely on the

Internet in order to complete its daily function. As a result, anytime there is an Internet outage, many employees may find themselves lacking purpose or direction. However, a lack of Internet doesn't have to mean a lack of productivity. For this week's tip, we'll review some ways your staff can be productive without an Internet connection.

Keeping Things Organized Office clutter happens. It is the natural side effect of a team being focused on getting task after task completed. If the files on your local network need some reorganization, or the workspace itself needs a little TLC, an Internet outage provides an ideal time to tidy things up a bit.

A tidy workspace will benefit the organization as a whole, as well as each employee. After all, the fewer distractions that an employee has on their desk, the easier it is

for them to stay focused (and the easier it is for someone else to find a resource should that employee be away from the office that day).

Furthermore, it is much easier for one to find things in an organized closet or cabinet than one that has everything thrown in and piled up without any rhyme or reason, which translates to saved time. Using the time that the Internet is down to go...



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Ashton Solutions

23625 Commerce Park
Suite 130
Beachwood, Ohio 44122
Voice: 216-397-4080



newsletter@ashtonsolutions.com



facebook.ashtonsolutions.com



linkedin.ashtonsolutions.com



twitter.ashtonsolutions.com



google.ashtonsolutions.com



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