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AXICOM
Networks • Computers • Security • Service

Computer Network Solutions and Management Services



AxiNews

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Chinese

New Year

This year, the Chinese New Year is on January 23 and it is the Year of the Dragon.

Also known as the Spring Festival, the Chinese New Year honors household deities as well as ancestors.

In preparation for the holiday, homes are cleaned thoroughly to rid them of evil spirits. Elders give out money to children and there is a large feast on New Year's Eve.

Online Office Productivity Software: Google Apps v MS Office 365

By Christa Nonnemaker, Business Development

We're increasingly moving to a mobile and wireless world where we want to have access to everything and anything wherever we are. So, how do Google Apps stack up to Microsoft Office 365?

First, to set the scene. Google Apps rolled out their offerings about four years ago while Microsoft Office 365 was just recently released. Both of these are cloud-based office productivity suites. So, how are they different and which one is a good fit for your business?

Office 365 is really the regular Microsoft Office products that you know and love such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook but now available online, or "in the cloud" as it were.

There are various levels of Office 365 starting with basic online email only going up to the whole kit and caboodle with SharePoint Server Online, Exchange Online, and Lync Online. Lync Online is Microsoft's unified communications solution which allows users to make video calls, use instant message and have Web meetings. Cost ranges from \$2-\$27/user per month but typical costs are \$6 or \$10/per month.

With Office 365, there are some limits to the online versions which is why the desktop versions are still the most feature-rich options. Office 365 integrates with the Office 2010 desktop app in some plans.

Google Apps is online only, like Office 365, but don't yet come close to the Microsoft Office

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Strong Passwords That Are Easy to Remember and Hard to Crack

By Jake Nonnemaker, CEO/President

Passwords and password-security is something of which we are all aware but let's drill down to find out which ones really work.

Passwords are easily the weakest link in your security. When you use cloud computing, passwords may be the ONLY security you have. If you make your passwords too short and easy, then they are easy to guess and hack. If you make them too long and difficult, they

will be hard to hack but hard for you to remember, too.

An easy way to make a strong password is to use a **passphrase** instead.

For example, the password "kitten" can be cracked almost instantly because it is a common dictionary word. But the password "Kitten3921"

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Comparing Google Apps to Office 365

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desktop features yet. But, that's an evolutionary issue and offerings continue to improve.

Google Apps for Business includes email, calendar, Instant Messaging, videoconferencing, word processing, spreadsheet and presentation applications among other productivity and collaboration systems. For example, Google Apps has a Forms app that is very handy (see right graphic).

Google Apps also include the extensibility of adding from Google Apps Marketplace so that applications can be easily and quickly provisioned.

On the downside, the Google Apps lack the feature-rich environment of the Microsoft Office products so if you're used to doing some fancy things, you might come away disappointed. In fact, fans of Microsoft Publisher will not find

Google Apps Drawing to be a compatible program.

The price point for Google Apps is also very appealing at \$5/user/month or \$50/user/year with the Annual plan. Call us today.

AXICOM is both a Microsoft Partner and a Google Apps reseller. Call us today if you have questions. 818.865.9865.



Strong Passwords

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will take about 10 days to hack which is better but feasible for a determined hacker with automated resources.

But the passphrase "My-black-kitten" will take 311 billion years to hack because it is hard to guess, is long (18-characters) and uses complex characters (capitals and special characters). But it has the advantage of being easy to remember. You can use your own custom variation like spaces, asterisks, ampersands, numbers, etc. as spacers between words.

The key to an effective password protection is making your password so difficult that the hacker would have to expend extraordinary resources to



crack it. If the hacker needs to spend too much money, computing power he is most likely to move on to an easier target.



Workers and Security: Do Employees Care About Security?

According to IT security provider Avira Operations in Germany that surveyed 1000 employees using its security products, the survey indicates that 35% of the respondents admitted that although they are aware of security policies, they don't feel that anyone cares whether those policies are followed or not. However 39% indicated that they do adhere to security policies and that everyone should stay vigilant.

AXICOM can provide a security assessment for your business and provide security solutions tailored to your needs. Call us today to set up an appointment. 818.865.9865.

4 Facebook Plugins to Increase Traffic, Followers and Credibility

By Jeff Johnson, Social Media Expert

Does your website incorporate any social interactivity on it? I'm talking about more than a little Facebook logo that directs to your company page... something with more substance that actually KEEPS your website visitors on your page at the same time.



If not, you may want to test the use of Facebook's social plug-ins to easily accomplish this—but be careful! You don't want to take the focus away from generating leads on your site, which is the #1 goal. How to get the plug-ins for your Facebook company page:

- 1) Go to your company's Facebook page.
- 2) In the right hand corner, select "Edit Page."
- 3) In the left hand column, select the "Resources" tab.
- 4) On the Resources tab, select "Use social plugins" and then follow Facebook's instructions from there.

4 Plug-Ins I Recommend:

- 1) Adding a "like" or "Send" button to your written and video blog posts easily allows and encourages your readers and viewers to send the post to a friend or "like" the post which will show up for their friends in their Facebook stream, giving you more exposure.
- 2) Add the "Facepile" plugin. If someone has Facebook friends that like your Facebook page, then they will show up in a plugin on your page.
- 3) Add Facebook's "Like Box" plugin. This box is the Swiss army knife of Facebook, combining a view of your most recent Facebook posts, the ability for someone to "like" your Facebook page right from your website, and pictures of Facebook friends who like your page (similar to the Facepile plugin, but smaller).
- 4) Facebook "Comments" plugin. Add this plugin to your blog to allow others to comment on your articles through their Facebook social feed (if they check off a box to share their comments) giving you more exposure for your blog.



Test your Luck!

We want to see who reads our newsletter! If you answer this question correctly, we will send you a small gift. Make sure to read the entire newsletter though!

Question: Why would the passphrase "My-black-kitten" take 311 billion years to hack?

Send your answer to christa@axicom.net with Subject Line: Newsletter Answer.



Find Good Fortune at AXICOM!

Managed Services AXICOM provides managed services such as remote monitoring and management of workstations and servers through AxiGuard, automated backup through AxiVault, managed email security and spam protection through AxiBlock, and more. Your data and network will be safe and protected when using AxiGuard. It's almost like having an on-going tune-up of your machines. All businesses, at a minimum, should be using AxiGuard.

Audits Do you ever wonder whether you have the right pieces of equipment? The right software? Enough hardware or software? Too much hardware or software? Security? The right Internet connection? The list is endless when it comes to IT. AXICOM can save you the headache of thinking about these things by coming in for a thorough evaluation and provide an assessment of its findings.

General Repair Computers have a way of acting up, needing attention, or getting updates now and again. Let's say you just bought a new computer and need your data transferred. AXICOM can do that and much more!

Call us today at 818.865.9865 or email support@axicom.net.

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Inquiring Minds...

Great FREE Collaboration Websites

Shutterfly If you are a leader or a member of a group where you have scheduled meetings, Shutterfly, although mainly a photo sharing and printing service, has an additional feature called Share which allows a group to set up a calendar, post documents and files, send automated email reminders, allow members to RSVP to events, upload videos and pictures, have a group Message Board, schedule, create polls, set up Task lists, and more. If you have a business networking group you can populate a calendar with dates and then set up the reminder emails to go out as you'd prefer—whether one day or one month in advance.



Many sports teams have signed up with Shutterfly to manage their teams and leagues. In fact, AYSO Soccer has adopted Shutterfly for multiple-team use. To find out more scroll down to the bottom of the Shutterfly site and click on "Sports Teams Websites" to learn more. Scouting groups have also latched on to Shutterfly.

Sign Up Genius SignUpGenius.com really is an amazing website. Whether you have a school or volunteer function that requires people to sign up to participate or to bring food or items or both, Sign Up Genius can handle this. With a variety of fun templates and designs, it's simply a matter of learning how to set up your event.



Events can be single-time events or repeating events. Sign Up Genius can handle it. It's a great way to avoid the chaos of multiple emails

or paper sign-up sheets on break-room or classroom doors.

SmileBox Smilebox is really fun and allows users to create slideshows, invitation, greetings, collages, scrapbooks and photo albums on your computer. It has tons of templates and now has an iPhone app. And, your creations can be shared on Facebook.



Huddle Aimed at the business market, Huddle is an online project management system so that multiple people can view and collaborate on files and other documents. It's an enterprise level program and it claims that 75% of Fortune 500 companies have used it!



Meetup.com Meetup has been around for a while and serves a social networking/collaboration site for business and hobby groups. It's a great thing to search and find a group that is focused on an interest that you're passionate about. It has a calendar function so that it can send out reminders about upcoming events.



It's likely that you've run across at least one or two if not all of these websites, depending on your role(s) in life. It's fun to use most of these sites.

Mark your Calendar!

Chinese New Year is January 23, 2012!

