

Taking a closer look at our solutions...

Making technology and business
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The latest in Smart IT Solutions by The Smart IT Company

September 2007

Off The Press:

Microsoft Partner Awards - Winners announced.

Whilst we didn't win this year, it was an honour to be named a finalist and we are all keen to go hard and secure first place next year!

This month...

- We pick up where we left off last month with our Mobility series and take a look at how Mobile devices can help to streamline productivity.
- There's more to printing than a simple purchase; let's discuss some factors which should be considered in order to maximise the publishing that occurs in your office.
- To Dual Screen or not to Dual Screen; if you've asked yourself that question lately then read on to find out more...

Questions? Comments? We value your feedback!
Call us (02) 8831 8200 to discuss any matter further...

Mobility 101 Part 2 – Windows Mobile; how it can save you money

Carrying on from last month, we talked about mobility and a particular scenario that one of our clients had with their sales force and old style paper based diaries. Key pain points for them were; the diaries were not always the same between the office and the sales person, it required large amounts of effort to maintain and in some cases, was too easily lost and irreplaceable.

After looking at these issues we proposed to the customer that they implement Windows Mobile powered devices. The Windows Mobile device is a combination of traditional PDA and a mobile phone. The sales person could see their email, calendar, contacts and tasks on the device right in front of them. This replaced their paper based diary with something that initially had a bit of a learning curve.

Most of their sales guys were in the "older generation" and much preferred their paper diaries. We got them to overcome their fear of the new technology, believe it or not, simply by getting them to play

solitaire on the device. This made them more comfortable with handling the new tool and gave them some confidence with using it.

Ok – so the Windows Mobile device was only one part of the solution. The other part of the solution was implemented at the office. We used Small Business Server 2003 and the features of it that allow it to work together with Mobile devices.

The Windows Mobile device was configured to synchronise with the sales person's mailbox every time new information came into the mailbox. The sales person's mailbox contained not only their mail, but also their calendar, contacts and tasks. All of these were synchronised with the Windows Mobile device, all without user intervention.

We then went a few steps further. We configured the sales person's calendars to be shared with others in the office. This then allowed the office staff to easily see where and when a sales person could be available to meet with a potential customer and add the appointment directly into the

sales person's calendar. This then immediately synchronised out to the sales person's Windows Mobile device. The same went for when the sales person made an appointment, except in reverse.

Once we had this all configured, the customer found that their productivity improved greatly. They no longer spent time shuffling appointments around, duplicating appointments, losing diaries or spilling coffee all over the diary. What about security I hear you ask – well – unlike a paper based diary, technology allows us to remotely erase a Windows mobile device should it be lost by the sales person. This ensures that confidential client information, phone numbers, contact details and the like are secure and under our control at all times.

So – this is one way that mobility can assist in satisfying a customer's requirement.

Stay tuned for Part 3 of the series next month where we look at something called Remote Web Workplace.

Looking for more room to grow?

If you have questions or require assistance please contact sales or support.

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Dry Writing

No matter how paperless we aim to make the modern day office, printers will always have a role to play converting soft files to hard copy. Whether it's a small home office dedicated to the amateur photographer, or the engine room of a busy corporate mechanism, printing needs exist – although they will differ vastly between those two extremes.

There are some basic factors which should be considered before a printer is purchased. It is important to consider your requirements and the application for which the printer is intended. What type of printing is the machine going to do; mainly text documents or plenty of colour-intense images? How many pages are you likely to print in a month? Is it critical to keep the cost per page down?

Inkjet printers can seem like a cost-effective solution, and for small volumes of colour rich copy, they certainly make sense and are a suitable fit. However, while inkjets are relatively cheap machines to purchase, they are expensive machines to maintain.

Compared to laser printers, consumables work out to be much more expensive.

For most offices, a dedicated Laser printer is an excellent choice. They can be networked for workgroup functionality, they are cost effective to maintain and can achieve consistent results at speed.

Laser printers function by using a process called xerography - xeros (dry) graphos (writing). Basically a laser printer uses the same principle as a photocopier; to adhere the image to the paper a combination of drums, static electricity and dry toner is employed. The fundamental difference is the way each machine creates the electrostatic image.

Photocopiers use a method known as “write white”, reflecting the image onto a piece of paper so that the background is discharged and remains dark. The image (the text, for example) carries a positive charge. Lasers adopt the “write black” method, discharging the image and leaving the background with a positive charge. This produces results that are far superior in quality to the write white method.

Laser printers have onboard smarts – an internal motherboard, microprocessor and memory. The memory is essentially a buffer which stores data when the printer is on hold, printing another page or job from the print cue, or if the machine is out of paper. These smarts also assist in producing more complex images such as graphics; the more memory the printer has the more capable it will be.

In some applications, a multifunction centre that combines scanning, printing and faxing can be useful; however in most cases you compromise the speed of printing, the scanning resolution and the affordability of the consumables. If more than just a few scans a month is required, it may be more effective to have dedicated devices.

Essentially, the right printer choice is a solid investment for the office that needs to produce quality output with minimum ongoing costs. We can help you with all of your printing needs, including consumables such as ink and toner. We are more than happy to offer a consultation regarding your applications to help you make an informed decision when choosing your next printer. **Call us today to discuss further!**

To Dual Screen, or not to Dual Screen?

That is the question Ryan ponders over this month...

Is it more efficient for staff to use one or two screens? Okay, now apologies to Shakespeare for borrowing his line there, but it is quite a valid question now days. With rapid reductions in the cost of LCD screens, is it worth having dual screens on your desk, and does the size of the environment have a bearing on the decision?

I have been using dual screens now for over five years, and in the last two we have given almost all staff members at Correct dual screens also. So why do we use them?

Quite simple really; by having two screens it means you reduce the need to change or flick between windows or programs as much, for example, you can leave your email program open on one screen while doing work in your accounts program on the other, if an email comes in, you don't need to tab between

windows to see if it is important or if it could be dealt with later.

What about having an Excel spreadsheet open and typing numbers from it into a Word document; you no longer need to minimise Word and memorise the information, only to restore Word again - you can easily key the data from one screen displaying Excel into the Word document you have open on the other.

So what equipment do we need to go to Dual screens? First you will need to buy a second screen, we suggest you get one the same size and the same model if possible, this will make things “look” the same when you look at them but also, using the same model will quite often give you the same “colour” and contrast on both screens.

You will also need a good video card that has multiple outputs, for business use, generally these will cost \$180-\$250 for one that has 2

monitor outputs, 3 & 4 Monitor outputs are available but the price is exponential.

Most people say they are about 20% more efficient with Dual screens, so if you consider you could get an extra day per week from staff, this works out to be a cheap one-off cost for long lasting benefits.

The only other thing to consider is the amount of real-estate a workspace has, but if you have the room, going dual screen around the office can have a positive impact on your business.

Contact the editor for more information

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