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Welcome to our 2nd edition of Bits & Bytes!

After a long hiatus, a company name change, a rebranding of our business and the addition of new services, we have relented to the many requests to bring back our popular bi-weekly newsletter.

As a previous customer, associate or perhaps someone we've met at a networking event, we wanted to provide you with a short summary of technology news and events that may be of interest to you.

"To SaaS or not to SaaS?"

Software as a Service (SaaS) is the term used for the newest generation of web based applications. Sometimes this is referred to as working "in the cloud".

Popular examples would be salesforce.com and Google Apps. These subscription based services allow you as a client to log into an application to do your work without installing any software on your computer (or a very small specialized program that is just for connection purposes).

The advantages of this model of software provision are many and include:

- **no capital purchase**/considered a monthly expense
- **no extra IT manitenance** as provider takes care of all upgrades and technical support
- **hardware requirements are minimal** and generally don't change over the long term

This model is great for keeping

DEATH TO DESKTOPS!

"Which should I buy, a desktop or a Laptop?"

A question posed many many times for us here at FMCN. These days, for owners not on a network or who have an existing station, the answer is Laptop.

Why?

The simple answer is that laptops today have almost the same power and capabilities as a desktop combined with the convenience of mobility so why NOT?

With the exception of high end multimedia and gaming systems, for the business user there is only 1 criteria about picking a laptop over a desktop and that is price.

A cheap laptop with basic functions can be on par with desktop systems ranging from \$499 to \$1000. For that kind of money you will get laptops that can use an office suite, surf the net, watch DVD movies, dock your iPod and do most standard functions.

The downside is that for that price range a desktop can come with larger display screens, better sound / speakers and some other options including upgradability that a laptop cannot match.

However, that all changes once you get to the next price point. \$1000-\$2000 can get you a whole new world of large HiDef screens (17-19"), blue ray players, Dolby surround sound and all

costs down and appeals to small business or new startups because of the lack of major initial implementation costs.

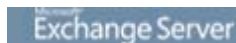
However, the biggest flaw with SaaS is that the data generally resides on the supplier's servers and should there be any interruption with the internet or communication with the server, your operation can come to a grinding halt. Usually, larger companies and multi-office organizations find this potential interruption too great a risk.

There are redundant options available but the cost and energy to implement these systems can be equal to or surpass the cost of a traditional software model. This makes having an effective disaster recovery plan much more difficult.



In the case of "Google Apps", they are essentially replicating a hosted solution similar to Microsoft Exchange/Outlook where you can have email, shared calendars, instant messaging, shared online documents etc.

There are other companies that do host actual Exchange and even Blackberry servers for a monthly fee and in some cases work in conjunction with on-premise servers.



For companies with 5 or less users, this may be a cost effective and viable solution as opposed to buying and implementing a larger scale "server" with traditional setups.

For others, a combination of SaaS and on-premise technologies might provide the right blend to maximize operations while

kinds of extras on your laptop that often means "death" for the less convenient desktop.

One example being the new Dell XPS 16 with a 16" high def (1080p) edge to edge screen, running core 2 processor with 4gb ram and blueray combo drive.



[Click the picture](#)

For around \$1600 you can get this power house of a computer which will replace any desktop and maintain all the features you need.

On the other hand the ultra lite "netbooks" have come into their own with smaller, lighter units that are designed for browsing and moderate work.

These units aggressively priced under \$500 in most cases offer full Windows (or Linux) systems using the latest in solid state technology for very low heat, noise and long battery life.

They are the opposite of the high end HD big screen laptops and are designed for the mobile professional who wants to check their email on the go, connect to remote applications and still have traditional Windows functions.



[Click the picture](#)

These units are of course a slower processor with an 8" screen and smaller harddrives (120-160gb). However for people on the go who are not worried about visual presentations on stand alone units, these are almost priced in the disposable category.

They do offer external monitor hookups and similar ports as their full sized brothers, but don't look for speed or loads of features.

keeping costs down.

SaaS applications can suit many businesses, however before any business jumps into such a program, consultation with an IT solutions provider is highly recommended.

So the next time you find yourself at the crossroads of a new computer, give a thought to what you are going to use it for and see if a laptop is for you.

SOUNDBYTES!

In today's edition, Jason and I address the question **"When do I have to actually BUDGET for IT services in my business?"**



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