FixmyComputerNOW.com

Weekly Tips	**February 17, 2009**

Welcome to our 3rd edition of Bits & Bytes!

After a long haitus, 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.

Skype, not just for geeks anymore!

One of the few technologies that has gained universal appeal is VOIP.

VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) refers to the ability to make telephone calls over an internet connection instead of a traditional copper or "hard" telephone line.

One of the leaders in this technology is SKYPE. Originally, Skype was a program designed to transmit audio conversations between computers using the internet.

Eventually they mastered that single core program and have since expanded to include streaming video conferencing, audio conferencing (more than 2 people at a time), voicemail and call forwarding features and, of course, the ability to connect to ANY phone number including hardlines and cell phones.

Now that technology has advanced even further to where cellphones themselves can use internet wireless networks, the ability to use Skype to avoid long

IMAGE AND ARCHIVING VS. BACKUP

A few months ago in a previous article about online backups vs traditional backups, we discussed external hard drives and how they can be an asset when used in any company's backup scenario.

In the last few months some new products have come out at better prices that can make your external hard drive backups even more secure and remove the fear of "what happens if the backup drive fails."

We usually recommend 3 types of backups for all businesses. The first is an "imaging" backup which takes a whole snapshot in time of a server and/or critical system which for disaster recovery purposes greatly reduces downtime and installation times.

The second is a traditional data "backup" whereby day to day changes are updated to an offsite, secured and regularly tested set.

Lastly, data that doesn't change and is not critical to operation can be archived for long term storage.

These new external hard drive systems are ideally suited for imaging and archiving.

distance charges and make "free" calls to anybody is very appealing.

In fact, Skype is still free to use between computers. Their paid services however, is where Skype's true strength lies.

For various rates (which are significantly better than any phone provider can offer), you can have Skype Out, which allows you to call any phone number for a fixed rate regardless of location. For example, their North American Skype Out package which is approximately $35 Cdn/year allows you to call any phone number in North America with no limits, no extra charges, no long distance or roaming fees.

Similarly, they have Skype In packages which allow you to have your own Skype phone number (which can be forwarded to any other line or cell phone) and will allow people to get a hold of you no matter where you are. This feature is a favorite of mobile professionals who want to keep one phone number and have it follow them everywhere they go.

To make things even better, Skype has now generated so much activity in the VoiP market that 3rd party companies are developing Skype Addins which are nice additions to have such as Pamela Addin which gives you the ability to record your conversations. There are also other add ins for contact management and erence calls, long distance calls and we even use it to record our soundbyte clips at the bottom of this newsletter.

It is PC, Mac and Linux compatible and connects to all manner of phone systems so it has come a long way since inception to become a leader in

Western Digital now has RAID mirrored 1Terrabyte and 2TB drives available for your backup needs. This means that the kit comes with two hard drives in them which automatically mirrors your data across both drives.

Effectively, you only get half the space of the drive to work with (ie. A 2TB drive has only 1TB of useable space) but it also means your data is being protected in case of damage to one of the hard drives. If one drive fails, the other can keep working until the defective one is swapped out. This setup is standard on almost all servers, but on a backup drive it gives you peace of mind in knowing that any data you place on that backup drive can't be lost due to mechanical failure.

You can take images (using software like Symantec System Recovery or Acronis True Image) which are generally tens or hundreds of gigabytes in size and easily save them for disaster recovery purposes. You can also store large amounts of archive classified data for long term care without worrying as much about hardware failure. This leaves your "data" backup option streamlined and efficient if you intend on using tapes or online solutions.

Depending on the size of the drive, you can pick one up for anywhere from $300 to $400. That is a

this type of service.

We recommend Skype and more specifically Skype Out as a resource to have in any business who needs to call and communicate outside of their area code.

You can visit Skype and take a trial download at Skype.com. meeting management which have been very popular.

With over 100 million users already, they are the top free VoiP application around.

We at FMCN have been using Skype for almost 5 years now and in our experience, we have been thrilled with the quality and reliability of the Skype system. We use it for our conf
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one time investment that is well worth it to know that your images and archived files are as well protected as your live data. You've heard us preach about the need for more than one backup of your data and these drives, with their huge amounts of storage space, and the protection of RAID mirroring, should be an essential part of any office backup.

Lastly, the newest benefit of these types of drives is that they now have a NAS (Network Attached Storage) option whereby the unit plugs directly into your network instead of a computer thus freeing up the need to always keep a computer on and connected.

They have basically added a network card to the unit and a little web browser host to allow you to "remote" to the unit via Internet Explorer or Firefox to configure it.

These options make the units truly versatile and user friendly when adding to your overall network.

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SOUNDBYTES!

In today's edition, Jason and I address the newest google tool: **Google Latitude**

And as a bonus treat to our Mac friends... Pc Vs. Mac

FREE DOWNLOADS

Firefox Web Browser

MalwareByte Anti-Malware Software

Bandwith Test