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Small Businesses Need an Intranet



As a small business owner, you enjoy the ability to operate quickly when action is needed. You appreciate the ease of communication within your office, and you can get things accomplished simply and efficiently. At least, that's the goal; maybe things aren't so smooth. One way to fix that is by integrating an intranet into your workplace.

What an intranet boils down to is an internal network which helps your business stay connected. This generally includes things like websites, portals, and email. Larger corporations tend to use intranets due to the sheer size of their workforce, but that doesn't mean that small businesses can't use them too. Using an intranet to stay in touch can benefit both your business and your work relations.

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Happy Thanksgiving



Autumn is upon us once again and, we are reminded how fortunate we are to help area businesses achieve success. From the Directive family to yours, Happy Thanksgiving!

On the Road to IT Nation!



It's that time of year again, Directive team members are hitting the road! From November 12th to November 14th, they're heading to Orlando for IT Nation!

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, IT Nation is an important conference for technology solution providers. During the event, our team members are able to attend hundreds of sessions and seminars, with topics ranging from in-depth product training to thought-leadership to customer service techniques, and more.

Just 28% of Organizational Data Stored Has a Clear Business Value



According to a recent survey by IDG Research Services of business and technology leaders, on average, only 28 percent of data stored and maintained has value to the day-to-day operations of a business. Translation: a whopping 72 percent of files stored by a business are useless.

The Plague of Dark Data

This statistic may reflect the data usage of your own company. Therefore, if the bulk of your data is essentially worthless, then why hang on to these files and pay good money to both store and maintain them? In the IT world, these files are known as "dark data." Gartner Inc. provides us with a great definition of dark data: "The information assets organizations collect, process, and store during regular business activities, but generally fail to use for other purposes."

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About Directive

We are a technology consulting firm specializing in technology implementation and management for businesses. We're known for providing big-business, Enterprise-Level IT services to small and medium-sized businesses.

Visit us **online** at:
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BYOD Might Not Be a Good Fit for Every Business



The concept behind BYOD seems really good-- employees bring their personal devices to work and

use them to accomplish company projects. Initially, BYOD was well received, but after reviewing the security risks, more companies are opting out of it. Is there another way to use mobile devices at work without all the hassle and risks of BYOD?

According to CompTIA's spring survey of 400 IT and business executives, 51 percent of respondents are opting not to do BYOD at all. Figures like this put a damper on the message of BYOD proponents, claiming that the use of personal devices at work was going to change the workplace forever. However, businesses aren't "throwing the baby out with the bathwater" by giving up on mobile devices, due in part to all the benefits they bring to the table. Instead, we're seeing companies take a different approach to mobile device use, namely, with CYOD (Choose Your Own Device). In a CYOD work environment, employers provide company-owned mobile devices to their employees. Up front, this approach will cost you a little extra money, but it will save you much more in the long run when it comes to preventing costly security breaches. Additionally, there are measures you can take to personalize company devices for the em-

ployees, like letting a worker choose the device model that they'll be using, and giving employees app store credit to purchase personal apps of their choosing (pending that they're first cleared by your IT management team).

Personalized measures like this will give employees an attachment to the company-issued device that people tend to naturally make with objects they carry on their persons (take for example your favorite hat), while giving your organization complete control of how the device is used. This addresses one of the trickiest issues concerning BYOD, which is how to go about deleting company data on a personal device.

If an employee is let go, certain company applications and files will have to be removed, and if you attempt to remove company data on a personal device, and you happen to delete their personal data or view sensitive information, then your business will be liable. This could lead to a messy legal battle that nobody wants. With the device owned by the company, you can completely wipe the data off the device without consequence because it all belongs to the company. Of course, you will want to notify the employee of this before giving them the device so that they'll be sure to backup any personal photos or files.

CYOD also provides employers with much more control over the device, which takes the guesswork out of knowing if an employee is or isn't following

company security policies. This level of control will help curb some of the worst security threats that come from BYOD. According to Marble Security Labs, the worst BYOD threats include:

- Malicious apps published by hackers.
- Mobile attacks over SMS messages.
- A compromised WiFi hotspot.
- Hostile configuration profiles.
- Unencrypted email attachments.
- Backup hijacking.

Additionally, Marble Security Labs analyzed 1.2 million iOS and Android apps and concluded that business data is inadequately protected by consumer apps on BYODs.

When it comes down to it, BYOD isn't a completely ridiculous idea. In fact, the benefits of BYOD may be worth the extra security precautions required to implement it. Alternatively, if you want to enjoy the benefits of BYOD, like increased employee satisfaction, productivity, and mobility, then going with a CYOD policy may be the easiest way to go about it.

To get personalized consulting to understand what is the best mobile device policy for your business, call Directive today at 607.433.2200.



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What Do You Look for in a Cloud Service Provider?



The cloud is the next big thing for some businesses, but a lot of the time, there are too many options thrown at them

all at once. They aren't sure what the best path is for their business. A cloud

solution can provide your company with a lot of benefits, but you want only the best for your business.

When it comes to the cloud, there seems to be a lot of confusion concerning certain parts of it. Additionally, there is a lot of interest in it as a service, but some businesses don't provide their prospective customers with a lot of detail, or

simply can't back up their bark with their bite. According to Joe McKendrick at Forbes, there are several concepts that you should look for in a cloud service provider. In fact, as a managed service provider, we offer these benefits:

- Clear pricing.
- Simple management.

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Small Businesses Need an Intranet

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There is No "I" in Team

Unless your business plans on flying solo, teamwork is important. If your goal is to keep your team informed, then an intranet can help you make leaps and bounds toward that goal. Even if your business is small, you're likely to deal with the "everybody knows everybody" syndrome, where gossip spreads and rumors are started. This leads to miscommunication, which can prevent tasks from being accomplished.

The key is to focus on goals and integrate proper planning. This can be accomplished by integrating a proper intranet into your business. An intranet can help you lay out clear, set goals. Your

team can then strive to accomplish these as one uniform entity.

Save Time and Save Money

We all know that wasted time in the workplace is, quite honestly, wasted money. In order to not waste time, you want to make information available to your team through the use of an intranet. If important information, such as deadlines, meeting dates, and workplace policies are all made publicly available, the chance of people being uninformed is mitigated. In turn, your team's productivity levels will soar.

Why Not Email?

We suppose you could just use email instead of an intranet, but we don't rec-

ommend it. Unlike an intranet solution, you won't be able to collaborate and edit in real-time circumstances. It will only lead to confusion and miscommunication. All of this is unnecessary when using an intranet solution from Directive.

We'll work with you to determine what kind of needs your business requires for its intranet, and make sure you meet them. At Directive, we're IT professionals who make the technology do the hard work, so you don't have to. Contact us for a free intranet consultation at 607.433.2200.



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Just 28% of Organizational Data Stored Has a Clear Business Value

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Often times, dark data piles up on a company's server out of an obligation to hang on to it that may or may not be legitimate. For example, a company may be required to keep files to comply with industry regulations, like in the healthcare industry with medical records. Other times, a business may not delete information because they have an inner sense that it's important; but, if pressed as to why it's important, it may be difficult to find an adequate answer. An example of seemingly-important files like these would be a company's network activity logs. While it's good to hang on to logs just in case you experience a network security issue, storing network logs going back two, five, or even ten years is quite unnecessary and takes up valuable hard drive space.

Data Will Only Get Darker

In regards to the future of data use in the workplace, it's expected to get darker. This is due in a large part to the IT trend known as The Internet of Things (IoT). With this trend, more organizations are adopting data collection solutions that feed company servers

information from a variety of Internet-connected sources. All of the data from IoT must be catalogued and stored for it to be of any use by analytics tools, and not all of this IoT data will need to be stored for long periods of time. Yet, many businesses will choose to hang on to drives full of IoT data, simply because they sense that it's important.

We are living in the middle of the information age. This increased amount of data is putting a stress on data infrastructures like the Internet. ISPs are struggling to expand their systems and update their hardware fast enough to keep up with data demands. Think for a moment how beneficial it would be for every Internet user if all of the Internet's unnecessary data was deleted. If 72 percent of the Internet's data was deleted, the performance of the web would dramatically increase. The same idea is true for your company's network. If you were to comb through your system and delete the dark data that you don't need, then you would see a boost in your network's performance.

The Rising Cost of Dark Data

Then there's the financial cost of dark data. Whether you store your data in the

cloud or on your company's in-house server unit, it cost money to maintain these systems.

Shining Light on Dark Data

One tedious solution to the increasing accumulation of all this dark data is to go through everything and delete what's not needed. While this isn't an impossible feat, it would certainly be a pain to pull off. Before undergoing such a large data chore, you will first want to count the costs of the project. Directive can help you plan for such a major data-management project.

Getting rid of dark data is only half the solution. In order to prevent your system from becoming overwhelmed with dark data, you will need a process in place that analyzes all incoming data and "separates the wheat from the chaff." To save your business the time of manually sorting through all incoming data, we can provide your business with tools that automate the data sifting process.

An automated process that determines which data to store and which to delete is still a new solution for the business

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What Do You Look for in a Cloud Service Provider?

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- Quality support.
- Honest assessments.

Prices are Tricky

Pricing for cloud services is often a complaint amongst those interested in moving to the cloud. The problem isn't necessarily about how much cloud services cost; rather, people are just plain confused about which services cost what. There is a ton of innovation involved with cloud services, and because of this, prices can vary exponentially from each service provider. Because of this, vendors can often drive away consumers without a solid pricing range. At Directive, our cloud services are flat-rate, monthly, and affordable. You won't

need to worry about any disconnection with us. You'll always know what you're spending, and what you're getting.

Make Management Easy

The cloud is a new and emerging platform for storing information and data, and as such, it can be tricky adjusting to it. A lot of consumers think that the cloud will be simple to operate, but they would be in for a rude awakening if they attempted it themselves. Without some training on the matter, cloud computing can be a difficult concept to grasp, especially for your end users.

Your cloud service provider needs to be able to make things easy for you. We have

professional IT technicians who can help ease you into the cloud environment.

Obtain Quality Support Services

As previously mentioned, cloud computing isn't simple by any means. You will require technical support in order for it to operate at maximum capacity. Directive provides several mediums of support, including phone and live chat support. Whenever you need help, we're here to help you solve the problem.



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We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.



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Solutions Integrator

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world. IDG conducted a survey and discovered that only 10 percent of businesses have a process in place that's completely automated, yet. Due to the growing pains of the data revolution, "77 percent of enterprises expressed interest in using a single platform solution that automatically manages data."

As advocates of protecting and putting a value on data, we understand that keeping your important information safe is paramount to business continuity. However, we often see businesses who need to reconsider their IT infrastructure every few years just to keep up with their data.

Could your company benefit from having a data-management solution that

streamlines operations and improves network performance and efficiency? Call Directive at 607.433.2200 to learn how to minimize dark data and find a data-management tool that's right for the unique needs of your business.



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