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Virus Alert: CryptoLocker Can Disable Your Business!



In September, a new ransomware came on the scene and it's been wreaking

havoc on computers the world over ever since. Given the name CryptoLocker, it's capable of taking over your system, encrypting your files, and literally holding your data ransom in order to extort money from you. If you don't pay, then your files are deleted. What's an honest business to do against such a threat?

How CryptoLocker Works

One thing that you don't want to...



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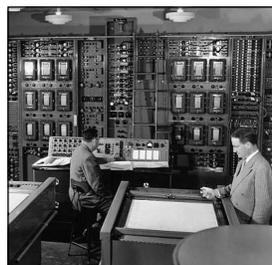
About Directive

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.

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The 50 Year History of Our Industry



Working in the IT industry means embracing change and the latest technology trends. Doing the same thing day-in and day-out is a luxury we don't have, and frankly, sounds kind of boring. Since computers were first invented, there's been a need to service them. Here's a look at how the IT service industry has changed over the past 50 years.

1960s & 70s: The Early Years

This was a time when only large companies could afford computers because they were expensive and took up a lot of space. In fact, computing was so costly in these days that businesses would pool together their resources and practice computer "time-sharing." Time-sharing allowed different businesses and users to interact concurrently through a single computer, which let companies take advantage of computing without having to own and maintain one.

The first generation of IT professionals maintained these time-sharing computers and helped develop new interactive applications. As we will see in the later of part of this article, history repeats itself and the old practice of computer time-sharing looks a lot like cloud computing of today.

1980s: Computers Become Affordable

Thanks to innovations by IBM, Macintosh, and Xerox, the 1980s was a revolutionary time for the IT industry as computers became more affordable for businesses. Three events in particular stand out as the biggest game changers for the IT service industry during this time.

- 1981: IBM launches VisiCalc, one of the first PCs. It had a spreadsheet program that revolutionized accounting and opened up a world of opportunity for CFOs.
- 1984-1986: Small businesses began taking advantage of PCs.
- 1988: IBM launches its PS/2 and 286/386 Revolution models which appeal to more departments than just accounting, thanks in part to the availability of WordPerfect and Lotus 123.

1990s: The Explosion of PC Popularity

The 90s was a time of PC innovation as computers became commonplace at work, in schools and at home, meaning consumers began using their PC for everyday tasks. Win-

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What to do with Your Old PC



It's nice to get a shiny new computer that's fast, powerful, and has all the latest features. Before you install your new machine,

you have to make a decision about what to do with your old one. Your old computer has been a faithful friend over the years so you may feel bad pitching it to the curb; instead, consider giving it a new home.

Donate it to Charity

If your old PC is still in good working order, then you may be able to bless someone who really needs a computer by donating it to a charitable organization. Plus, you should be able to write off the donation on your taxes, which will help your bottom line. You will also be able to get some nice PR out of your gift. Be sure to mention the donation in your company newsletter and post it on your company's social media account.

A charity will be able to give the machine to someone in Upstate New York that

needs it, or perhaps use it in their own office. Nonprofit groups are dependent upon the donations of others to keep operations going, and many groups would prefer to spend their funds on achieving their mission of goodwill. Therefore, spending money on technology may not be as high of a priority for a charity group as it is for a business like yours trying to maximize profits by utilizing the latest technology. A computer that's old to you may be leaps and bounds ahead of what a charity may be using.

Use it for Your Business

Maybe your old computer is no longer able to meet the demands of your position, but that doesn't mean it's totally useless for your business. There are likely several other positions in your company that aren't as high demanding as your own job and would benefit greatly from having your old computer. For example, maybe the receptionist just needs a reliable PC for word processing, web browsing, and accessing a few company specific applications. If your old computer is still in good working order, then another employee may find it useful, and this

move will save your company money from having to purchase a new workstation.

If your old computer doesn't have enough resources to run your business' essential applications, or if everyone in your company already has a reliable workstation, then you can still use your old PC for your business by retrofitting it as an NAS device for your company's network. With a bit of configuration, your old computer can be used as a print server to handle all print traffic, or you can use the old machine to host applications. There are several more ways that your old PC can be used to benefit your network by converting it to an NAS device. To learn more about these other uses, and to have Directive do the work of converting and configuring your old PC, then give us a call at 607.433.2200.

Prepare Your Old Machine before Handing it Off

Before you give your PC to a new owner, be sure to prepare it by wiping your information from the hard drive and giving the machine a few upgrades. The last

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4 Data Loss Scenarios that can Happen to You!



You may feel like your computer network is immune to data loss, but according to a study by Blackblaze.com, 46% of users

experience data loss every year. Whether it's from something big like a natural disaster, or minor like improperly removing a flash drive, every form of data loss is costly and can be prevented with a data backup plan.

Data loss can happen to anyone and it can strike suddenly. To illustrate how prevalent data loss is, we will go over four of the most common causes of data loss.

Hard Drive Failure

You may be running an old server and think that everything is working just fine, but the reality of your situation is that your old server is running on borrowed time. We recommend that you upgrade your computers every five years because hard drives become unreliable after the fifth year, and the longer you push past the five year mark, the the higher of a risk your drive has of failure.

The failure rate of a hard drive will be dependent upon its make and the model, so it's difficult to provide an exact lifespan for your particular drive. For example, Blackblaze released data stating that 80% of their hard drives are still operational after five years, and Google found that their drives have a

50% chance of failing within five years. Either way you slice it, pushing a hard drive beyond the five year mark is a risky move for any business.

Computer Viruses

The common perception about computer viruses is that they're primarily designed to steal your sensitive information like your credit card number. While it's true that there are many viruses made to steal your identity, there are also several nasty viruses out there that will delete your data. It's estimated that 4-to-7% of all data loss incidents are due to computer viruses.

Often times, there's no rhyme or reason as to why a virus will erase your data.

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The 50 Year History of Our Industry

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dows released popular operating systems and the potential of the Internet was becoming apparent. During the 90's, IT service companies also expanded into users' homes and helped educate the public on the many benefits of computers. Here are just a few of the major IT events from the 90s.

- 1990: Memory management becomes easy with Hard disks, and large scale Ethernet rollouts begin.
- 1994: Email is first tried out in the corporate environment using Lotus Organizer.
- 1995: For an IT technician, it's impossible to think of the year 1995 without first thinking about Windows 95. The way Windows 95 helped make computers easy to use for both consumers and businesses alike truly revolutionized how the world uses computers.
- 1996: PCs are now used as multimedia machines. IT service companies are there to install CD-ROMs, sound

and video cards, RAM, and speakers.

- The Late 1990s: Windows 98 and NT take the market share from Novell NetWare, PDAs become popular, consumers adopt email, and BlackBerry Enterprise Server launches.

2000s: The Modern Office Takes Shape

A lot of the technology businesses use today, like Windows XP, Vista, and 7, along with smartphones and video conferencing, were all introduced and began taking shape during this time, and IT service companies helped businesses remotely manage all of their technology and implement BYOD policies. A few tech milestones of the new millennium include:

- 2001: The launch of Windows XP, Microsoft's most successful OS that's still the most widely used OS on the market (and slated to lose support in April 2014).
- 2004: Salesforce introduces the first SaaS solution.
- 2006: iPhone launched and virtual-

ization projects become common.

- 2009: Laptops outsell desktops putting BYOD in the spotlight.
- 2010: Windows 7 launches.

Today: It's all about the Cloud

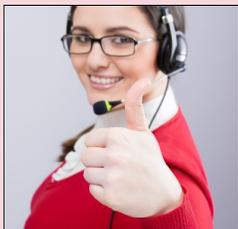
The IT service providers of today still administer the same great services that they've been offering for the past 50 years, with our latest emphasis being to help businesses adopt and become acclimated to the cloud. Cloud computing from Directive can save your business money on operating expenses, ensure your data is backed up and safe, and offset the cost of owning and maintaining expensive computer hardware--just like time-sharing in the 1960's!

To be a part of the history being made by Directive, give us a call at 607.433.2200!



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The 4 Best Things about Remote Support



If you've never taken advantage of remote support to remedy an IT problem, then you're likely doing IT support the hard

way by having a technician physically take care of every issue. While it's always nice to chat with your friendly tech, you may be able to save yourself a whole lot of time and money by taking care of the issue with remote support. Here are four benefits to remote support that can revolutionize how you take care of technology issues.

Efficiency

While it's true that most people prefer face-to-face communication over using the phone, face time comes at a premi-

um these days. In business, time is money. By spending the time making the arrangements to meet and having a technician travel to you is a big waste of time; especially if the problem can easily be resolved over the phone with a little guidance, or if we can directly take care of the issue with our remote IT services.

Saving Money

Not only does time equal money, but it also costs money to travel. If you're in the habit of routinely relying on outside IT technicians come to your office to fix your technology, then you're likely paying more for IT than you have to. This is because many IT support companies will pass on their travel expenses to you in your repair bill.

At Directive, we include technician visits in our flat-rate service contract, which

means your bill is the same every month, even if there's more tech visits than usual. Using remote support means that we're able to offer you this service for less, and because the issue is being resolved over the phone, we have zero traveling expenses. This allows us to pass the savings on to you!

Help the Environment

Less technician travel time means less time spent on the road. Taking advantage of remote support is a great way to save gas and put less CO2 in the air. If your business is looking to go green, and advertise your accomplishment, be sure to include "remote support" on your list of steps you've taken to be an Earth-friendly company.



Read the Rest Online!
<http://bit.ly/18EHvU1>

4 Data Loss Scenarios that can Happen to You!

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Some hackers just want to create viruses that make everybody else miserable. You will want to protect your business from computer viruses with a strong network security solution like a Unified Threat Management (UTM) tool. Call Directive at 607.433.2200 to receive a free network security audit, along with a consultation on how your business can protect itself from online threats.

Human Error

The second biggest cause of data loss is human error. This is something we are all prone to, in one form or another. Deleting data by accident might stem from a minor inci-

dent like forgetting to save your file and then having the power go out, or something major like accidentally formatting a hard drive. It's virtually impossible to take human error out of the equation, the only real thing you can do is to be proactive and make sure that all of your data is backed up.

Natural Disasters

A natural disaster can do more damage than demolish a building; it can also take out a company's IT infrastructure. If a fire turns your building into charcoal, then your servers containing your valuable data will be reduced to a glop of melted plastic and deformed metal. You might be

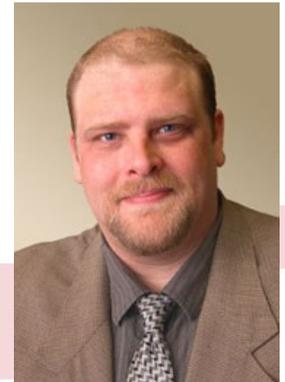
able to pass off the remains of your server as art and sell it to a government administrative building to decorate their lobby, but even money from an art sale will not be enough to make up for the data loss because your company's data is your most valuable asset.

The best way to protect your company's data from a natural disaster, human error, computer virus, hard drive failure, or anything else that can cause data loss is to back up your network with Directive's Backup and Disaster Recovery (BDR) solution.



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<http://bit.ly/18EGOtC>

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.



Chris Chase
Solutions Integrator

What to do with Your Old PC

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thing you want is to have your identity stolen or your accounts hacked because there was still sensitive information on your donated PC.

It's also a good move to install a new hard drive in your old computer before donating it. Disk drives have an average life cycle of five years, so if you gave a five-year-old machine to someone with the original hard drive in it, then

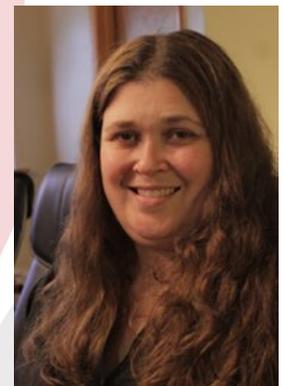
you may be giving them a lemon. Installing a new hard drive is a great way to guarantee that none of your old information can be accessed by the new user, and you can get a new hard drive for less than \$100.

Directive can help prepare your old computer for a new owner, or we can convert it to an NAS device. We can even recommend a good charitable organization that will be able

to find a new home for your old friend. Before tossing out a perfectly good piece of technology, be sure to give us a call at 607.433.2200 to learn about more ways that your old PC can be reused or properly recycled. Remember, a megabyte is a terrible thing to waste!



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Charlotte Chase
Solutions Integrator

Directive

330 Pony Farm Road
Suite #3
Oneonta, NY 13820
Toll-Free 888-546-4384
Voice: 607-433-2200



newsletter@directive.com



facebook.directive.com



linkedin.directive.com



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You lost a lot of files, but one Doc was recovered. Looks like your 2014 Resolutions. All it says is "Backup Data."

