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Google Docs Now Lets You Type With Your Voice, Here's How to Use It!

Use This Chrome Extension to Automatically Refresh Your Browser



Have you ever been glued to the computer monitor while compulsively hitting your

browser's refresh button? You might have done this while waiting for an online sale to drop or while waiting...



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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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Outsourcing IT Helps Businesses Maximize Their Return on Investment



You started your business because you have a particular skill set. This is what allows you to continue doing business as usual. However, this also means that there are some topics that you might not understand completely. This is why you hire employees from diverse backgrounds, and it's one reason that you should consider outsourcing what you can to professionals in specific fields.

In particular, outsourcing IT is a great way to reduce your overall amount of frustration towards technology, as well as decrease costs associated with managing it. There are immeasurable benefits and infinite possibilities that come alongside outsourced IT, and it's all to help you manage your technology in the most profitable way possible.

The Benefits

The most immediate benefit that your business can reap from outsourcing your IT management to a third party is the relief that comes from knowing your technology is in good hands. Professional technicians like those at Directive have years of experience maintaining and implementing new technology solutions, and they're privy to tricks of the trade. You can know with confidence that the folks handling your IT know how to keep it running at maximum operational efficiency.

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Here's Why BDR is WAY Better Than Backing Up Your Data With Tape



Data backup, regardless of its form, is a critical component of any modern IT infrastructure. If you're not using data backup or disaster recovery, your business could be risking crippling data loss. Even if your infrastructure is protected from typical threats like viruses and malware, these security solutions aren't going to prevent a devastating hardware failure.

In other words, it doesn't matter what your current state of data backup is; the fact remains that you need to have some sort of contingency plan put into place in the event of a data loss disaster. Businesses that are incapable of recovering after losing data tend to be out of business within the next year, so it's your job as the business owner to ensure that not only your own livelihood is secured, but your employees', too.

Granted, this doesn't mean that all data backup practices are considered equal. Most organizations currently use tape backup, which is far from an ideal backup solution. Here's why tape backup is considered an antiquated backup system, and how BDR can replace and even surpass it.

The State of Tape Backup

Tape backup may have been useful in the past, but it's quickly grown out of style in the business environment. The primary reason that tape is inefficient for a backup solution is due to it being a manual process that's prone to user error. If an employee forgets to set

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Why You Should Encrypt ALL of Your Data, Not Just Your Customers'



Businesses today are responsible for keeping the data in their care safe from hackers. There are two kinds of data

that a business must protect: the information of their customers, and their own data (eg. company policies and employee information). Which of the two do you think the average business does a better job of protecting?

Surprisingly, studies show that companies invest more into protecting the data of their customers than they do their own data. InformationWeek summarizes a survey conducted by Vanson Bourne:

Nearly one-third of companies and organizations with 100-to-2,000 employees in the US, Canada, India, Australia, Japan, and Malaysia, say they don't regularly encrypt their employees' bank information, and 43 percent don't always encrypt human resources files. Nearly half say they don't routinely encrypt employee health information.

It's rather shocking that so many businesses will leave such sensitive information unencrypted, meaning that, if a

hacker (or a nosy person) were to get their hands on it, they would be able to easily read it. Encrypted data is essentially worthless to a hacker; without having the encryption key, the data will appear like a bunch of jumbled letters and numbers. For many businesses, the financial services used automatically encrypts customer data. However, regarding their own data (like employee health information), it's the employer's job to make sure it's encrypted; which, let's face it, is something on the proverbial to-do list that's easy to let fall through the cracks.

Marty Ward, Vice President of Product Marketing at Sophos (sponsor of the survey), told InformationWeek, "That companies are prioritizing customer over employee data is not surprising. But it is surprising how much employee data is exposed out there, and [that they are] leaving intellectual property and financial data unencrypted."

Here are just some of the examples of data related to your everyday business operations that you should encrypt:

- Employee bank account information.
- Employee social security numbers.
- Employee health records.

- Company intellectual property.
- Company financial data.
- Passwords to company accounts.

If anything, companies should prioritize in encrypting their own data because there's so much at stake. For example, compared to a customer's credit card (which the credit card companies can cancel any charges that are deemed to be fraudulent), stolen Social Security numbers and employee bank account information can lead to major losses for victims that are irreversible.

The good news here is that encryption services are becoming increasingly easier to implement, which is why most of the organizations from the report said they have plans to encrypt their own sensitive data within the next one-to-two years. Do you have protections in place like data encryption that will ensure your company's sensitive information is as safe as it can be?

Give Directive a call at 607.433.2200 and don't take any chances with the important information that's under your care.



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Outsourcing IT Helps Businesses Maximize Their Return on Investment

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Another fantastic benefit of outsourced IT comes from saving money in the long run. Instead of paying immense up-front costs for your technology, outsourcing your IT allows you to make monthly payments for the same services and products. Doing so allows you to decrease your capital expenses and shift IT management to an operating expense.

The Possibilities

With outsourced IT, you can transform most aspects of your organization into an "as a service" offering, allowing you to not only remove the burden of managing technology off of your team's shoulders but also allowing for immedi-

ate cost savings. Are you having a hard time with server management, email hosting, cloud and virtualization services, or even implementing a data backup and disaster recovery solution? All of this can be done "as a service," which helps your business remain competitive and flexible.

Furthermore, the traditional break-fix IT model can be completely left behind. You won't have to worry about your technology breaking down on you and, in turn, breaking your budget. Outsourced IT solutions are proactive and managed, meaning that they aim to resolve issues before they become expensive problems.

If your business is ready and willing to break away from the traditional break-fix IT model, Directive can help you do so. Our trusted technicians know their fair share about implementing new solutions, and we always do our best to help businesses implement technology that's designed to improve your operations and increase your bottom line.

To learn more about how managed IT can benefit your business, contact Directive at 607.433.2200.



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Here's Why BDR is WAY Better Than Backing Up Your Data With Tape

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the tape, then that's a whole day's worth of data that could be lost. Furthermore, tape backups are extremely resource-intensive and are generally performed after hours to avoid downtime. This means that tape backups can only be performed once a day, at the most. To top it all off, restoring from a tape is cumbersome. Depending on how much data your business has, it could take anywhere from hours to days to restore your data.

The Benefits of BDR

Compared to tape backup, a Backup and Disaster Recovery (BDR) solution provides several benefits that make it a better choice for the continuity-minded business owner. Here are three of the benefits offered by a BDR solution:

- **Multiple backups per day:** The BDR's snapshot backup technology is capable of taking images of your data as it appears at a specific time. Any further backups taken of the data will only take into account files that have been changed, meaning that backups are less intensive, and more of them can happen throughout the workday. These backups are then sent to both the cloud for quick deployment, and to a secure off-site data center, where your data can be accessed in your desperate time of need.
- **Rapid recovery speed:** Thanks to your data backups being stored in the cloud, recovery can happen quickly and efficiently. There is no tape backup to deploy. It's simply a matter of receiving the data from

the cloud, and deploying it to your infrastructure. You can experience a data loss disaster, and be back in business relatively quickly-- far faster than any tape backup solution can offer.

Server virtualization: Best of all, the BDR device can temporarily take the place of your server, in the event it falls victim to hardware failure or a similar disaster rendering it inoperable. This gives you ample time to find replacement parts and repair your downed server while minimizing downtime in the process.

To learn more, give us a call at 607.433.2200.



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Let Us Coordinate All of Your Technology Vendors So You Don't Have To!



When it comes to technology, it's often difficult to understand how every bit of it fits into a complete IT infrastruc-

ture. In fact, if you were to ask your staff to communicate with your technology vendors, would they know how to do so? Understanding where your technology comes from, namely your vendors, is an important part of streamlining your business's operations.

The typical business relies on several vendors and the products they distribute, all in order to keep operations moving forward at a respectable pace. However, organizations that don't know how to approach their vendors, or aren't invested in achieving the most profitable relationship with them as possible, will find themselves and their budget limited. Knowing which vendors your business can benefit from is only the first step to success. In order to fully leverage the goods and services rendered from multiple different vendors, communicating with them is essential. This is

where vendor management services, like those that Directive offers, excel.

What is Vendor Management?

When we talk about vendor management, we're talking about a third party who is responsible for anything vendor-related within your business. This could be anything from hardware and software procurement to communicating with tech support on a client's behalf. Vendor management allows this third party to act as a single point of contact for your business, so you don't have to contact every vendor individually.

The Benefits of Vendor Management

Vendor management might seem impersonal on your part, but we assure you that it's the best way to approach your company's technology. Here are three of the most useful benefits that your business can reap from vendor management:

Single point of contact: If your business takes advantage of multiple solutions from several different vendors, you realize that communicating with so many different companies can be both time-

consuming and annoying. By taking advantage of vendor management, you only have to contact one party.

No more annoying product support:

Let's face it; dealing with vendor tech support all of the time can be outright annoying and infuriating, especially if you're working with people who are just plain impossible to communicate with. By having a third party handle all communications with a vendor, you know that whenever you need assistance, it will come from the friendly professionals at Directive.

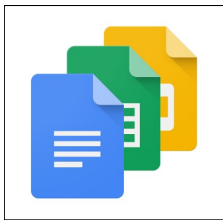
Stay informed about pricing or services rendered:

Some vendors will change their prices or service offerings based on the demand for their services. This can break your budget if you're not aware of the latest changes in their policies. By outsourcing your vendor management, a third party keeps tabs on what's happening with a vendor, so you always get the best return on investment for your payments.



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Google Docs Now Lets You Type With Your Voice, Here's How to Use It!



Voice-related technology is hardly news for

Google. Android smartphones have had voice capabilities for a long time now. Google Now, the function's official name, can be used for Internet searches, setting alarms, adding calendar entries, activating entertainment like movies and music, calling or texting friends, and countless other functions. Now, however, you can literally write entire documents by using your voice in Google Docs.

The new voice feature in Google Docs allows for a variety of commands that help you compose documents and edit them in real time, using only your voice. By using specific commands, you can write, format, and edit your Google Docs files. Just think; now you can finally give your hands the rest they deserve, and let your voice do the typing for a change. All you need is a microphone or a headset to get started.

To use your voice with Google Docs, you need to navigate to the **Tools** menu item. You should then see **Voice Typing** near the middle of the column. Select it, and a box should open in the left-hand sidebar of your window. It will be a picture of a **microphone**, and all you need to do is click it to start using your voice for writing. Once it is ready to start recording, the microphone will turn red and you can speak into it. Watch in amazement as the document writes itself, all by listening to your voice through the microphone. Just make sure that you're speaking in a clear manner.

Of course, you can't expect Google Docs' articulation of your voice to be 100 percent accurate. Thus, you need to make an effort to go back through your work and ensure top quality. ZDNet suggests that those who want to use Google Docs' voice features keep the following in mind:

- Voice commands are only available in English. The account and document language must be English.

- To select text, there are a variety of commands such as "select next character," "select next line," "deselect" and "unselect."
- Alignment terms are straightforward with left, right, center and justified.
- Text formatting has the basic commands such as bold, strikethrough and underline. Highlighting has multiple colors, but the default is yellow.
- Table additions also look simple.
- But moving around documents may be better suited for the mouse.

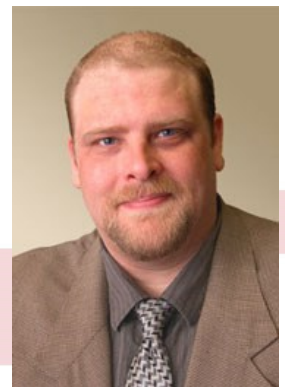
Would you be willing to use your voice for Google Docs, or would you rather just stick to writing the old fashioned way?

Let us know in the comments, and be sure to subscribe to Directive's blog for more great tips.

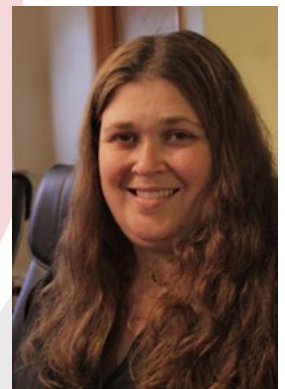


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We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is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



Chris Chase
Solutions Integrator



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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blog.directive.com

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