



THE RHODENIZER REPORT

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THE TAKE-AWAY POINTS:

- **No worries with the FileSafe file server.**
- **E-mail from Adobe? Just delete it.**
- **IE6: Not just outdated, it's dangerous.**
- **Use the Internet to identify annoying phone callers.**

A SAFE AND SIMPLE FILE SERVER

One of my biggest complaints with Microsoft Windows Server has been it's complexity. While it's capable of many functions that a large corporate I.T. department would find useful, even the "Small Business" version consists of numerous services and processes that most small businesses don't need running in the background constantly. This not only contributes to an overhead burden (slowing it down), but increases its vulnerability to attack.

Without frequent updates, reboots, and maintenance by an IT pro (which can be very expensive), Windows Server is arguably the most complex, the most vulnerable, and the most expensive to maintain server for a small business today.

"The more complicated the plumbing, the easier it is to stop up the drain." - Scotty

Fortunately, Server Partners, LLC, an Indianapolis-based company, offers a solution called FileSafe. It's a file server preconfigured to your needs, shipped to your location, installed by your local IT Pro, then monitored remotely 24/7 for a fixed monthly fee. There are no

startup costs or hidden fees. Plans begin at only \$99.00 a month, and it works with all Windows PC's or Mac OS X.

Since it runs on a Linux-based platform, antivirus software is unnecessary. Your Windows PC connects to the shared folders across your local network and they appear as mapped drive letters in Windows Explorer. Moving your files to the shared locations is as easy as drag-and-drop. Permissions can be set on each top level folder for users to either have "read", "read & write", or no access to them at all.

Files are backed up automatically to the local machine, an external USB drive, and to the remote monitoring center. You can restore a file from last night, the night before, or several other backup sessions previous to that if you wish.

If a total disaster strikes the office, you can have a new server shipped overnight with your most recently backed up files restored—for free. That should give any small business owner a warm fuzzy feeling.

While the FileSafe server, offers very good protection for critical company files, it's not the per-



fect fit for every small business environment. Those who need to use Windows-based server applications like Printer's Plan, Act, or Lacert, will still need a Windows server or a shared Windows workstation to run them on. Also, any server-based program requiring a Microsoft SQL Server back-end will not find it on the FileSafe. These limitations are a good thing for security reasons, but a bad thing if you need those apps.

For more information, check out www.filesafeserver.com. Or, to find out if this is the right solution to your specific business needs, call Cliff at (404) 202-8657 for a free consultation with no obligation.—C. R.

ADOBE E-MAIL PHISHING SCAM

PC World magazine reports that a new e-mail scam is making its way across the Internet, trying to fool people into thinking it comes from Adobe.

It announces a new version of a PDF Reader/Writer. The subject line reads "download and upgrade Adobe PDF Reader – Writer for Windows" and includes a fake Adobe logo. The e-mail comes from "newsletter@pdf-adobe.org".

My own investigation found that "pdf-adobe.org", which is part of this scam, was registered on Jan 16th by Kevin

Stubbs of Cheshire, England. His domain name re-directs the user's browser to the site "pdfnewdownload.com", which promises to provide a downloadable program after you complete an online registration and furnish credit card info. In fine print, the privacy agreement admits "...personal information will be shared with 3rd parties for the purpose of offering you products and/or services..." In other words, spammers.

The site contains no contact info for the "company" whatsoever.

In response, the real Adobe issued this statement:

"It has come to our attention that e-mail messages purporting to offer a download of the Adobe Reader have been sent by entities claiming to be Adobe. Many of these e-mails are signed as 'Adobe PDF' (or similar), and in some instances require recipients to register and/or provide personal information. Please be aware that these e-mails are phishing scams and have not been sent by Adobe or on Adobe's behalf." The real site is www.adobe.com.—C. R.



GOOGLE HAS HAD IT WITH IE6

Google has clearly had enough of Internet Explorer version 6. As of this coming March 1st, Google will no longer support IE6 on its Google Docs and Google Sites services.

Internet Explorer users will have to upgrade to at least version 7 if they want to use those products. Other companies have already stopped supporting older browsers like Internet Explorer 6.0. In fact, it's no longer even supported by Microsoft.

The recent cyber attacks against Google and other U.S. companies (some say from hackers within China), exploited a flaw in IE6—which prompted Microsoft to scram-

ble to patch it in a rare out-of-cycle update earlier this month.

According to statistics from StatCounter, use of this version of Microsoft's web browser has been dropping steadily with the releases of Internet Explorer versions 7, and 8, but it's still being used by 13.5 percent of Internet Web surfers.

Google now sets the minimum baseline for other browsers at Firefox 3.0 or higher, Chrome 4.0 or higher, and Safari 3.0 or higher. "

In a related story—A couple of days ago, the German Federal Office for Security in Information Technology advised German citizens to

switch from Internet Explorer (regardless of the version they use) to an alternative browser for security reasons.

Shortly afterwards, the French government issued a similar advisory, pointing out that Internet Explorer 6, 7 and 8, all share a similar vulnerability that allows malicious hackers to remotely execute arbitrary code.

The U. S. government issued a similar advisory about IE6 several years ago, mandating that all PC's in use by federal government agencies use something else—like Firefox. It remains unclear why that story was never really picked up by the mainstream media.—C. R.

"The recent cyber attacks against Google exploited a flaw in Internet Explorer 6"

QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX

Q- “When should I plan on replacing my office PC’s?”

A- The question indicates a desire to be proactive—which I enthusiastically applaud. You should always be prepared to repair or replace anything critical to business operations. Be prepared for lighting strikes, fire, theft, and other kinds of disaster.

Aside from that, there is no set lifespan for computers. They don’t slow down or wear out, though some problems may require extensive work to resolve. Components may need to be replaced, but that’s relatively inexpensive for desktop or tower PC’s.

The only reason I would recommend replacing an entire computer would be if:

- A. There is a problem that would be so expensive to fix that the cost is unjustifiable.
- B. Even if upgraded, the current platform no longer meets the needs of the user.

When making this decision, remember that the cost of a new PC is not just the price of the machine. It also includes the cost of getting it setup, installing all your applications, and transferring your files and personal data.

Q- “Is there any compelling reason why we should up-

grade from Office 2003—to Office 2007?”

A- If there is some feature in Office 2007 that you think would be beneficial to your business, evaluate it on that basis. Factor in the price of the software—plus memory upgrades (Microsoft’s stated minimum memory requirements for Office 2007 is 1GB) and weigh the cost versus the benefits to arrive at your answer. Also consider the learning curve as well. That UI ribbon takes some getting used to.

For most small businesses, I think Office 2003 with all the latest service packs and updates is entirely adequate.

Q- “I would like to download the Office 2010 beta version to try it out, but I don’t want to mess up the licensed version of Office 2007 I have on my PC. Is there something I should do first to protect it?”

A- You can either create a backup image of your PC first with something like Norton “Go Back”, or Acronis True Image, so you can restore everything back to the way it was before (and hopefully nothing goes wrong), - or just get a cheap PC to install it on so you can experiment with no fear of messing anything up on your primary PC.

For the non-technical person, the second option is probably

the best. It’s a good idea to have a spare PC for research and experimentation. Install anything you want to test out first on that PC before you take the plunge on your primary system. If the test PC develops a problem, you can reformat and reload everything from scratch in your spare time—or have someone do it for you. That’s the safest way to go.

Q- “Windows Update keeps bugging me to upgrade to Internet Explorer 8. Should I go ahead and do it, or wait?”

A-It depends on which version you have now. If you have Internet Explorer version 7, you are OK to wait but don’t be afraid to upgrade if you want to. IE8 is reasonably mature now and has a “compatibility mode” button that will let you emulate the previous version if you encounter any problems.

If you still have Internet Explorer version 6, upgrade to something else right now. Seriously, stop reading and do it now. Upgrade to IE7, or IE8, or Firefox, or Chrome, or Safari, or anything else current, but do the rest of the Internet a favor and stop using that notorious virus magnet. If you need help, call me.



“If you are still running Internet Explorer version 6, upgrade to something else right now. Seriously,...”

See the “Cliff’s Pick’s” page on my website for shortcuts to the best prices on printers, scanners, software, and much more ...

www.rhodenizer.com

E-mail your questions to:

AskCliff@Rhodenizer.com

WHO KEEPS CALLING ME?

Someone keeps calling. You don't recognize the number so you let it go to voicemail. They don't leave a message, but continue to call a couple of times each day. Aggravating, isn't it?

So, you finally decide to answer and give the caller a piece of your mind, only to find out that it's a recording. There's no person on the line to tell that you don't want to receive any further calls.

You may be able to find out who the caller is by using a reverse-lookup service like

AnyWho by AT&T. Just visit www.anywho.com and click the "Reverse Lookup" button. Enter the phone number and see if the search results reveal a name and address. Unfortunately, unlisted numbers and cell phones aren't included, but don't give up yet.

Google the phone number in quotes, like: "(877) 252-2460" - which happens to be the number of my latest antagonist. If that number has been on a website anywhere for any reason, you'll probably find something about it.

My search led to numerous results - including sites made specifically for people to record complaints concerning repeated marketing calls.

I not only learned that the number belongs to a cable company, but that they had been reported to the FCC several times already.

Once you know who is calling, you can decide what to do with that knowledge.

You can also register your home and cell numbers on the national "Do Not Call" list at www.donotcall.gov.



ABOUT RHODENIZER IT

We are a different kind of IT service provider. We don't resell any hardware or software. We find the best deals on what you need and pass the savings along to you.

Our mission is to help small businesses reduce expenses, increase productivity, and safeguard private information.

It's about more than just fixing computers. We also

provide IT consulting and services that include finding the best solutions to your business problems.

We work with clients to prepare disaster recovery plans that ensure their critical data remains safe, yet easily accessible. Additional benefits include money-saving ideas for managing your computer resources and planning for future business expansion.

We have the training, experience, and know-how to provide the right solutions for your needs, and your budget.

Just call to schedule your **free initial consultation with no risk, and no obligation.**

Tell me about your computer needs or IT issues. I'll recommend a course of action that makes sense for your situation at no cost to you. What have you got to lose?

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