



THE RHODENIZER REPORT

NOVEMBER 2007

www.rhodenizer.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MICROSOFT OFFERS FREE ONLINE SHARING	1
I FINALLY GOT A BLACKBERRY	1
IS YOUR BUSINESS INFORMATION SAFE?	2
QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX	3
MICROSOFT RELENTS TO CONSUMER DEMAND	4
ABOUT RHODENIZER IT	4

THE TAKE-AWAY POINTS:

- More free software and online file sharing
- My Blackberry Curve 8310 has internal GPS
- Disaster recovery plan saves your business
- Microsoft extends Windows XP deadline until June 2008.

MICROSOFT OFFERS FREE ONLINE SHARING

In response to Google's free online applications and document sharing announcement last month, Microsoft has now announced Office Live Workspace, a new web-based feature of Microsoft Office that lets you create, store, and access documents online and share them with others at no charge.

Office Live Workspace is among the first in a new wave of online services coming soon from Microsoft. Users can save over 1,000 documents to one place online and share them with others in a password-protected, invitation-only workspace. Other users who don't have a desktop version of Microsoft Office installed can still view and comment on the documents in their web browser, Microsoft states.

This new strategy departs from the company's current model of selling software licenses and takes it a little closer to competitors (like Google) which offer free online versions of productivity applications including spreadsheet, word processor and presentation tools (no desktop software required).

Not to be outdone, Adobe Systems has also announced an agreement to acquire its own online word processor called "Buzzword". Plans are underway to add it to a new file sharing service (code-named "Share") that they claim will make it easier for people to share, publish and organize documents online.

Last, but not least, IBM has announced its own free "Office-



like" software called Lotus Symphony. Boasting 100,000 free downloads its first week, their software is based upon the OpenOffice.org applications I wrote about in the Sept. issue.

I think we are witnessing a historic turning point in the history of software. Think about how these changes can impact the way you do business. Are you ready for the future? - C. R.

I FINALLY GOT A BLACKBERRY

Waiting for a compelling reason to take the plunge, I recently learned of the new Blackberry Curve 8310. Just released in the U.S. and only available from AT&T Wireless, this is the only Blackberry to have all the features they are famous for plus a 2-megapixel camera and built-in GPS. While the larger 8820

has built-in GPS, it has no camera. When I learned that this little feature-packed 8310 included everything I had been waiting for and was priced \$100 less, I decided to go for it.

Setup was probably more difficult than it needed to be because I chose to order mine

online. The wiser choice may have been to purchase at the store and have it set up and tested there. But, always the techno-explorer, I chose to experience this challenge myself. After overcoming a few minor glitches, I emerged victorious. Kudos to AT&T Mobility tech support for finding (cont. P. 2)

I FINALLY GOT A BLACKBERRY (CONT.)

(cont. from P.1) a quick solution on their end. All functions are working fine now.

Only slightly larger (and lighter) than my Motorola RAZR, the Curve rides comfortably inside my pocket. Also, for a device this small, the speaker sounds impressive during calls, as well as with ring tones and music.

The most impressive feature by far is the internal GPS. TeleNav can not only give

directions but also provides a directory of gas stations near my position, sorted by lowest price. Very cool.

The cost of the device is actually small compared to the recurring costs of the additional data plan (\$30), and the TeleNav service which provides maps and traffic information (\$10 for unlimited routes). This raises my monthly \$60 cell phone bill to about \$100. Fortunately, it's a business expense justified

by increased productivity. To be able to quickly navigate from one address to another through Metro-Atlanta traffic is worth it all. I also get push email, better synchronization with Outlook, and the ability to do more while on the go.

I wish the rechargeable battery lasted longer. But, it usually puts in a full days' work before needing a recharge. Overall, I am pleased with my new BlackBerry and the freedom it gives me. -C. R.



IS YOUR BUSINESS INFORMATION SAFE?

I recently found some statistics published in a New England university survey that we should consider alarming. It reports that 3 out of 5 people admit to having lost files they thought were being backed up, and 93% of businesses devastated by natural disaster never fully recover. Why? They were never adequately prepared for it.

Just think about how you would rebuild after a fire, flood, or tornado. Insurance can pay for replacing lost or damaged computers, but no amount of money can ever replace your missing information. How could you operate your business with no client information, no records, no billing or accounting info? How will you explain to the

bank, the IRS, and everyone you do business with that you never took the time to create a disaster recovery plan?

Many I've spoken with don't recognize this as a high priority because they assume there will always be time to deal with it later. However, this most recent information reveals that 93% of us are just one lightning strike away from losing our businesses.

I can't over-emphasize the importance of backing up your critical files and keeping those backups in a separate location. For everyone with business or personal information to protect, the key points to remember are:

1). Identify all the sources of information you need saved.

2). Make sure that information is being backed up on a regular basis automatically, not whenever you think about doing it. People get busy and tend to forget.

3). Ensure those backups are reliable. Test them periodically for errors.

4). Rotate your backup devices, tapes, disks, etc., to a separate location on a regular schedule (at least weekly).

5). Don't store software disks with computers. Keep them in separate locations. It's easier to deal with the loss of one, than the loss of both.

6). If you need help, don't hesitate to call an IT pro. A comprehensive disaster recovery plan is the cheapest insurance you can buy.—C. R.



You are just one lightning strike away from losing your business!

QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX

Q— “If you are so into modern technology, why aren’t you using text messaging?”

A— Instant Messaging is more about modern culture than technology. It has its place in small workgroups but I don’t think it’s appropriate for all manner of communications. I see too many people texting while driving, while they should be listening to someone else, or as a way of avoiding personal contact. Hastily worded messages are fine for communicating facts and figures, not for complex thoughts and emotions.

If instant communication is needed, the phone is a better choice for me. If it can wait, send me an email. I convey thoughts better in writing when I have some time to think about my choice of words and how they may be perceived by someone who can’t see my face or hear the tone of my voice.

Q— “As long as I’m backing up everything on my PC, can’t I just restore it all to a new PC if I have to start over?”

A— Unless the new PC is identical to the old one, you will run into some problems.

Some of the files you back up are part of the operating system. Some files were created when applications were installed. And, some are files you created. A new PC will

have its own operating system with drivers and configuration data to match that hardware. If you over-write those with files from your original PC backups, you’ll have to re-install them again.

Acronis True Image is a backup program that creates an image that can be used to restore your system. However, in the event of a disaster you will likely have to restore to a new PC that requires different drivers. Acronis sells an optional plug-in to their backup program called Universal Restore. This software works with Acronis backup to create a “smart” backup that can prompt you for the drivers it needs to boot up. This makes it possible to boot the saved image to a new PC, but you’ll still have to install drivers for video, network card, sound card, etc., if it can’t find a generic Windows equivalent.

Restoring to a different PC can be a messy and time consuming process. Imaging tools are useful as part of a comprehensive recovery plan. But, the key to a rapid recovery is advance planning and preparation. If you’re not sure how to handle this, let an IT pro recommend a solution that fits your needs.

Q— “Is my antivirus software enough to protect my PC?”

A— No. It can only protect you

from viruses it recognizes and has a cure for (signature files). It can not protect you from Trojans, worms, malware, spyware, root kits, or any other threats it has not been made aware of.

Antivirus software should be just one part of a multi-layered defense strategy. Most DSL or cable modems have no firewall. If your PC connects directly to these, you’ll need firewall software (like ZoneAlarm) as well. If you have a combo modem/router/firewall, or a router with firewall, you don’t need additional software as long as the router has been properly setup and configured.

For the PC, I recommend AVG, Avast, or NOD32 for virus protection. AdAware, AVG, and Spybot Search & Destroy are my choices for spyware protection.

For additional protection, turn off file sharing and disable services running in the background that you don’t need. I’ve created a video and step-by-step instructions for how to do this on the “Video Tips” page of my website (www.rhodenizer.com).

Send your questions to:
questions@rhodenizer.com

If we use your question in one of our newsletters, we’ll send you a free Rhodenizer IT stainless steel travel mug.



“... Antivirus software should be just one part of a multi-layered defense strategy.”

MICROSOFT RELENTS TO CONSUMER DEMAND

Yielding to popular demand, Microsoft announced it will continue to sell Windows XP through June 2008, five months later than the deadline set when Windows Vista was launched in January. Computer sellers may still preinstall Windows XP on machines until Feb. 1, 2009.

"Some customers need a little more time to make the switch to Vista," said Mike Nash, in a Microsoft video interview. "we're responding to feedback that some customers will benefit by extending availability of XP." Nash said the move was prompted

by customer demand but also acknowledged they may have overreached in trying to retire XP only a year after releasing Vista. "Most previous releases were available for about two years after the new version shipped, so maybe we were a little ambitious".

He also defended Vista, which has come under fire from some system builders as hardware hungry, buggy, and bereft of drivers. Saying that Vista is on track to being "the fastest-selling operating system in history", Nash repeated the claim that Microsoft COO, Kevin Turner, made

about selling 60 million Vista licenses so far.

Microsoft has been caught off-guard by the continued popularity of Windows XP. In July, CFO Chris Liddell told financial analysts that the company adjusted its 2008 forecasts to account for a larger percentage of revenue coming from XP (from 85/15 in favor of Vista, to 78/22).

Dell, the world's No. 2 computer seller, bowed to pressure from customers earlier this year and reinstated Windows XP as an option, despite objections from Microsoft at that time.



ABOUT RHODENIZER IT

We are a different kind of IT service provider. We don't sell any hardware or software. There are no sales incentives for steering you toward a particular product. We provide IT consulting services that include finding the best deals on what you really need and passing the savings along to you.

Our mission is to do more than fix computer problems.

Our mission is to help small companies save money, increase productivity, and safeguard private information.

We work with clients to prepare disaster recovery plans that ensure their critical data remains safe, yet easily accessible at all times. Benefits of such strategic planning also include money-saving ideas for managing resources and reducing IT expenses.

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 IT problems or concerns. Let me recommend a course of action that makes sense for your situation. I'm betting my time that you'll be impressed.

Rhodenizer IT
Information Technology Services

P. O. Box 768122
Roswell, Georgia 30076

www.rhodenizer.com

The Rhodenizer Report is published and distributed by Rhodenizer IT, Inc. © Copyright 2007. All Rights Reserved.

DISCLAIMER: The information, opinions, and recommendations expressed within are for general knowledge and are not intended to be a substitute for personal consultation. Furthermore, some information may be based upon other information provided by third parties. Unless specifically stated, no form of independent verification is undertaken. The author is not responsible for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies. This information is provided free of charge and is without warranty, neither explicit nor implied. The reader assumes all risk when performing any computer modifications without the direct supervision of a qualified IT professional.