

## RB Balch PC Tips Newsletter, NOVEMBER 2007 – Are your passwords "strong"?

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Reflections of **Better Business**

Your guide to technology and an error-free computer environment

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By: **RB Balch & Associates, Inc.** Full service, award winning computer consulting firm. Serving AZ since 93.

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### SPECIALS THIS MONTH

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**NOVEMBER - THANKSGIVING Special.** I'm thankful - my daughter is having the big Thanksgiving festivities at her house this year. There must be something you can give thanks for too. We're thankful that we're approaching our 15<sup>th</sup> year pretty soon. SO. Mention this newsletter for \$25 OFF your invoice this month - you can use our Thanksgiving special for multiple visits during the month of November (one discount per day).

Hardware special: power surge "squid" stripes. Regular \$23.00; SPECIAL \$19 EACH when we bring to your onsite visit.

REMINDER: we can help you "build" a new computer online with Dell – we do not markup – same pricing ordering with us or from Dell. We can order for you (no fee to order), bring and setup.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Contact us at 623-561-9366 OR at [help@rbbalch.com](mailto:help@rbbalch.com) OR online from our website [www.rbbalch.com](http://www.rbbalch.com) to schedule online. **If you schedule online, you'll save an additional \$5 off your next appointment.**

## REMOTE TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Contact us for remote technical support - it's easy, fast, less interruptions at the office and less expensive for you! (1/2 hour minimum)

Our motto: "you don't have a problem until you have a problem". Think about it. Contact Rochelle at [rb@rbbalch.com](mailto:rb@rbbalch.com).

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## 2 TECHNOLOGY/COMPUTER TIP

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### THIS MONTH: Are your passwords "strong"?

BY: Matt Erickson, RB Balch Consultant

Do you know what your passwords are? For your computer? For the server? For the router? For other computers in the office?

Are they posted on a "sticky" somewhere - for everyone to see? Have any of your passwords been set to the default?

Many people do not take security and passwords seriously. After all, who would want my data? But - it may not even be your data "they" are after.

Hackers are equipped with advanced programs that make breaking short passwords a very quick & simple process. Short passwords are a recipe for disaster.

Create "strong" passwords - use alpha and numeric characters WITH some special characters AND use both upper and lower case. These passwords should also be at least 15 characters long! \*Password are not stored on your machine if you EXCEED 14 characters in length; this makes it much more difficult for a hacker to "hack" into your password.

Some of the reasons a hacker may be interested in your computer can include:

- \* File storage: Use spare space on your server to store their files, movies, music, pictures. Some of the content may be very questionable and even offensive...but it's free for a hacker. These files are almost always illegal and you could be held responsible for it.

- \* Spam: Use your server to send out spam

- \* Phishing: Use your server to send out phishing emails (emails that look like another "real" web site . . . but it really goes to the hacker's site). For example, a banking site, asking you to confirm your social security number for "security". "They" get the info - and it's tracked back to you.

- \* Illegal activity: Use your server to conduct an illegal business. You can be held responsible for this.

\* Financial data: Search your files for financial data - and then work more scams

\* Credit cards: Search your files for credit card and other confidential information - and use as they see fit. Perhaps sell your identity.

Do you begin to see the problem?

Change your passwords and keep them secure. Anytime someone leaves your office, make it a company policy to have everyone change passwords. Why leave doubt in anyone's mind - just in case something were to happen.

A simple change to your server can make passwords expire in a pre-determined amount of time. This forces everyone to make new passwords as often as you see fit. Along with that, a complexity requirement can be put in place for ALL new passwords.

Another common feature available on your server can allow passwords to be changed only by the Administrator. Employees who have been let go often like to change their passwords to make their computer unusable. This feature will prohibit users from changing their passwords, leaving a functioning computer.

Be secure. Be safe. Sleep well at night.

Need help to secure your computer environment? Let us help. Contact us at [help@rbbalch.com](mailto:help@rbbalch.com) 623-561-9366 or Rochelle directly at [rb@rbbalch.com](mailto:rb@rbbalch.com) OR schedule on-line at [www.rbbalch.com](http://www.rbbalch.com)

**Have an idea for a topic? Just let us know – or send in your questions to [help@rbbalch.com](mailto:help@rbbalch.com)**

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### **3 Andy's Did You Know?**

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***By Andy Karpel, the "A lot about nothing" expert***

**MONTH: NOVEMBER**

**Birthstone:** Topaz, Citrine Meaning: Fidelity

Derived from the French word for lemon, "citron", Citrine is one of the most affordable gemstones. Citrine includes yellow to gold to orange brown shades of transparent quartz. Sunny and affordable, citrine can brighten almost any jewelry style, blending especially well with the yellow gleam of polished gold.

In ancient times, citrine was carried as a protection against snake venom and evil thoughts. Most citrine is mined in Brazil. Supply of citrine is good from the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, from the Serra and The Ira' mine.

Sometimes you will hear citrine referred to as topaz quartz, which is incorrect. This name was used in the past in reference to the color, which is sometimes similar to the color of topaz. Since topaz is a separate mineral, this type of name can be confusing and should not be used. However, citrine is considered an

alternative to topaz as the birthstone for November. Since most citrine on the market started its life as amethyst which was heated to turn its color to gold, citrine jewelry, as well as amethyst jewelry, should be kept away from prolonged exposure to strong light or heat. With this precaution, citrine jewelry will last for many generations.

**Flower:** Chrysanthemum

**Astrological Sign(s):** Scorpio The Scorpion Oct. 24 - Nov. 21

Sagittarius The Archer Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

**Moon Phases:** Nov 1 Last – Nov 9 New – Nov 17 1st Qtr – Nov 24 Full

Thursday, November 1 All Saint's Day

Friday, November 2 Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Sunday, November 4 Daylight Savings time ends (AZ stays the same)

Tuesday, November 6 Election Day - please exercise your right to vote

Saturday, November 10 USMC Day

Sunday, November 11 Veteran's Day

Tuesday, November 13 Sadie Hawkins Day

Thursday, November 22 Thanksgiving Day

**Andy's "I didn't know that"** November 10 1775: USMC Day The Birth of the U.S. Marine Corps. During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress passes a resolution stating that "two Battalions of Marines be raised" for service as landing forces for the recently formed Continental Navy. The resolution, drafted by future U.S. president John Adams and adopted in Philadelphia, created the Continental Marines and is now observed as the birth date of the United States Marine Corps.

The first Marine landing on a hostile shore occurred when a force of Marines under Captain Samuel Nicholas captured New Providence Island in the Bahamas from the British in March 1776. Nicholas was the first commissioned officer in the Continental Marines and is celebrated as the first Marine commandant. After American independence was achieved in 1783, the Continental Navy was demobilized and its Marines disbanded. Due to increasing conflicts at sea with Revolutionary France led the U.S. Congress to establish formally the U.S. Navy in May 1798.

Two months later, on July 11, President John Adams signed the bill establishing the U.S. Marine Corps as a permanent military force under the jurisdiction of the Department of Navy. U.S. Marines saw action in the so-called Quasi-War with France and then fought against the Barbary pirates of North Africa during the first years of the 19th century.

Since then, Marines have participated in all the wars of the United States and in most cases were the first soldiers to fight. Today, there are active-duty and reserve Marines, divided into three divisions stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; Camp Pendleton, California; and Okinawa, Japan.

Each division has one or more expeditionary units, ready to launch major operations anywhere in the world on two weeks' notice. Marines expeditionary units are self-sufficient, with their own tanks, artillery, and air forces. The motto of the service is Semper Fidelis, meaning "Always Faithful" in Latin. ....**And now you have the FACTS**

**Andy's second hand "tidbits"** The 1st official Thanksgiving Proclamation made by the American colonies was issued by the Continental Congress in 1777. Six national Proclamations of Thanksgiving were issued in the first thirty years after the founding of the United States of America as an independent federation of States.

President George Washington (2), President John Adams (2), President Thomas Jefferson (none) and President James Madison (issued 2).

In 1789 Washington, designated a national thanksgiving holiday for the newly ratified Constitution, specifically so that that the people may thank God for "affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness" and for having "been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed..."

After 1815 there were no more Thanksgiving Proclamations until the Presidency of Lincoln, who made two during the Civil War. He declared Thanksgiving a Federal holiday as a "prayerful day of Thanksgiving" on the last Thursday in November. Since then every U.S. President has always made an official Thanksgiving Proclamation on behalf of the nation. President Franklin D. Roosevelt set the date for Thanksgiving to the fourth Thursday of November in 1939 (approved by Congress in 1941)

**Andy's "Imagine That" – Why is Tuesday election day?** Election Day in the United States is the day set by law for the selection of public officials by popular ballot. Federal (or National) Elections always occur on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November of every even numbered year (the Tuesday between November 2 and November 8, inclusively).

Congress has mandated a uniform date for Presidential and Congressional elections, though early voting is nonetheless authorized in many states. In Oregon, where all elections are vote-by-mail, all ballots must be received by a set time on Election Day, as is common with absentee ballots in most states (except overseas military ballots which receive more time by Federal law). In the state of Washington, where most counties are vote-by-mail (and in the others most votes are cast by mail as permanent absentee ballots), ballots need only be postmarked by Election Day.

Election Day is a legal holiday in some states, including Delaware, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maryland, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia. Some other states have laws that allow workers to take time off from employment without reprisal, and often without loss in pay. A uniform date for choosing presidential Electors was instituted by the U.S. Congress in 1845.

Many theories have been advanced as to why the Congress settled on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The actual reasons, as shown in records of Congressional debate on the bill in December 1844, were fairly prosaic. The bill initially set the national day for choosing presidential Electors on "the first Tuesday in November," in years divisible by four (1848, 1852, etc.). But it was pointed out that in some years the period between the first Tuesday in November and the first Wednesday in December (when the Electoral College met) would be more than 34 days, in violation of the existing Electoral College law.

So, the bill was amended to move the national date for choosing presidential Electors forward to the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, a date scheme already used in the state of New York. As for the day of the week chosen, Sunday was ruled out because it was the Sabbath. An election on Monday

might require travel on Sunday, **and so it was also ruled out. Tuesday had no problem....."imagine that"....**

**YET MORE important useless information**

Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail.

Seat belts are not as confining as wheelchairs.

How come it takes so little time for a child who is afraid of the dark to become a teenager who wants to stay out all night?

Why is it that at class reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?

Scratch a dog and you'll find a permanent job.

No one has more driving ambition than the boy who wants to buy a car.

There are worse things than getting a call for a wrong number at 4 AM. It could be a right number.

I've reached the age where the happy hour is a nap.

Be careful reading the fine print. There's no way you're going to like it.

The trouble with bucket seats is that not everybody has the same size bucket.

Money can't buy happiness -- but somehow it's more comfortable to cry in a Corvette than in a Yugo.

The only trouble with retirement is you never get a day off!!

**Quotes:**

The chief qualification a politician should have: "It's the ability to foretell what will happen tomorrow, next month, and next year and to explain afterward why it didn't happen."..... Sir Winston Churchill

"Politics is supposed to be the second-oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first" ....Ronald Reagan

"May your stuffing be tasty - May your turkey plump, May your potatoes and gravy have nary a lump. May your yams be delicious and your pies take the prize, and may your Thanksgiving dinner stay off your thighs".....Unknown



**4 Community Update**



**ENTREPRENEURIAL Conference. 11/08/07. Rochelle will be a moderator for one of the small business panels. [www.azentrepreneurship.com](http://www.azentrepreneurship.com)**

**RB Balch is proud member of:**

Arizona Small Business Association (ASBA) - Chamber of Commerce - National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) - Better Business Bureau (BBB).

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## **5 RB Balch. WHY do we issue this and WHO are we?**

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WHY: Purpose of this newsletter?

To help you learn more about technology and computers

To be informal and informative

To answer specific questions asked by readers

....To continue our commitment of keeping you informed

Reflections of **Better Business** (published since 1994) is for employees, clients, friends and associates of **RB Balch**.

WHO ARE WE: RB Balch. Computer-consulting firm. Established 02/93. Experienced. Reliable. Ethical. Good. Revenues since 1993 over \$20 million. Our mission is to be your one source solution for all of your computer needs. Consider us your "computer guy", your IT department. We're only an email or phone call away.

### **SERVICES: PC Field Support, Software Development Projects, Business/Marketing Consulting, Seminars & Keynotes.**

*PC Field Support:* PC troubleshooting, network installation and maintenance, server and workstation setup/support, hardware and software upgrades, virus and spyware detection & repair, data recovery, backup/restore, programming, web design, web and email hosting, more. Troubleshooting is our specialty. Contact us as needed, or set-up recurring regular GOLD maintenance appointments (discounted, no contracts, no pre-paid bundle of hours required). We come to you.

*Software Development Projects:* PC development, no job too small. We specialize in projects 1 to 500 hours (longer projects also accepted). New or maintenance. Simple changes or complex systems. Programming, Databases, Web design, Contingency plans/strategy plans, etc. Available nationally.

*Business Consulting:* Utilize technology to help you grow your business - we're here to help. IT strategies, Disaster/recovery planning, IT security audits. Marketing and promotional plans.

*Seminars, Keynotes:* Technology and Motivational workshops, keynotes and lunch programs for your staff or association. As a successful entrepreneur and award winning business owner, Rochelle Balch,

president RB Balch and international professional speaker (member of the National Speakers Association), is available for programs for technology, team building, marketing and business, and personal development. Get everyone on the same page to understand technology in your company. Mention this newsletter for discount off speaking fees. For sample topics see <http://www.rochellebalch.com>

**Appointments:** We offer, and highly recommend, regularly scheduled PC GOLD maintenance appointments. We offer on call/as needed service and emergency service. We are available weekends/evenings/holidays, and on special retainer, if required. No pre-pays, change frequency or cancel maintenance appointments at any time. Contact us at [help@rbbalch.com](mailto:help@rbbalch.com), at 623-561-9366, or visit our web site at [www.rbbalch.com](http://www.rbbalch.com) for on-line scheduling. Contact Rochelle Balch directly at [rb@rbbalch.com](mailto:rb@rbbalch.com) or contact Andy Karpel directly at [andy@rbbalch.com](mailto:andy@rbbalch.com) if you like.

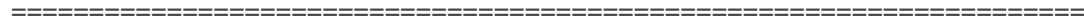


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Your email address is absolutely only used by us at RB Balch.



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