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Are PC problems getting in the way of your business?



RB Balch & Associates, Inc.

PC Tips Newsletter

February 2009

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→ This Month's Special

We're here to help you build your business - and to help keep your costs down! FEBRUARY - FRIDAY the 13th SPECIAL: Score big this month with clean-up special. \$13 off visit - for general cleanup. Keep your systems clean - and help avoid costly spyware/virus cleanup bills later. GOOD FOR UP TO 2 computers (\$13 each), at one visit.

Contact RB Balch at 623-561-9366, help@rbbalch.com or from our website at www.rbbalch.com (for appointment scheduling). OR simply reply to this email. Mention this special and provide coupon at visit (or with payment if work is done remotely).

**** THIS IS YOUR COUPON ****



→ Technology \$\$\$ Saving Ideas

Plan Before You Buy

Considering new software? STOP. Check it out before you buy.

First, determine if the the software will meet at least 70% of your requirements. Make a checklist of functions and features you need. Assign a numbering scheme...like from 1 to 10, 10 being highest. Then confirm that all of your 7's, 8's, 9's ad 10's are included in the new software.

IF not, reconsider how you are doing business - or reconsider the software.

Be sure to include items like security levels, number of users, number of potential records, backup and recovery features, maintenance contracts, version control, more.

Next, review the equipment you have - and determine if the new software will run. Consider hard drive space required, RAM (memory) recommended, backup, etc.

Doing this BEFORE you buy will save you money. Yes, we've had clients purchase software - without going through these steps. In some cases it required the user to upgrade equipment. Other cases the user discovered too late that an assumed critical feature was not included.

Take your time. Contact your IT consultant for assistance as needed, if needed.

RB Balch is a proud member Of





Questions? Need help? Contact us today! help@rbbalch.com OR 623-561-9366 OR schedule on-line at www.rbbalch.com.

→ Technology Trends & Tips

Beware of equipment that looks too good to be true...that's because it generally is.

Consider purchasing "brand name" equipment - especially for servers and other critical equipment. Get the extended hardware warranty with new purchases. NOTE: for laptops it is highly recommended to get additional coverage that covers drops and spills.

There are numerous horror stories out there where users have purchased a "custom" computer - built to your spec - from a generally unknown or unreliable source.

The price may appear great - but what if there's a problem - and that person or that company is no longer around.

Don't skimp on critical equipment or software to run your business.

And that's this month's Technology Trend & Tips.

→ Ask the Computer Guy

Why is my PC running so slow?

This is one of the more common questions asked while our techs are on site. A machine that is perhaps only 6 months old - is running much slower than maybe a 2 year old PC. So the big question: why is it slower? Why is it slower than it was 6 months ago?

Often times when the computer is new, there are few programs installed. When new programs are installed (and toolbars), the programs prelaunch when you start your computer. Some of these you can see in the bottom right corner of the Windows Start Bar; some of them do not show at all, and just remain hidden, eating your computer power.

So, how do you to reduce this problem? First, decide what programs you really need, and remove those that you don't. For example, if your desktop is showing the current weather conditions, you may be able to do without that. Simply find that program in your Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs (or in Vista Programs and Features), and uninstall it. Each program that is installed and showing in your System Tray, may account for up to 1% of your power (some much more). Other examples are Instant Messengers (IM), speed loaders, Desktop Managers, Screensavers, too many Anti-Spyware programs, etc.

The same idea works with the toolbars in Internet Explorer. Take a look and see how many toolbars you have. Is there a Google toolbar (and a Yahoo)? One toolbar should be sufficient to take care of most needs, more than that is a drain on the system and should be avoided.

Other items that may cause slowness are the fragmentation of the hard drive, Adware, Spyware, registry bloat (too many items installed/removed), well you get the idea.

You can avoid most of these issues by only installing the items you need on a computer and not over doing it.

Have a question? Just email us at help@rbbalch.com.

PC Support Related Info

WIN XP PRO

WINDOWS XP PRO is still available on business series computers from Dell. We are a registered Dell business partner; let us help you order your new/replacement PCs. Consider replacement starting at 4 years + (before they crash). Our equipment pricing is same as you see from Dell; we do not mark up computers/servers. Our business is providing the on-site IT Service.

MOVING OFFICE LOCATION?

Let us help you plan your move. Moving can be nightmare...Let us help you plan your move so you can have a smooth transition. Ask for one of our trained Technical Move Specialists.

REMOTE TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Contact us for remote technical support - it's easy, fast, less interruptions at the office and LESS expensive for you! (. 5 hr minimum vs. 1 hr. minimum when on-site). As simple as going to a web site.

SPAM

Eliminate SPAM and you will eliminate potential virus problems.

WATCH PHISHING (fake emails)

Holidays are always a good time for scammers. Watch emails that look like they are from your bank....but really aren't. Never click on a link to a website embedded in an email - unless you requested it.

Our motto: "You don't have a problem until you have a problem". Think about it. Contact Rochelle at rb@rbbalch.com.

Andy's Famous Corner by Andy Karpel, the "A lot about nothing" expert

January Selections

Birthstones: Amethyst
Meaning: "not drunk" (about)

Amethyst comes from the Greek word "amethystos" meaning "not drunk", and was believed to prevent its wearers from intoxication. Amethyst, the gemstone believed by ancient Greeks and Romans to ward off the intoxicating powers of Bacchus, also is said to keep the wearer clear-headed and quick-witted.

Amethyst is purple quartz, a beautiful blend of violet and red that can found in every corner of the earth. Historically, the finest

amethyst were found in Russia and were featured in much royal European jewelry. Today, while Brazil is the primary source of this gemstone, fine material can be found elsewhere, especially in Zambia.

The early Egyptians believed that the amethyst possessed good powers, and placed the stones in the tombs of pharaohs. During the Middle Ages, it was used as medication, believed to dispel sleep, sharpen intellect, and protect the wearer from sorcery. It was also believed to bring victory in battle.

The amethyst was also the stone of royalty. It is the stone of Saint Valentine, who wore an amethyst engraved with the figure of his assistant, Cupid. (HINT...HINT...Saint Valentine's Day)

Flower: Primrose, Violet

Astrological Sign(s): Aquarius (The Water Carrier) Jan. 20 - Feb. 18. Pisces (The Fish) Feb. 19 - Mar. 20

Moon Phases: Feb 2 First - Feb 9 Full - Feb 16 Last - Feb 24 New

Moon Me: In February it is usually the heaviest snows fall. Hunting becomes very difficult, and hence to some Native American tribes this was the Hunger Moon. The February moon is also called "Medicine Dance Moon, Full Snow moon" or the "Storm" Moon.

Calendar

Sunday, Feb 1 Super Bowl Sunday - SuperBowl XLIII in Tampa Florida - GO CARDS!!

Monday, Feb 2 Groundhog Day

Tuesday, Feb 3 "The Day the Music Died" - (1959)

Thursday, Feb 12 Lincoln's Birthday

Saturday, Feb 14 Valentines Day

Sunday, Feb 15 9th planet discovered Pluto. By Clyde Tombaugh. (1930)

Monday, Feb 16 President's Day

Thursday, Feb 19 Prize into a Crackerjacks. (1913)

Sunday, Feb 22 Washington's Birthday

Sunday, Feb 22 Oscar Night - 81st Annual Academy Awards

Monday, Feb 23 Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima"(1945), by Joe Rosenthal. It depicts five

Tuesday, Feb 24 Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday)

Wednesday, Feb 25 Ash Wednesday)

Andy's - I Didn't Know That

Groundhog Day is a holiday celebrated in United States and Canada on February 2. In weather lore, if a groundhog, also known as a woodchuck, marmot, or ground squirrel, emerges from its burrow on this day and fails to see its shadow because the weather is cloudy, winter will soon end. If on the other hand, it is sunny and the groundhog sees its shadow, the groundhog will supposedly retreat into its burrow, and winter will continue for 6 more weeks. Candlemas is usually the same day, and has similar beliefs about the coming weather.....**I didn't know that!**

Just like Andy

Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima" is a historic photograph taken on February 23, 1945, by Joe Rosenthal. It depicts five United States Marines and a U.S. Navy corpsman raising the flag of the United States atop Mount Suribachi. The photograph became the only photograph to win the Pulitzer Prize for Photography in the same

year as its publication, and ultimately came to be regarded as one of the most significant and recognizable images of the war, and possibly the most reproduced photograph of all time. Of the six men depicted in the picture, three (Franklin Sousley, Harlon Block, and Michael Strank) did not survive the battle; the three survivors (John Bradley, Rene Gagnon, and Ira Hayes) became celebrities upon the publication of the photo. This picture was later used to sculpt the USMC War Memorial, located adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery just outside Washington, D.C...**AND now you have the facts!!**

Andy's - Image That

It was February 3, 1959, The Day the Music Died. A plane crash killed 3 rock and roll musicians. At approximately 1:05 AM, a Beechcraft Bonanza airplane carrying Buddy Holly (Charles Hardin "Buddy" Holley - changed to Holly), Ritchie Valens, (Richie Valenzuela) and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson, crashed in a farmer's field en route to a concert near Fargo, North Dakota, killing all three performers as well as the pilot. The phrase "The Day The Music Died" was coined by Don McLean's 1971 song about the crash, "American Pie".....**"image that"**

Andy's - Second Hand Tidbits

NOTE: Inauguration Day, January 20, 2009, falls on a Tuesday. An employee who works in the District of Columbia, Montgomery or Prince George's Counties in Maryland, Arlington or Fairfax Counties in Virginia, or the cities of Alexandria or Falls Church in Virginia, and who is regularly scheduled to perform no overtime work on Inauguration Day, is entitled to a holiday. (See 5 U.S.C. 6103(c).) There is no in-lieu-of-holiday for employees who are not regularly scheduled to work on Inauguration Day.

Quotes

I want to keep fighting because it is the only thing that keeps me out of the hamburger joints. If I don't fight, I'll eat this planet.....George Foreman

The game of life is a lot like football. You have to tackle your problems, block your fears, and score your points when you get the opportunity.....Unknown

There is no I in TEAM.....Unknown

A hot dog at the ball park is better than steak at the Ritz.
.....Humphrey Bogart



RB Balch. Who are we?

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

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

WHO ARE WE

RB Balch. Full service IT Computer Consulting firm. Established 02/93. Experienced. Reliable. Ethical. Good. Accumulated revenues since 1993, over \$23 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 - IT Consulting, Software Development Projects, Business/Marketing Consulting, Seminars & Keynotes.
PC Field Support - IT Consulting: 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 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. 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 www.rochellebalch.com

Appointments: BRONZE, SILVER OR GOLD recurring scheduled maintenance appointments offer reduced rates - and no contracts to sign. 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, at 623-561-9366, or visit our web site at www.rbbalch.com for on-line scheduling. Contact Rochelle Balch directly at rb@rbbalch.com or contact Andy Karpel directly at andy@rbbalch.com if you like.

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