What's New

Since 1985 Pratt Computing Technologies has been leading businesses through the ever evolving technologies.
So what is new?

Pratt Cloud Essentials. We have a special relationship with Microsoft as a "Cloud Solution Provider" Partner. We have the blessing from Microsoft to be able to offer you something special. You won't find our exact offering from any other partner in the country.

Our offerings have been specifically tailored to fit your needs, as we understand YOUR business is unlike any other.

Call us 865-693-0900 for more information.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Doc Pratt, President of Pratt Computing Technologies.

"For over 31 years we have helped people see their technology in a different light, how it can solve business problems and help them achieve their goals. Give me a call today at 865-693-0900 Extension-111 to discuss your needs."

Navigating The Cloud: Gold Mine…Or Minefield

Is the cloud a good fit for your company or not? On the one hand, taking full advantage of today's cloud capabilities could be key to becoming a top player in your market. On the other, without proper oversight, just one cyber-break-in could bankrupt your organization…

Feeling a little confused, or perhaps even overwhelmed, about your company's cloud options?

Don't worry, you're not alone. In this article we'll help you unravel your choices so you can make the most out of this game-changing technology.

To really take full advantage of the cloud, there are (at least) three things to consider:

1. Whether to use a public or private cloud network – or both.
2. Which cloud-based apps deliver the best value for your organization.
3. How shared servers can help you save time and cut costs.

So just what is a "public" versus "private" network, or cloud? Simply put, a public cloud serves many organizations, while a private cloud is proprietary to just one. We'll cover each so you can more easily navigate the pitfalls and possibilities each one presents.

Which Is Best For Your Network: Public, Private…Or Both?
One advantage to using a public cloud is that you can start using it in just minutes. It allows you to easily scale up or down, as your business needs change. And, with pay-per-use pricing, you only pay for what you need.

However, compliance with government regulations often can't be achieved in a public cloud. Also, public networks don't offer the same degree of control that a locally based private network can

provide. And in a public cloud, you never know who you're sharing a server with.

All that being said, a hybrid cloud may be your best model. For instance, compliance-controlled work can be handled in a private network, while less restricted tasks can be done over a public one.

Cloud-Based Apps: Microsoft Office 365 vs. Google Apps For Work
You'll find countless cloud-based apps for business. However, Office 365 and Google Apps For Work are two of the most popular cloud-based productivity suites in the market today. Both allow you to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations on your own, as well as in real time with team members. They also provide video conferencing and cloud storage. Here's a quick rundown:

Storage – At a paltry 30GB, the storage you get with the basic version of Google Apps For Work

"Amazon-shared servers allow you to grow and shrink your web presence with demand."

pales in comparison to the 1TB you get with the Office 365 Business Essentials plan. Yet, moving up a notch to the Google Apps "Unlimited" plan gets you unlimited storage, beating Office 365 hands-down.

Collaboration – Both Google Apps For Work and Microsoft Office 365 make real-time collaboration with team members in different locations easier than ever. Due to its simplified features and web-based origins, Google Apps may be easier to work with. However, users accustomed to Microsoft Office may prefer the more familiar feature set of Office 365.

Then There's Amazon…
Amazon-shared servers allow you to grow and shrink your web presence with demand, easily store and retrieve data from a super-reliable network of worldwide data hubs and deliver content at blazing speed – all at minimal cost. While Amazon has led the field

in this new type of service, companies like Microsoft, Google and IBM, as well as niche players like Rackspace, SalesForce and Oracle, have all jumped into the fray.

Each offers a varying range of toolsets that can make your network more productive and reduce overall operating cost.

Navigating your computing choices in today's cloud-driven world can be complex. And it isn't getting any simpler as the field rapidly evolves. Not sure what to do? We can help!

Receive a Customized Cloud Assessment, Valued at $297 - FREE When You Call Today!

You don't need to navigate the cloud alone. Let us analyze your organization's use of today's cloud technologies. We'll help you see how Pratt Cloud Essentials can boost your productivity and cut costs. Call 865-693-0900 or e-mail me direct at dpratt@prattonline.com to book the valuable free service today!

Why Pratt Computing Technologies?

Just Look at Some of the Services we Provide:

Proactive Managed IT Support Services

IT Consulting

On-Site Support

Desktop, Server & Technology Infrastructure Support Services

Office365 Setup and Consulting Services

Cloud Computing Consulting, Services and Solutions

Backup & Disaster Recovery with Off-Site Backups

Technology & Business Alignment Strategic Plans

Network Risk Assessments

Product Sales and Installation

Office moves and Expansions

Multi-Office Connectivity

Proactive 365 X 24 Remote Monitoring

Risk Analysis Requirements under the Security Rule

Section 164.308(a)(1)(ii)(A) states: RISK ANALYSIS (Required). Conduct an accurate and thorough assessment of the potential risks and vulnerabilities to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronic protected health information held by the [organization].

There is no single method or even a "best practice" for performing a risk analysis that guarantees compliance with the Security Rule. However, the risk analysis must include vulnerabilities to the confidentiality, availability and integrity of all ePHI that an organization creates, receives, maintains or transmits. This includes ePHI in all forms of electronic media: hard drives, floppy disks CDs, DVDs, smart cards, personal digital assistants, transmission media, or portable electronic media. This can be a single workstation or a complex network between multiple geographical locations.

Your analysis must identify all these information storage locations and then assess the potential threats and vulnerabilities.
• What happens when a provider takes home a laptop or accesses ePHI from a personal device at home or while traveling?
• Do providers text ePHI? Does anyone on your staff text with patients?
• How many of your staff members use the same password? Does this password allow unnecessary access? Could staff members alter, delete, transmit or disclose information they should not?
• Do you have employees or contractors who work from home? How secure is that environment?
• How do your business associates protect the ePHI they handle on your behalf? The list of risks continues.

The big concern at this time is, "What do you do with the information learned from the analysis?" Conducting the analysis is the first step, but it is not the last step. Based on findings from the analysis, covered entities and business associates must implement improvements in their security program.

Here are some improvements that might be indicated:
• Encryption for all devices and storage
• Adding a VPN (virtual private network)
• More thorough screenings for potential employees
• Verifying authentication capability to ensure integrity of information
• Automatically updating anti-virus, malware software and operating systems security patches
• Installing a better firewall
• Improve backup process, implement disaster recovery, including mock events and test restores
• Verify functionality of UPS (uninterruptable power source)
• Add a checklist for close of business each day—are all applicable doors locked?

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Has your business fully harnessed the power of social media?

By 2018 the number of active social media users is expected to grow to 2.55 billion. If your customers are there, and if you intend to grow, that's where you need to be. Step 1 is to become visible. Once you have a good presence, here are six things you can do next: 1) Promote your products and services. 2) Provide personalized offers to your consumers based on how they behave online. 3) Build channels with influencers. 4) Engage your followers with quizzes and contests. 5) Put buying options on your social media pages. 6) Gather customer feedback. Above all, make sure your website comes across great on cell phones and tablets. That's where users are accessing social media.

-SmallBizTrends.com

Google Home vs. Amazon Echo: This should be good…

The battle for an always-listening virtual assistant has begun.

Scheduled to launch this fall, Google Home seeks to unseat Amazon Echo, which launched in 2014. Both devices act as personal assistant, music hub and smart-home control point. Echo has a big head start in smart-home control, breadth of features and "charm." It answers to the name "Alexa," whereas Home's "OK Google" just doesn't have the same appeal. Yet Home has a more attractive, customizable look. And, unlike Echo, Home can carry on a more intelligent conversation with you, answering questions in context rather than having to ask for more information each time. All that, plus Home's connectivity with streaming devices, makes it a formidable challenger.

-Cnet.com

Smart-chip credit cards may actually cause fraud to increase in the near term.

Yes, you read that right… A recent study from anti-fraud company Iovation and financial

"Well that's not good."

industry consultant Aite Group shows that a mad rush in the dark web has begun. Fraudsters want to get the most value from stolen data before newer systems recognize the old magnetic-strip card numbers as clearly fraudulent. These attacks can be especially hard on merchants. Average losses range from $980 to $2,379 per incident, according to Javelin Strategy and Research LLC. To avert losses, businesses can use fraud-detection software, 3-D Secure or "tokenization" – the core of ApplePay and AndroidPay. But the problem won't just go away with the new chip cards. Cyberthieves aren't about to get honest and get new jobs… It pays to remain vigilant.

-CNBC.com

Curl up in your hammock this summer with these three tech-savvy books.

Don't Make Me Think Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, by Steve Krug, focuses on intuitive navigation and information design. It's short, witty and packed with illustrations and a good dose of common sense. DotCom Secrets: The Underground Playbook for Growing Your Company Online, by Russell Brunson, shows how low traffic and conversion may just be symptoms of a bigger problem. The good news is that the real problems are easier to fix. And finally, How to Shoot Video That Doesn't Suck: Advice to Make Any Amateur Look Like a Pro, by Steve Stockman, helps you create amazing videos you'll be proud to show the world.

-AlleyWatch.com

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