The Next Wave

Beachwood Systems Consulting

- Serving the IT Community for Over 20 Years -

Management Letter

I'm sure you have heard the expression that there is no free lunch. There's always an angle but sometimes its just hard to find, right? Well, let me tell you that you can believe what you read in this newsletter.

The main article is about being able to connect to the internet for free at various locations in Cleveland. The article on back page talks about a completely free and highly effective antivirus and antispyware package for your home pc's. You might remember from our January newsletter learning about free on-line backup of up to two gigabytes of data on your pc using a service called Mozy. (By the way you can find all of the back issues of *The Next Wave* on our web site.) Another great free product is PDFCreator from SourceForge that will do just fine for most people rather than shelling out $180 for Adobe Acrobat Standard Edition. Now that's value!

It is hard to believe but we are approaching another holiday season and we want to wish you, your family, and your business a very prosperous 2009.

Adam Ryan

WiFi Hot Spots in Cleveland and Beyond

Can't live without your laptop! Got to be connected! This article is for you!

What's the difference between WiFi and 3G service? WiFi is (currently) a short range technology that operates at fast local area network (LAN) speeds. 3G service operates using the same cell phone towers that your cell phones use and hence works in a much broader area. With the latest 3G technology of EV-DO and HSDPA speeds are good but still slower than a LAN. The cost ranges from $60 to $80 per month for most 3G services.

Many people have WiFi set up at home or work. Many have connected to WiFi when staying at a hotel. But where else can you get WiFi? The answer is *Hot Spots*, some of which are free, kind of free (you have to buy food or drink from the merchant), and strictly on a paid basis.

Free. Almost any Panera Bread, Yours Truly Restaurant, Caribou Coffee, or Arabica Coffee House in the greater Cleveland area has free WiFi. But how much computing are you going to get done during a meal, and with the waiter coming by asking you if you need anything else every ten minutes? The city of Cleveland has free outdoor WiFi between Public Square and Playhouse Square which is okay for your handheld PDA-telephone for speedy browsing while you're on the go. To get something meaningful done on your laptop at no charge though, public libraries are still a great choice. There are also a handful of hotels such as the Hilton, Embassy Suites, and Residence Inn in Beachwood; the Comfort Inn, Hampton Inn, Hilton Garden, and Residence Inn in downtown Cleveland, the Ramada in Middleburg Hts; and the Marriott, Hampton Inn, Hilton Garden Inn at the Airport that are all reported to have free WiFi in their lobbies. And on a nice fall day find a bench at University Circle, the Cleveland Museum of Art, or at Cleveland State University to get free access. See www.wififreespot.com/ or www.anchorfree.com/hotspot/finder for a more complete list.

Not Free. See www.jiwire.com that contains a fairly comprehensive directory of 68,000 hot spots around the country and lists about 200,000 in the world. The two main companies that aggregate service offerings from WiFi providers into their own usage plans are iPass and Boingo. If you need access to WiFi hot spots on a regular basis then check out one of these two companies and expect to pay about $25-$30 per month. These services are especially good if you spend a lot of time in airports or at select hotel chains that accept the accounts. If you are already using AT&T DSL, then you can get free Hot Spot access. Here are some

Look Inside…

Hot Spots…

well known chain businesses and their providers where you can get WiFi on a paid basis either per session or per month:

- Barnes & Noble (AT&T)
- Borders Books and Music (T-Mobile)
- FedEx Kinkos (T-Mobile)
- McDonald's (Wayport)
- Starbucks (AT&T)

There is a new service for airlines called GoGo. American, Virgin, and Delta are testing the in-flight wireless service. You can bet it will not be free.

Security. Make sure you are connecting to the wireless network you should be. Hackers have been known to set up their own wireless networks in the same vicinity and give them similar SSID names. Then they have all of the unsecure traffic flowing through their computer. Always use a VPN when connecting to your corporate network. For general internet usage, a company called WiTopia.net has a personal VPN that can secure wireless connections at Hot Spots.

What was life like before the internet?

Free Antivirus & Antispyware Software

There are many XP and Vista home computers that have no antivirus and antispyware protection because users think they need to pay Symantec, McAfee, or Webroot $50 per year to use one of their products. Take it from the pro's at Beachwood Systems, the free version of Grifsoft's AVG antivirus & antispyware software is good stuff. And while you can't use the free version in a commercial organization of any type, over 80 million people around the world use it at home. And you should too.

This program is the most requested software on Download.com. It includes the ability to schedule hard disk scans and exclude select folders. It has a resident memory scanner and an e-mail scanner. Its real-time Link-Scanner technology keeps you from clicking search links to dangerous sites. Virus definitions and application updates are updated on a regular basis and download to your computer unobtrusively in the background. It is fast and effective and doesn't hog CPU resources like some other products on the market. And there seem to be fewer conflicts with other programs than some of the more complex security suites.

Go to http://free.avg.com to get Version 8. Grifsoft has a more advance version that you can purchase. They do a nice job explaining the benefits on their web site between the two. There is no tech support with the free version but there is a forum. Be sure to fully uninstall any existing antivirus and antispyware before installing AVG.

Stay safe.

Should I Upgrade my GoldMine?

As budgets are being finalized for next year, many executives ask themselves what the best use is for their IT dollars. If you are a user of GoldMine Standard Edition (version 6.7 dBase and earlier), this question is very important.

We know that your version of GoldMine still works well in your environment and that is a testament to the quality of the product you purchased several years ago. But there are important advantages to upgrading your GoldMine sooner than later.

FrontRange, the maker of GoldMine, discontinued its support for all versions prior to v7 Corporate Edition. Rest assured though, that Beachwood Systems will continue to support your company's usage of earlier products as long a possible.

Secondly, with PC and server upgrades that your company may be considering, older versions of GoldMine are incompatible with new operating systems like Windows Vista. This is also true with MS Office. Document templates created in earlier versions will no longer work in Office 2007.

Most importantly, GoldMine now uses Microsoft SQL for its back-end database. This replaces the cumbersome dBase of days past. SQL is a far superior database engine that eliminates the need for the 'BDE'. MS SQL is a much more reliable database engine and database maintenance is performed automatically and regularly to ensure data integrity. Plus, MS SQL & Crystal are included with the upgrade of GoldMine at no additional cost. *Nice!*

Quoting Made Easy

Does your business require creating quotes for customers? Do you waste time copying and pasting contact information from GoldMine and your product and pricing data from a pricelist document? Do you record the sale data in an accounting package? Are potential sales being lost because there is no follow up with the client after the quote was created? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, then QuoteWerks is for you.

QuoteWerks, from Aspire Technologies, Inc., is designed to be both easy-to-use and a very powerful tool for creating quotes. With just a few mouse-clicks, a customized quote can be created for a potential customer and e-mailed to them in a PDF format, and a follow up call scheduled on the salesmen's calendar. QuoteWerks does this through quality integration with GoldMine to pull the contact information into the quote, and schedule the follow up call. QuoteWerks also creates, up-

dates, and completes forecasted sales and opportunities in GoldMine and links the quote to the contact as a linked document.

QuoteWerks can also be used as a product database. By importing your Excel or Word pricelist documents into QuoteWerks, you can then maintain those pricelist directly with price breaking for varying quantities, percentage discounting for specific client types, and product bundling. QuoteWerks lets you change prices and profit margins on the fly, it has price refreshing features that let you refresh the prices on an existing quote with your current pricing, and it compares prices between vendors ensuring that you get the best prices.

QuoteWerks links to QuickBooks and Peachtree. There is an export module for generic exporting for that can be pulled in to most accounting packages. This helps ensure that data is correctly entered in both systems and cuts down time associated with double entry of data. With pricing between $199 and $329 per license, QuoteWerks is very affordable.

New Macola Releases Support Microsoft Vista

Exact Software has released new versions of its Macola ES and Macola Progression series business software.

Macola ES v9.5 now supports the 32bit Business, Enterprise, and Ultimate (not Home) editions of the Microsoft Windows Vista operating system. All integrated Crystal reports have been upgraded to Crystal Reports XI R2. The 32 bit version of SQL Server 2005 Standard Edition is supported on the 32 bit Windows 2003 Server Standard Edition operating system. Exact Synergy for Macola ES v9.5 was released simultaneously.

In addition to the platform updates and correcting a number of software bugs, functionality improvements have been made. Credit Card Processing in Order Entry has been improved with screen messages that provide user feedback on processing results, authorization status, reference ID, and other data. There is now support for commercial credit cards also know as corporate or purchasing cards. There is a new option to update item cost and sales price when transferring items between locations if the target location has zero quantity on hand. Kits can be created by copying components from existing kits. The pre-delivered Exact Business Analytics (EBA) has had dimensions added to Purchasing, AR, AP, and GL analytics as well as improved financial BI views for consolidated reporting. Several improvements were made to the Exact Warehouse Management System.

By the time of this publication, the first service pack for Macola ES v9.5 and Synergy v9.5 should be released. It will be named 9.5.100

and be available for download.

Macola Progression 7.7, the newest version in the Progression series, now supports the 32 bit Business, Enterprise, and Ultimate (not Home) editions of the Microsoft Windows Vista operating system. The backend database should be either SQL 2000 or SQL 2005 if you have a Vista workstation in the mix because Pervasive is not supported for Vista pc's. Vista will also require you to use Crystal Reports XI Release 2 if you want to run integrated Crystal Reports under the PWE client. Note that during the update to v7.7 you can choose to stay on Crystal X and simply not run Crystal reports on Vista workstations which is probably not desirable. Your Macola system must be on a minimum of version 7.6.400 before you can upgrade to v7.7.

In addition to supporting Vista, functionality improvements have been made to Progression. To name a few, in Bill of Material there is a new Mass Delete / Replace Components. There is a set up option to prevent the ability to put a non-inventory item on a purchase order. And in Accounts Payable, you are now able to voucher a purchase order with a history status.

All in all, these are the most powerful and stable versions of Macola yet and are free to all companies current on maintenance. We encourage everyone to update to the latest release as well as the new Event Manager v7.5.