

Reporting All The Bits

Toxic data spill worse than the Exxon Valdez!

What's Inside

Death at the Funeral Home ...
Story on Page 2

Getting Technology to Work for You ...
Story on Page 3

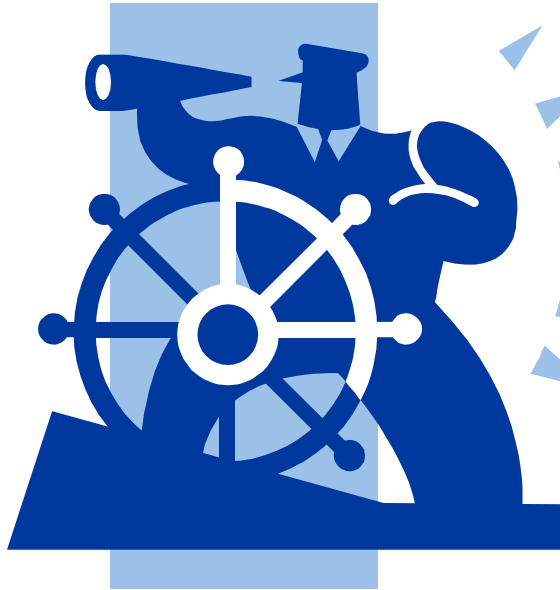


The Exxon Valdez oil spill was not the largest – it was because of where the oil was spilled that the impact to wildlife was enormous and it was so difficult to clean up.

In the same way the accounting records of a health care claims organization could be sent to over one hundred plus undisclosed recipients based on a small keystroke error.

Tens of thousands of bits would be sent spilling over inboxes everywhere with the potentially toxic information of claimants and their counseling visits and the fees that were reimbursed to the counseling firms. It is not just what gets sent that is bad: of equal or greater concern is where all the data gets spilt. Whether it is health care claims, student records, or your customer lists it is very easy for data to leak out of your organization.

Here is how the data gets spilled. ... Create a spreadsheet based on your database and send it by email. If you are using Microsoft outlook the auto fill feature is really handy for cutting down keystrokes; however, instead of sending the email to your auditor or sales manager the email auto fills right up to some “random” email address that has been auto collected or to a distribution



list with a similar name. Instead of sending the claim information to your accountant, Preston, it gets sent to the Press release distribution list. Your mail client will start to auto fill (second guess) where you want to send the email. If you are not careful then the spreadsheet with the note would be sent out to the general distribution

list instead of the intended recipient.

The clean-up after this type of damage, like a major oil spill, is almost impossible. You would have to rely on the goodwill of all the recipients to delete the information that you sent them. It is much easier to prevent the spill than to clean it up after the fact. If you have all the data rights controlled through a central server then policies can be set to control access to the data—this is the first step in the right direction. Centralized controls on backups, burning CDs and data access through external drives is another way to plug a data leak. Finally a simple change such as turning off the auto fill feature in your mail client program would reduce the accidental emailing of confidential information.

For more information and recommendations specific to your situation fell free to contact KDI. ☺

Death at the Funeral Home

It was a sad day in the funeral home when the computer seized up! Like a sudden heart attack - It was fine one minute then all of a sudden - bam! There were signs, I am sure, of the illness that was being ignored and they were in complete denial. It is like ignoring those chest pains!

The funeral director almost blew a casket when he heard the computer had died. He demanded that they call in a computer guy to resurrect the machine. Normally the funeral home is not a place I would want to visit, much less work there. The only people who are dying to get in are the permanent residents with no plans on leaving in the near future. Ha! Ha! So you can laugh at the worn out jokes, but this is not very funny! The death of the computer is a very grave situation! Appointments have to be booked, death certificates must be issued and life, or business, must go on.

So it is with great remorse that we must visit the mortuary. My joints are getting stiff at the very thought!

Here is a place where people have become accustomed to picking up a dead body, cleaning them up, draining your fluids and replacing them with chemicals (like an oil change) and stuffing your gut with cotton. These same people are afraid to push the reset button on a computer. Then again they must think the same thing about us. When somebody dies we leave the room and we call them to pick up the body. Anyways, we arrive at the client site. This is not a happy place even when the computer is running! It is not that there are so many people grieving the loss of loved ones - it is just the serious nature of the business. It is not appropriate for people to be breaking out in boisterous laughter if someone is going to walk through the door at any moment and bring them an "at need" call. An at need call is when someone dies and there were no pre arrangements. A pre need arrangement is when I come in one day and decide that today is a good day to plan my funeral. That is the time I get to decide if I would like the moment to be a happy thing or plan to make it so everyone is really miserable that I am gone. Of course I could try to plan that it would be both!

In the funeral industry, like the computer industry, there is an emphasis on pre need planning. You know the event will occur, and planning is helpful for the survivors, but it is not done as much as it should be. The computer has died and now it is my turn to take care of the remains. Unfortunately this was not a pre need arrangement.

In other words they had not planned on the computer dying so no back-ups were made. No recovery plan was anticipated! My view of a computer pre need arrangement would be that there were regular back ups, and they were taken off site. This was an at need service in all its meaning.

One thing I have learned about funerals was that the service was meant for the living - not the dead. The patient had died but we had to console the survivors. Just as with a loved one, we needed to discuss options. For one funeral service company they listed three options: Ship the body out, burial or cremation.

It was the same for the computer. We could ship it out somewhere for training in a computer school (much like cadavers in medical school), or we bury it in the land fill, or melt it down and recycle it. Grandma's ashes being placed in the garden is just a different form of recycling!

The difference in burial for the computer is that it is going to cost less than a full service funeral. Before we exercise the disposal options of a computer however; we have to provide one service currently not available to the human race.

We have to recover what we can of the computer's memory.

Wouldn't that be something if we could recover and preserve Einstein's mind right after he died! Wow, then there wouldn't be any deep dark secrets—well maybe that isn't such a good idea. I am not so sure if I would want my memory fully restored! Why would you want to put Einstein's brain, or any other brain, in a two year old or seven year old boy? Preserving memories is one thing - but I think it is best left to using a scrapbook. Anyways it is an option in the computer business.

Just as mortician does a cavity embalming, the computer technician has to open up the computer and remove the hard drive and then close it up. The hard drive is plugged into another computer and then we see if we can recover the data. You can see that this would not work for humans! We are in luck and the old hard drive fires up and we can recover most of the data.

At the end of a very long day our energies have been spent on rebuilding a computer and salvaging the data. Life is back to normal at the funeral home. On reflection the parallels to our businesses are amazing. Two lessons to be learned. One is for us to get those chest pains checked with a doctor. For my clients they should call us right away if they hear clicking noises from inside the computer. The second lesson is that life would be a whole lot less stressful if we all engaged in a little pre-need planning.☺

Enjoy the peace of mind of secure, offsite automated data backup and storage.

REMOTE OFFSITE BACKUP

Got accounting records, customer files, product data, BOMs, research projects and other important data on your server? What if there's a fire? A flood? An earthquake? **AND THE DATA IS GONE FOREVER?**

Don't be one of those people who gets home insurance only after the robbery or the fire. Secure, automated offsite backup of your valuable data is available now. Imagine the peace of mind you'll have when you know your data is safely protected—and that after a disaster, all you have to do is easily retrieve your priceless files from our secure storage and put them onto new PCs.

KDI has developed an automated, reliable NAS (network Attached Storage) drive technology to accomplish this for you. Call us today at 604-574-7225 to find out more about how KDI can give you peace of mind by protecting and backing up your data! ☺

Getting Technology to Work for You.

How do you respond to clients in a timely manner, provide personable service and follow up that excellent service without hiring an army of technicians or breaking the bank?

One problem in the service business is that you can not inventory time. Time that is not helping a client solve their problem is potentially time wasted – never to be recovered. If you want to build your business on timely response you have to have some slack time or an efficient way to coordinate your resources.

Time gets lost in the traditional dispatching function in communicating between your clients, the dispatcher and the technician. Even when your technicians have cell phones they are not always in a position to take a call. If the technician gets the call there are still issues with improving communication as to when they are on the site, how close they are to the site and their progress once they start the job.

Can you imagine that when your client calls in with a problem the dispatcher can confirm the details with the client as they are entering the details of the call. Before the phone call is completed the dispatcher knows who is available and they have already assigned the call, with a priority to best available technician.

Can you imagine that as the technician comes onto the client's site that the system already knows he is there? The technician does not have to call in for a dispatch number—all he has to do is review the dispatch details for the location (either on the way or at the site) and click that he is starting the job. The client site contact person and details are available so that the technician can meet with the appropriate person on site and they can click when they have completed the job.

The information for status and billing is now immediately available. The potential is there for property managers and owners to know from checking a website that a call has been made, when the work is in progress and when it is complete. The administration time to enter a timesheet and complete the billing has been reduced significantly since the tracking activity has been used to generate the billing. With a shorter billing cycle the time to collection has been reduced and cash flow has been increased. You would have more informed and happier clients as well as more efficient administrative and technical staff.

How can this happen now? It is the result of the convergence of new and proven technologies. KDI has harnessed the power of the RIM Blackberry with the industrial strength of an enterprise class application and hosted it on a Linux server. The technology has converged and become cost effective to be employed in small and medium sized business.

For more information on how this is possible and how technology can make life better for your organization feel free to call KDI. ☺



#404-17768 65A Avenue,
Surrey, BC,
Canada, V3S 5N4
www.kdi.ca

Phone: 604-574-7225
Fax: 604-574-7256

Managing all the Bits

Services We Offer:

- General Network Repair and Troubleshooting
- Network Design & Implementation
- Disaster Recovery
- Virus Protection & Removal
- Network Security
- E-mail & Internet Solutions
- Wireless Networking
- Spam Filtering
- Offsite Data Storage and Back up Solutions
- Web Design/Hosting
- IBM iSeries Software Development/Management

Something Really Scary

Halloween is gone and ghosts and goblins may make for scary stories, but the real scary stuff is closer to home. We normally don't get into situations of exploring haunted mansions. Big bank bailouts may also seem distant; however, job loss or revenue loss and public speaking tends to rank high in scary stuff for most adults.

Talk of the "R" word seems to be the scary topic today. The following quote reminds me that one man's fear is another person's fun. (Like a giant rollercoaster ride)

What we used to say was bring on the recession.

Recession drove people to church, and they realized they were missing their Bible.

- Hargis Thomas of Oxford University Press, which publishes Bibles, quoted in the Economist, October 28, 1996 ☺



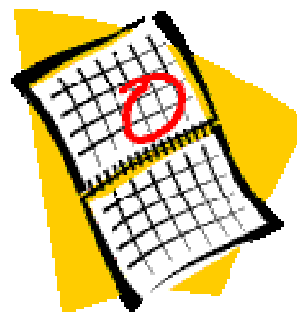
The last bits

This issue we are past the scary things and move forward to remembering and thankfulness.

With all the bad news out there I was reminded it could be worse. There is a report that crime is down in the United States. There are three reasons for this:

- 1) There are less banks to rob.
- 2) The banks have no money.
- 3) There is no gas for the getaway car.

With all these troubles there is something to be thankful for! ☺



KDI Calendars

The KDI calendars are in and will be dropped off or sent by mail in December. We are planning our next newsletter to be sent in January. If you have any comments feel free to contact us with your ideas. ☺