

Reporting All The Bits

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Office worker rescued from an avalanche of paper!

Whatever happened to the promise of the paperless office? With the advent of modern computing and the IBM mainframe we were going to be ushered into the era of push button automatic gadgets and the paperless office.

What has happened is that the cost of computing has sunk like a rock. It has given us the capability to duplicate and quadruplicate information and misinformation at the speed of light. Our expectations have grown such that typing 60 words a minute is not good enough. Printing reports at 10 pages a minute seem slow when the network attached printing center can now crank out reports at 50 to 100 pages per minute. Our expectations have also increased to expect that we can get mountains of data sliced and diced any way you want it to the point of information overload.

People are now figuratively, if not literally, "buried under paper" and their paperwork. While this seems bad, there is an upside to all this.

I considered what would have happened if the head office of a large company burned to the ground fifty or more years ago. There was no chance for a full data recovery. Could you imagine the equivalent of having every paper document in duplicate housed in a warehouse away from the head office? Now the expectation is if there is major disaster you are expected to retrieve mountains of data with a 'click of a button' and be back in business, operating somewhere else, by at least the next day. Remember 9/11? The trading houses and the exchange were all back up and running for Monday September 17th after they had run a full

scale connectivity test over the weekend.

From personal experience we have had two different clients have their primary server stolen over a weekend. We had to change over the internet connections from their office to ours and restore the data from backups to one of our servers that had to be configured to work in their environment. One case took all day—there was so much data to restore and the last back up tape was stolen with the server. That took some effort! The other case we had them up and running by Monday afternoon.

If this was the day of all paper documents that were burned or stolen there would be no hope for recovery. So while our computers can crank out reams of paper—the saving grace is that with proper backup procedures and a recovery plan you can recover from a potential disaster.

There is also hope for the manager that is buried in an avalanche of paper reports and data. Data by itself is meaningless. It could be columns or numbers and text. We want to transform the data into meaningful information. That is where the appropriate design of database and information systems comes in. Even with a good database system you can be overwhelmed with the amount of information. The next step would be to design a "dashboard" where are the key operational numbers that tell you the state of your business or division are on one page or the screen of your BlackBerry. If you needed more information then "at a click of button" you could drill down to get the details. This is not as dramatic, or expensive, as helicopter rescue of someone buried under snow. If you need help to get out from under, you don't need a radio beacon, just contact KDI. ☺

In the March 2008 Newsletter we featured stories of the Irish. To commemorate Robbie Burns Day it is now the season to give the Scots a wee bit of equal time and treatment. Ach aye!

A Scotsman walking through a field, sees a man drinking water from a pool with his hand.

The Scotsman man shouts 'Awa ye feel hoor thatâs full Oâ coos Sharn'

*(Don't drink the water, it's full of cow s ** t.)*

The man shouts back 'I'm English, Speak English, I don't understand you'.

The Scotsman man shouts back 'Use both hands, you'll get more in.'

A young Scottish lad and lass were sitting on a low stone wall, holding hands, gazing out over the loch. For several minutes they sat silently. Then finally the girl looked at the boy and said, "A penny for your thoughts, Angus." "Well, uh, I was thinkin'...perhaps it's aboot time for a wee kiss."

The girl blushed, then leaned over and kissed him lightly on the cheek. Then he blushed. The two turned once again to gaze out over the loch. Minutes passed and the girl spoke again. "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin' perhaps it's noo time aboot time for a wee cuddle." The girl blushed, then leaned over and cuddled him for a few seconds. Then he blushed. Then the two turned once again to gaze out over the loch.

After a while, she again said, "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin' perhaps it's aboot time you let me put my hand on your leg." The girl blushed, then took his hand and put it on her knee. Then he blushed. The two turned once again to gaze out over the loch before the girl spoke again.

"Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

The young man glanced down with a furred brow.

"Well, noo," he said, "my thoughts are a wee bit more serious this time."

"Really?" said the lass in a whisper, filled with anticipation.

"Aye," said the lad, nodding.

The girl looked away in shyness, began to blush, and bit her lip in anticipation of the request.

Then he said, "Dae ye nae think it's aboot time ye paid me the first three pennies?"

When Jock moved to London he constantly annoyed his English acquaintances by boasting about how great Scotland was. Finally, in exasperation, one said, "Well, if Scotland's so marvelous, how come you didn't stay there?"

"Well," explained Jock "they're all so clever up there I had to come down here to have any chance of making it at all."

Jock finds himself in dire trouble. His business has gone into foreclosure and he's in serious financial problems. He's so desperate that he decides to ask God for help. "God, please help me. Ah've lost ma wee store and if Ah dinna get some money, Ah'm going to lose my hoose too. Please let me win the lottery!" Lottery night! Someone else wins... Jock prays again. "God, please let me win the lottery! Ah've lost my wee store, ma hoose and Ah'm going to lose ma car as weel!" Lottery night again! Still no luck... Jock prays again.

"Ah've lost ma business, ma hoose and ma car. Ma bairns are starving. Ah dinna often ask Ye for help and Ah have always been a good servant to Ye. PLEASE just let me win the lottery this one time so Ah can get back on ma feet!"

Suddenly there is a blinding flash as the heavens open and the voice of God Himself thunders:

"Jock at least meet Me half way and buy a ticket!"

A Scots boy came home from school and told his mother he had been given a part in the school play.

"Wonderful," says the mother, "What part is it?" The boy says "I play the part of the Scottish husband!" The mother scowls and says: "Go back and tell your teacher you want a speaking part."



A Multiple Site Network Case Study

We all "know" that we should have a backup and a recovery plan. We all know that if we are using an older communication set-up like Frame Relay we can get something faster and just as reliable for less money.

What stops us? Could it be the fear of the unknown and the resources to try it? As an example, Jim is the manager of a company with three locations. Two branches are connected to the head office by Frame Relay. There are two servers at the head office for their business applications, files and emails. Currently it is costing \$900 / month for frame relay charges and there is no offsite data storage. Jim has to remember to change the tape in his server and take it home once a week.

The ideal solution would be to use the existing internet access provide a secure connection between all the locations. We would propose three small form factor NetSentrons and the QNAP storage with the offsite option to upgrade his connections and provide a secure, hassle free automated file backup. Who would want to spend over \$6,000 if they are not sure the solution will work? Perhaps Jim may have to upgrade the level of service at the head office to ensure the internet access is up all the time and that he has the bandwidth for remote office access. Let us factor in upgrading the existing internet access and dropping the Frame Relay so now you would save \$800 / month. With an upgraded internet connection payback would be achieved in under nine months. The benefits would be faster access for the branches, the security of offsite data storage and the bonus that Jim could securely access the server from home or the hotel when he is on the road.

As your partner in IT we would propose to finance the solution. If for any reason you are not satisfied you can return the equipment within 90 days. The investment summary now works out to a \$380 basic set-up plus payments (including the offsite data storage charges) of \$310 / month. In the first three months \$1,310 would have been spent on

the equipment and support. Assuming that the first month the frame relay was still up there would be only two months of savings of \$800 for a total savings of \$1600. Within a few days of implementation the telephone company gets their 30 day notice that the frame relay service is being cancelled so the first three months there is only a net savings of \$290. There is a positive payback after three months. After three months the savings continue to accrue at \$490 / month. **At the end of one year there is a total savings of \$4,700.**

We have another client who bought two NetSentrons and needed to upgrade some additional equipment and wiring in their Edmonton branch. Their frame relay charges were also much higher than the previous case study. Even with the outright purchase of all of the equipment, airline flights and technical set-up they achieved their return on investment within eight months. The staff immediately noticed the improvement - rather than go for coffee while they waited for the report, it was printed before they had a chance to get out of their chairs. Over the last four years our client has saved over \$70,000 in communication charges in addition to the soft cost savings in employee time.

Each client situation is different, but upgrading from Frame Relay or tape backup is almost certainly a profitable venture. Feel free to call or email KDI for a free consultation. ☺

Announcing a Small Form Factor NetSentron

The NetSentron appliance is now available in a smaller and less expensive package. With a list price of \$1750, or \$75.00 month, it is significantly less investment than a rack server. It is an ideal solution for small schools, libraries and small to medium size businesses. For more information or to arrange to take one for a 'test drive' feel free to contact KDI at 1-800-661-1755. ☺





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Chinese New Year

Right after Robbie Burns day (January 25th) the celebrations will begin in earnest for Chinese New Year—the year of the Ox.

Those born in the Year of the Ox are patient, speak little, and inspire confidence in others. If you need honest, steady and unbiased advice, call on the Ox.

Ox people are generally easy-going, but they can be very stubborn, and hate to fail or be opposed. Oxen don't care to be pushed, especially since they think they're the good guys of the Chinese zodiac.

Come the 26th of January it is traditional to pour some red label and propose a toast to prosperity and to the year of the ox.

Next year, the Chinese New Year will be on February 14th, 2010. Then it will be time to toast our Valentine and the Tiger.

Speaking of Valentines, we will waive the \$95.00 set-up fee for any client that decides to try the QNAP or the NetSentron before February 14th, 2009. For more information call Jason at KDI. ☺

The last bits

What can a client expect from KDI?

We are a team of professionals that work as advocates on your behalf to get the most value out of your information technology.

We have a broad knowledge of information systems in general. We will work with you to gain an understanding of your organizational needs and culture. Then we can craft a solution to meet your needs. We seek to provide the tools and training to help our clients meet their aspirations and goals to transform their organizations to their highest potential.

We would like to move our clients from systems that run well to systems that are well used. We would like to move our clients to a safer internet experience and a more meaningful information analysis experience.

We focus on the implementation of technology that lets you get back to business and excel at executing your plans.

