ToSolution is excited to announce that we have recently acquired the CompTIA Security Trustmark+ certification. Combined with our CompTIA Managed Service Trustmark we are now the only IT Service Provider in Southeastern Wisconsin that holds both certifications. Click here for the press release and find out why this matters for your business.

Join our upcoming webinar:
5 Ways Business Continuity Improves Your Business’s Profitability

Thursday, May 19th
2PM ET | 11AM PT

No More Finger Pointing

Have you ever had an important part of your overall technology solution stop working and can’t figure out who is responsible to fix it? The vendor points their finger at your IT provider and your IT provider insists that the problem is with your other vendor. I’ve seen situations where this can take weeks to resolve. Talk about frustration! And all the while it’s costing you money.

That’s why we include these two very important items in our ProVision flat fee offering:

- **Vendor Management**
- **Enterprise Grade Monitoring**

We want to establish relationships with all our client’s vendors so that we can always be your first call. Just call us and we’ll enter service tickets with your vendor on your behalf. Most importantly, because we have enterprise level monitoring we can watch your network while we’re talking to your vendor, and together we can get to the root of the problem more quickly. Oftentimes, when other vendors see the monitoring data we can produce, they actually get excited that we can all work together to solve the problem for you.

Here’s a great example. A client had a large scale used for weighing trucks as they came to their plant to drop off milk. The scale transmitted the data to the ERP system. The system was failing every 2-3 days. The scale vendor pointed their finger at the network. The monitoring software we use allowed us to quickly create a map of the connection between the scale and the network. We setup the monitoring software to collect data until the next failure. We could see that the network connection was stable throughout. We were able to show this map and the data to the scale company, proving that the problem was not with the network.

As a result, the scale company was there the next day to repair their equipment. Instead of days or weeks of finger pointing, the problem was resolved in a day.

That is what a complete flat fee IT service provider should be doing for your business. Managing your network with sophisticated tools
and managing all of your vendors to make your company as efficient as possible. We can’t eliminate all your problems, but we certainly can reduce the time it takes to correct them. If you’re interested in learning more about ToSolution and the services we provide call me directly at (262) 409-2722.

To Cloud or Not to Cloud - Do We Even Have a Choice?

My oh my, how times are changing in the world! Things seem to be moving faster than ever. Our homes and offices are connected to...well...everything. Or so it seems. Not only are our offices connected to the Internet and reliant on technology, but our homes are as well: printers, scanners, televisions, refrigerators, home phones, and more. All connected. Always on. Always available. We have access to what we need all the time, thanks to some amazing technology! It’s really awesome, isn’t it?

My wife and I recently purchased a new Ring Video Doorbell for our home. We love it. It was easy to set up, easy to install, and now we can answer our door from anywhere in the world. When someone rings our front door, we get an alert on our cell phones, click a button and voila, we are talking to and seeing whoever is ringing. It’s great! And it comes with a recording service that records every interaction and saves the video in “the cloud”.

I bring this story up not specifically to endorse the Ring Video Doorbell (although it’s really cool and you might want to check them out). Rather, I bring it up because this technology, like so many others, includes the cloud as part of its solution. Can you think of other technologies that mention cloud? I’m sure you can. How many times have you heard the term cloud in the past 30 days? My guess is you’re hearing about it all the time. But have you given much thought to what the cloud really is?

I meet business owners all the time who have been hearing about the cloud to do different things. Here are some of the things “the cloud” can do for you:

- It can hold copies of important data for backup and archival purposes, ensuring that your data is available and you can keep working without a data loss interruption.
- It can make file collaboration easier and faster, saving you time and money and making it really easy to share information between employees and vendors.
- It can make email more reliable and available, saving you downtime and giving you a faster response to your clients.
- It can make things much simpler for your business. Simpler fees and software means cost savings and more time spent on your core business, not on things like messy licensing and software upgrades.

These are just a few of the benefits of the cloud. But we still haven’t really answered the question about what, exactly, the cloud is, have we? It’s really great that I can view my doorbell video from anywhere, but who owns the data? Where is it? How secure is it? In the case of my Ring Video Doorbell, the cloud actually refers to Ring’s servers in a data center they own. Or do they? One might notice that Ring’s website and marketing material makes no mention of exactly where your video is saved or who gets to access it. A little tech investigating will quickly reveal that the video is stored in Amazon’s data centers and not in any facility that Ring actually owns (this is pretty typical for cloud solutions these days...storing data in either Amazon or Microsoft data centers).

The bigger point is this, once you start digging a bit deeper, you may quickly find that many cloud solutions have loosely-defined terms, little to no specification as to how or where your data is stored, and virtually no safeguards against data access. It’s one thing to trust a company with storing relatively inconsequential data like video recordings at my front door, but when I start thinking about how much value my business data has, it’s an entirely different ballgame. I’m sure you would agree that our business data security and availability
is paramount, and far more important than access to my doorbell over the Internet. I don’t know about you, but I will only trust my critical business data to a company that proves to adhere to strict standards. These can be things like how they build their data center (complying with SSAE 16 standards), how they secure their data center (complying with Statement on Auditing Standards No. 70, or SAS 70), and whether they adhere to industry standards and compliance like HIPAA, PCI, and others.

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard business owners say they think the cloud is a great idea – and no doubt it can be – but only with a thorough analysis and vetting of exactly where your data is stored, how it’s stored, and what happens to it. Since your business data is critical, it’s prudent to know exactly what it is that a cloud solution is offering. Cheapest isn’t always the best solution when it comes to cloud. We really take the time to know the solutions, look “under the hood”, and vet the companies, ensuring that the solution meets our exacting requirements for security and availability. Backup and disaster recovery is another area of cloud that gets left out of the discussion often, too. Just because your business data is in the cloud doesn’t mean that you can forget about your backup strategy. Cloud solutions need to be backed up, too.

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**Client Spotlight**

"In addition to being technology experts, ToSolution has a strong commitment to community" - Demetria Smith

Highland Community School is a public, K-8 Montessori school located on 17th Street and Highland Avenue in Milwaukee. Highland’s award-winning educational program focuses on nurturing students’ compassion, curiosity and sense of power while building academic skills. Technology is critical to the smooth operation of our school. From mandated online student assessments to parent communication, technology is an integral part of how we are achieving our goal of nurturing informed, compassionate, life-long learners.

Highland Community School was ToSolution’s first school client. For the past several years, we have been on a learning journey together. In a growing school with over 60 staff members and 400 students, Highland has ever-growing technology needs and ToSolution has been there to help us figure it out every step of the way. ToSolution does everything from setting up our network to helping staff troubleshoot issues with a program. There is no job too large or too small for this company.

In addition to being technology experts, ToSolution has a strong commitment to community. They sponsor Bike Walk Eat, Highland’s annual summer kick-off event. This biking event is designed to build community, enjoy one of Milwaukee’s treasures, the Hank Aaron State Trail and raise critical funds to support Highland. On June 4, 2016, Highland will host the fifth annual Bike Walk Eat. Bike Walk Eat is a one-of-a-kind event. Each year, the event has continued to grow. We expect over 200 people to attend this year!

Click on the event logo to learn more and sign-up!

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**Service Desk**

“*It’s Monday Morning and the Internet is slow...AGAIN*”

One of the great features of WatchGuard Firewalls is the ability to get a deeper view into the network. WatchGuard has a reporting server called WatchGuard Dimension. This application enables us see where network traffic is coming from, where it’s going, the amount of bandwidth used per device and user, as well as threats that have been blocked by the firewall.

Every once in a while, we will receive a report of a network performance degradation. Given the large amounts of data that a network
handles on a daily basis, it’s not always easy to determine the cause. This is when having a great firewall with great reporting tools comes in handy.

In one particular case, every Monday, we would get multiple user’s reporting slower than normal network speeds. While using Watchguard Dimension, we were able to see a particular computer had been sending large amounts (over 20GB) of data to an outside location. Upon further inspection, that outside location was actually an approved offsite backup facility. After checking the backup schedule on the machine, we discovered that this machine would start to run a backup on Sunday night, as scheduled, but it would continue into Monday until it finished. After changing the schedule, the network performance was much improved.

Contributor:
Shawn Olson | To Solution, Inc.
Lead Engineer, Network Services

"Bringing a little Silicon Valley into the Heartland"

Considering Dan’s article on the cloud we thought it would be fitting to share a little bit about our partner US Signal.

"US Signal’s fully deployed, 14,000-mile network is guaranteed to deliver resiliency, flexibility and scalability. It’s the most robust network of its kind in the Midwest, and serves as the backbone for a full suite of colocation, security and computing services. This includes both HIPAA Compliant Cloud-based and Network-based solutions, and is relied upon by everyone from entrepreneurial individuals and startups to Fortune 500 level companies."

US Signal has a lot to offer when it comes to cloud services, disaster recovery and data security but one of the things that we like most about them is that all their data-centers are located right here in the Midwest. With US Signal we can answer the question “Where is your cloud?” with confidence because our "cloud" is right here in the heartland.
Stop Forgetting To Attach Your Attachments

We've all done it, I did it twice last week alone (which led to this being May's Tech-Tip). We craft a new email to a client or colleague and ask them to "please see the attached file" and then with all the excitement of a puppy with a brand new couch cushion we send it off...and a moment later we realize we didn't actually attach the attachment. So we quickly search for the message in our sent folder, forward it to the same person we just sent it to with a new caption reading "oops, forgot attachment - sorry". Usually at this point we remember to attach the file, if you've ever gotten to this point and sent the message yet again without the attachment, you REALLY need this tech-tip.

When selected, Outlook 2013/2016 looks for a sequence of words in the body and subject of the email. Words that will trigger the reminder would be obvious ones like "attach" and "attachment". Or phrases like "print attachments", "please see attached", "see the attached spreadsheet"...etc. It's not 100% effective (depending on the sequence of words), but it's good to know this feature is available.

If this scenario sounds familiar, then like me, you need to make sure the above option is selected. If in the past you have "ignored" these helpful pop-up reminders, simply uncheck and recheck this option. The option can be found under the "Mail" tab with-in "Outlook Options". Simply click "File" at the top left corner of a new email, then select "Options", make sure the "Mail" tab is selected and scroll...
down until you see this option, it's under the heading "Send messages".

Contributor:
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Director of Business Development

ToSolution
Your Experts in Business IT Support
Join our upcoming webinar:
5 Ways Business Continuity Improves Your Business's Profitability

Thursday, May 19th
2PM ET | 11AM PT

RSVP HERE *

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