

NEWS RELEASE

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Switch off for Christmas

I love Christmas – it's the one time of year that I really switch off and just enjoy being with my family and friends.

And this year, despite my fondness for TV Christmas specials, turkey and too many purple Quality Street, we will be skiing in Austria.

And those who know my obsession with technology will be amazed to hear that I will only be taking my PDA, mainly because it acts as my mobile phone, leaving my more than capable team to do their job in my absence.

Before I go, I will do all the usual pre-holiday checks – cancelling the papers and the milk, persuading the neighbours to water the plants and locking all the doors and windows. And, last but not least, making sure our computer network is safe and secure.

Perhaps you think I am being overcautious – after all, I do work in IT! But ask yourself this, how often have you locked the office door behind you on Christmas Eve and not returned until January 2, feeling fed up and distinctly unfestive?

And before you left, did you do anything more than switch off your computer and set the answer machine? No? You're not alone – thousands of businesses close for the holidays without making the most basic checks before they leave.

In fact, I can probably guarantee that the last time anyone checked their computer network before closing for Christmas was December 24 1999, when we all thought the Millennium Bug was going to blow up our computers.

Luckily for most companies it didn't, but that doesn't mean a very generous hacker won't send you a particularly virulent virus for Christmas, leaving you with a very unhappy New Year or a burst pipe won't flood your offices, leaving your hard drive high and dry.

I am not trying to be Scrooge here. For any business which relies on its IT network, there is a genuine business need to ensure your continuity planning and disaster recovery is up to date before you head off to the Christmas party.

Every company should work out the very basics of what it takes to keep their business running if the worst was to happen.

From an IT perspective, it could be as simple as making sure all the back up files are up to date, stored off site and that you have access to a serviced office with rental computers if required.

For companies who have to guarantee the integrity of their information the procedure is more complicated and it is even more essential that they get it right.

And don't make it your New Year's resolution to do this. Do it before Christmas then make sure you keep the plan up to date.

In the long term it could save or even earn you money. There's a rumour that insurance companies will be reducing costs for companies with a verifiable recovery plan.

Plus, from a new business point of view, it is a great selling point that you are so careful with customers' details and information that you regularly make sure they are protected.

I'm sure Christmas is presenting other challenges which are more immediate – like what to buy your partner, how to pay for it all and even whether you have enough food/drink/batteries/Alka Seltzer for the holidays.

I know, I have the same worries every year. But knowing that my business is safe and secure before I go away is just one more worry off my mind before I go on the piste.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Innovit is a Midlands based provider of IT solutions for SMEs, professional services and education. The Innovit team work in partnership with client companies to maximise the potential of technology with the businesses, helping them to work smarter not harder.

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