

Weekly Tips	September 19, 2007
<p>Sponsor Link:</p> <p><a href="http://www.signal.com">www.signal.com</a></p>	<p><b>Welcome to our 35th edition of Bits &amp; Bytes!</b></p> <p>We hope you will all enjoy the 35th edition of our bi-monthly e-zine. We have had some excellent feedback on past editions which are available on our website.</p> <p>As a previous customer, associate or perhaps someone we've met at a networking event, we wanted to provide you with a short one page summary of technology news and events that may be of interest to you.</p>

## The New World of Online Interaction

The world is going online and not just to check the news. Today countless events that formerly would have to take place in person are now taking place online.

**Using online meeting programs such as GoToMeeting, Webex, Macromedia Breeze and others, companies are conducting meetings, salesmen are demonstrating products and people are collaborating on projects while physically separated by thousands of miles.**

At JN Software Consulting, we use these programs to conduct online training sessions with between 1 and 15 trainees at a time. By logging into one of these programs, both trainer and trainee can view each other's desktops.

By controlling their mouse, the trainer can teach the trainee using

## THE TECH ADVISORS!!!

[www.thetechadvisors.ca](http://www.thetechadvisors.ca)

Join us Sunday nights at 9:30pm through [www.talkshoe.com](http://www.talkshoe.com). A big Welcome to our New TA - Jason Chiles!

## 5 COMPUTER MYTHS!

To coincide with our Tech Advisors Podcast this past Sunday, I thought it would be interesting to address some "Computer Myths".

Just like the popular show on the discovery channel, we can look at some urban legends in the computer world that may or may not have some truth behind them.

We've ranked them in order of least to most common phrases associated with the myths.

To coincide with our Tech Advisors podcast this past Sunday, I thought it would be interesting to address some computer misconceptions or "myths".

Just like the popular show on the Discovery Channel, we wanted to look at some urban legends about computers.

the trainee's own files and documents. Each user can also easily send files to the other, as well as access a number of other useful functions.

Often verbal communication through these programs can be handled by sending text messages, but we find the most effective method is to combine the online meeting with a phone conversation.

While JN Software generally calls the trainee directly, there is also the option of the online meeting programs offering inexpensive conference calling services that you may want to use, should your meeting involve more than two people.

There are various pricing plans available depending on the program you select. Some can be purchased by the minute, while others have monthly plans.

We at JN Software, for example, pay a monthly fee which allows us to train our clients whenever they want. Either way, once you add up the time and cost of driving to meetings, you may see a benefit to meeting virtually instead.

### **So the next time you need to meet with someone, why not consider meeting them online?**

The next time you need to learn something, why not try learning it from the comfort of your home by learning online with a company like JN Software Consulting?

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Today's Contributor:  
Jon Neuhold

We've ranked them in order of least to most common "myth":

### **5) Turning my computer on and off every day will "wear out" the computer.**

This myth has been around a long time. It was true, in past generations of computers that relied on "mechanical" switches to power up and down.

Previously, buttons and a lot of the electrical connections on a computer were made using a spring operated contact that theoretically could "wear out" the more often it was used.

Today's computers (referring to the last 10 years at least), do not have the same mechanical connection. There is still a button, but it electronically activates the power supply making this myth "busted".

Computers these days are designed to run 27/7/365 for years. That is not to say that defects do not occur, it just means that the industry standards for a brand name computer has a realistic lifespan of 3-5 years. Pushing the button everyday won't affect that.

### **4) Even though I have an LCD, I still need to use a screen saver to protect it.**

The truth behind this myth was that with CRT monitors (the old box style tube monitors), did in fact have a risk of "burn in" when a stationary image on the screen was left on for prolonged periods of time.

Screen savers were developed to continuously move the image on the screen so that the cathode ray could not burn a permanent image into the phosphorous on the back of the tube.

With today's LCD (liquid crystal display) technology, the same risk of "burn in" simply does not exist.

Though we do still recommend screen savers for privacy measures, a more effective tool is the computer's "power saving" feature which actually turns the monitor off after a time

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## 5 TRUE "MYTHS"

To continue our "myth" theme, here are a few that are absolutely true.

### 1) You get what you pay for.

In terms of computer quality, most people looking to purchase a computer look at price as their first parameter. We try to educate our customers on the values of warranty, service and performance.

Many computers these days are "powerful" enough for the average business user, so warranty and service become critical when dealing with the "what if" scenarios.

A good warranty and upgradeable options comes with a premium price tag.

### 2) A clone PC is as good as a name brand. (aka all computers are the same!)

In today's technology, clone PC's otherwise known as "grey" boxes which are assembled by local computer stores are in fact almost identical in construction to the name brand computers.

The internal components are made by the same manufacturers that the big brands use and are configured in much the same way. The big difference lies in the actual chassis (or case) and the customized features that some name brands have created to make their PCs "unique".

In some cases, the grey boxes can be cheaper and provide more customization features that the

(similar to a screen saver). With the monitor off, LCD technology will last longer. The enemy of LCD technology is electricity itself.

### 3) If I have a laptop or portable harddrive, I must not go through a retail store's security bars.

One of my favorites myths, again derived from previous generations of technology, is the threat of magnets erasing or "wiping" your data.

The reality is that once again this misconception was a fact in the day of when weak magnetic fields could disrupt the data on floppy disks.

Today, floppy disks have been replaced by CD's or DVD's which do not use magnetic technology or by large hard drive structures that requires HUGE magnetic fields to disrupt them. The chances of wiping data from these devices are slim.

In fact, to wipe data from a harddrive (which incidentally has extremely strong magnets inside it already), a stronger specialized magnet is required. These magnets are referred to as degaussing magnets and are used in industry specific parameters.

In general, a fridge magnet or walking through the security devices of your favorite retail store will not affect a laptop or portable drive.

### 2) Given enough time, a hacker can break into anything and steal anything.

It is true that there are hackers out there always attempting to disrupt something. In reality, risk vs. reward is the key to how

name brands.

### **3) You should turn off your computer once in a while.**

This is absolutely true. Many times these days with updates from software vendors and with technology for power saving and "sleep" modes, computers that run 24/7 don't have the opportunity to "reset" themselves or implement the updates because they are constantly active.

Even if you run your computers 24/7, you should turn them off and restart them at least once a week to ensure updates, logs and any startup related routines are implemented. It will also give you an opportunity to look for hardware indicators like noise and dust accumulation.

### **4) If I don't have a surge protecting device, I can fry my computer in a blackout.**

The purpose of a surge protector is to ensure that the electrical current from your plug in the wall is consistent and even. If an increase or decrease in power occurs the computer components can become damaged.

A surge protector is designed to filter out extra power and a UPS (uninterruptible power supply) is designed to fill in power when it is below grade.

Without these devices, during a storm or any kind of power fluctuation your computer equipment can be permanently damaged which in some extreme cases can include data loss.

### **5) To ensure my data is safe, I should backup to an OFFSITE location.**

This is a statement long debated. It

hackers think.

A hacker wants either a) revenge b) money or c) fame. If none of those apply, then chances are no hacker would care to "steal" your data.

What this means is that though many institutions and businesses are online, the skills required to hack high level security are rare.

In the movies, you can see the average computer user at home "accidentally" or easily break into a government's secured area or a bank and transfer funds.

The reality is that most breaches of these types of online areas are "inside" jobs where a hacker has had help.

Regardless, computer security should still be a vital component for every business. Standard security measures will protect against most possible threats, however, the odds are that you will rarely if ever have a serious "random" threat to your online resources.

### **1) Everything is a virus!**

This is my absolute all time popular myth. Most people, when confronted with a problem on their computer that they cannot attribute to their actions or to any direct error message, lay the blame on the most elusive "virus".

Of course viruses do exist, and of course they are designed to be malicious. However, the reality is in today's computer world, catching a virus is very rare unless you have done specific things to catch one.

9 out of 10 times, when a customer says "I

comes down to risk vs. loss. The best backup is one that is a) complete b) tested to make sure it works c) updated regularly and d) offsite.

Why offsite? Computers are not only vulnerable to their own malfunction, and to internet based attacks but also to their physical environment.

What if the computer is stolen? What if the area is flooded by water? What if there is fire? Keeping backups in an offsite location is an extra measure of security for your data against these environmental issues to which your computer may be vulnerable.

We have seen backups secured in fire proof vaults, hidden in closets away from the computer, but many times we find backups sitting on top of the same computer it is backing up with no regard to security or safety. A good backup, should leave the "office" as part of a planned and scheduled procedure.

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think I have a virus" it turns out to be a spyware infection, hardware failure or an operating system issue.

Spyware (which is completely different from a virus) has replaced viruses as the biggest threat to your computer, not because of what it does to your hardware, but because it routes your information to outside sources without your knowledge of consent.

So essentially, the term "virus" has become the catch all phrase to describe any computer problem, crash or error.

Should you have questions about any of the above mentioned myths and the reality behind them, please feel free to contact us at [info@fixmycomputernow.com](mailto:info@fixmycomputernow.com) or call us at 905-471