

# MC Connect

*“Insider Tips to Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, and More Profitably”*

## Focus

We live in a world full of noise. With the advances in technology came the promise of simple and easy. And in the beginning that was fairly accurate. Remember typing letters on mechanical typewriters? Do you remember the type bars getting stuck, and having to reach up and pull them all back down again? Do you even remember type bars at all?

Then word processors came along and made life simple. No more stuck type bars. No more Wite-Out. No more problems. Well, except for the fact that you could only see 10 or 15 words at a time. But that was a small price to pay. Until computers came along.

Now life was *really* going to be simple. Type the whole document, see it all in one place, make corrections, save it to a disk, open up a fancy spell checker program, check the spelling on your document, save it to disk again, open it back up in the word processor program, then print it out. Piece of cake!

Then came the Internet, faster computers, better word processing programs with real-time spell checking, laser printers, smart phones, social media, laptops, tablets, and interstellar teleporters. Well, maybe not that last one. But seriously, this was *really, really* going to make life simple. We don't even have to print things off anymore. We can communicate with *everyone* with just a few clicks, taps, or touches. Could it get any better than this?

By now you are probably way ahead of me. But let me illustrate with my current project: this article. I started it yesterday, and finished one whole paragraph before enough distractions (technology related) caused so much environmental noise that I finally gave up and moved on to something else. I started back up this morning at 10:00 AM. It's 2:50 PM. Go



“As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!”

- Justin Shelley, Master Computing

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ahead. Count up the paragraphs, sentences, and/or words, divide by the number of minutes between 10:00 and 2:50 and you'll see where I'm going with all this. Here, I'll break it down for you: (sorry, just got distracted by an email) in 350 minutes I wrote 269 words. That's roughly 3/4 of a word per minute. For the record, I type faster than the average Joe. I have a nice computer with all the latest software. The problem is all the technological noise: calls on my cell phone, calls on my office phone, emails, text messages, whatever. (Just ~~wasted~~ invested another 5 minutes exchanging texts with my wife about a vacuum.)



Joe Calloway, author of *Be The Best at What Matters Most* with Justin Shelley, president of Master Computing

OK, we've identified the problem (technological noise combined with self-diagnosed ADD). But now what? And why am I shaking hands with a guy 12 inches taller than me?

In my most recent how-to-run-an-IT-business training retreat, I met Joe Calloway, author of *Be The Best at What Matters Most*. I'll be honest, I didn't learn anything earth-shattering. But it was a good reminder of the importance of focus. I wear a lot of hats within my company, I'm active in my church, I have a wife and four children, I have many hobbies, a long bucket-list, and I'm writing a book. Focus probably is not a good word to describe my current situation. Unfortunately, my lack of focus causes me to fall short much of the time.

During Joe's presentation, he asked two questions that really made me stop and think: 1) What are the 3 things we must always do with every customer? 2) What are the 3 things we must never do with any customer?

It didn't take me long to answer either of those questions, but it was a huge eye-opener for me because I fail in both cases much of the time. One thing is certain: I will be making some changes to the way we do business. I'm not going to publicly admit where I am dropping the ball, but I will extend an invitation to anyone reading this article: cut through the noise, the distractions, and the chaos of our technology-infused world and figure out what matters most. What simple changes could you make in your circle of influence that would have the most impact? What do you need to always do and what should you never do? Boil it down to as few words as possible, then do it. I got mine down to one word each. Now *that's* simple. *That's* easy. Right now, the noise has faded, the chaos is at bay, my target is in perfect focus.

Thanks Joe!

Justin Shelley

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## This Month in Technology History

We're finally moving away from Apple in this month's column to focus on perhaps *the* most important product introduction in computer history – the IBM PC. All personal computers in wide use today – yes, even Macs – are directly or indirectly derived from the standards set forth by the IBM PC starting this month in 1981.

Although it was the largest computer manufacturer in the world coming into the 1980s, IBM had completely missed the minicomputer bubble of the 1970s (minicomputers were, in essence, much smaller and less powerful mainframes that were affordable for many smaller businesses). Sensing that it was starting to fall behind to other manufacturers in other areas as well, IBM wanted to exploit the burgeoning personal computer market. Company chiefs knew that if IBM could bring a personal computer to market quickly enough, it would sell based on the reputation of IBM alone.

However, these same chiefs soon came to realize what much of IBM already knew – that undertaking the research, development, and release of a completely new product within the complex bureaucratic workings of IBM would take precious time. Early figures estimated that it would take four to five years for IBM to get a personal computer to market – time company executives knew they didn't have. Worse yet, IBM's sales network was geared towards selling mainframes, typewriters, and tabulation machines – not personal computers. Not only did staff not have the training necessary to give informed advice about such products, but the network's connection to retail chains and independent computer shops, where most personal computers were sold, was non-existent.

IBM engineer and executive Bill Lowe proposed a plan to upper management in July 1980 to create an autonomous Independent Business Unit within IBM to design and develop a personal computer that would be free from most of the constraints of IBM's bureaucratic workings. The team would seek out off-the-shelf parts that could be quickly and cheaply used for the personal computer. It would also bypass the usual IBM sales network and market the machine directly to retailers. All of these were firsts in the company's history.

These provisions meant that the IBU, now lead by Don Estridge, was able to develop a machine that was ready for sale barely a year later. Estridge, like most of his team, owned an Apple II prior to joining the IBU, and they implemented many of the features of the Apple II into the IBM PC, including its open architecture, openly published technical specifications, and price point. On August 12, 1981, IBM released the PC, which contained 16K of memory, an Intel 8088 processor, and Microsoft's PC DOS 1.0, for a cost of \$1565. Sales were phenomenal, perhaps beyond IBM's expectations – by the end of 1982, IBM was selling one PC per minute of every business day, and by 1984, IBM owned 56% of the corporate personal computer market and outsold Apple, Commodore, and HP combined.

Although IBM's decisions enabled the company to produce a quality product quickly and at a low cost, their choice to use off-the-shelf parts (and perhaps worse, not sign an exclusivity deal with operating system provider Microsoft) allowed other manufacturers to take the same parts and build their own, often cheaper or more feature-rich, clones. These computers, initially known as IBM Compatibles, first hit the market in June 1982. By the end of the 1980s, MS-DOS compatibles (as they were now known) made by companies such as Acer, HP, Dell, and Compaq were outselling IBM's own PCs, and IBM finally sold their PC business in 2005 to Chinese manufacturer Lenovo after years of losses.

Although the Windows compatible market is now as large as it is thanks to the fact that multiple companies have adopted the same standards for manufacturing PCs, it owes its start to IBM. Without the backing of the well-respected computer giant, it is unlikely that the platform would have caught on as rapidly and as deeply as it did. Although IBM ended up losing the battle for market supremacy, they set many of the standards for the PC industry that still stand more than thirty years later.

Jay Hathi

## Could The Dog Days Of Summer Be A Threat To Your Business?

*How To Ensure The Heat Doesn't Fry Your Server  
(And Your Profits!)*

With the “dog days” of summer upon us, most business owners are looking for ways to keep their company’s sales and profits HOT, while keeping their IT expenses COOL. If proper attention is not given to your server and network equipment during the summer; however, all that heat outside can actually bring your company’s growth to a grinding halt and increase your IT expenses significantly.

Excess heat can be a big problem for small to mid-sized business servers, since a server that becomes overheated usually costs more in energy, fails more often, and is more likely to crash. For most companies, a server crash can mean hours or days of downtime, unproductive employees, HUGE amounts of stress, and thousands of dollars in lost opportunities.

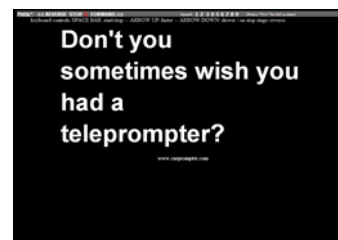
### “7 Steps Every Business Owner Must Take To Prevent A Server Crash”

Here are a few simple things you can do to prevent your server and network equipment from overheating and crashing this summer:

1. Tidy up the server room; a neater room will increase airflow.
2. Keep the doors to the server room closed and seal off the space.
3. Make sure cold air reaches all the equipment.
4. Have a redundant A/C that is specifically designed for computers.
5. Buy a rack enclosure where the cooling is built into the bottom of the rack.
6. Keep the temperature at no more than 77 degrees Fahrenheit.
7. Consider virtualization or cloud computing so that you are generating a lower amount of heat in the first place.

**Protect your server and computer equipment from frying with our FREE “Beat The Heat” Network Audit. Schedule your “Beat The Heat” Audit today by calling our office at 940-220-7817. Offer Expires 8/31/14.**

## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



### CuePrompter Online Teleprompter

CuePrompter is a free teleprompter/autocue service. Your browser works like a teleprompter—no extra software needed! You can use it for free in both commercial and non-commercial settings!

Videos are a great way to get clients to hear what you have to say, whether you post your video on Facebook, LinkedIn or Google+, or whether you e-mail it out to your clients. CuePrompter makes creating those videos so much easier—now you don’t have to look down at your notes or memorize your three-minute speech, and the best part of this neat web site? It’s totally free.

CuePrompter works well with most operating systems and browsers and allows you to make the text as big as you need it to be. It’s easy to control the speed settings as well as reverse and fast-forward as needed.

This handy gadget can be found for FREE at [www.CuePrompter.com](http://www.CuePrompter.com). Just type in what you want to say, and you’re in business. Now go out and make a video!

## 6 THINGS LEADERS FORGET TO DO THAT PUT THEM AT RISK

There's much to remember to be a successful leader. Sometimes leaders get so busy and engrossed with day-to-day operations that they forget some critical activities. Here are 6 items that need to be on your leadership agenda:

**1. Grow a replacement:** Your employer can't promote you until they have someone to replace you. You can't move up in the organization if you're the only one who can do that job where you're at right now. If you're the top boss, you can't let succession planning languish or the fate of your entire organization hangs in the balance.

**2. Anticipate problems:** Most problems simmer on the back burner before they start to boil over. Like a professional pilot, you've got to be scanning all your instruments and the horizon to make sure you don't get slammed by a potential problem (or at least be completely ready for the problems you can't avoid).

**3. Exploit opportunities:** Most leaders know what (and who) is wrong, but they become oblivious to opportunities. Who are the star performers that need recognition and development? What are the great opportunities just waiting to be seized? It isn't simply positive/negative thinking: it's about being as focused on the good and opportunistic, as you are on the bad and problematic.

**4. Change before it is necessary:** We all know about the power of disruption and its potential to ruin us. Why do we wait until the last moment to change? Why not preempt? Staying successful isn't based on your ability to change: it's based on your ability to change faster than your competitors, the needs of your customers and the demands of the marketplace. If you have to change just to keep up, you've lost whatever competitive advantage you could have enjoyed by changing sooner.

**5. Stay relevant:** What does it even mean to be relevant? Relevancy is about being closely connected: your colleagues, your customer and vendors, and your marketplace. You are deemed relevant when others believe you affect them and their success, and that therefore you and your work matter. In business, customers make the evaluation as to a firm's relevance. What are you doing to stay up-to-date and salient about what matters most to those you lead and serve?

**6. Take care of themselves:** "Taking care of yourself" seems selfish, doesn't it? Maybe that's why so many leaders neglect to do so. Consider: if you're going to model the energy you expect from others, give support and lead the way, you need to be at the top of your game, mentally, emotionally and physically. Burned-out leaders burn out followers. The right diet, exercise and rest aren't luxuries but very real necessities for successful leadership.

With so much to do, you need to keep a clear and up-to-date agenda of the truly important things you consistently need to do. To work without an agenda—and to forget to do the 6 things above—puts you at risk as a leader.

## Is Your Keyboard Making You Sick?

Jessica Shelley

Now that we're at the height of cold and flu season, you might want to take a closer look at what's living on your keyboard. A series of studies called "Germs in the Workplace," found that the following four office surfaces had the most bacteria (in this order):

- Phones
- Desks
- Computer keyboard
- Computer mouse

Obviously, these are items you touch all day, every day. Germs and dirt from your hands and mouth are transferred easily on to these items, and vice-versa, making them breeding grounds for harmful bacteria.

To lessen your chances of picking up colds and flu, we recommend cleaning your mouse and keyboard daily with disinfecting wipes. It's also smart to clean these items before a new person uses them.



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## Student Laptop Buyer’s Guide: Use These 6 Tips When Buying Your Student’s New Laptop This Fall

School is almost back in session, and if you’re in the market for purchasing a new laptop for one of your children (it seems like anyone from elementary school children to college graduates need a laptop these days, right?), here are 7 tips to get the most out of your laptop purchase.

**Tip #1:** Bigger is NOT necessarily better when it comes to laptops. If your student is on the go, smaller laptops are going to be your best bet. Go for less than 4 lbs. and either 11” or 13” screen size. The SurfacePro, UltraBook or MacBook Airs are all solid options for most students.

**Tip #2:** Pay for a good design. A student will be using their laptop day in and day out. Choose sleek over clunky. Also opt for a design that is made to protect the display and resist wear and tear over the next few years of use.

**Tip #3:** Buy for the long haul. Think about how long you want your student’s computer to last. Make the mistake of saving a few bucks now for a cheaper processor, lower memory or smaller hard drive and you’ll be regretting that decision when you’re buying another laptop in 2 years instead of 3 or 4.

**Tip #4:** Go for long battery life. . . your student will use it! Six hours of battery life is the MINIMUM spec you should purchase. If you can get 10+ hours of battery life in your budget, go for it.

**Tip #5:** Consider touch screen hybrids. Many Windows 8 devices such as the SurfacePro allow you to use the device as sort of a tablet/laptop hybrid. For kids that grew up on tablets and smartphones, these hybrids make them feel right at home with their new computer and actually make them more efficient.

**Tip #6:** Mac versus PC. This decision is really up to you and your preferences. Software choices these days allow your student to do just fine with either choice. Choose whichever operating system your student is used to using and they’ll do just fine.

Still unsure what to buy? Don’t hesitate to give us a call and we’ll be happy to guide you in the right direction. We’re here to help.



## The Denton Business Owners’ Guide To IT Support Services And Fees

### IT BUYERS GUIDE

What Every Business Owner MUST Know About IT Support Services And Fees



What You Should Expect To Pay For IT Support For Your Business And How To Get Exactly What You Need

#### You will learn:

- ✓ The 3 most common ways IT services companies charge for their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.
- ✓ A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you, the customer, when buying IT services; you’ll learn what it is and why you need to avoid agreeing to it.
- ✓ Exclusions, hidden fees and other “gotcha” clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON’T want to agree to.
- ✓ How to make sure you know exactly what you’re getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn’t anticipate.

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## 10 Easy Ways To Eliminate E-mail Overload

E-mail driving you crazy? Every time you delete one, do five more show up? Are you finding it impossible to answer every e-mail you receive? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you’re not alone!

Some people are even declaring e-mail bankruptcy — they dump every e-mail in their inbox and start over. If that’s not an option for you, then here are 10 tips to reduce e-mail overload.

1. **Get a good spam filter.** Even if it saves you just 10 minutes a day, that adds up to over 59 hours a year.
2. **Cancel subscriptions to unwanted mailing lists, and opt-out of LEGITIMATE e-zines.** But be careful! Trying to opt-out of spam e-mails will only alert the sender that they have a LIVE address. Also, make sure you are careful to check the “unsubscribe” or “opt-out” box when purchasing items online.
3. **Ask your friends to remove you from joke groups or chain messages.** Simply explain your situation and, if they are good friends, they’ll take you out of their message group.
4. **Don’t post or publish your e-mail on web sites.** Spammers will steal it and put it on their lists.
5. **Don’t respond to every e-mail you receive.** Yes, it’s okay NOT to respond to some e-mails. If it’s a group e-mail, don’t respond with “okay” or “:)” — it’s not necessary unless the sender is specifically asking you a question or requesting a response.
6. **Be succinct.** Restrict your messages to a few sentences. If you can’t, pick up the phone or talk in person. This will avoid the back-and-forth of e-mail conversation.
7. **Take advantage of subject lines.** If possible, put your question in the subject line, or your message. If that’s not possible, make your subject line very descriptive so the recipient knows what your message is about. Here’s another tip; create a set of codes with your coworkers and place them in the subject line to help them process and prioritize messages. For example, use “FYI” for informational messages, “AR” for action required, and “URG” for urgent messages.
8. **Schedule time to check your E-mail.** By not checking your inbox every few minutes you will save time and be far more productive.
9. **Respond to messages when you open them so you only read them once.** If the e-mail requires an action step, schedule the action step and delete it from your inbox.
10. **Set time aside in the morning and the evening to process your inbox.** Shoot for a completely empty inbox. File messages you need to keep and set reminders for messages that require you to follow up.

Now, here are some tips to keep from adding to the e-mail overload of others...

1. Be courteous when forwarding an e-mail: summarize the thread and why you are sending it at the top of the e-mail.
2. Don’t copy someone on a message unless it is necessary. And explain why you’re copying them. Recipients won’t need to guess your intentions. This means less back and forth messages.

## Warning: If You Are Using WordPress For Your Company Website, There Is A 73% Chance Your Site Is Vulnerable To Being Hacked

Hackers are crazy busy right now, and WordPress websites are their favorite target! So far this year, hackers have broken every record to date. In 2012, there were roughly 192,000 WordPress sites worldwide. In March 2014 alone, a single hacker used 162,000 hacked WordPress websites in just one single attack.

A recent study by EnableSecurity concluded that 73% of the 40,000 most popular websites that use WordPress software are vulnerable to attack. WordPress is the most popular blogging and content management system in the world and powers 1 out of every 5 websites.

The main culprit in these vulnerabilities is violating the first rule of WordPress security - not running the most up to date version of WordPress. If you're not running the very latest version of WordPress, chances are that your site is vulnerable to any hacker using simple, free automated tools.

### Here are 5 quick tips on keeping your WordPress website secure:

1. Always run the very latest version of WordPress.
2. Be conservative in your selection of plugins and themes (and run the latest versions of these).
3. Make sure every user has their own strong password.
4. Put a Web Application Firewall (WAF) in front of your website.
5. Force logins and admin access to use HTTPS.

## Who Else Wants To Win A \$25 Gift Card?

The winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Lita Welch from Denton! She was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month: **During which year did Congress pass a bill to make July 4th an official holiday?**



The correct answer was b) 1870. Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a gift card to Barnes and Noble!

### Which of these celebrities was NOT born in August?

- a) Michael Jackson   b) Lucille Ball   c) Bill Clinton   d) Taylor Swift  
e) Patrick Swayze

E-mail Us Right Now With Your Answer!  
[trivia@master-computing.com](mailto:trivia@master-computing.com)

## The Lighter Side: Silly Summer Stories



### How to Grow Strawberries:

Farmer Evans was driving his John Deere tractor along the road with a trailer load of fertilizer. Tim, a little boy of 8, was playing in his yard when he saw the farmer and asked, "What've you got in your trailer?"

"Manure," Farmer Evans replied.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked Tim.

"Put it on my strawberries," answered the farmer.

Tim replied, "You ought to come and eat with us, we put ice cream on our strawberries."

### Young Entrepreneur:

Robert, who was 6 years old, was looking at the ripe red tomatoes growing in Farmer White's garden. "I'll give you my 2 pennies for that tomato," said Robert, pointing to a beautiful, large, ripe fruit hanging on the vine.

"No, I can't do that," replied Farmer White. "I can get a dime for a tomato like that one."

So Robert pointed to a smaller green tomato: "Will you take 2 pennies for that one?"

"Oh, yes," answered the farmer, "I'll give you that one for 2 cents."

"Okay," said Robert smiling, sealing the deal by putting the coins in the Farmer White's hand, "I'll collect it in a week's time."