



## Tomorrow's Technology Today Celebrates its 10 Year Anniversary!

*Tomorrow's Technology Today* was founded in early 2001 by Lisa Niekamp-Urwin as a result of a need for technology support in the general area. Lisa started the business with just a couple of customers, and with simple word of mouth, the company grew from there! TTT now provides their services to more than 160 businesses.

Soon after establishing Tomorrow's Technology Today, LLC., Lisa started thinking about residential and small office/home office (SOHO) businesses as an untapped market. She researched having a retail storefront and decided she didn't want those hours. And the idea appeared: the hardware store down the road. Lisa met with the owner and discussed how he handled tool repair and suggested we adding computers to that list. TTechT would provide packets of forms, the customer would complete the info, the hardware store would drop an email or give us a call, and we would pick up the machine. We would handle all contact with the customer and return the unit to the store when it was ready. After some additional marketing for our residential services, business started booming. We then ventured out to two more local hardware stores and it has been a success ever since.

This was about the time Lisa had started to investigate products to help automate the business. We were doing all of our work manually, and it was very time consuming and tedious. Our technicians didn't need to be sitting around making sure the temp files were cleaned out, defrags run, or updates installed. So, we invested in a remote monitoring and management system and started getting some of our small business clients on board. This service had become such a huge success in our commercial market that we decided to offer it to residential and home-based business clients in an all-in-one inclusive package as well, which would help us scale this business segment. We could tune up their PCs and clean up their malware, viruses, spam and so on, and with the solution on board, they would be protected and monitored at all times. If they got another infection, we would clean that up and it would all be included in a yearly price with no additional labor charges.

It was the right decision. We have now doubled our residential and SOHO business, and have over 250 nodes across our entire customer base. With remote monitoring and protection, we could scale to accommodate an influx of new clients, one success at a time!

The business has since been expanded far beyond computer sales and service. We also sell and service printers, network equipment, servers, and battery backups. We can also source any make/model of laptop batteries and power adapters. TTechT also has a full-time website designer/developer on staff that can help you get a new website up & running or take over an existing site in need of updates along with a full-time software developer that can help with software programming and reports. If you have a technology need...Chances are, we can help!



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## 10 years ago today ...

**10 years ago today**, the biggest television in the average house was a 32-inch analog set, which most thought was massive. (Of course, it was in terms of weight. It was over 125 lbs.)

**10 years ago today**, the average person was still using a dial-up, 56k narrowband Internet Connection.

**10 years ago today**, an average person's computer was a Compaq that weight more than most dogs, had barely any storage or RAM, and had a screen that was only slightly brighter than an Etch-A-Sketch.

**10 years ago today**, we were still backing up files on 3 1/2 inch floppy disks. We had boxes full of them.

**10 years ago today**, most of us did not own an i-Pod, or any other sort of portable digital MP3 player. We were still hauling a box of CD's around with us everywhere we went and playing them on a bulky portable CD player that skipped whenever we bumped it.

**10 years ago today**, some of us were still listening to cassette tapes in our cars.

**10 years ago today**, the majority of us were still driving to local video stores to rent movies and some of them were on VHS tapes.

**10 years ago today**, we were still using a camera that required film, which we had to drop off at the local pharmacy to be developed.

**10 years ago today**, most of us had never done any online banking, or any other monetary transactions online for that matter.

**10 years ago today**, we did not have a blog, an RSS feed, a Twitter feed, any social networking accounts, Gmail, GMaps, Google News, Flickr, Firefox, Netflix, Wikipedia, satellite radio, or any of the other endless assortment of digital services we often rely on today.

# Top 7 Common Small-Business Tech Mistakes

(and how to avoid them)

## 1. Failing to Back-Up Appropriately

Backup strategies are useless if you don't use them. Unfortunately, many individuals and businesses neglect this crucial step, and sometimes it comes back to bite them. Remember, having a physical hard drive or a cloud-based storage account won't help you if you fail to keep your data backed up and your technology relevant. The good news is that backup programs will handle the operation for you. Set up frequent, regularly scheduled automated backups for your data, so you don't have to remember to do it manually. The need to establish a good backup strategy is especially critical if you run a small business with no dedicated IT staff to handle the process; data recovery is a painful, expensive process.

## 2. Disposing of Old Technology Incorrectly

You can't just toss unwanted computers, smartphones, and other gadgets in the trash, because they contain hazardous materials that can damage the environment. In a worst-case scenario, disposing of old tech improperly can cost you in fines. But you don't have to spend a lot of money for someone else to dispose of it properly. Instead, consider cleaning up and reselling your old tech. Obviously, your gear has to be in working condition, though some companies will take phones with cracked screens. If your hardware meets the standards of resale companies, remember to wipe your data before sending the items along. You may end up with a decent-size check to put toward your office upgrade.

## 3. Slacking on Security, Security, Security!

Your business may be small and unassuming, but that doesn't mean that crooks aren't ready to steal your secrets. Along with safeguarding your employees' smartphones, it's important to make general IT security a priority. Make sure that you know the ins and outs of your operating system's security features, and that you have updated firewalls and anti-virus programs in place. It's also important to practice safe computing. E-mail and social networking accounts are particularly vulnerable to viruses and spam, so keep different passwords for different accounts and don't click sketchy links. This might seem like common sense, but more than half of small businesses have no IT security guidelines in place, according to protection firm AVG.

## 4. Ignoring Your Online Reputation

Small-business owners know that reputation is everything, and this fact of business life applies to your online reputation, too. Even if you don't think you have much of an online presence, customer review and consumer advocacy sites give your customers a platform for voicing their opinions on the Web without your explicit consent. That's why it's important to monitor your business's online presence regularly, and to research how your company appears in search results. What you don't know could be hurting you. If you discover that your online presence is less than savory, take the appropriate face-saving steps to rebuild your good name.

## 5. Choosing the Wrong Tech Support

Tech support is a tricky subject. After all, if you're a small enough business and you "know a guy," why bother hiring a professional, right? Maybe. Research suggests that small businesses generally try to use as little IT help as possible, but this is not necessarily a good thing. No doubt you can call in your cousin's girlfriend's dog trainer's little sister--or even hire a remote professional on an ad hoc basis to deal with problems--but if you plan on expanding your business at all, it may make sense to hire a part-time or full-time professional. Not only will you be able to build a better relationship with an in-house IT pro, but you'll also be able to expand technologically and upgrade your company seamlessly.

## 6. Failing at Social Networking

For small businesses, Social network sites such as Twitter and Facebook are excellent resources for developing an online presence. But they're not so excellent if you never use them, if you automate them, or (worst of all) if you use them to engage in public spat with customers. Social networks are a great, free way to build relationships with customers, so it's absolutely worthwhile to do some research before you jump into the fray.

## 7. Not Researching Your Printer

Many small businesses do a lot of in-house printing, but that doesn't mean you should choose a printer for your company strictly on the basis of its sticker price. Researching printers before purchasing one can help you save a lot of money. It's important to know how much the replacement ink or toner will cost, because in the long run the cost of consumables is the deciding factor in whether the machine is a good deal. Many "cheap" printers gradually leach money from your business through jacked-up ink or toner prices.