

April 2018

# Q-NEWS

The Quanexus Newsletter

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## Apple Accused of Slowing Down Devices to Promote Sales of New iPhone

by Jack Gerbs

Several lawsuits have been filed against Apple, alleging they intentionally slowed down older phones to push users to purchase new devices. In a December statement, Apple announced their software is designed to intentionally slow down some phones. The reason for this feature is to prevent older phones from shutting down.

Apple claims the reason for throttling performance is to extend the battery life of older devices. The lawsuits are alleging this explanation is fraudulent and not the true intent of that feature.

## April 2018

by Jack Gerbs



Welcome to the April edition of Q-News. This is an exciting and frustrating time to be in the IT industry. Things are changing daily and while technology is supposed to be getting easier to use, it is getting more complex to implement. Cloud solution options such as Microsoft Office 365, Barracuda Office 365 Essentials, and voice over IP (VoIP) solutions are proliferating. I am very proud of the Quanexus team and how they are working diligently to keep up with the ever-evolving technology landscape. If some of these technologies are confusing you, don't hesitate to reach out and ask our experts, we are here to help.



## President's Corner

by Terry Watson

Quanexus continues to grow and expand! I'm happy to share we have added another new employee. Please join me in welcoming Robert Harris to our team. Robert has a degree in Education and is currently pursuing certifications in Information Technology at Warren County Career Center. He will be joining the Voice Division as a Cabling Technician where he will assist with the installation of cabling infrastructure and various hardware. Welcome aboard Robert and welcome to the Quanexus family!

## Next Event Coming Soon!

Keep an eye out for our next event, which will be a free Security Awareness Training.

Updates will be posted on our website and sent out to our email list - make sure you are on it! Subscribe on our website.

# Storm Season, Are You Ready?

by Jack Gerbs

April is known for thunderstorms, which accompany lightning. Every year we have clients affected by these electrical storms. The issues range from an unexpected power outage to equipment being destroyed.

Here is a short list of examples of what can happen:

A momentary loss of power equates to turning the power off on a server or workstation. Turning the power off or not properly shutting down a server or workstation, can cause data corruption. Years ago, this was an extremely big issue, but operating systems and applications have improved greatly and are able to detect and repair themselves. You should not count on these more robust operating systems and applications to be able to recover from a non-controlled shutdown.

Note some of the suggestions that follow.

**Most organizations install an uninterruptable power supply (UPS) on their servers.** However, a workstation that has open files on a server, if improperly shut down, can corrupt the files it had open at the time of a power outage. Depending on how much your organization relies on the data hosted on a server, you may want to consider installing a UPS on the workstations as well.

**Power strips and surge suppressors.** UPS's have surge protection built into them. If you do not have a UPS on your workstations, they should have a power strip with surge protection. Do not buy a \$5 surge strip. A decent, name brand quality surge strip will cost between \$18 and \$25.

**All UPS's run on batteries.** The typical life of the batteries in a UPS is three to four years. It is highly recommended the batteries in the UPS be replaced every three to three and a half years. Even if the replace battery indicator is not on, it is highly recommended to replace the batteries ahead of time, especially as we enter storm season. If you wait until the battery replacement indicator comes on, the batteries will already be in a diminished state and may not provide the required protection and uptime.

## Here is my list of things to check as we enter storm season:

- ✓ Make sure your servers are plugged into a UPS.
- ✓ Check the age of your UPS, and if necessary, replace the unit or install fresh batteries.
- ✓ If your UPS has the capability to send a shutdown signal to the server, verify that feature has been implemented.
- ✓ If reasonable for your organization, install a UPS on workstations or at minimum, use a good surge strip.
- ✓ Any device that plugs into the network, like printers, firewalls, etc. should be protected with a surge strip.
- ✓ Verify your backups are working.

**A word of caution on buying UPS batteries:** Buy batteries from a reputable vendor. eBay and Amazon might offer some incredibly good deals on batteries, but the likelihood of these batteries being a good deal is questionable. The reason, for what appears to be an incredible deal, is the batteries are not fresh, they are old. Sealed Lead Acid (SLA) batteries used in a UPS need to be maintained and if not properly maintained, they will not hold a charge. Buy batteries from a reputable vendor!

Business class UPS devices provide a way (send a signal) to let the server or workstation know there has been a power outage. The UPS can be programmed to send this message after a pre-programmed time. Once the message is received by the server, the server can perform a controlled shutdown, protecting your valuable data.

Lightning damage can also be minimized by proper grounding and bonding. This sometimes requires an electrical contractor to verify the building meets fire and building electrical codes. We have seen buildings that have additions added which were not properly grounded. Several of the facilities have suffered extreme loss to most of their electronic systems. This includes video surveillance systems, office automation and control systems, printers and other computer equipment.

Even if you take all the necessary precautions, you can still experience some type of equipment failure. If you have been to any of my seminars, you know I preach having a good backup solution. You need to constantly monitor your backup solution to know it is working, and that you can recover data from it.

# FCC to Seek Ban on Vendors That Pose a Threat to National Security

by Jack Gerbs

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has developed a plan and is asking the question, should we ban telecommunication vendors that pose a threat to our national security? Under Pai's plan, any telecom or broadband company using government funds to purchase telecom equipment, will not be able to purchase equipment from vendors that pose a national security threat.

High on the list of these companies are Huawei and ZTE. You may remember Huawei from when they took over the 3Com product line. During this phase, Huawei was also manufacturing data switches under the HP brand. Huawei works with Google on development of the Nexus line of phones and mobile devices. AT&T, Verizon and Best Buy have all announced they will no longer be selling Huawei phones.

That leaves Amazon as the only company in the US still selling Huawei products.

The proposal does not stop private companies from buying Huawei products. The requirement is that any company which uses federal funds cannot purchase the Huawei equipment. This is very far reaching, as most all telecom companies accept government funds.

If you look at your cell phone, cable and other communication bills, you will see a tax for Universal Service Fund (USF). This tax provides subsidy funding for low income individuals and direct funding to carriers to help provide services in under-served communities.

The FCC actions come after a recent bill that was introduced in the Senate, calling for a ban of equipment used by Chinese manufacturers Huawei and ZTE. The FCC's plan does not call for a ban on Huawei's smartphones, but most retailers have already dropped the smartphone product line.

# The New Apple iPad- Going After the Chromebook

by Jack Gerbs

Apple's big event in Chicago didn't get the warm reception they were expecting.

The Chromebook has had a stronghold on the educational market place for a long time because of the device's low price. Apple is trying to get a bigger piece of the K-12 market. It was rumored the new iPad would be less expensive than the previous version, with a rumored price around \$259. However, the actual price is \$329, which is the same price as the 2017 (low end) model. The educational price for the previous model was \$299, whereas the new educational price is \$289, only \$10 less. Chromebooks outsell iPads six to four.

There was also the hope and expectation of a keyboard, which Apple mentioned that Logitech was working with them to produce. The feedback to Apple is they need a keyboard to be competitive with the Chromebook. The new iPad is compatible with the Apple stylus, which was previously reserved for only the high-end iPads. The cost of the Apple stylus is \$99.



One of the big positives was the inclusion of the Retina screen. The Retina display will provide the ability for an augmented-reality. One of the current Apple commercials shows the dissection of a frog on the iPad as an example of augmented-reality. Apple wrapped up their Chicago meeting promising more to come at the June 4th WWDC developer's conference.

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# Office 365: Too Many Options

by Jack Gerbs

Every day I am having to explain what Office 365 is.

Microsoft has done a wonderful job of confusing everyone about the Office 365 platform. In the old days (a few years ago), when we thought about Office, we thought about the desktop suite- Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc. Today, Office 365 is an ecosystem including the desktop suite and online services that used to reside on servers, such as Exchange (mail server), SharePoint (collaboration tool), Teams, Skype and more.

To make things more confusing they have three product tiers- Home, Business and Enterprise. The features and user licenses vary among the three tiers. If you go to Microsoft's web site, there are three separate pages you would need to look at to understand the different platforms, and at best, it is very confusing. We are developing a matrix that will soon be available to help take the confusion out the different products and tiers.

For most of our clients, the best platform is Office 365 Business Premium. This platform includes the Office desktop suite including: Outlook, Hosted Exchange (mail server), SharePoint and OneDrive (like DropBox). As an add-on to the Office 365 Business platform, we offer Barracuda's Office 365 Essentials package. This backs up the Office 365 ecosystem to Barracuda's network.

Two key features of the Barracuda platform are data archiving and discovery. The archiving feature backs up your data in a form that does not allow users to delete information. The discovery feature lets you search the archive for key words, phrases, names etc. These two features are becoming a regulatory requirement for many of our clients.

The Enterprise platform includes legal-hold and e-discovery. It also offers greater compliance controls based on Microsoft Information Protection technology. Information Protection allows you to classify your data, and based on how files are labeled, users will have restricted access on what they can do with the files.

Some examples of this are:

- Users may only be able to read a document. When the document is open, they won't have the ability to copy and paste from the document.
- Limited ability to email a file to someone else.
- Ability to retract/recall files that have been shared with someone else.
- Monitor the activity of someone trying to email a protected file to someone who should not receive the file.

Other enhanced security features include monitoring for accounts that may be at risk. If all of your users are US based, you can prevent anyone from logging into the network that is not physically in the US. It will also show attempted logins from outside the US, which could indicate a user's credentials may have been compromised.

If you need help in understanding the different platforms and which one is right for your organization, our team is ready to help.

## Request a Network Assessment



by Kimberly Sievers

Have you taken advantage of this service?

A network assessment consists of an on-site survey of an organization's network and procedures to identify vulnerabilities and weak spots within a system and is of no cost, or obligation to the company.

Based on the results of this complimentary assessment, Quanexus will create a list of suggested actions to improve the network and its security posture.

Whether you are an established customer, or a potential client, a network assessment will be a helpful overview to ensure you stay on track to achieve your goals and your network stays secure.

Perhaps your organization would prefer a more in-depth assessment, Quanexus also offers the option of a formal risk assessment.

If you are interested in learning more or setting up your own assessment please reach out to us at 937.885.7272.

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