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Helping Not-for-Profits

As pioneers in this rapidly-growing financial service area, our comprehensive approach to the Not-For-Profit sector is virtually unmatched. In addition to the traditional CPA services, we provide management consulting, and strategic planning.

Software Solutions Can Be Affordable

It may seem harder than ever to budget for computer software that will bring your not-for-profit into the next decade. After all, you want to update and expand, take advantage of new features on the market and adequately protect your computer system from outside threats. And all of this costs a lot of money — doesn't it?

Not necessarily.

There is a way to find effective, inexpensive software solutions. From the comfort of your computer, you can track down low-cost and no-cost options for creating, sharing, backing up and restoring original and PDF files, and protecting your not-for-profit from cyber-threats.

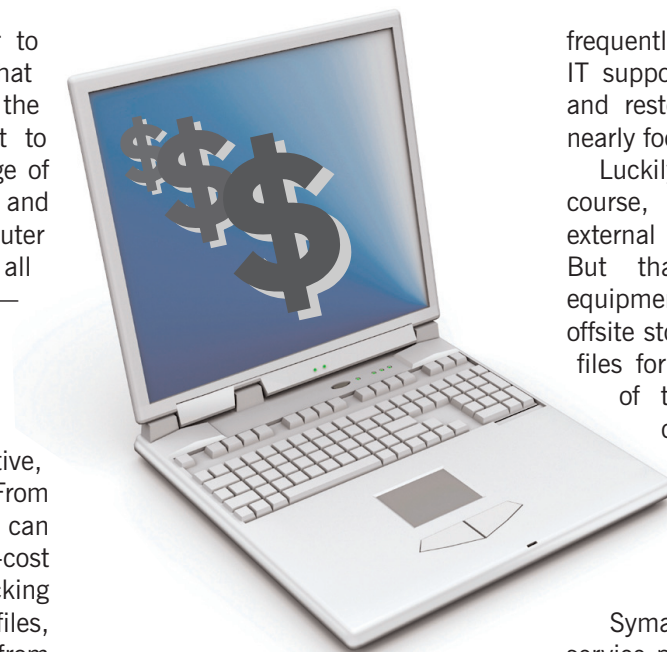
Creative license

Open Office (OO) is a good free alternative to Microsoft Office for creating word processing, spreadsheet and presentation documents. OO can be installed on as many PCs as needed, at work or at home, with no licensing restrictions. Google Docs is also free and requires no installation, since it's Web-based.

The OO download also contains slideshow presentation and even database creation applications. Even better, the application interfaces are familiar to anyone who's used other office software.

Picture-perfect PDFs

PrimoPDF is a free program that allows you to convert any original file



to a PDF (portable document format) file, a compressed file format that can be opened by any PDF application. But it doesn't allow for any PDF manipulation, such as applying security or adding or rearranging pages.

For that type of work, Nitro PDF Express is a relatively low-cost option. Not only can this software create and manipulate PDF files, but it also can add security to them. And it's fully compatible with other PDF applications.

A backup plan

Because of possible computer crashes, overwritten or lost files, or any number of other possibilities, being able to back up and restore files is a must. With any organization that

frequently operates without consistent IT support, it's important for backups and restores to be easy, reliable and nearly foolproof.

Luckily, there are many options. Of course, files can be backed up to external hard drives, tapes or DVDs. But that calls for buying extra equipment and supplies, having secure offsite storage and retaining the various files for the legally required amounts of time. To avoid buying extra components and using more staff time, online backup and restore is often the way to go.

One such choice is Symantec's Online Backup. This service provides options for how much data to back up (in terms of file size) and how long it should be kept to meet governmental legal requirements (such as one year or seven years).

Backups can be scheduled to run anytime, and the data is transmitted and stored with SSL and 256-bit AES encryption so that it won't be compromised as it's sent across the web.

Backups and restores can be managed from any Internet connection, and the PC requirements to manage these features are basic. Pricing depends on the total space required and the length of retention.

Security net

The important thing to remember about security is that it's not a question of whether or not you're secure. It's a

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question of whether you're more secure or less secure. So, you shouldn't rely on a single option. Instead, implement a combination of security methods.

A starting point could be ZoneAlarm Internet Security Suite 2009, which combines antivirus and antispyware protection with identity theft protection and firewall security. It's easy to install and uninstall, it's light on system resources while running, and it plays nicely with other security applications.

While mainly just an antispyware and antivirus application, Sunbelt CounterSpy is an excellent choice for not-for-profits. It's accurate in terms of spyware detection and removal, it's easy to use and — most important — it's low cost. Meanwhile, Windows Defender is a free antispyware program for use on the Windows operating system. Defender has low impact, scans quickly and offers a limited number of free support calls.

Full speed ahead

These are just some of the solutions available. "Finding free and low-cost software" below lists websites and pricing for the software discussed here, as well as some additional alternatives. As you can see, good software can be obtained without spending much money — and, in some cases, without spending any at all. So start shopping around, and your not-for-profit can enter 2010 without "cyber-embarrassment." **h**

Finding Free and Low-Cost Software

Here's website and cost information for the sampling of software discussed in the above article and for some additional alternatives.

Data Protection/Security

ZoneAlarm Internet Security Suite 2009

zonealarm.com/store/content/home.jsp

\$50

Sunbelt CounterSpy

sunbeltsoftware.com/Home-Home-Office/Anti-Spyware

\$20

Windows Defender

microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/defender/default.aspx

Free

Kaspersky Anti-Virus 2009

<http://usa.kaspersky.com/store>

\$60

Norton AntiVirus 2009

symantec.com/norton/products/latestproducts.jsp

\$40

File Creation

Open Office

openoffice.org

Free

Google Docs

google.com/google-d-s/b1.html

Free

StarOffice

sun.com/software/staroffice/index.jsp

\$35

PDF Creation and Manipulation

PrimoPDF

<http://primopdf.com>

Free

PDF Online

pdfonline.com

Free

Nitro PDF Express

nitropdf.com/express/overview.htm

\$49

Nitro PDF Professional

nitropdf.com/professional/overview.htm

\$99

File Backups and Restores

Symantec's Online Backup

symantec.com/business/online-backup

Varies

Iron Mountain

<http://ironmountain.com/digital>

Call for pricing

Norton Ghost 14.0

symantec.com/norton/ghost

\$70

Jungle Disk

<http://jungledisk.com>

\$2/mo. + 15¢/GB

File Backups/Restores and Data Protection/Security

Norton 360 3.0

symantec.com/norton360

\$80

* Based on information available at press time. Prices rounded to nearest dollar.

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