

Solutions

Business Solutions: Integration of Phone and Internet Solutions

The idea of choosing the right internet and phone company for your business can appear overwhelming. With the number of phone and Internet providers knocking on your door, it is hard to devote the time needed to make an informed decision as to which company is right for you. Plummer Slade, Inc. has added Business Solutions to our product offering and has the industry knowledge to assist you with this important decision.

For years, we have worked with almost every Internet and phone vendor in Western PA. We are able to recognize which providers deliver the best service and price for their particular offering. By looking at one or two months of average phone and Internet usage, we are able to recognize if there is a better voice and data plan out there for you. Your voice and data bills reveal exactly how you use your phone and the Internet. After completing our analysis we can recommend a more cost effective, efficient voice and data solution using the latest technology and updated pricing plans.

To get started we need:

- ❖ Copies of your most recent local, long distance, wireless and Internet bills
- ❖ A copy of any service agreement with your current voice and data provider
- ❖ A current copy of your company's service contract with your telephone equipment vendor.

Few companies have the time to constantly monitor their voice and data needs. By allowing us to manage your local, long distance, wireless and data services, your company can focus on growing your business. ☺

For more information contact Doug Morgan at ext 227.

Restructuring Your Email System

As email becomes a primary method of communication among businesses, we need to re-evaluate how and where we are saving our email messages.

Most email applications enable users to create folders beneath the Inbox to organize their email messages. Although this creates an organized structure for the messages, keep in mind that these folders may be stored locally on the PC and may be excluded from any server-based backup that is scheduled.

If your customized folders are saved on the email server, then you may not realize that saving email messages within these folders can limit the storage capacity on the server. As each user continues to save email within the Inbox, storage on the email server can quickly be consumed. This can also lead to a decrease in efficiency of the email application.

Consider implementing an organized directory structure for saving files that can be accessed by all users within your office. Each client or case should have a separate folder on the server. Within each client/case folder, create another folder specifically for saved email messages. Saving email from your email application to this folder will not only reduce the amount of email in your Inbox, it will also allow other users in the office to access the important email messages. Email can be saved in a text format or also in the email application's native format, such as .eml for Outlook Express.

As the volume of email increases, you may want to re-examine your procedure for saving messages and sharing information throughout your office. ☺

For more information contact Stacie Sebeck at ext 211.

Newly Released: Time Matter 7.0

LexisNexis, manufacturers of Time Matters software, released Time Matters 7.0 in mid-August 2005. The new version includes new features and improvements to existing capabilities. In addition, there are now two ways to buy and use Time Matters: Time Matters Complete and Time Matters Focused Solutions.

Time Matters Complete is the same method of purchasing as previously. Licenses of the software are fully paid for up-front and the complete set of features is included with the program that was purchased, whether the program is Time Matters, Billing Matters and/or Billing Matters Plus.

Time Matters Focused Solutions offers monthly licensing and modularity. This solution allows the customer to choose among various feature sets and pay for them on a monthly basis. New version upgrades are included with the monthly charge. The customer need only request the upgrade within 6 months of a new release and pay for shipping. The "Starter Solution" is the required starting point which includes Client, Matters, Notes and Web records. Additional feature sets are organized into nine groups or "Add-on Solutions" and are summarized as follows:

- ❖ Calendaring – Calendars, ToDo's/Task Manager, Scheduler, Chain Templates.
- ❖ Document Management – Merge; Formattable Clipboard; Document Automation, Documents Search, Document Indexing, Check In/Out.
- ❖ Communications – MAPI/POP compliant Email, Mail, Phone & Fax tracking, Instant Messaging.
- ❖ Mobility – Synchronize with laptop, Palm, Blackberry, Pocket PC, Outlook.
- ❖ Knowledge Management – Conflict Check, Outliner, Global/Web Search.
- ❖ Basic Billing – Time Matters Basic billing plus links to QuickBooks, Timeslips, PCLaw, Tabs3, Juris & MS Small Business Accounting.
- ❖ Advanced Billing – Equivalent to Billing Matters – Includes Timesheets, Billing Options, Payment Tracking, Trust Accounting and more.
- ❖ Back Office Accounting – Equivalent to Billing Matters Plus – Includes Accounts Payable, Check Writing, Vendor Management.

New Features & Enhancements

The following is a brief description of some of the overall enhancements to Time Matters, Billing Matters and Billing Matters Plus.

- ❖ Synchronize Matters and Billing Records to your Palm PDA.

- ❖ Calendar Enhancements –
 - Events scheduled for the same date and time are displayed side-by-side.
 - Multi-day Scheduling - Simplify scheduling multi-day events such as Trials or out-of-town trips. Similar to a recurring event and allows users to set the start and end dates.
- ❖ Client Matter Monitor – Monitor activity on your Contacts and/or Matters. Be notified when specific Contacts and/or Matters have activity such as other staff adding, changing or deleting records for your client like phone calls, documents, email, and more.
- ❖ Visual Matter Timeline – Create a visual timeline to display all record types within a Matter.
- ❖ Outline Enhancements – Ability to mark (strike through) an element without an associated record done.
- ❖ Customizable Workflow Navigators – Create one or many Navigators to define your workflow.
- ❖ Send to HTML/XLS – Save reports as a web page (HTML) or Microsoft Excel file (XLS).
- ❖ Express Matter Lookup – When looking up a Matter from a Contact record, a user may view all of the Matters or only Matters related to the Contact.

Email Enhancements

- ❖ Inbox Enhancements – Make your inbox rules inactive to temporarily disable.
- ❖ Send Bills via Email – Specify an email address in billing preferences to send invoices via email.
- ❖ TM Mail Agent – Option to automatically check email even if Time Matters is not open.
- ❖ Process Send Multiple Email – Tag multiple Contacts and use the Process send email feature to create specified relationships between each Contact and the Email sent.
- ❖ iCal Support – When you receive an email that has a iCal attachment, use the TM Save button to create an Event.
- ❖ vCard Support – when you receive an email that has a vCard attachment, use the TM Save button to create a Contact.

Billing Matters Enhancements

- ❖ Enhanced Billing Record Security – Enhanced security has been added on the billing record.
- ❖ Mass Rate Change – Change a Rate Source, Rate Level, Rate Amount or just recalculate billing records. Select individual billing records or multiple records.

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- ❖ Standard Reports – Many filters have been added to standardize the options adding more ways to print billing reports. In addition to filters, over 50 new reports have been added to include WIP, AR, Productivity, and Fee Allocations by Responsible and Department.
- ❖ Detail Credit Apply – A credit can now be applied to a billing item record on an Invoice.

Please contact us for a demonstration to see the latest version of Time Matters and all of its features. ☺

For more information contact Leslie Hennessy at ext 228.

Filing Cases Electronically

Effective July 1, 2005, the Western District Courts of Pennsylvania implemented Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF). This new filing system enables a method for information processing and handling within the courts which includes electronic delivery of documents to, from, and between the courts; electronic retrieval of case information; electronic document management; and immediate access to reports and docket sheets.

The electronic filing system will greatly reduce paper costs for the courts as well as prevent document loss. Prior to the implementation of the new filing system, one clerk of a Western District Court reported “he received 11 feet of paper stacked from floor to ceiling daily.” File room retrieval will also be eliminated and immediate docket entries can be created. Law firms will also benefit by decreasing the need for courier services. They will now have the ability to receive electronic notification of filings, as well as access to the electronic filing system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The following is a list of hardware and software requirements needed in order to file electronically:

- ❖ A computer with an Internet connection – preferably with high speed access.
- ❖ A word processing application, such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect.
- ❖ Software that will save documents in a PDF format, such as Adobe Acrobat Standard (includes Adobe Reader and Writer).
- ❖ A scanner to convert the paper documents to a PDF format.

The electronic filing system uses a GUI interface and is user-friendly. The Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system will be mandatory by July 1, 2006. ☺

For more information contact Stacie Sebeck at ext 211.

Backing Up Your Data Externally

Most businesses are aware of the importance of data backup. Without an adequate backup of critical business information, a minor disaster can quickly cause lengthy downtime and loss of productivity. We recommend businesses follow a multi-phased approach to data backup, which includes rotation of backup media (such as tapes or CD/DVD) to off-site locations, daily “snapshots” of critical data, and redundant copies of data to alternate locations within a network. The latter approach is a “pseudo-mirror”, and is usually set up as a simple script which copies the data from the main file server to a secured workstation with adequate hard drive space, located somewhere within the network.

The external hard drive class of storage media is now frequently being used as a backup device, including as a replacement to using a local workstation as a place to store the pseudo-mirror. These units consist of a single hard drive housed inside a cover, usually with one button on the front or top and a few connections on the back. They can be connected to a workstation or directly to a server via a USB or Firewire connection, and are seen by the operating system as simply another hard drive where files may be stored. These devices come in very large disk sizes usually ranging around 200 to 350 GB or more of storage space, which makes them great for storing large amounts of data such as backups.

Typically, these drives come bundled with backup software which can be used to manage and schedule periodic backups; however, they can also use simple backup scripts or other types of commercial backup software as well. Since they are no larger in physical size than the latest mystery novel, they can easily be set up and secured in a closet or room along with the server, and will take the burden off of the workstation that had been storing that backup data. They are easy to set up and configure. They are also quickly and easily disconnected and removed in case of a disaster such as a fire or evacuation of the building.

The Maxtor external USB hard drives are available for about \$200, but prices will vary depending on your backup requirements. ☺



For more information contact Jeff Smereczniak at ext 214.

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P L U M M E R S L A D E
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WHAT'S HAPPENING...

Time Matters users: The first Time Matters Users Group meeting will be held on October 20, 2005 in the Frick Room at the Omni William Penn Hotel, downtown Pittsburgh. Cost is \$15 and includes lunch. The meeting will last from noon to one-thirty p.m. Please RSVP to Jenn Schreck at 412-261-5600 x210 or e-mail schreck@plummerslade.com.