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Inquiring Minds...

**What is the blockchain technology behind bitcoin?**

Massive surges in the value of bitcoin have people buzzing about blockchain technology, the power of cryptocurrencies, which might seem unnecessarily mysterious. According to Investopedia, it isn't as complicated as it might seem. Blockchain, the technology that powers bitcoin, is just a system to record transactions.

**How does blockchain work?** Unlike traditional record keeping, blockchain doesn't use a third party, such as a credit card company, to validate these transactions. Instead, it uses thousands of computers spread out across the globe. The technology does this by making copies of the entire blockchain that are downloaded by all nodes participating in the system. Each copy contains a record of every transaction that has ever been made, which addresses were involved, and when it happened. Once data is added to the blockchain, it cannot be changed and thus serves as an excellent record of account backed up securely across a decentralized network.

**Verifying and re-verifying.** As new transactions occur, every computer gets to work verifying them and adding them as a block to the existing chain, giving the technology its name. These new blocks are added to the chain about once every ten minutes and newly minted bitcoin are given to these users, or miners, as a reward for helping the blockchain progress. This process takes

more computing power and energy to complete over time as the number of existing bitcoins starts to approach the maximum total allowed.

**According to Harvard Business Review** many people are excited about blockchain because of the potential it holds for a variety of industries in markets. It can serve as an open, distributed ledger that any two groups can use to verify transactions with a permanent record of events. Any of these transactions could be searched for, validated, and shared when necessary and could dramatically reduce the number of human resources required to handle the data. As an example, it currently takes microseconds to execute a typical stock trade online, and it needs little or no action on the part of a human. Settling the new ownership of the stock, however, can take days as both parties must consult their individual ledgers, verify the terms of the sale, and finally record the transaction. Using blockchain in this situation could expedite the process and cut out the inefficient middlemen.

**The blockchain is still in its early stages of adoption,** and there is still a lot of potential for this technology to make a significant impact on a variety of markets. Only time will tell how quickly and how big that effect will become.

*Don't rely on luck...*

## Expect Great Service!

Are you ready for a team of skilled professional technicians at your service 24/7/365 to ensure your company is safe from harm? Things like regular updates, security patches, and network monitoring are just a few of the nuggets we include in our pot of golden IT Services.

Your company is important to us and we will be here to answer your calls when you need us most. We take pride in our quick response times and speedy services. Don't rely on luck the next time you need help call...

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Happy St. Patrick's Day & Happy Easter!

JR-Tech Times



**Have A Business Friend Who Is Struggling With Cybersecurity? Refer Them To JR-Tech.** We'll give them a FREE Cybersecurity Risk Assessment, and if they become a client, we'll give you \$1,000! (See page 2 for details)

Don't Rely On Luck! Be Prepared For Disasters Big And Small To Protect Your Business.

*While your cousin's brother-in-law or Bob in sales may know a lot about computers, how much time can you really spend bogged down with technology issues before your business loses money? Consider greater risks like natural disasters, viruses, or outages. Does your answer change?*

**Can you afford to close the doors of your business for a few days?** Imagine if your network went down due to a virus attack, a hardware failure or software problem (all common in a standard year of operations for small businesses). How long would it take to get your company up and running again?

**Let's put a dollar amount on your losses.** Take a few moments to quantify how much money you're losing each year due to minor technology issues like these. Don't forget to include losses associated with paying employees to work when they really aren't, missed opportunities to serve your current clients, and potential customer losses due to downtime.

**It's not about if your technology will fail, it's all about what you do when it does.** Unfortunately, risk is a part of business and technology; the question is how will your company handle the situations that arise. Will you be a proactive business owner with a plan or rush to fix things only when they're broken. Lessen the intensity and pain when downtime strikes by creating a plan so you can take action immediately. Inform your staff of the steps to take when disaster strikes. Don't rely on luck to pull you through.

**Identify risks and solutions now.** Assess the risks your company may face that could impact your business negatively like a power outage, a computer virus, or even a break-in. Build a business continuity plan or roadmap for navigating your company operations during adverse conditions. While each company has a little different list of threats, all of these risks ultimately have the

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An Irish Toast

“May your pockets be heavy, your heart be light, and may good luck pursue you each morning and night.”

“May you never forget what is worth remembering, nor ever remember what is best forgotten.”

“May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be always at your back, may the sun shine warm upon your face, and rains fall soft upon your fields.”

“May you live as long as you want and never want as long as you live.”

Observances

*We're wrapping up the first quarter of the year this month. 2018 is off to a great start! Don't miss these wonderful observances in the coming weeks.*

Spring forward on Sunday, March 11th.

Don't forget to set your clocks an hour ahead before you hit the sack on Saturday, March 10th. Spring begins March 20th and the evenings will soon be brighter with an extra hour of daylight.

Why do we Spring forward?

Daylight saving time has been a tradition since the early 1900's. It was originally intended to give workers more daylight near the end of the day. Many supporters also argue that the extra hour allows people to conserve energy. While it was an argument for many countries while adopting daylight savings time, we couldn't find any significant data to support this theory.

Saturday, March 17th is St. Patrick's Day.

Wear green or blue to celebrate. “Saint Patrick's blue” is a light shade of blue attributed

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Want  
\$1,000?

Tired of listening to your buddy fuss about his computers at the office? Sick of hearing how the IT guy just isn't cutting it? You're in luck!

#### We love referrals!

Hand out our number. We will dive right in with a FREE Cybersecurity Risk Assessment to help your friend pin point all the threats in their network and get things back on track.

#### Slow computers, open ports, network stalls, hardware failures?

We consider it a privilege to meet your friends with support and a full systems analysis and we will even make it your lucky day too!

Refer your most at-risk friend and when they become a client, we will give them a FREE Cybersecurity Risk Assessment (a \$1,499 value) and send you \$1,000 cash!

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## Don't Rely On Luck! Be Prepared...

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same negative impact — losing valuable time serving your clients and making money.

### Preventative steps and action plans for your daily operations.

After you've developed a list of potential risks, take a look at preventative measures and plan solutions to safeguard your company from harm. Preventative measures may include things like off-site backup, flood and fire planning, additional resources for communication if the phone lines are down, secure secondary computers or even an alternate worksite. Prepare an action plan so everyone in your company knows just what to do in an emergency. Create a list of who to call and when. Include numbers for managers, utility companies, repair resources, and emergency response groups like your local fire station, police, and EMTs. Be sure to include your company insurance information too like the carrier name, policy number, and contact information.

**Real statistics** According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), some 40% of businesses never reopen after disaster hits and another 25% that do, fail within a year. The first step to prepare your business for an emergency is to create a plan that will

help you minimize the effects of the disaster.

### Are you prepared for the unexpected?

Even if you are not anticipating a natural disaster, issues like a building fire, flooding from a broken water heater, or a cyber attack can be devastating. Planning ahead may mean the difference between recovering gracefully with minimal damages and closing your doors for good.

**Ready to get started?** If you need a hand evaluating your network to prepare for the future, give us a call. We will analyze your current technology, identify risks, and give you recommendations to put preventative measures in place. We offer security, monitoring, and support for a fixed monthly agreement amount to cover all your IT support needs.

**If you're worried** about your backups, struggling to keep your systems running, or just ready to create some new disaster recovery plans, give us a call. You can offload your IT worries to a responsible IT expert dedicated to the well-being of your business. This way you can focus on what really counts, keeping your doors open and serving your fantastic clients.

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## Hacker Chris Putnam's Luck

Everyone by now is familiar with the famous smiley face emoticon that is made with the letters :) or :-). Less known are the emoticons named for people. In Facebook there is the obscure emoticon named "Putnam". Type :putnam: to get the emoticon that is a hat tip to former Facebook engineer Christopher Putnam. Putnam is famous for his 2005 hack of Facebook in which Facebook pages were transformed into replicas of MySpace pages. Putnam and two other friends devised the hack as a prank to amuse themselves. The hackers made no attempt to hide their identity and the worm itself was not intended to be destructive. But, it inadvertently did end up deleting user data and that's when Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz contacted Putnam.

According to an article by Putnam in the 2011 Business Insider website, Moskovitz told Putnam that the hack was funny but deleting information was not cool. Putnam revealed all the information about the worm that started it all and by January 2006 the two were friends. Moskovitz invited Putnam to interview for a job. Putnam was delighted - but also wary since a MySpace hacker was once invited for an interview by his victim as a ruse to have him arrested. When he eventually walked out of Facebook headquarters with a job, and not a federal charges, he was much relieved. Putnam left Facebook in 2010, but his emoticon lives on.

## Windows 10 S

Microsoft 10 S may soon become the new standard. Windows 10 and 10 S are said to become fused together in the coming months.

### How is Windows 10 S different?

For many consumers Windows 10 S may seem too constricting. The major difference is the security. Windows 10 S offers all the features of Windows 10 Pro, however restricts the applications you can run to those authorized by the Windows Store. This restriction allows for more streamlined operations for installation and uninstallation keeping your device clear of junk files running in the background.

**What does the "S" stand for?** Take your pick of words, Microsoft hasn't released anything concrete. Many say it stands for simple, safe, or even student. The whole idea of this platform is to create a more consumer friendly version that keeps your device running fast and smooth.

### What's the push?

While Windows 10 S was initially inspired by teachers, Microsoft is truly pushing for home and enterprise users to see the advantages too. Windows 10 S supports the entire Office suite and a variety of other business applications available in the Windows store.

## Observances...

(Continued from page 1)  
to St. Patrick. Green was only associated with St. Patrick's day after it was recognized as Irish independence day in the late 1700's.

### Sunday, April 1st is Easter and that's no April fools!

It's hard to remember the last time we had these two observances on the same day. But Sunday, April 1st is Easter and April Fools Day too. So, don't forget to take a breather from the office and enjoy a fancy Easter dinner with family and friends, or maybe just a good gut wrenching practical joke.

### March into the second quarter refreshed.

This March, give yourself a little something extra. Take time to get away for an extra-long weekend, vacation on Spring break, or even enjoy a long drive with a friend. Give yourself some fresh air and time away from work to regroup your thoughts and revisit your goals. Did you achieve any of your New Year's resolutions yet? Is it time to set some new benchmarks so you can keep moving forward? Focus on you for a few before we dive into the Spring months and kick off the second quarter of 2018.

Happy St. Patrick's Day  
& Happy Easter!

## Ransomware Threat Grows; Small Businesses At Equal Risk For Expensive Infections

A recent uptick in hackers using ransomware to take their victims' data hostage means that organizations should aggressively move to back up data -- and teach employees how hackers work.

**What is ransomware?** According to PC Magazine, in a ransomware attack, criminals deploy malicious code through e-mail or websites. The code then encrypts computer data so that the company can no longer access it. Criminals then demand payment for unlocking it. The technique has been very successful over the past few years.

**Ransomware reports rose 35-fold** from the last quarter of 2015 to the first quarter of 2016. Some extremely high-profile cases have made big news, such as the U.K.'s National Health Service data that cost the organization \$100,000 in ransom and an estimated \$1 billion in damages. However, small businesses are just as likely -- or more likely -- to have a ransomware attack. In fact, according to PC magazine, some criminals exclusively target small businesses, which rarely have the IT resources to prevent such attacks. One attack on a small business can not only disrupt commerce, but likely poison relationships with larger companies and even clients.

### Employees themselves are often responsible for letting the hackers in by downloading malicious files.

Employees don't know the difference, but e-mail attachments can masquerade as innocuous pdfs, when in fact, they are executable programs. Advise your staff, no one should ever click on an attachment in e-mail if they do not recognize the sender. Even legitimate websites can often host malicious programs and one visit to such a website can mean ransomware infection. Malicious links are another way these infections take over. Users should never click links or popups to update extensions either.

**Preparation is key.** Constantly update all computers. Updates might be a pain, but are critical since they often address security issues. Cybercriminals LOVE old outdated operating systems. They know how they work and can

crawl right in the back door. They may not know yet how to compromise the newest and best systems. Experts recommend deploying so-called hosted endpoint security to manage computers, networks and mobile devices. These inexpensive programs are provided by companies such as F-secure, Webroot Secure, and Avast.

### Back up your stuff and keep safe.

A great step to take in avoiding ransomware involves finding a backup solution to fall back on in case the defenses fail and the data is already being held for ransom. Sophisticated solutions exist that allow a company to maintain several layers of backups that can be rolled back to a time before hackers compromised the data just like nothing ever happened.

### If you are attacked, should you pay?

Experts say no -- easy to say but not easy to do if you are facing catastrophic data loss. But remember, these are criminals. There is no guarantee they will restore your systems after you pay and every chance they won't. In a pickle? Give us a call.



"This is security. Looks like we have an escape from cubicle 36."