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Who is Parallax?

Parallax Solutions is a health information technology consulting firm located in the Waterloo/Cedar Falls area. What we are trying to bring to the table is a clear understanding of how medical offices can utilize hardware and software to effectively manage their electronic information.

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Give Parallax Solutions a call today if you are concerned that your network isn't functioning at its full potential. If you have concerns, it probably isn't.

Sincerely,

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Is your wireless network safe?

It's no secret that it can be a challenge protecting your data. The more steps you take to extend your network to your users, the more you have to be mindful of the security risks involved. If you are using or you plan to use wireless networking technology, keep the following things in mind.



- Always use strong encryption. With the speed of networking technology, the decrease in performance is very slight. WEP encryption is considered at least mandatory and WPA encryption is ideal. Use strong encryption keys. They may be a pain to type when joining devices to your wireless network, but the more pain the better!
- Always use MAC address authentication. This prevents unauthorized wireless devices from joining your network. It may be a hassle to register your company devices in the MAC address database, but it is time well spent! There are so many wireless devices today, it pays to protect your network. Many WAPs (wireless access points) support local authentication of MAC addresses, allowing you to type them right into the WAP's management interface. For larger clinics with lots of devices, you can even use RADIUS authentication to Active Directory. Neat stuff.

Backups - Yes, they are CRITICAL!

Are you backing up your data? If not, you should be!

We all know that health information data is priceless. If this is the case, are you doing all you can to ensure that the data is safeguarded from loss? Loss can happen in many different ways. Corruption, accidental deletion by users, hardware failure and even natural disasters can cause you to lose data. Just because your jazzed up new server has a nice redundant array of disks doesn't mean you are safe. You MUST have a backup of this data.

At the very least, you should be backing up your data to a tape drive using a ten tape cycle to give you two weeks of recoverable data. Keep a monthly backup archived somewhere offsite just in case. Additionally, you should ALWAYS keep the most recent tape backup offsite with you. Make it a part of your daily ritual. Pack that tape up and take it offsite.

Some facilities have found that it is inexpensive to use external hard drives as a backup means. You can purchase 150GB external USB hard drives for around \$110 each. Five

of them will run you about the cost of an entry level tape drive. Plug it in, let backup run, then take it home with you, rotating the next drive into the schedule. Nothing could be easier. USB 2.0 is quite fast and you will be happy with the results. Often times, this can be a cheap alternative to tape drives and media!

Imagine how you will feel if, in the event of data loss, you have the means to put your data back in place. That feeling is priceless and it can save you untold amounts of anguish. Don't forget to have your backup software set to e-mail you the status of the job. That way, you can have an e-mail in your box each morning telling you what happened with backup.

Even when doing software upgrades, I always make two backups. One to tape and another to a hard drive. If something goes wrong, that gives me a great contingency plan. Also, it never hurts to verify your backups are true by testing restores periodically.

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