

CADZOW NEWS

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DEVELOPING SOFTWARE FOR BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT

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HELLO, GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME...

... This year we are trying something a bit different and will be discussing some major topics in instalments. To start, "Software Mistakes" and "Missing Email".

SOFTWARE MISTAKES: Part One — Retiring the Old System Too Early

When new software projects start, the idea of retiring the old one often takes a life of its own and the IT staff become desperately keen to delete everything, turn the machines off and recover the rack space in the server room. Although there might be technology arguments for yanking out the old system as soon as possible, any plan for the rollout of a new system **must** include keeping the old one running, not only until the go-live day, but for some time afterwards.

The old system will be needed, at least, for historical information and, at most, a fall-back in case of delay.

The problem is that retiring old systems is easy and commissioning new ones is hard, so if two such projects are planned to finish by a certain date, retiring the old system is very likely to be finished on time and starting the new one is very likely not to be finished on time. And then you have a crisis because you don't have any sort of system running! Trying to finish a project in an environment of crisis usually makes things worse, and instead of a wonderful new system you have a disaster that barely keeps going.

Given a last minute problem with the new system, would you rather have staff using the old system, inefficient though that may be, or writing everything on bits of paper? As strange as that "solution" sounds, it happens all the time, all over the world and in all industries.

New software systems are often deployed along with new hardware, and it's usually too difficult to recreate the old software on the new hardware. Fortunately, "virtual machine" software is inexpensive, so you can easily keep an old system running (say, running SQL Server 7.0 and Windows NT 4.0) without requiring dedicated hardware.

COMPUTING: Backup! Backup! Backup!

In late 2001 one of our clients had some computers stolen and others stripped for parts. The valuable ZIP disks used for backups were also stolen, because a helpful staff member had put them in a handy box next to one of the computers! **WRONG!**

Luckily someone had taken Friday's backup home, so there was a happy ending, although this was only by fluke and not due to a specific policy.

Are you backing up? Are you checking your backups? Do you know how to backup? Are you keeping a series of backups? Are you storing them away from your premises? What would happen to your business if your computers were stolen and you didn't have a backup?

Cadzow 2000 provides a "Backup Cadzow" icon which has the ability to back up to a hard disk, network drive, or removable disk (if using .MDB data files). Backups should be done to both the local hard disk and a removable disk which is taken offsite (such as a ZIP disk). This will protect you from virus damage, hardware failure, theft and fire.

An exercise you should undertake is this: Imagine your office burnt to the ground and everything was destroyed. What would you wish you could get back? Debtors records? Contracts? A lot of the data people have on their hard drives is not particularly important (old letters, for example) but everyone has at least one thing that is mission-critical to their business. **THINK ABOUT WHAT THIS IS**, and ensure it is protected.

MISSING EMAIL: Part One — Obsolete Email

In the same way that people who change employers can have superannuation funds in accounts they later lose track of, it's now quite common for internet users moving between service providers to lose track of old email accounts and to have new email accounts they are not aware of.

Email is an increasingly critical business tool and any organisation who has changed ISP, or had staff leave may have mailboxes quietly accumulating messages which nobody sees. It's worth undertaking a review of your email to ensure these messages are being downloaded, and you should start with the mailboxes provided by your internet provider and web/domain-hosting provider (as the case may be). It's also worth checking you don't publicise an email address that doesn't work! It's amazing how many businesses publish obsolete email addresses on their websites.

Next Newsletter: "Stray Mail"

CADZOW SOFTWARE: Interesting Articles

Cadzow 2000 Disk Space Warning Messages. Cadzow 2000 issues warnings when disk space is low, but don't start deleting everything in sight! <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1532>

Cleaning Up Contacts Database. If you've been running your contact manager for a while it will pay to do some cleaning up. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1251>

Handling Loans. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1531>

Exporting Enquiry Results to Excel. Cadzow 2000 has a number of export options which allows you to apply all sorts of advanced analysis in Excel. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1635>

Marking Invoices As Paid Against Purchases. Ever "swapped invoices" with a supplier? You can adjust the A/R and A/P balances easily with a Transfer Adjustment. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1141>

Cadzow 2000 Filter Toolbar. A lesser-known feature of many Cadzow 2000 screens is the filter toolbar, which allows manipulation of a results list. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1117>

COMPUTING: Fascinating Cadzow Knowledgebase Articles

Received a Strange Invoice for Domain Services? If you have a domain name, you may receive invoices and other official-looking emails with all your details. Be careful who you send money to. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1666>

Daylight Savings Changes in 2006. Daylight savings time is being tweaked for the Commonwealth Games. See here for details on modifying Windows. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1625>

Are You Installing Firefox Updates? Just because you installed Firefox 1.0 doesn't mean you're safe from all the spyware washing around the web. Update! <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1667>

Corruption with USB Drives. USB drives are cheap, popular and handy. They're also not reliable. Don't use them to store the only copy of your documents. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1668>

Infected? Change Your Passwords! Viruses and spyware are trying to steal from you. If you've ever been infected, change your passwords. Do it now. <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1459>

DEMOCRACY, The Beauty Of

Most people vote for candidates in the South Australian Legislative Council using a single number "above the line". But if you vote for someone who does not win a seat, your vote will flow to the parties they have nominated their preferences towards. In some cases you might be surprised who that ends up with. Check out the full list at <http://abc.net.au/elections/sa/2006/guide/groupvotingtickets.htm>.

The Cadzow team has been developing business and accounting software solutions for 25 years. Cadzow is an Australian organisation addressing the software requirements of business and government. Software solutions in the Cadzow 2000 family include: Cadzow Contact Manager, Cadzow Time Manager, Cadzow Training Manager, Cadzow Call Stats Manager, Cadzow Booking Manager, Cadzow Job Manager, Cadzow Accounts Receivable, Cadzow Accounts Payable, Cadzow Stock Control, Cadzow Weblink, Cadzow Room Manager plus many customised solutions. To learn how they can be used individually or together, visit <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1288>.

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