# Is Anything In Life Really FREE?

***Warning:* If You've Downloaded Free Software From The Internet, Your Computer May Be At Risk For Viruses, Hackers, and Spyware!**

We've all heard the saying that the best things in life are free, but I'm not sure they were referring to software.

Freeware (free software, not to be confused with open source software) such as the AVG anti-virus free edition, Spybot, and Ad-Aware are all programs you can download to your PC for the ultimate discount: free. However, you get what you pay for.

While these programs may work just fine for someone's home computer, they are not business class tools and should not be trusted to completely protect your computer or network from viruses, spyware, hackers, and other problems.

Every month we receive calls from clients whose computers are infected with a nasty virus or a boatload of spyware who had these programs installed and running, and were under the false assumption that they were protected.

### Why Freeware Doesn't Protect Your Computer

In most cases, freeware is a light version of a software program that you pay for. Take the AVG free edition for example. AVG offers a free edition of their licensed product as a way of introducing you to their fully-featured product. However, this software does not come with any online, e-mail, or phone support. It is also illegal to use it on multiple machines or in a commercial, non-profit, or educational environment (single home users only).

### You're On Your Own

As you might expect, freeware comes with zero guarantees or promises to function correctly, to be compatible with your system, or to safeguard you from threats. You're not a paying customer so you're on your own to resolve any technical problems you encounter, and you certainly won't get support if your computer gets infected.

Since many free applications are plagued with bugs and incompatibilities, you may end up with a mess on your hands and no one to blame but yourself.

Additionally, freeware programs are not always current with the most up-to-date protection, and don't always update themselves automatically or perform scans and tasks on a regular schedule. That means you could be operating with a false sense of security; and since the sophistication and number of threats circulating are only increasing, you need a comprehensive solution that you can trust especially if your computer or network holds data and files you don't want to lose or make available to a cyber-criminal.

Bottom line: you get what you pay for. If the files, data, pictures, and functionality of your computer or network is of high-importance, then investing in a trusted, industrial-strength software program to protect it is a smart and worthwhile investment.

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"

Chris Davis
Founder & CTO
Polarverse IT Services

November 2015

Waterloo Region

## Inside This Issue…

WHAT KIND OF INTERNET-START-UP CAMP ARE YOU GOING TO THIS SUMMER?

STAHLER. 6/1

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# Don't Let Your Phone Be Used Against You: 5 Smart Tips To Keep Your Smartphone Safe

For better or worse, we are practically "married" to our phone these days. It goes everywhere we go. It has access to our most private conversations and key financial data. It holds some of our most precious memories, in the form of pictures, sound recordings and video.

And yet, there are those who would use it to rob and manipulate you. And they're getting more and more clever each day at penetrating your defenses.

So how do you protect your phone and yourself from vicious attack by these cybercriminals?

Here's a basic checklist to keep you and your "beloved" safe.

**1. Keep your phone with you at all times. Remember, if somebody swipes it:**
 - It can be used to access your money, or steal your identity.
 - Someone can pose as you on your social media accounts.
 - A thief can use your SIM card to rack up phone bills.

**2. Keep your phone secure.**
 - Set a secure entry password.
 - Update your phone's operating system as soon as updates become available.
 - Turn Bluetooth off when you're not using it and avoid using it in crowded areas.
 - Only use encrypted Wi-Fi networks that require a password, and set your phone to not automatically connect to new networks.
 - Enable remote geo-tracking and the lock and wipe functions. These will allow you to locate your phone if misplaced. You'll also be able to lock the screen and wipe the data if the phone is stolen. Just be aware that geo-tracking may enable others to pinpoint your location.
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**3. Keep your data secure.**
 - Back up your data regularly.
 - Don't save passwords or PINs on your phone.
 - Avoid online banking in public or crowded areas. Strangers may be able to look over your shoulder.

**4. Use apps safely.**
 - Apps can transmit personal data. Select permissions carefully when you install them.
 - Always source apps from trusted providers and check feedback from other users.
 - If you're not sure why an app needs access to your contacts, calls, photos or location, see if you can find a comparable app that doesn't require that access.

**5. Be selective about how and where you use your phone.**
 - Stick with trusted webs sites and apps when you download anything.
 - Never download content from an unknown source or one you can't verify.
 - Turn GPS off when you're not using it. Your location can be tracked if you have it turned on.
 - Log out of web sites when you are done using them.
 - Especially with e-mail – THINK before you click. Hackers are getting very clever at creating authentic looking e-mails. One false click could unleash malicious code allowing them access to all your personal data.

**FREE Report:** The Business Owners' Guide To IT Support Services And Fees
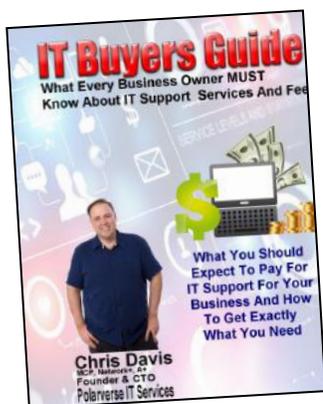


## You will learn:

♦ The 3 most common ways IT services companies charge for their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.

♦ A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you, the customer, when buying IT services; you'll learn what it is and why you need to avoid agreeing to it.

♦ Exclusions, hidden fees and other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.

♦ How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.

**Claim Your FREE Copy Today at info.polarverse.com/ITbuyersguide**

# Chris' Desktop

If you've been following my pod casts (available on our YouTube channel—http://youtube.polarverse.com) you'd know that recently the topic of the cloud has come up and with that I am planning a webinar on "Mobile & Cloud Computing For Business" on Wed November 25th! I will show you how you can cut costs and boost productivity without exposing you to security breaches or other threats. I will cover cloud computing in simple terms and how it can help protect your business, how to choose the right services and mobile devices, policies you should put in place and legal considerations you may not have thought of. If you'd like to get advance notice of when registration for this event is available just email me directly: chris@polarverse.com

**Personal Note:**
Looking forward to Halloween this year with Jillian, much more exciting for her at 3 than it was at 2! We went to a kids party last weekend (24th Oct—she was the peacock princess) and have been having fun Halloween stories before bed time; her favorite so far "Where is my mummy?" Not sure what we will be doing on Oct 31st yet cause the pool that does Jilli's swimming lessons changed the start date to late afternoon that day if you can believe it! I mean what do they think kids would be doing that afternoon/evening!
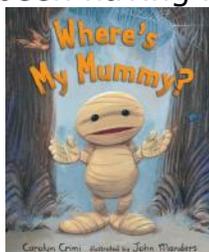
# Jillian's Toddler Times

October has been a really fun month for me! I started going to daycare once a week and while I miss momma and papa during the day there are lots of other kids to play with and fun things to do! I got to make rice Krispy treats my first day!

Chase is on the case! Papa brought home a new toy for me from my favorite tv show—Paw Patrol! He has a car that transforms into a dog house and shoots across the floor with sirens and other sounds! Chase is a police dog!

For Halloween this year I got to dress up as a peacock princess with a fancy dress and gold sparkle shoes! Momma says we may be going to another party or two before Halloween is really here and that papa will be a pirate—R!

## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



# Tossing Your Video Cam To The Wind

Shooting the perfect video for your business just got easier, thanks to a new flying camera that's smart enough to follow you on its own. It's called the Lily flying camera, and it breaks new ground in ease of use. Just toss the camera in the air, and it starts shooting video. It can follow or circle or zoom in on a subject with ease. You just wear a special wrist beacon. Lily may be a cool toy, but it's also a great tool for your business. Shooting video from the air, hands–free, quite literally means the sky's the limit on what you can do. It also means you can shoot great marketing videos without having to buy a whole lot of new gear. Just toss Lily in the air, demo your product and let Lily capture stunning aerial footage for you.

# Password Management as a Service



You Already Take Security Seriously… Why Not Take Security to the Next Level with Strong, Easy-to-Manage Passwords?

Your business has always taken security seriously and been mindful of protecting your data. You've invested in firewalls, anti-virus programs, spam filtering, and backup/disaster recovery tools. But when is the last time you considered the first line of defense beyond all these security measures? Passwords are used to protect your systems, data, and online accounts; however, the difficulty of remembering strong passwords often puts people off creating them.

Our Password Management as a Service offering makes it simple for you to use strong passwords while delivering the following benefits:

| Ease Of Use | Enhanced Productivity |
|---|---|
| Your staff members can easily reset their own Windows login passwords without needing to call the help-desk and wait for a response. | Your staff members will no longer waste time hunting for or trying to remember passwords, and through one-click login tools. |

| Improved Operational Efficiency | Unsurpassed Security |
|---|---|
| Your staff members will be able to consolidate website favorites/ bookmarks across all computers using one click login tools. | Your staff members will use more complex passwords as opposed to easily remembered passwords—and each password will be unique. |

**Contact us for more information or visit:**
**http://www.polarverse.com/password-management**

## Windows 10 Upgrade Remotely

While we're not urging everyone to upgrade today there is an expiry date of July 28, 2016 when 10 will no longer be a free upgrade .  Then it becomes a purchase of $149 to $249 depending on the edition (home/pro).

**A couple of reasons to upgrade**:  improved search, better security, and updates are applied much faster making it all that harder for hackers to attack your systems.  My personal opinion is that 10 has improvements on both 7 and 8.

Polarverse has developed a method to do Win 10 upgrades remotely and to tweak systems effectively for best performance and security.  If you want to upgrade now and not wait until it is your turn on the Microsoft schedule give us a call now!

# Cloud Computing And Your Company: What You Need To Know

Like it or not, cloud computing is coming to your industry. The question is, will you happily be an early adopter of this technology or be frozen by indecision?

Here are some answers to questions you may have about how to best take advantage of this new and sometimes paralyzing technology.

**Just what exactly is "the cloud"?**
The cloud is simply storing and/or accessing data and programs over the Internet – rather than using a computer's hard drive. Simply put, the cloud is a metaphor for the Internet. Due to increases in technology, the cloud is a super-efficient and reliable data processing, storage and delivery system.

**Why migrate to the cloud?**
The cloud can integrate online apps for marketing, human resources, customer service and more, enabling faster scaling, growth and flexibility for your organization.

As with your electric bill, you pay only for the capacity you use, thus reducing your capital expenditures as well as ongoing expenses. It also allows instant access from any device and easy backup capabilities.

**What about data security?**
While there are risks in sending your data to the cloud, one way to protect it is to select a data security system that encrypts the data at the file level before it leaves your network.

**So, is the cloud for you?**
There's a lot to like about the cloud, yet we've just scratched the surface in this article. If you have more questions or would like help putting together your cloud strategy, call us at (519) 489-0646



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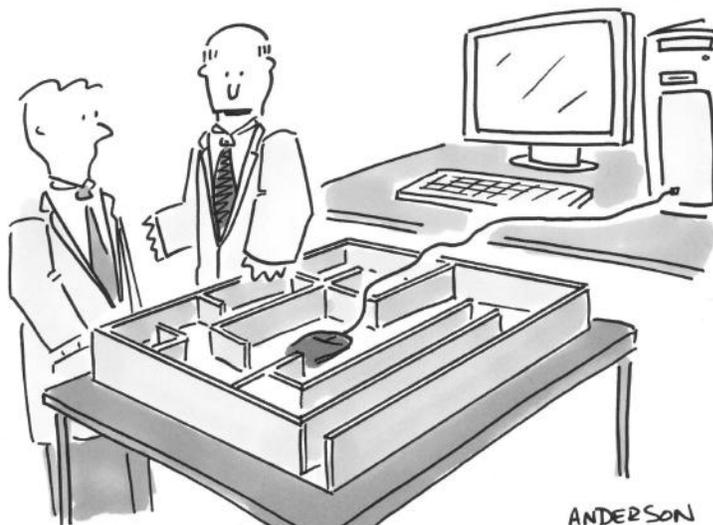
"Still nothing. You sure this is the best computer we have?"

## The Lighter Side:
### Crazy But True… Midnight Mystery: The Case Of The 'Weird' Laptop



One day a user brought us her laptop. She said it was acting "weird."

We ran the usual diagnostics, which all came up clean. Then the dreaded "Blue Screen of Death" showed up.

The cooling fan had failed completely.

So we backed up her data and gave her a new machine. End of story…

Nope. Within a week, she brought the new laptop back to us, complaining of similar problems. This had us stumped – it was brand-new.

We ran the hardware diagnostics in a continuous loop overnight. Nada.

We asked the user if she had any ideas. She got a funny look on her face and promised to report back to us. Sure enough, the next morning we received an e-mail from her, with an incriminating picture.

When she snuck into her den at midnight, she had caught Boots, her fat orange cat, preparing to take a nice, warm nap on her laptop.

As Boots stepped onto the keyboard, his paw triggered the hot key. Then, as he snoozed on top of the unit, the internal fan had to work overtime to keep it from melting down.

Mystery solved!

We all had a good laugh, glad to know our detective work had finally paid off.