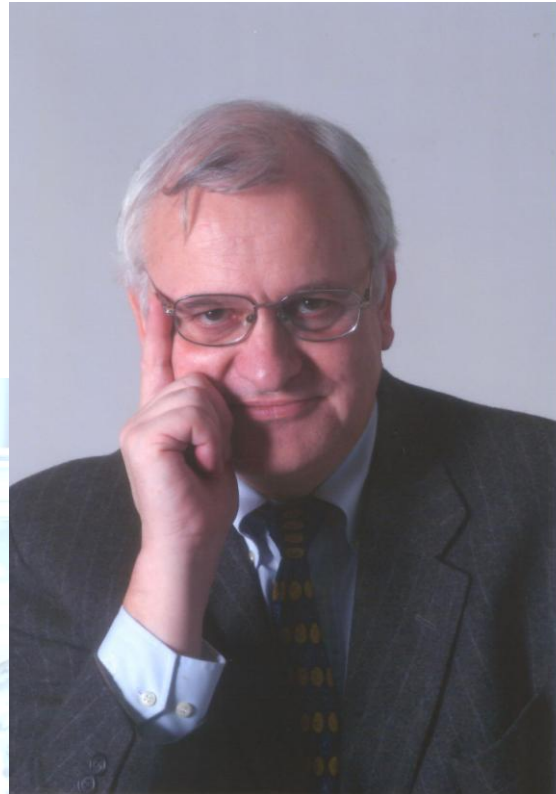


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ITMatters

In this regular column Charles Zealey of ITSolve covers all aspects of business and personal computing. If you have a question about IT matters, email it to Charles on itmatters@itsolve.co.uk



Last month we looked at some of the benefits of installing a server for a small business. This month we elaborate on some things just alluded to last time.

In many ways the server can take the place of the office notice-board. Those scrappy bits of paper used for recording everything from the sandwich bar's price list to the local courier's phone number. Storing the information in files would be fine – building some sort of intranet even better. Software is available to allow you to maintain your own intranet and publish items of news – customer wins for example – so everyone in the office is up-to-date.

In addition to the obvious benefits, the information will be backed up and can be made available to remote offices or home workers

You could consider using a shared contact list – all those telephone numbers and addresses in one place. There are a number of ways of achieving this from a simple spreadsheet to a specialised contact management application but all will bring benefits of saved time and reduced errors.

Another favourite application is a shared calendar – have you ever wondered where the boss is today or whether the Sales Director is free for a customer meeting next Tuesday? You will still have to keep it up to date but if you do it will be far more useful to you and to your colleagues.

Many business put there procedures manual on-line, making sure that everyone has easy access to the same version and updates can be made quickly and easily.

There are far more uses for that server than we can cover here, but will a little time spent thinking it through you will be able to come up with your own list. Some can be implemented simply by using standard packages, while others might need some software to be developed for you.

The possible applications are limited only by your imagination (and finance) so why not let that imagination off the leash, dream some dreams and see where it leads you.

Charles Zealey is a consultant working with business professionals helping them to improve their organisation's productivity and effectiveness with the use of Information Technology. Typically a return on investment can be achieved with 6-12 months. To access help sheets go to www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/. For a free half-hour consultation on business IT issues phone 01635 869863 or email lisa@itsolve.co.uk.

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