

2012 Spring Update from Aventure Technology

Season's Greetings!

The Year of Dragon is upon us – time for bold exploration on key levels! Here are a few tips and recommendations for an enjoyable, informed and safer digital experience. Feel free to forward this letter on if you find it useful.

Theft & Recovery - take a minute to visit www.preyproject.com to download free tracking software for your laptop or smartphone in case it's ever stolen. Installation takes only a few moments and you'll have a very helpful tool should you ever need it.

Inexpensive Video Security - ranging from \$80 to \$159 each, you can buy wireless, motion-activated web cameras, setting them up in key but discreet positions in your house or office. Taking advantage of your existing Internet connection, these cameras can be configured to send you an email, along with photos, of any motion detected. Excellent for monitoring your place while away, keeping an eye on family or employees, or just watching the pets at home.

Tablet Wars - the iPad is still my top choice for the slickest device out there, with rumors of a sub-\$300 version to arrive this fall. At present, the \$199 Kindle Fire offers an excellent value, though not quite as elegant as the iPad. The new iPad has no problems other than the non-intuitive printing process.

Need for Speed - for faster performance, consider swapping out your hard drive for a Solid State Drive (SSD). Essentially a large flash drive, it allows for boot and performance speeds several times faster than conventional hard drives. Prices will come down over time, but if you want or require great speed, they are well worth the cost (at the moment \$280 for 128GB, \$550 for 512GB, etc.). The new Ultrabooks come with SSD's inside.

New System Specs - if you are shopping for a new system this year, aim for an i5 or i7 processor, 6 to 8 GB of RAM, and a video card with at least 1GB. Order a solid state drive (SSD) if you want fastest drive speed. Forward any quotes to me for an experienced opinion on any potential purchases.

Streamlined Computing - if you run [Ccleaner](#), [MalwareBytes](#), and [Defraggler](#) just once a month, then reboot your computer, you can keep your system running cleanly and stable over many years. These applications are available for free on my site, in the Downloads section. To save some money as well, check with me before spending money or renewing subscriptions on any security-related software.

For Access Users - make a backup of your MDB or ACCDB file, then run the Compact & Repair utility to optimize your database. Get in touch if you want to add new features, to resolve data issues or to upgrade your database. Microsoft Access is still the most popular, feature-rich database product out there. If you work with lots of data, whether in a personal or business environment, this inexpensive product may be a worthy solution.

Free Online Backup - visit www.idrive.com to install a free backup service. Anything over 5GB will require a paid version, but you can choose specific folders to backup so as to not go over your limit. An excellent choice for protecting your email and critical files at zero cost. Email me for easy installation instructions if you wish as there are a couple points to navigate, or have me tunnel in for 15 minutes to do the setup for you. iDrive is on my site under Downloads.

Avoid Infection Disaster - due to the pervasive nature of malware and other infectious software, I recommend you place a copy of the System Restore icon on your desktop or in the Aventure Tools folder for quick access when necessary. You'll find it under Start, Programs or All Programs, Accessories, System Tools. This can mean the difference between a quick infection recovery versus a longer and more

expensive repair of your operating system if you fall prey to some of the latest infections.

The Growing Mac World - as I observe the digital shopping trends over time, it's apparent that Apple products are on the rise, mostly due to the success of the iPhone and iPad. I own nearly each product model myself, enjoying them thoroughly, but you will pay a bit of a premium for the stability and elegance they offer. Like anything new, there is a learning curve whether you are Mac or PC-oriented, but the odds are that Apple products will creep into your life over time.

Periodic Updates - from time to time you may see a message about updating LogMeIn, the remote access software I use for quick technical support. Click on Update to run a 30-second process whenever you see the alert. The same goes for updates by Adobe, Java, and Microsoft. All are safe, and generally necessary.

Wireless Speeds - still running an older G-band wireless router? Consider upgrading to the latest N version. Currently prices range from \$39 to \$179 (my personal favorite, the Apple Airport Extreme), and you may experience greater stability as well. Routers are sensitive to electrical disturbances so consider a decent surge protector as well.

Password Strategy - it's time to be smarter about your password strategy. Change your email password to something difficult (something like "G88dke95\$", for example) - no more pet names and birth years. Choose an entirely different one for your online financial accounts so that your money remains safe even if your email password is hacked. Finally, have a "throw-away" password for non-essential sites, like online news or occasional shopping accounts. Contact me if you want to learn about password patterns for creating unique but easy to remember passwords on the fly.

Gift Ideas - For a cool gadget, check out the flip cams by Pure Digital at www.theflip.com. They are easy to use, and both video and image quality are superb, all for a small price compared to traditional video cams.

If we consider the possibility that our technology is an extension and reflection of our inner and outer senses, then something extraordinary is going on. I was at the airport the other day, overhearing a woman say she was intrigued over the idea of getting herself an iPad. I suggested she follow that notion, despite her response that a woman of "her age" might not be able to learn things her grandchildren seem to pick up with ease. In one sense, we are timeless creatures. Let your sense of self be just as crafty as the fearless offspring around us. Adjust the attitude when necessary, then follow your intuitions with great joy and vigor. Not only will you master the bits of technology in front of you, but you'll come to see how refreshing it can be to occasionally move the furniture of your mind.

Have a marvelous 2012!

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