



TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

Technology News You Can Use!

May 2006 - Issue XV

In this Newsletter

- [Letter from the Chair](#)
- [Whose Domain Name Is It Anyway?](#)
- [Experiences in CRM - CardScan at SAMA](#)
- [Can you REALLY run your IT Department like a business? \(Part 2\)](#)
- [Local News - Items of Interest](#)
- [Need more information?](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Letter from the Chair [John Dickson](#), [Denim Group](#)

Alphabet Soup: IT Certifications and Value

From time to time I get asked what the CISSP means at the end of my name on my business card. It actually stands for "Certified Information Systems Security Professional" which is the industry certification for those that specialize in information security. I have been a CISSP since 1998 and the certification has helped me numerous times when consulting for various clients.

You've probably seen other folks that carry certification abbreviations on their business cards as well. Popular certifications include CCIE (Cisco Certified Internetworking Expert), MCSE (Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer), or the PMP (Project Management Professional). These certifications are not a guarantee that the person holding them is an instant expert on all things relating to their field of interest.

Distinguished Technology Speaker

Robert P. Ernst - NAVAIR

Learn about new defense related opportunities for San Antonio Companies

Hear about the national recognition San Antonio is receiving

Discover the economic impact that the National Sustainment Technology Center (NSTC) and Defense Technology Cluster (DTC) are making for San Antonio Companies.

Tuesday, June 20th - 11:00am - 1:00pm:
Norris Conference Center

[Register Now!](#)

Technology Council

- Mission
- The mission of the Technology Council is to
- promote the technology industry and educate
- businesses on technology-related products and
- services. This Council harnesses the power of the
- rapid growth of technology and addresses industry
- issues by offering best-in-class programs featuring
- the policy makers, visionaries and experts shaping
- the industry.

Ongoing programs offered and supported by the Technology Council;

1. CIO Breakfast Series
2. CIO Resource Guide
3. CIO Panel - Distinguished Speaker
4. E-Tech News You Can Use

Instead, the certification is an important “signal” that the person holding it has the resources and commitment to obtain the distinction. It means that they probably have a broad understanding of the key areas of interest, which coupled with relevant project experience, make the consultant someone to consider employing or hiring for a project. In addition, certifications also mean that the employers for whom these consultants work are prudent risk managers who want to make sure their consultants have a consistent basis of knowledge from which to practice. Think “Underwriter’s Lab” stamp of approval... This is why Denim Group had its twenty plus software developers obtain Microsoft development certifications when the company obtained “Gold Partner” in Microsoft’s partner program.

So next time you meet someone with a set of letters at the end of their name, ask them how valuable their clients feel their certification is. You are likely to learn something!

Calling all techies and techie supporters! The North Chamber is making a push to add additional volunteers to one of its most exciting committees – the Technology Council. If you are in a tech business, looking to implement more technology in your business, or generally a supporter of all things “tech,” you have a home in the Tech Council. Consider attending the next Tech Council meeting at the North Chamber. Our group meets once a month and I encourage you to come check it out

Whose Domain Name Is It Anyway?

By [Jeff Wickley](#), [Wickley interactive + marketing](#)

Who owns your domain name? Maybe more importantly - who controls your domain name?

Many businesses believe that they do. However, when they decide to redesign their aging web site or change web hosting providers, they find out otherwise.

As a web site design and development firm, these are a couple scenarios we come across all too often:

1. You had XYZ company build your web site 6 years ago. They got you a domain name and put your web site on the internet, and you have been paying someone monthly ever since. For whatever reason, now you want to move your site over to ABC company. Guess what? XYZ company bought the domain name for you but registered it to themselves and they aren't too happy about losing your business.
2. You had a friend of someone working at your company buy your domain name for you a few years ago. Now, that friend is no where to be found and you would like to make upgrades or move your web site over to ABC company. Where do you start?

If you find yourself in one of these situations or would like to avoid this situation, here is what you can do.

Domain names are controlled by a few critical pieces of information. Most importantly, there is the registrant, the registrant's email, and the administrative contact. You need to have at least one of these pieces of information, if not all, tied to you. Start by checking what information is registered for your domain name by doing a WHOIS query. You can usually do this at your domain's registrar site (i.e. netsol.com, register.com, godaddy.com). If you don't know who your registrar is you can look up your domain

If you would like more information about any of the Technology Council's programs, would like to participate or need information on becoming a member of the Council please contact the [North Chamber](#).

name at www.domainwhitepages.com, where you will find a wealth of information on your domain name, network, and server.

If you are listed as the registrant and the email account tied to the registrant is active and accessible, you are in good shape. The next best thing is if you are at least listed as the administrative contact. This will at least give you some ability to change your record.

If you are not listed as the registrant, or if the email account is not yours or not active, you need to get that fixed. The easiest way is to have the company that registered your domain name make the change, or if you have the login information for your registrar, you can make the change yourself. If that is not possible, you may need to contact the registrar company and get it sorted out. This will be a much more painful process as you will have to prove identity and ownership before they can give you control. If both of these attempts fail, you may be able to take the legal route.

The process of getting control of your registration record can take anywhere from a couple of days to weeks or months depending on how it was registered. The important thing is to have yourself established as the legal owner (registrant) of your domain name. By doing so now, you will save a lot of headaches and frustrations down the road.

[Top](#)

Experiences in CRM - CardScan at SAMA

By [Larry Lentz](#), [Microsoft Dynamics CRM MVP](#)

A few Thursday's past was the San Antonio Manufactures Association (SAMA) annual Trade Show. As always, I was 'in charge of' Registration. I say it with little quotes because the SAMA Admin, Debbie, is great and lined up all the volunteers, etc. But at the last minute, of course, I came up with a brilliant idea. Why not use CardScan (www.cardscan.com) to capture all attendee information for the show. Since my official duty post was the registration booth (we don't have advanced registration) and everyone coming to the show would pass by, what better way to capture the info, real time.

But, I didn't come up with my great idea until the weekend before the show. I started a conversation with the folks at CardScan which culminated with a phone call on Wednesday morning. We finally connected at 9:44 AM with a cut off for overnight shipping at 9:50! I received my CardScan scanner and software at 9:45 AM the next day, the morning of the show!! I loaded the software and tried it out. Oops! Problem. I call their tech support, explaining that I have to be at the show in less than a hour. After taking my registration info (ugh, but necessary), they quickly solved my problem. Then I prepared to go to the show. Oops, another question. I call again. 'Didn't I just speak with you?' They answered my question quickly and accurately. Off to the show.

I arrive and set up my laptop at the registration desk with the scanner sitting up on the counter. I quickly show a few of the volunteers at the booth how to scan cards and what the 'drill' is. They are delighted. The whole booth is energized to be sure that everyone entering the show is asked for their business card so it can be scanned and then entered into the big rotating drum used for the prize drawings (over \$1,000 in cash!). I was interested to see, over the course of the day, that the various shifts showed each other how to scan the cards, being sure that everyone's card was scanned. It was so easy! Didn't seem to matter whether they entered the cards top first or bottom first or lengthwise. The scanner handled it. Those that didn't have a business card were asked to fill out an info slip, a little bigger than a business card. These had to be entered lengthwise since they were too wide for the scanner otherwise. The scanner handled those fine. All in all we scanned over 400 cards that day, in about 6 hours. It was a quick process.

After the show, I took the CardScan database and went home. That night I spent several hours entering the

info from the paper slips for those that didn't have a card. The scanner was great at capturing the image of the card but not the data. I had to enter all that info manually. But, it was MUCH easier than it would have been trying to enter the data from those slips of paper. The image was displayed on my screen just below where I needed to enter it. I also had to verify the info from all the other business cards. Some were great, many needed minor changes, some were more challenged. It was interesting to see how various business cards were recognized. I spent a few hours cleaning up the database. It could have been less but this was the first time I had used the software. I think next time it will go even faster as I learned how it works as I went along. Overall, it was a heck of a lot faster than entering the data by hand from the cards themselves!

Next I had to do something with the data. Naturally I transferred it to Microsoft CRM. When transferring cards, you have two choices: Leads or Contacts. Leads is the appropriate entity for this kind of data. But CardScan lets you transfer directly into a Contact as well. To do so, you must specify the Account, if any, the contact is to be associated with. Transferring the CardScan data to Microsoft CRM took about 40 minutes, about 10 Leads per minute. Included in the transfer was the image of the business card! This is kept as a Note for the Lead. This has been handy when going back and verifying info. Once I had the data in CRM, I used the bulk edit function to add the 'Topic' (SAMA Trade Show 2006) so I will know where the Lead came from and the lead source and venue. I was able to edit all the Leads pretty much all at once.

My next step was to send an e-mail to each Lead (attendee) thanking them for attending the trade show. It included their name and their company name. Other personal information could have been easily included as well. But this was sufficient. Sending this thank yous was a good way to verify the e-mail addresses provided. There were a number of 'bounced' e-mails. Many of these were caused by errors in the e-mail address. The 'dot' before the 'com' was sometimes dropped and other simple errors. Actually, considering the number of cards entered, the number of bounces was minimal. I easily fixed those and resent the thank you e-mails.

Once I had pretty much verified the e-mails, which also helped me correct a few other errors, I had a 'clean' database. Then I used the Advanced Find feature of MS CRM along with a custom 'View' that I created which included all of the appropriate contact fields (name, company, address, etc) to provide a listing of all the Leads from the show. Then, using the export to Microsoft Excel feature of MS CRM, I was able to export all this attendee info to an Excel spreadsheet which I was then able to e-mail to SAMA. Now SAMA will have a record of the attendees, including their e-mail, fax, and other info for use in promoting future trade shows, etc.

All in all, I was quite impressed with CardScan. It's going to make future business card data entry a snap.

[Top](#)

Can you REALLY run your IT Department like a business? (Part 2)

By [John Tomblin](#), [DataTitan.com](#)

<...continued from last edition...>

We've all heard the saying "You can't manage what you can't measure". Well, it's true...but it also comes down to another saying " The devil's in the details"...and unless you're willing to tackle the details...the former will never be realized.

There are five measurable units, Time, Priority, Scope, ROI and Completion. Notice all of these are somewhat intangible...so at first you would be hard pressed to believe they can be measured...but they can...we did it...and hears how we did it.

Step 1 - Time -

Measuring time is a daunting task. When unable to pinpoint the exact time it takes to perform a certain task...you must estimate. I know, this doesn't sound very scientific...but in order to create the value of time...you have to start somewhere. Sometimes you can't definitively measure the value of time...but that's not to say you can't 'feel' the value of time. So the question goes like this: "Upon completing this project, will employees be more productive?" Yes or No. If no...stop! Don't go to the next question. Project closed...do not pass GO...just go back to work! If the answer is yes, the question then becomes how much more productive will staff be? 1 minute an hour, 10 minutes a day? If this impacted everyone in a company, you could calculate the value of the endeavor using the following formula: (e.g.: 1 minute saved per hour x 100 employees x \$15 per/hr. x 240 work days in a year calculates as:

[.25 (cents) x 100 x 8 x 240 = \$48,000]. There you have it. If you tell your boss you can increase employee productivity one minute per day...he or she is not going to get very choked up...but when you tell the boss it reduces payroll by \$48,000 per year, well, now you'll have someone's attention.

Step 2 - Priority -

This is a biggie...we used a point measurement of 1-10...but use whatever works for you. It's simple...just sit down with your staff and determine where the project ranks in relationship to other projects/endeavors. Assign a value to the project and stick with it. One of the side benefits of this approach was getting staff truly engaged in their own success. Instead of issuing my own mandates, good employees would often times come to me with their own great ideas. We would sit down together and write out the project scope. This was always a great team builder exercise I continue to use today. Besides, who better to determine what projects should be introduced than the very people doing the work. Yes, there were plenty of "corporate" projects always underway...and we did the same with those projects as well. Only difference was the scope was already provided to us. And when bigger projects stepped in the way of smaller projects, we would simply put the smaller projects aside...and resume when the bigger projects were finished.

Step 3 - Scope Complexity -

Same rule here as for Priority. We assigned a points value between 1-10. The benefit here was it forced everyone involved to think through to the end result. Scopes were broken down to a series of smaller tasks that could be tackled. "Just go do it" went by the way of the dinosaur and we began breaking down big projects into smaller workable goals. This allowed to engage more readily and with less mental blocks that can derail the start of projects...especially large projects.

Step 4 - ROI - Return on Investment

If you buy 1,000 widgets for \$1,000 and sell 1,000 widgets for \$2,000, you have an ROI of 100%. If only everything were this simple, right?. On IT projects, we used the same strategy. How much will the hardware or software cost? How many labor hours to install or ramp up? How many training dollars need to be invested? What about the old equipment being replaced? Can we resell it? How much productivity gain will be realized (See Step 1). If costs in year one are \$100,000 and productivity gain is (from workers) \$50,000 annually...and life expectancy of the hardware is five years...you just earned an ROI of \$200,000. It sounds much better arguing your case for \$100,000 if you've opened the conversation with the statement "this will generate a return to the company of "\$200,000." And the process works!

Step 5 - Completion -

You might think so...but putting a completion date can be the single most important part of a project. The reason? Increased productivity. By putting completion dates and times on projects (we actually would measure tasks in time zones depending on where the employee lived) so there was never any excuse as to why a project was done on time. Also, there are employees who thrive on the challenge of meeting the goal...and others who demand of themselves completion on time. Most people lose interest in their jobs from boredom...so we always provided lots of goals to keep everyone enthused and on task. This in turn

increased productivity among the entire group...and often times was the leading topic of conversation at IT meetings (e.g.: "How many projects did you finish this month?", "How many points have you earned?") Interestingly, it was always the less productive staff who were always trying to get a read on what the "producers" had completed.

In the end, implementing this system was at first very painful. I worked very long hours for six months putting all the pieces in place...making adjustments, determining the measurement units and putting new pieces in place.

Bottom line...

You CAN run an IT department like a business... if you're willing to measure its value .

[Top](#)

Local News - Items of Interest

Texas at your Fingertips-

<http://www.texas.gov>

Did you know that you can check your driving record, renew your drivers license and vehicle registration, apply for permits, review FAQ, etc at our own state government website?

<http://www.bcad.org>

Did you just get your new year's tax appraisal? After the shock wears off - go to BCAD's website and see the ins and outs of your property appraisal. From their main page click on Property Search. From here you can view the improvements noted on your property, a detailed breakdown of your taxes and lots more!

<http://www.texascomptroller.com>

Need information on filing your sales tax electronically? How about getting info on that scary audit that's coming up? Check out the Texas Comptroller's website and find all the links to help you start or grow your business!

[Top](#)

Need More Information?

If you would like more information on any of the articles in this newsletter the following options are recommended;

- Discuss the article with your IT professional.
- Contact the Author of the article (contact info is available within the article)
- [Contact us](#) and we will help you find the resources you need.

If you would like information on a topic not included in the eNewsletter - please let us know and we'll do our best to find the information you need and have it included in the next eNewsletter!

This newsletter is a combined effort of the North Chamber Tech Committee and The Montopolis Group. All

input is provided by Chamber members.

[Top](#)

Contact Us

Technology Chair

[John Dickson](#)

Partner

[Denim Group, Ltd.](#)

North Chamber Contact

[Debby Zucker](#)

Director of Finance/IS

[North SA Chamber](#)

Editor

[Katrina D. Mukherjee](#)

Vice President

[The Montopolis Group](#)