

Don't forget your holiday IT checklist, experts warn

Submitted by: Six Degrees Limited

Tuesday, 28 July 2009

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London, UK; 28 July – With more than half of British workers expected to stay in touch with the office on holiday this year (Hotels.com, July 2009) tech experts are advising people to create a 'holiday IT checklist' before they go, so they pack the IT essentials along with sun cream, and ensure their technology is travel-ready.

Leading IT services firm, Conosco, which advises small and medium sized businesses on their computing requirements, believes that Britain's army of laptop carriers and Blackberry fanatics are often ill-prepared for their travels, despite their increasing reliance on technology.

"Switching off on holiday – both mentally and technically – should be easy," explains CEO and founder of Conosco, Ben Gladstone. "But it's becoming harder and harder for employees to leave the office behind, whether it's fears over job security, wanting to stay in touch with customers and colleagues or simply being indispensable!

"For staff and employers this can become an IT logistical nightmare if not handled sensibly. We're advising lots of businesses over the holiday period on potential problems like what to do if laptops and phones are lost or stolen, and even how to get online while sunbathing round the pool!"

To help those packing their bags and jetting off – as well as the expected 12m Brits holidaying at home – Conosco has published its five summer holiday IT travel tips:

1. Don't forget to pack your IT – don't forget to add the essentials to your 'must pack' list, along with your passport, including phone charger, 3G dongle or card for laptop, waterproof neoprene laptop case and plug adaptors.
2. Check IT is travel-ready – you don't want to end up poolside with a dead Internet connection. To check it really does work outside of the office (or home) go outside and test it before you leave (with Bermuda shorts on if you want to get into the holiday spirit!). Turn on your 3G connection and visit a news web site, check you can see the latest information and not a cached page; then send and receive emails to both a friend and work colleague using a desktop email program (eg Outlook). Finally, open, edit and save a document from your office's shared folder.
3. Go through security – laptops and phones are easily lost or stolen while travelling. Check passwords are complex enough (don't write them down – if you have trouble remembering them, try Roboform or MobileMe for Apple); encrypt the hard drive on your laptop and set automatic screen locks on your laptop and smartphone; and don't forget to pin-code your mobile phone.

Conosco's Gladstone adds: "Most people are unaware of some of the fantastic applications around, for example if you lose your iPhone and have the latest 3.0 software, you can log into a website and see a Google Map of where it is."

4. Poolside IT – the beautiful villa you're staying at might have Wifi, but don't trust it! For peace of mind, use a 3G adaptor - it will work almost anywhere*. While doing laps in the pools, your laptop batteries will last even less time than the average British Summer, so turn down screen brightness and set it to blank after a minute idle. And, if you don't want to be iPhoned-off by being woken up on your sun lounger every five minutes, turn off push email – plus your battery will last much longer.

5. Giving it large (but not on the dance floor!) – large documents are often too big for mobile connections. Use Google Docs to edit and store documents on a website, and try web-based services like NetSuite to see the latest sales figures, or Terminal Servers to access your office PC securely from anywhere in the world.

* Conosco recommends the Vodafone USB Modem Pro, free with an £18 per month plan or unlimited UK data and £8.50 a day for unlimited usage

More detailed checklist: <http://effortlesscomputing.co.uk/2009/07/27/holiday-tips-it-in-the-villa/>

About Conosco

Conosco is one of London's leading IT services suppliers for SMEs with managed computing packages to suit most businesses. From help desk support to strategic consultancy, Conosco has been serving leading companies like Innocent, Lombok and Anya Hindmarch for over five years. For further information on Conosco, visit <http://www.conosco.com>.