

JJS I.T. NEWS

CLINT'S WORLD

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Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work, and forced to do your best, will breed in you temperance and self-control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and content, and a hundred virtues which the idle never know.

-- Charles Kingsley,
Author

For the next three months, I've decided to feature an article on each of our IT staff. This will be fun!

Month #1 features Clint. Programmer extraordinaire, Clint does most of the TOPS programming. He is the official A/F-Correlative King of I.T.!

Clint started working at Sheeran back in October of 1998. At that time he had recently finished his degree at Millersville University and this was his first computer programming job. Clint learns fast and with his assistance we were able to reduce our dependence on outside programming consultants.

What does Clint do in his spare time? This is a question that many people ask, but few really know. He is a very mysterious guy. However, we do know a few things:

- He has a Chevelle that he's fixing up.



- He has a younger sister, Andrea.
- He waits until the week before Christmas to shop.
- His family has several pet birds.
- For some time he has helped his parents fix up their house, which dates back to the 1880s. It's been in his family for a long time. I hear he is great at installing Wainescoating.
- I know this will come as a shock to many — he is very quiet and shy.
- At one time he was a model—I saw a picture in Telemarketing a few years ago.
- Clint is 31 years old.
- He has a very logical mind, which makes him an excellent programmer.

We are very thankful that Clint decided to work here at Sheeran!



GOOGLE ALERTS

I recently stumbled upon an interesting (and free!) feature offered by Google. Google Alerts are emails that are sent to you when there are new Google results for search items of interest. For example, I've created alerts for "Lori Homsher" "Albright College" and "Sheeran Direct". I receive an automatic email whenever there are new web site links, blog posts, news posts, etc containing any of these search terms.

Here are some examples of why you might use Google Alerts (from www.google.com/alerts):

- to monitor a developing news story
- keep current on a competitor or industry
- keep tabs on your favorite sports teams



You can specify whether you want to receive alerts for everything on the web, or just news, video, groups, blogs, etc. Also, you can have the alerts condensed into a single email once per day, or sent as they happen.

Google says their Google alerts technology is in BETA. I've been using it for about a month and haven't experienced any difficulties.

After reading the back page, I'm sure you'll set up a Google alert for "Silicon photonics", to ensure you don't miss a single news event on that fun topic!

The path to success is up-hill. You don't fall into success and it isn't handed to you.

— unknown

There is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents.

— Thomas Jefferson

In other words:
Leaders are followed based on character and skill.

ARRANGE TABLES ON A PAGE IN WORD

Word's Table Properties makes it easy to position your tables so they automatically align with the surrounding text. For example, suppose you just created a table which by default aligns itself along the left margin with all surrounding text pushed below it. You would like your table to align at the right margin and the text to wrap around it. Follow these steps:

1. Select the table.

2. Right-click the selected table and click Table Properties.
3. Under Alignment, click Right.
4. Under Text wrapping, click Around.
5. Click OK.

You can adjust the spacing around the table by right-clicking the table and clicking the 'positioning' button.

STUPID CRIMINAL STORIES

As a mom, I often look for 'teaching moments' to share with my kids from everyday life. Many times, the teaching moments come while driving the kids to their various activities. Car teaching moments normally involve stupid criminal stories from the radio news. There is never a shortage, because the world is full of stupid criminals. This particular story got my attention because it involves information security.

Gary McKinnon is a North Londoner accused of the biggest hack of all time against the U.S. government. Over several years, he hacked into computers at the

U.S. Dept of Defense and NASA. He faces up to 70 years in a U.S. federal prison. Now that his trial is looming, he has become very vocal — sharing his story with anyone who will listen. Here is his story...

Gary hacked into U.S. government computers to determine if UFOs are real. He claims he's just a computer geek who wanted answers.

Not to appear uncaring to his plight, but honestly... if you're smart enough to hack into a government computer, you should be smart enough to know you are breaking the law!

THE CHANGING CUSTOMER

Today's customers are better educated, more sophisticated, and more concerned with cost. They want more for their money and they have high expectations of service.

Think about your own demands as a customer. You insist on quality goods and efficient service. You don't want to be abandoned after the sale. If something goes wrong, you want to know that the salesperson and the company will stand behind the sale. You want easy options for communication with the company.

The same is true with our customers. As they experience excellent customer service over the Christmas and holiday season, their expectations with our level service increase. Each time they notice an easy

way to communicate with a company online, their expectations of our communication options increases.

Look for opportunities to bring enhanced customer service to our clients. I recently had an excellent customer service experience in which a sales rep called me a couple of days after the sale to find out if everything was received to my satisfaction. The call took less than 2 minutes of the rep's time, but made a lasting impression on me. I will not hesitate to order from that company again. This is the type of customer service we should aim for every time we have contact with our clients.

— source: www.madeforsuccess.com

RISKY WIRELESS BEHAVIOR

In a study by Cisco, workers were surveyed to determine the type of risky behavior they were willing to perform on their computers. One of the questions was on risky wireless behavior. Ten percent surveyed said that they have used a neighbor's Internet connection when working remotely. Most stated they did so because "they were in a bind" and that their neighbor didn't know about it. One of our own employees recently had their wireless router compromised.

Why is this a risk? For sev-

eral reasons. First, if you attach to your neighbor's network and it becomes compromised with malware, it can easily spread to your system and network.

In addition, if other people attach to your wireless router, they can monitor your network traffic. Everything that is sent unencrypted can be viewed quite easily with free tools. They may even decide to hack into your computers.

The risk is greater for people who use the older 802.11b wireless routers, which have poor encryption

options. Tools like wepcrack will break 802.11b (WEP) encryption in a few seconds. What can you do?

First, upgrade your router to a newer version that supports WPA2, which offers better encryption (for example: Linksys WRT54G). These routers enable you to set encryption on for all network traffic. Then set filtering to limit the PCs allowed to access your router. Newer routers come with security software to help you set up secure wireless networks. Monitor activity to make sure they stay secure.

THE ART OF APPRECIATION

I have a CD by Mike Robbins called "Appreciation in Action". Mike is an ex-baseball player whose mission in life is to help others appreciate the best in themselves and in others. It's an awesome concept, but one that does not come naturally to many of us (myself included). Since hearing the CD earlier this year, I've made true efforts to be more appreciative of everything around me. The results have inspired me to continue to improve in this area.

The nice thing about appreciation is it helps your entire outlook on life, which in turn changes your attitude. Instead of focusing on the negative, you look for the positive.

A specific example is what we do in karate with the kids. Our Master (Dosanim) taught us to use PCP. No, not the drug (what kind of karate school do you think it is!). PCP means Praise-Correct-Praise. Rather than pointing out what a child is doing wrong, we look for something he is doing right and point that out first. After hearing a compliment, the child open to correction.

Our daily lives are full of events that are good. People doing their jobs well, green lights timed perfectly for our travels, a delicious lunch, a hug from your child. How often do we reflect on how much we appreciate these events?

Here are some ideas you can try for the next week. I'll bet you end up an optimist by the end of the week!

- Think about several people who have helped you in the past (family, friends, teachers, coworkers, etc). Tell them how much you appreciated their help.
- Next time you go to the store, thank the cashier for doing a good job — and really mean it! After all, without stores we'd all be plucking chickens for dinner.
- Identify someone you appreciate in the community and send him/her a thank you note. My daughter and I did this during a 'random acts of kindness day' — we gave a thank you note to the Chinese restaurant in Gap. They were so happy to receive the note that we got a bag of fortune cookies!
- Think about the important people in your life and mentally identify the good characteristics that you admire about them. Ignore the negatives (everyone has them) and just focus on the positives.

*Bite off
more than
you can
chew,
then chew it.*

-- Ella Williams,
Founder, Aegir
Systems



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...a lot of talk about Web 2.0, web mashups, Ajax etc., which in my mind are all facets of the same phenomenon: that information and presentation are being separated in ways that allow for novel forms of reuse.

- Sho Kuwamoto, blog: kuwamoto.org

SILICON LASING FOR DUMMIES

Silicon chips have been used in computers, cell phones and other electronics for decades. Silicon is the basic building block of semiconductor electronics. Scientists have been trying to get silicon to produce highly concentrated light, which is able to move far faster than typical electricity over copper wire. Imagine computing at the speed of light!

Silicon ("Si" on the periodic table of elements) is a very common element. It has a unique property, which allows it to form nice crystals. In its crystallized form, silicon is an insulator, not a conductor. However, through a process called doping, a small amount of impurity is added to the silicon crystal, turning it into a conductor (something that electricity can flow through).

This doped silicon can be used to create transistors (semiconductor devices), which act as switches or amplifiers. When you put thousands/millions of transistors

together you get a silicon chip. The transistors act as switches, creating Boolean (logic) gates, and the result is a microprocessor chip — the brain in our computers. Disclaimer: This is a very simplified definition!

Now imagine if scientists were able to modify silicon to 'lase' (light amplification by stimulated emission — the basics of lasers). It would be the start of silicon photonics. It could raise data transfer speeds from one MB per second to 10 GB per second — a 10,000-fold improvement! Silicon photonics may bring terabit-level optical data pipes inside future computers, speeding up communication within the system for tasks like I/O, storage read/writes, etc.

In the past three years, researchers have demonstrated silicon lasing and vendors like Intel are working hard to make the convergence of electronics and photonics a reality. When it happens, expect it to have a huge impact on many everyday devices. As a bonus, if you read this article you will have some idea of what it's all about.

WHAT IS WEB 2.0?

Web 2.0 doesn't refer specifically to any new technology. Rather, the term suggests a new version of the world wide web.

The term Web 2.0 refers to the second generation of sites, such as virtual worlds (Second Life) web-based communities and social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook), wikis (wikipedia), and mash-ups.

In business, Web 2.0 often refers to embracing the web on an enterprise level — using the Internet as a legitimate business platform for communication and service to customers.

Think about how much has changed on the web in just the last two years. YouTube is now used by companies to market their products and services (the SANS Institute has several videos on YouTube). Second Life has a business section on their grid that allows businesses to use the platform for online visualization (<http://secondlifegrid.net/how>). Organiza-

tions are realizing the benefits of offering their customers and employees social networking options for fostering group collaboration and teamwork.



The technologies aren't necessarily new, but the use of these ideas in business shows a new attitude toward technology that was considered "for teenagers only" in the not-so-distant past. It's an exciting time to be a part of Internet growth!