

CHEAP TECHNOLOGY



Cheap Technology Tool #1:

Google Voice

www.google.com/voice

We all communicate for a living, some of us better than others. Although many of us are fairly effective communicators, our effectiveness is only as good as the messages we receive. Today, you can contact me using six different phone numbers; 1) Office, 2) Office Direct, 3) Toll Free, 4) Mobile, 5) Home, 6) Old Home. I have four voice mails for those six phone numbers.

Enter Google to make our lives easier. Google Voice, a self-proclaimed app to “teach your phone new tricks,” delivers a fantastic product. One phone number with Google Voice will ring any of your six phone numbers in a designated order, but always revert to one centralized voice mail system housed online. It even transcribes your voice mails and delivers text to your inbox.

Google Voice is a powerful application with a lot of developer support and continuous improvement. It doesn't matter which carrier(s) you use, and the service is available at no cost to users. The only potential downfall is users do become dependent on Google for all future telecommunication needs, but this is offset by Google's remarkable buying power, delivering some of the cheapest domestic and international rates published. So, the only question you need to answer is: How much Google do you want?

Smart Technology Comes With Coffee

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Google is still the king of Internet search, but Google is king of much, much more as this Internet Giant diversifies into helping us work smarter.

An article recently discussed technology giants like Microsoft, Google, Apple, Amazon, and many others competing over the same talent. Ironically, these two authors are from two of the top five cities for technology talent in America: Boston and Seattle, both cities now home to a Google campus.

So why do we care about Google and other gigantic technology companies in the retirement plan sector? Well, we probably all own a small piece of them in our mutual fund investments within our own retirement plans, let alone our clients' retirement plans. Another reason we should care is that Google, and other firms, are investing in us working smarter.

CHEAP TECHNOLOGY

Cheap Technology Tool #2:

Starbucks Mobile

www.starbucks.com/coffeehouse/mobile-apps

Coffee. Seattle. Starbucks. Guilty. This article is focused on Google and other cheap technology, so this may be a stretch. Here's the connection: Starbucks finally created and released the Android (Google platform) application for its fastest way to pay; using your smartphone.

My Starbucks Rewards is a loyalty website that links to your phone's application to essentially reload those Starbucks gift cards everyone seems to accumulate in business. Besides, how many times do you treat your clients to coffee? By the time this article hits the press, it'll probably be old news, but at the time of writing, it's a big step for the Seattle coffee company to play nicely with Google.

Don't tell VISA, but according to independent blog posts and other analysis, paying with your My Starbucks Rewards account via phone is actually faster than credit card. You also get loyalty points and other cool rewards from the world's largest coffee company. Just think how many deals you lost or never had a chance to land because you couldn't say, "well let's just meet at the Starbucks..." Now it's even easier to treat clients to a cup.

Cheap Technology Tool #3:

Google Alerts

www.google.com/alerts?hl=en

Back to a more direct Google tie-in. You're ready for that finalist presentation only to have it postponed. Ugh. Now you risk all that research becoming stale by the time you present.

Have no fear...Google Alerts is here. This free service from Google allows you to subscribe to email alerts, delivered straight to your inbox anytime there's a new hit anywhere on the Internet for any search term or phrase you choose. Need the news as it happens? No problem. Prefer to receive the updates daily or weekly? Just select the frequency from the drop-down menu, and you're set.

Here are just a few examples of how you can use Google Alerts to keep your finger on the pulse of your business.

- Monitor legislative developments in local governments or public school systems that could impact.
- Track news related to that big client's/prospect's new fundraising efforts.
- Follow your name or your company's name to decide whether those marketing strategies are generating the press you expected.

If you can Google it, you can create a free Google Alert for it.

Cheap Technology Tool #4:

Audiotorium for iPad

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/audiotorium-notes-text-audio/id362787978?mt=8>

No matter how organized you are, it's too easy to accumulate a phonebook size stack of notes from your many meetings and conferences. Then, there's the challenge of trying to decipher your own personal chicken-scratch—I mean shorthand—when you get back to the office.

The Audiotorium app for iPad takes care of these issues for the whopping price of only \$4.99. Just launch the application, and you're greeted by an interface that looks like a yellow legal pad and allows you to type meeting notes and record the audio at the same time from within the same app. Concerned that you'll now have to organize notes and recordings? No problem. Audiotorium allows you to tag all your entries with key words that could include client name, location, date, etc.

If you have a Dropbox account, Audiotorium will instantly save your notes and recordings to the cloud. You can email a link to other meeting attendees before you even leave the parking lot; or automatically sync the files with your assistant's computer, so she or he can review and draft that follow-up email with action items for your review before you get back to the office.

Prefer handwriting to typing? Well, the next update to the app promises to allow you to write notes directly on-screen using your finger or a stylus. Unfortunately, the app does not come with one of those cool CSI-type filters that picks a voice out of a crowded restaurant, so you may want to stick with typing for those meetings at your local Starbucks.

Adam and Yannis are always on the lookout for new and creative mobile applications and other technologies. If you have any tips or suggestions, please email them at adam.pozek@dwccconsultants.com and yannis@spectrumpension.com.



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