

**RSS Herald
Recommends P. 4**

**IAVOA Corner
P. 6**

**New Ideas for the New
Year P. 2**

RSS Herald

January 2008 ISSN: 1532-2564

All the news Virtual Assistants can use...

**Can You Spell
S E C U R E ?
Keeping Client
Records Confidential
P. 9**

**For Your Eyes Only
P. 8**

*A Prairie Winter Morning
Photo by Kathy Ritchie,
Aurora, CO 1/19/08*



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Cover Photo by Kathy Ritchie 1/19/08

"How easy it is to see in others what we dare not see in ourselves."

Anonymous

New (or not so new) Ideas For The New Year by Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services

Welcome to a New Year and a time for new beginnings.

At the start of every year, most of us make resolutions or have thoughts about making some changes to our lives. From telling ourselves that we need to lose weight or eat healthier, to quitting smoking or any other life-changing task, we all wish we could profess these wishes and then actually stick to them.

Unfortunately, New Year's resolutions are one of the first promises that we make to ourselves that we inevitably seem to break. So we decide to either make tiny resolutions that we know we won't break, or we don't make any at all.

Well, why don't we make a resolution (don't worry, this is an easy one) to make our businesses more efficient, productive, and thus, more profitable this year?

I know what you are saying to yourself, "But

I am already doing that. What can you possibly tell me that I am not already trying?"

Well, these ideas may not all be 'new' ideas, but they may be ones that you haven't had a chance to implement yet. So let's get started....

Most of us sent our holiday sentiments to our clients and contacts in the form of greeting cards or gifts. But, how often throughout the remainder of the year do you make an attempt to keep in touch with these valuable business associates? This is one resolution that you should make this year to help increase your business. After all, these professionals have seen your work and know that you are worth recommending to others.

Try sending a monthly or semi-monthly newsletter to them and fill it with news about your company, any new product or service you



are offering, short helpful articles that they will find useful, and plugs for your clients (they will love that!).

We at Docu-Type send out a newsletter every other month (read our archives and sign up at www.docutype.net/news.htm). It is usually an 8-page PDF filled with information to help build small businesses. It is laid out with an Index on the front, along with an introduction section. Throughout the newsletter, we include articles, links and helpful tips that may help our small business clients. And, we also include a little bit fun to help break up the monotony of a busy entrepreneur's day.

Somewhere in amongst all this useful information, we try to plug at least one of our clients

(Continued on page 3)

“Editors are very particular as to what is included in their publications. If you want to advertise, you will have to buy the space.”

Janice Byer, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services, provides professional, creative and affordable virtual office assistance and small business website design. She is a Certified Canadian Virtual Assistant (CCVA) and Master Virtual Assistant (MVA). She is also the author of [Surfin' The Net - Docu-Type's Virtual Collection of Links](#), which is filled with the secrets of her success. Visit her [website](#) for more information and to get your copy.

New Year New VA

(Continued from page 2)

or associates. It is either to announce a new client's website, announce an associates open house, or to rave about an association we belong to, we try to include our clients in our newsletter. When they read it, you just know they will be happy. Actually, we did a piece on our local Brampton Board of Trade in a previous issue and, a few days after it was mailed out, we got a call from the President to thank us for the mention.

If you are unsure as to how to set up your newsletter and what to include, it might be best to contact a professional who can guide you through the process.

Another new (or maybe not so new) idea to help boost your business is to try gaining free exposure. And, one of the most common ways to do this is to write articles. Write about what you know and submit it to online ezines that are related to the topic and printed publications as well. It may take a while to get noticed by those that you want to be your future clients, but this form of marketing will help you to be recognized as an expert in your field and, in turn, trusted by your audience and potential clients.

One word of caution, be sure to read and reread what you have written. If possible, have someone else read it to see if there

are any errors that you may have missed. Also, if you are going to use statistics in your articles, be sure to include where you received your information (in the form of a bibliography or footnotes) and that it is from a reliable and accurate source.

Press Releases are another terrific way to gain exposure through the media. When you start your business, add a new product or service, win an award (see our Press Releases for our latest awards at <http://www.docutype.net>), or have any other newsworthy happening, be sure to let the media know and they in turn will let their readers (your potential clients) know.

And again, a word of caution with regards to Press Releases, make sure that it is newsworthy and does not come out sounding like an ad. Editors are very particular as to what is included in their publications. If you want to advertise, you will have to buy the space. But, if you truly have something worthwhile to say to the readers, then there is a much better chance of it being published.

Now, the final idea that we have (for today anyway) is to try to alleviate some of your workload. As small business owners, we wear all the

hats when it comes to running a company. Unfortunately, some of those hats take us away from the tasks that actually generate revenue. We need to get back to the important aspects of our business... its success!

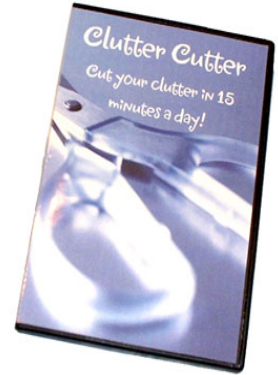
To accomplish this we need to be able to have an extra pair of hands when the workload gets to be too much. So, why not outsource some of your tasks to a fellow Virtual Assistant? You already know they are experienced professionals that specialize in everything from general word processing to website design and can handle the more time-consuming tasks that take you away from building your business and increasing your profits.

These are just a few ideas that don't cost a fortune and can contribute to the success of your small business. I hope you will implement some of these ideas (if you haven't already done so). They are all wonderful ways of increasing the productivity of your business.

RSS Herald Recommends: Cut your clutter in 15 minutes a day!

Now there's a tool to help you clean out the clutter in your home. This CD includes 9 minutes of inspiration, information and motivation as well as 15 minutes of upbeat music. It's like having me there to walk you through anything you might encounter along the way.

click here to listen to a sample!!



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JANUARY 2008

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 New Year's Day	2 Bank Holiday (SCOT) New Year's Day Holiday (NZ)	3	4	5
6 Epiphany	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 Southland Anniversary (NZ)	18	19
20	21 Martin Luther King Jr. Day US Wellington Anniv NZ	22	23	24	25	26 Australia Day (AUST)
27	28 Auckland Anniv NZ Wai-kato Anniv. NZ	29	30	31		

Monday Nights with Kelly Poelker Schedule: <http://www.another8hours.com/cgi-bin/chat/chat.cgi>
Other days in January:

- 1 New Year's Day
- 2 Run up the Flagpole and See if Anyone Salutes Day
- 3 Festival of Sleep Day
- 3 Fruitcake Toss Day
- 3 Humiliation Day
- 4 Trivia Day
- 5 National Bird Day
- 6 Bean Day
- 6 Cuddle Up Day
- 7 Old Rock Day
- 8 Bubble Bath Day
- 8 Male Watcher's Day
- 9 Play God Day
- 10 Peculiar People Day
- 11 Step in a Puddle and Splash Your Friend's Day
- 12 Feast of Fabulous Wild Men Day
- 12 National Pharmacist Day
- 13 International Skeptics Day
- 13 Make Your Dream Come True Day

RSS Recommends x 2

Frustrated by the limited size of your Windows desktop workspace? Now you can add another monitor to your PC or notebook with this simple-to-install SVGA adapter. The adapter simply plugs into a USB 2.0 port, and it works with both CRT and LCD monitors as well as projectors. You can view large spreadsheets, multi-task more effectively, or do multiple screen displays and presentations. The possibilities are endless! Includes software on CD-ROM. Requires Microsoft Windows 2000/XP/Vista. Actual resolution dependent on operating system and monitor type.



I can vouch for this product—having a PC with an embedded graphics card, and limited number of PCI slots, this adapter solved my problem on how to get a second display without buying a second graphics card. One note, I've found that the legacy drivers worked best, which are available for download on the Tritton website. Kathy Ritchie

[Cyberguys.com Clearance Section](#)

At TigerDirect.com: [Tritton VGA USB2.0 Adapter](#)

- 14 Dress Up Your Pet Day
- 15 National Hat Day
- 16 National Nothing Day
- 17 Ditch New Years Resolutions Day
- 18 Thesaurus Day
- 18 Winnie the Pooh Day -The Birthday of Winnie's author A.A. Milne
- 19 National Popcorn Day
- 20 National Buttercrunch Day
- 20 Penguin Awareness Day
- 21 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday, celebrated on the third Monday
- 21 National Hugging Day
- 21 Squirrel Appreciation Day
- 22 National Blonde Brownie Day
- 23 National Pie Day
- 23 National Handwriting Day
- 23 Measure Your Feet Day- we only ask...."Why!?"
- 24 Beer Can Appreciation Day
- 24 Compliment Day
- 25 Opposite Day
- 26 Spouse's Day
- 27 Chocolate Cake Day
- 27 Punch the Clock Day
- 28 Fun at Work Day
- 28 National Kazoo Day
- 29 National Puzzle Day
- 29 National Cornchip Day
- 30 National Inane Answering Message Day
- 31 Backward Day
- 31 Inspire Your Heart with Art Day



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Spam, Trash, Filth: Fighting Back Against Email Harvesters By Clara Fyffe

After writing my previous article – the one regarding back-ups that I hope everyone read – I started surfing the ‘net. I was searching for quilt and craft sites. One site caught my attention because of something the owner had said

and done. I’m going to do it, too, because if there’s one thing I learned from my back-up experience, it’s this: “A little trouble now is worth it to save a lot of trouble later.”

I am sorry to say that I cannot recall the name of the site I found, so please forgive me. And, due to the way the author wrote his/her text, I am sure it’s okay to reiterate it here for you.

I don’t know about you, but one of my email addresses that I use the most hasn’t been changed in about ten years. That email address garners around 500 spam or junk – or filthy – emails a week, if not more. I can’t just blindly dump them all at once each day because, once in a while, a real and important email gets tossed into the spam mix. Therefore, I spend a lot of time pulling the couple of good ones from the quagmire of the bad.

On this particular website I found, the author figured out one way to prevent spam and explained how he could do it, yet still allow interested potential clients to email him. His text went something like this (and I’ll use my email as an

example). At the bottom of his contact page, the first line states, “You may email me at allwrite –at– bloomington.in.us.” He then skips a line and continues with his explanation. It went something like this: “Due to the hundreds of spam emails we all receive by having our email addresses on the ‘net, I have chosen to modify my email by taking out the @ sign and substituting –at– in its place to make it useless to those who harvest our emails for inappropriate use. To write me, just highlight and paste this email into your email program and change the –at– back to the @ sign. Thank you for understanding.”

Now, I don’t know about you, but I think that’s a really good idea and, if I ever get my files back, I’m going to do that on my site, as well.

There are many other symbols that could be used in place of the @ sign, as long as you do like he did and explain the “why and how” to your readers. For example, mine could change to allwrite ☺ bloomington.in.us or maybe allwrite\$ bloomington.in.us. Get the idea? Any symbol would work.

I think that rather than irritating a potential client, he just might think it’s a clever idea and utilize the “disguise,” too.

I’m considering changing each of my emails to this method, as well as each address in my address book to prevent harvesters from stealing them. I know we’re all busy, but an extra keystroke is well worth getting rid of spam.

Someone else suggested that when you visit sites that require you to give your email address,

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Clara Fyffe, writer for the IAVOA Corner



Shirley Gandee

“That email address garners around 500 spam or junk – or filthy – emails a week, if not more...”

IAVOA Corner

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such as eBay or Amazon or any of the others, that you use an email address that is far removed from your business or personal email addresses. Make up a hotmail or yahoo address for those sites and check them only on their own websites. That way, harvesters are kept away from your important email accounts and you won't get any spam from them.

An IT person gave me the following hint, but I can't verify its validity. He says that if you "make up" the first entry in your address book as something completely irrational and bogus – like 245-at-642.num – that your address book will remain untouched. If anyone denies this and can explain, please contact me.

Two other IT guys, both instructors, told me that your email address should **never** be included on **any** of your web pages. I don't really understand all of their computer lingo, but they say that using a short form for the potential client to fill out on your "contact me" page is much better and safer. The client would then hit the "Submit" button, to which your email address is embedded and hidden, and the "Submit" button would therefore direct their information to you via your email program.

I apologize because I know I didn't explain this last suggestion very well at all, but it makes good sense. If one of you readers can explain it better, please write me with

your explanation and I'll submit it next month.

I also am asking you to send me your ideas on reducing spam/junk/filthy emails. I will be more than happy to include them in an upcoming article. Please send all your suggestions to me, Clara Fyffe, at all-write@bloomington.in.us.

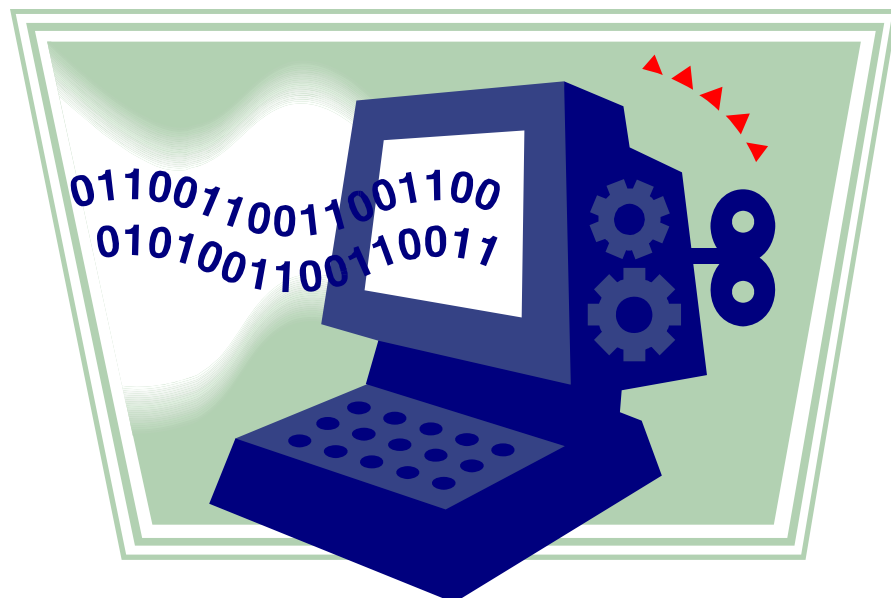
And, if you have ideas for future articles, send them, too. I look forward to hearing from you!

For more information on controlling your spam please visit
<http://www.anti-spam-tips.com/>

Another tip, from Janice Byer, to encode your email address to prevent harvesting.

<http://www.wbwip.com/wbw/emailencoder.html> enter your email address, then press encode, and then substitute the code for all instances of your email address on your website. While it may not stop all the spam, it can't hurt!

Thanks Janice and Clara for such timely advice!



For Your Eyes Only “Ask April” Column, Computer Tips Weekly Newsletter Worldstart.com

Have you ever been in a situation where you're working on sensitive material in MS Excel and someone walks up behind you?

What do you do?

Do you quickly minimize the entire program?

Yeah, I've done that too. But what if you need Excel to work on another project with the person who came in?

You could go through the hassle of closing and saving the file, but luckily, there's a faster way!

Why not just hide the file?

Hide it?

Yes, hide it! (I realize it's not a piece of paper you can just shove in a desk drawer, but I promise, Excel has you covered on this).

Here's the deal.

The next time you need to quickly remove a workbook from someone else's eye-sight, simply go to the **Window** menu and choose **Hide**. For Excel 2007 users, you're looking for the **View** ribbon, **Hide** button.

Instantly, the current workbook will be hidden from anyone's view.

If you take a look at the list of open files in the **Window** menu (the Excel 2007 list is under the **View** ribbon, **Switch Windows** button),

you'll find that the workbooks are no longer listed. (That's good news! That means you can't accidentally switch to the file you don't want to be viewed).

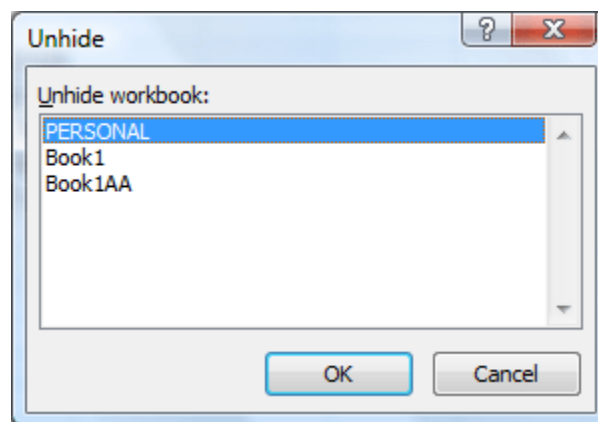
Now, let's move ahead a bit.

Let's suppose you're ready to get back to work on your hidden file. It's definitely not on the list in the **Window** menu, so what do you do?

You unhide it, of course!

To do so, return to the **Window** menu and choose **Unhide** this time. In Excel 2007, it's back to the **View** ribbon, **Unhide** button.

A window will then pop open, listing all of the hidden files.



Choose the workbook you need to unhide and click **OK**. You'll then be returned to Excel with your workbook active and

you can continue working. At this point, I bet you have just one more question. Am I right?

Are you wondering what will happen if you forget to unhide a workbook and try to close Excel?

Excel-lent question!

Basically, Excel will ask if you want to save the file, just like it does with all of your open files when the program closes. Choose Yes or No and proceed the same as you would with any other file.

The difference comes in when you open the file again at a later time. Upon reopening it, the file will immediately be hidden. You'll need to **return to the Window** menu (**View** ribbon) to **unhide** it and then, once again, you're ready to go. (If you forget

please keep this warning in mind!)

There you have it! A quick and easy way to keep your Excel work away from wandering eyes. It's kind of like "hiding the clutter!"

~ April

Have a question about Microsoft Office for the newsletter?
Ask April!

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Can you spell S E C U R E? Keeping Client Records Confidential

Take this short quiz:

1. Do you keep your clients' credit card information?
2. Do you purchase on their behalf using their credit card numbers?
3. Do you have access to their bank account information?
4. Pay their bills?
5. Do bookkeeping for them?
6. Keep or have access to other personal / business information?

If you answered yes to just ONE of these questions, you need to be concerned about security for your clients' information.

Here are some tips to ensure maximum security:

If you process your clients' credit cards after invoicing them, don't keep the credit card numbers in your computer. Even in QuickBooks. I utilize a flash drive, with very strong encryption, which is always stored in a fire-proof safe. NOT in the computer. In QuickBooks, I manually enter each credit card number as I process payments.

If you purchase items for your clients, keep their credit card information on a flash drive, or for ease of use if this is a frequent occurrence, use 3x5 cards which remain locked in a fire-proof safe when not in use.

If you have your computers networked, SECURE YOUR NETWORK! This can't be stressed enough. The safer version of networking is wired, but its not always convenient. If you must use wireless, use the most advanced security you can afford. Whatever you do, DO NOT scrimp here!

If you do, not only is your own data at risk, but whatever you've completed for your client is also at risk.

I'm sure we've all heard the reports in the news about the major retailers whose wireless networks were secured with the older WEP encryption and therefore were easily hacked by drive by criminals. DO NOT USE WEP!

Be sure and use the WPA (Wi-Fi protected access) encryption methods, and the latest technology you can afford. WPA is our friend.

Frequently change your passwords. Make it a New Year's Resolution to develop a better password habit. Don't use words that are easily identifiable to you, don't use your kids' birthdays, your anniversary or anything that could be easily hacked. There are a number of software tools that can randomly generate very strong pass-



EDITOR'S

Corner

words for your use, and help you setup a timetable to change them.

Password protect or encrypt your client folders on your computer. I use a product called Invisible Secrets, which offers a number of ways to keep your data secure. From hiding applications, to creating self executing files to send confidential information to your clients.

This is one of the things my clients appreciate most. I never send confidential information to them without first making a file for them to double-click, enter the password we've already agreed on, then they can open the document.

Not only does it provide greater security for them, it also provides them greater confidence in the process with which you work with them.

PC Magazine has an excellent article about security in the January edition. Its invaluable information and I encourage everyone to read it.

Thanks! Kathy Ritchie