

E.NEWSLETTER

Welcome, it seems like just a few weeks since I was writing for the winter 2009 newsletter, yet a whole year has passed. 2010 has been a great year for Shield with more local businesses benefiting from our Safety Net IT support than ever before and another new member of staff on board; I trust you are all getting used to Stuart's accent by now. I can tell you that Stuart is really progressing in his training and each day learns more and more about our customers, the kind of service we provide and of course his technical knowledge is coming on in leaps and bounds. We certainly are reaping the benefits of having another technical member of staff on board and I hope that you are too.

The recent change from standing order to direct debit payments for Safety Net contracts has meant that transition to the VAT increase on January 1st will be a much easier one. Rather than relying on our customers to make the arrangements with their bank we can do it all for you.

All of our Safety Net customers should have received an email confirming our opening times over the Christmas period. These opening times have also been published on our website; click this link to find out more

<http://www.shieldtechnologies.co.uk/index.php/xmas10>

Finally we would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

Mark Swindale, Managing Director.

customer survey . . .

Customers were asked to rate the following out of a possible '10', with '1' being a low rating and '10' being the best:

- The speed of our response to your request
- The competence of our support team
- The friendliness of our support team
- Was your issue resolved first time?

9.56

9.69

9.74

92%

YES

GEEK speak

Will Social Networking Replace Email?

There are some who believe that the growth in the use of social networks could spell the demise of email. We have been having a look at the arguments from both camps so that we can nail our colours to the mast!

Those who believe that social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter will replace email are using the argument that communicating with customers will be more interactive than one way email marketing. Social Networking will allow businesses to enter into a dialogue with customers about products and services.

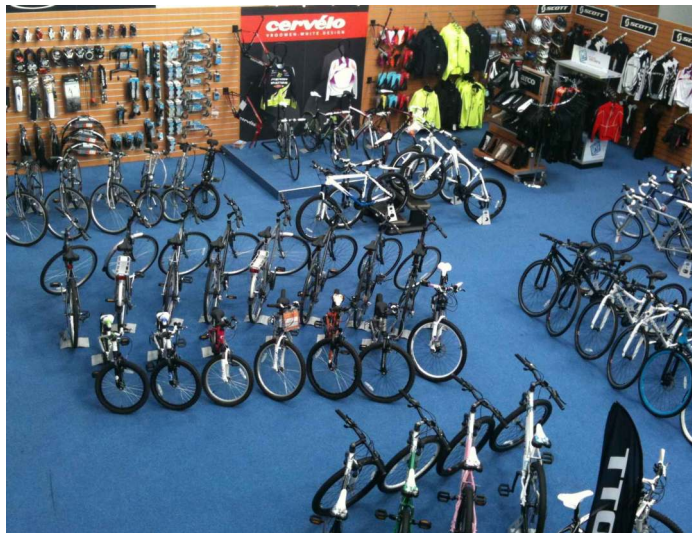
Whilst this is true, it seems to us that the arguments against the idea that these sites will replace email far outweigh those that are for.

There are a whole host of reasons why email use should increase over the coming years, not least that email is universal. Almost all social networking sites that require registration require an email address; they use email themselves to send you updates. Believe it or not there are plenty of people not interested in joining social networks; with daily news stories about privacy and security who can blame them?

So will social networking replace email? We don't believe so!

Customer Profile:

Get Fit With GreenWheel Cycles



GreenWheel Cycles is Peterborough's newest premier cycling centre with the city's first and only in house pro-fitting centre. Stocking a large range of children's, hybrid, mountain and the ultimate range of road and time trial bikes, we are able to accommodate every customer.

As a partner store for the UK's number one provider of tax-free bikes for the Government's Cycle to Work initiative, we offer a large range of cycles and accessories for you to choose from. To discuss your needs further we can arrange an appointment to see you in your workplace or feel free to visit us in store at your convenience.

Whether you're a novice cyclist or competing at the highest levels, our cycle-fit service aims to offer you a comprehensive assessment to ensure you leave GreenWheel Cycles with a better knowledge and understanding of your riding style and position. Our knowledgeable and experienced fitting specialists will be able to guide you through the step-by-step process to ensure that you receive the best possible service and a bike that meets your individual requirements exactly.

Our workshop department is fully equipped to carry out all necessary servicing and repairs and our technicians are fully qualified and experienced in bike care. We offer three levels of servicing in order to meet your bike's every need and a large range of other options from puncture repairs through to a complete build of a new frame and components.

For more information about **GreenWheel Cycles** products and services have a look at their website www.greenwheelcycles.co.uk or call Peterborough **01733 305130**.

Iain Crighton

TOP TIPS

Working from Pen Drives . . . pen drives are a great way of saving and transporting files and folders. Often we find that users will work from the files on pen drives which can cause problems. We would recommend that pen drives are used for transportation and storage only, when making changes to files use your computer rather than the pen drive. Pen drives can be unreliable and can cause problems with file recovery.

Email Broadcasting . . . in recent months a number of customers have contacted us about email broadcasting software. Since the inception of our newsletter we have used a number of different products and have finally found one that we are happy with on price, reporting and appearance. Here are a few of the products we have found and used over the last 12 months.

www.newzapp.co.uk – this company offers a 3 month trial period during which you can send 20 emails. There are a number of different options available including a free option with up to 200 emails per month with very basic tracking such as number of opens and number of clicks. For better tracking information the Lite, Enterprise or Professional options are available with a higher number of emails allowed. These range from £300 to £1200 per month.

www.benchmarkemail.com/p/75437 – we currently use Benchmark for our newsletter and marketing material. It is low cost with plans ranging from \$9.95 per month for 600 emails to \$375 per month for 100,000 emails. The email tracking will give you information about who has opened your email and who has clicked on the links in your email. It is easy to use and with over 200 email templates most businesses can find one that suits.

www.campaignmonitor.co.uk – this company offer a pay as you go plan which will cost \$5 per campaign plus 1 cent per email. The pay monthly campaigns are based on the number of subscribers you have so from \$15 per month for 500 subscribers up to \$500 per month for 50,000 subscribers. With these plans you can send unlimited emails. The tracking is extensive, not only reporting opens and clicks but measuring campaign related sales.

There are hundreds of these websites around, all offering something different in terms of price, style and reporting, if you are going to use a service like this it is important to do your research.

Working from Home . . . with Christmas holidays now in our thoughts it's a good opportunity to consider how your office is manned over the Christmas period or indeed, should we suffer the same kind of winter as the last. Working from home or a location other than your office is now more effective than ever, not only can you have remote access to all of your files and folders, with VOIP (voice over ip) technology you can make and receive calls as if you were in the office without the hassle and cost of divers. For more information about working from home, please email us at sales@shieldtechnologies.co.uk or call 0845 8384309.

Shield's Big Wigs Challenge comes to an end



On 9th November representatives of Shield Technologies attended a presentation evening hosted by Sue Ryder Care at Thorpe Hall Hospice. The event was attended by all the businesses to complete the Big Wigs challenge where the final totals were announced and awards given for Charity Entrepreneur of the Year, Sue Ryder Care Ambassador of the Year, Innovator of the Year, Outstanding Individual, and Outstanding Team.

Shield Technologies were runners up in the

Entrepreneur of the Year award, after narrowly missing out on the top spot behind RSA who raised just over £6000. Claire, Marketing Manager at Shield also picked up the Outstanding Individual of the Year.

Our final total was announced, a whopping £5155.50. We would like to thank all of you who attended, provided items for our auction and those businesses and individuals who provided printing and equipment for the event. In total this year's Big Wigs raised over £16,000 which is enough money to run a hospice for 3 days; a great achievement for all those who were involved.

SHIELD NEWS



A 'Neat' Referral

Over the last couple of months we have given away a number of cheques for £100; these cheques are for referrals we have received which have resulted in a new Safety Net customer. One such cheque was recently handed over to Neil Baird, Managing Director of Neat Electrical. He gave us a referral earlier on this year for a business that he thought would benefit from our Safety Net it support contract. Neil had already told the business in question about Shield Technologies and how we help many businesses across Peterborough with the smooth running of their IT systems.

The business signed up to Safety Net and once they had completed their third month we handed over a cheque for £100 to Neil. Neil said "Mark and his team do a great job for many local businesses and I have often referred other businesses to them, the £100 is a nice thank you but the reason I refer to Shield is simply because they offer a great service to their customers".

If you know of a business you think would benefit from our Safety Net it support contract tell them about us, tell us about them and you could earn yourself £100.

Customer Profile:

PPS PRINT

PPS have been providing high quality design and print for business for more than 35 years, printing for some of the largest companies and organisations in the area.



It is now more important than ever to create a strong first impression; PPS spend time listening to our customers' requirements in order to better understand how the finished printed product should look, before agreeing the brief, budget and timescale for producing a professionally designed printed product that needn't break the bank.

We go out of our way to provide quality print, hassle-free, and on time. We understand that price and budget are important, of course they are, consequently, we will work with customers to arrive at the optimum balance between price, specification and quantity.

We offer advice and guidance on paper, printing, size, design, folding and finishing ensuring the product delivered is the product you hoped for.

With high levels of data and artwork stored on our systems it is imperative that we have reliable IT systems and support. Shield Technologies have been supporting our IT systems for a number of years now and they have always provided us with excellent advice taking in to account reliability as well as cost.

Marcus Brailsford
PPS Print: 01733 349881
www.pps-print.com

interceptor*

disaster recovery

Shield's Interceptor range of disaster recovery products and services is designed to provide business continuity for small and medium sized companies. Disaster recovery is not just for large corporate organisations - cost effective disaster recovery is equally as important to any growing, forward thinking organisation.

Interceptor Online Backup



Most organisations perform daily backups using various media, **interceptor online backup** is designed to supplement any such system. Providing two backup systems means your business is less likely to suffer loss of data. The advantages of online over tape or hard drive are

- Data is off site but held locally
- Tapes and hard drives can be damaged despite appearing to backup correctly.
- **interceptor** requires no user intervention
- File restoration is much quicker

One business already benefiting from the **interceptor online backup** service is Sopp & Sopp, their Matt Henson said "**interceptor** proved its worth in January when a file was lost on our system. Within one hour, the file was retrieved utilising the backup and back on our extensive database."

Interceptor Email Guardian



If your server goes offline for the briefest of periods emails sent to you may never arrive and worse still you may never even know about it.

Designed to ensure you never lose an email again, **interceptor email guardian** pushes emails to your server having first scanned for viruses and spam, reducing unwanted traffic and the risk of infections so that you receive emails instantaneously.

Should your server go offline emails sent to you will be queued and distributed as soon as your server is back online, providing you with email which could otherwise have been lost forever.

If your server is affected by a longer period of downtime your emails can be redirected to a safe location which you can access to read and reply to urgent messages.

One business for which Shield recently activated **email guardian** has seen an immediate reduction in spam email. Neil from Renaissance Property Management said "The day after Shield activated email guardian for us we only received 1 spam email, a reduction from around 50 the previous day."

Interceptor Web Rescue



Loss of internet connection can be frustrating, if your business relies on web based databases and software, the consequences of a long period without an internet connection can be devastating.

interceptor web rescue is designed to offer a temporary internet connection using 3G

- We provide loan equipment to guarantee an internet connection (subject to site survey)
- Your business will have an internet connection within 2 or 5 hours subject to your service level agreement
- When your regular connection is restored we will test it before we disconnect and remove our loan equipment
- We will record any data usage and invoice accordingly

If you would like any further information about our **interceptor** range of disaster recovery services click on the links above or email sales@shieldtechnologies.co.uk



DID YOU KNOW?

At the time of writing, the snow seems to be just about everywhere and the weather forecasts are full of severe weather warnings of more to come. For many employers this can be a tough time with staff being left with little choice other than staying at home. Working parents may have no choice at all with so many schools being closed.

The question being asked by many employers is; do I have to pay staff if they do not come in because of the snow? Well the answer is, unless there is a contractual entitlement, - no. Of course there is the right to time off in a family emergency to arrange child care when normal arrangements have been disrupted but its' not paid time off. But that's not necessarily the end of story as you need to keep staff onside and not alienate them by being too harsh in this respect. That will almost certainly be counterproductive with staff withdrawing their goodwill and no longer will they go the extra mile when that order needs to be got out etc.

So consider other ways around the problem; can time be made up later or do they want to take it as holiday, or can they work from home? Many people can function quite efficiently with the use of technology and Shield Technologies will be able to assist you with any of the technical aspects this may involve. It may well be worth considering all the options.

On the subject of employee rights, it may well be worth reminding you that on 1 October 2010 the National Minimum Wage increased. The new rates are:

£5.93 for workers aged 21 and over

£4.92 for workers aged 18 to 20

£3.64 for workers aged 16 to 17

There is also an apprentice rate of £2.50 aged 19 and under, or in the first year of apprenticeship.

New Customers

Adam Electric Ltd. Nene Overland. Williams Bros.

SHIELD
technologies
... safeguarding your business

the**businessclub**
building better business

Also on 1 October a major new piece of legislation was introduced; the Equality Act which has some wide ranging consequences. The first thing to note is that it draws together all the various legislation which existed in respect of discrimination, for example race and religion and creates protected characteristics and introduces new forms of discrimination, associative and perceptible.



Finally and on the subject of retirement be aware that things are set to change. From 6 April 2011 employers will not be able to issue any notifications for compulsory retirement using the Default Retirement Age procedure. Between 6 April and 1 October 2011, only people who were notified before 6 April 11, and whose retirement date is before 1 October 11 can be compulsorily retired. This may still be subject to change so if in any doubt check.

To learn more contact:

Trevor Richards of Richards HR Solutions
01733-361800

www.richardshrsolutions.co.uk

AND FINALLY

From all of us here at Shield Technologies, Mark, Claire, Jonny and Stuart, a sincere 'thank you' for all your support over the last twelve months, it has been an incredible year!

So to all our customers of today and of tomorrow we wish you a very Merry Christmas.

Merry Christmas!

The
**BUSINESS
END**

WINTER 2010