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Tablet Cage Match: Nexus vs. Kindle



When making a tablet purchase for your business, there are many factors to take into account, such

as portability, battery life, screen resolution and more. However, the most important factors are whether or not the device will actually help you get more done. Here are the Nexus 7 and Kindle Fire tablets side-by-side for your comparison. At first, it would seem that both Google. . .



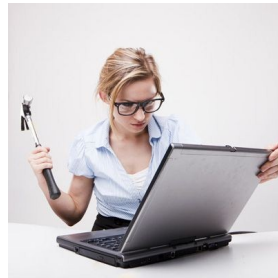
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About Directive

We are a technology consulting firm specializing in technology implementation and management for businesses. We're known for providing big-business, Enterprise-Level IT services to small and medium-sized businesses.

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Leave IT to the Professionals



For small and medium businesses, attempting to fix your own computer issues can do more harm than good. It may seem like having to pay for IT services is an unnecessary expense, especially when you have a somewhat tech savvy employee who seems to know what they are doing. It may be an expense now, but it will save you thousands of dollars in time and money in the long run.

For example, one member of an accounting firm works on an average of 5 accounts in a day. Clients are billed at \$300.00/hr. This includes time and materials. At a total of 8 billable hours, this firm generates \$2,400.00 per employee. As an accounting firm, they rely heavily on computers. There is accounting software, intra-office communication, e-mails with clients, legal documents and more. If any part of the computer network is down, so is productivity.

Just as your company is focused on being the best in the field, Directive is driven to provide the very best practices and bring value to your business through IT. By attempting to fix computer errors without the proper training, there is a risk that a simple issue may escalate to a pricey, time-consuming one. Small and medium businesses cannot afford to lose a day or more's worth of business, especially on something that could have been repaired quickly.

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Handling Criticism and Adversity on Social Media



Social Media is a far-reaching, extremely valuable tool for advertising and marketing. That is, well... until it isn't. Being able and prepared to handle negative online criticism can be the difference between a small but unfortunate event your company can learn from and 'irreparable damage that your company may never recover from.'

Turn Criticism into a Learning Opportunity - Show the customer (and the world) that you are dedicated to resolving the situation, making amends, and ensure that your followers see that you have learned from this and are taking action to prevent it. It is recommended that you reach out to the upset user immediately. Give the customer a way to contact someone.

For example: *'We apologize for any problems you experienced with our [company/product/service/etc.] Contact us at [supply an email] and we will resolve your issues right away.'*

A response from the person who made the complaint that your company 'went above and beyond' speaks volumes, and warm fuzzies will be had by all.

Use 'DELETE' Wisely - There are occasions where an ill-timed comment by a teenager or a snide remark by an ex-employee can make a little blip on your company's social media page. Using discretion, you may find the best way to handle this it to quietly delete the comment. Be

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What's Boggling Down your Network?



Does it seem like all of your technology is running a little slow at the office? Does it take longer than it should

to copy files over, synchronize your inbox, and open up documents? It might not be your computer, but your entire company network causing slowdown for your entire staff.

Slow computers are annoying, but when it starts to keep you and your entire staff from getting things done during the business day, a slow network can cost you a lot of revenue. Think about what isn't getting done by the end of the day because employees need to sit and wait... and wait... while their computer slowly chugs along at basic everyday tasks. If you think you might be suffering from a bogged down network, there are a lot of culprits to point fingers at:

- **Overtaxed network infrastructure** - This is pretty common if things weren't built right from the start or

if you've done a lot of growing and expanding without much upgrading.

- **Viruses or Malware** - One or more computers on your network could be inundated with malware that is causing a lot of network usage. It's also possible that this malware is being spread around and has infected multiple computers on the network.
- **Spam** - Junk mail doesn't just clog up your inboxes. In order to process all of the junk mail your mail server and network need to work harder. Employing a good spam filter or hosting your email in the cloud will help resolve this.
- **Your Router, Firewall, Server, Etc. is Biting the Dust** - Sometimes a lot of slowness is simply a tell-tale sign that it is time to replace something. It only takes one weak spot on your network to affect the entire system. It might mean it's time to get a new router or toss some more RAM into a server. The best place to start is a

network evaluation which will tell you exactly where your bottleneck is.

- **User Activity** - How much bandwidth are your employees using? Is everybody streaming Internet radio? Consider equipping your office with some background music with satellite or Internet-streamed radio. Are employees abusing bandwidth and torrenting movies or software? Equip your network with a content filter to block unwanted Internet usage while still being able to allow certain users access to the sites they need to go to.

These are just a few common events that could cause your computers and network to become sluggish. Is it time to speed up your network? Contact Directive at 607.433.2200 and ask about our free network audit.



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Slash Power Costs and Boost Performance with SSD



Companies such as Facebook, Google and Amazon are switching to Solid State Drives (or SSDs for short) in a push for greater

performance with reduced operating and hardware costs. Reduced hardware costs? Yes, while Solid State Drives are more expensive than traditional hard drives, they afford certain advantages over the legacy storage hardware.

An SSD can operate at about one watt, and handle around 40,000 reads and writes per second. A traditional Hard

Drive runs at about 180 read/writes a second at about 15 watts. Using SSDs, you will need fewer drives to get the same amount of work done, using a fraction of the power.

Many are still reluctant to switch to Solid State hardware, preferring to wait for the price per drive to go down even further. Still others argue that SSDs have a reduced lifespan compared to traditional hard drives. While this is true, the traditional HDD has lifespan limitations of its own; with moving parts, shock and vibrations can cause the internal components to break or become misaligned, or as time goes on, the drive just takes progressively longer to write data before

they eventually fail. It's more than likely that a solid state drive will last the life of the device it is put in.

The benefits of using SSD technology however cannot be underestimated. Being resistant to physical shock, they are ideal for laptops and mobile devices. Dramatically less energy demand will save you on your utilities bill in the long run. In the case of storage, one of the most advantageous aspects of SSD technology is the lack of moving parts; no moving parts mean fewer things that can fail.



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Handling Criticism and Adversity on Social Media

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warned, however, that having a series of angry posts accusing you of deleting criticisms from consumers and ignoring your problems can easily snowball. It's better to take action quickly, respond, and appreciate the criticism. Deleting a complaint doesn't make it go away.

Tell the Truth - Once there is deception on the part of a company -- or by anyone who represents your organization -- they lose reputation, authority, and credibility with extremely valuable clients and pro-

spects. The best way to avoid this situation is not to get into it in the first place. Don't use 'dummy' Facebook or Twitter accounts to post on your own accounts. This can be a public relations nightmare if revealed. Instead, encourage actual customers that are happy with your work to comment on your page. Real testimonials and peer recommendations go a long way.

The Internet Never Forgets - Do not argue with a customer via social media posts, under any circumstances. Even if

five or more years have passed, odds are that if it was on the internet then someone can find it and bring it up again. The best way to steer clear of something volatile is to communicate with your clients privately, either via e-mail or telephone. If the disagreement was never on social media, then you have less reason to worry about it resurfacing at an extremely in opportune time.



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Ransomware: Computers Held Hostage



As computer technology around us continues to advance, so too does the development of computer viruses, spyware and mal-

ware. The latest digital plague is called Ransomware, malicious software that takes over the hard drive of infected computers until ransom is paid.

When one considers the enormous variety of computer viruses that exist today, it is difficult to decide where to start a discussion of the topic. As of today, there are 768 distinct "families" of malware listed on Symantec's Security Response page, some of whom possess hundreds and thousands of "offspring." In 2010, it was estimated that that five malware samples emerged onto the internet every 30 seconds, with 15-20 Trojans being released every half hour.

As we know from experience, these viruses can cause a variety of serious and not so serious consequences, from needing to use file backups and anti-virus programs to wiping your computer back to factory settings. However, a new kind of virus known as Ransomware has be-

come increasing prevalent, which is all the more concerning given that victims of Ransomware often do not inform the authorities. One of the most prominent recent examples of Ransomware is known as the Reveton virus, and it poses significant risk. Reveton is defined as "drive-by" malware for a very good reason, because unlike many other viruses, downloading or opening files and attachments is not needed for the virus to spread. In fact, merely clicking on an infected site can instantly lead to your computer being locked.

Ransomware functions by encrypting or otherwise blocking access to a computer's hard drive. Once this is accomplished, the malware generates warning messages that resemble those of law enforcement and governmental agencies (FBI, U.S. Justice Department, etc.). These messages usually claim that the computer user has broken some law, which ranges from under-aged viewing of pornography and computer-use negligence to accusations of child pornography present on the system, massive illegal downloading and other serious charges. Some variations of Reveton are even sophisticated enough to remotely access webcams, so that a picture of the computer user will display on the frozen screen along with the warning to lend

credibility. However, the "FBI" is perfectly willing to let these crimes slide, as long as you provide the fine using your personal information and a prepaid money card (which is untraceable). To accomplish this, the malware can ascertain the computer's geographical location from their IP address, then make appropriate payment service suggestions based on that data.

As if all of this wasn't bad enough, the original Reveton malware has been "upgraded" with the incorporation of the Citadel Trojan. While not a new Trojan, due to its versatility and open-source customization, Citadel remains a favored tool in crimeware kits by remaining on the system even after the ransom has been paid.

This provides further opportunities for identity theft and access to personal and financial data by including the capabilities to steal login information, use key-logging programs and employ man-in-the-browser techniques to alter web transactions in real-time. In addition, the malware is smart enough to generate unique pages for each country that Ransomware appears in so that it looks like the correct agency is monitoring you.

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Leave IT to the Professionals

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By having a technician from an IT provider like Directive available to contact in the event of a computer-related problem, all focus can remain on your business, where it belongs. A tech specializes in fixing things like server authorizations, patching the firmware on your firewall software and router, ensuring Windows Updates happen on all of the servers and workstations, troubleshoot Blue Screen of Death errors, or any of the thousands of additional routine IT pain-points that

plague a company each day. The bottom line is: Whenever you spend the day concentrating on fixing your computer, printer or other IT-based problem, you're losing money. Regardless of what kind of business you own, when your computer system is not functioning properly, you are out both time and money.

By contacting a reputable IT firm like Directive, the issue could have been resolved quickly or possibly even avoided. A good IT company understands that downtime

equals a HUGE loss in your company's productivity, revenue, and finances. We want to see our Upstate New York clients succeed and generate revenue and grow.

Next time your company suffers from an IT issue, do the math, and call Directive at 607.433.2200 and we'll take care of your technology issues so you and your staff can keep focusing on your business.



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Live Chat Support is available for all your account, technical support or billing questions or concerns.

To use the service go to www.directive.com and click the Live Chat Support link at the top of the page.

Ransomware: Computers Held Hostage

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Because of the very personal nature of this scam, as well as the potential consequences for crimes like child pornography, Ransomware is only recently coming to the attention of the mainstream. While these viruses are not impossible to remove, many individuals will simply pay the fine rather than risk causing any legal troubles by talking to the authorities themselves.

Other varieties of Ransomware Viruses include fake anti-virus and anti-spyware programs, as well as copyright

protection services who "scan" your computer for copyright protected materials and force you to pay a fine.

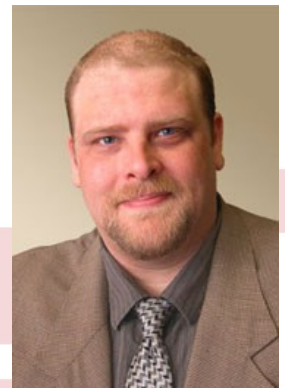
Subsequent investigation has traced the likely source of such malware to the activities of a Russian cybercrimes gang who have been very active over the last few years. Countries that have been affected by this strain of Ransomware include Germany, the U.K., Spain, France, Italy, Belgium and the U.S., which is not to say that these Russian gangsters have refrained from robbing their own people.

However, despite the dire nature of Ransomware, there are several steps that you and your business can take to prevent Ransomware infections. The Internet Crime Complaints Center or IC3 recommends these following steps if you contract Reveton:

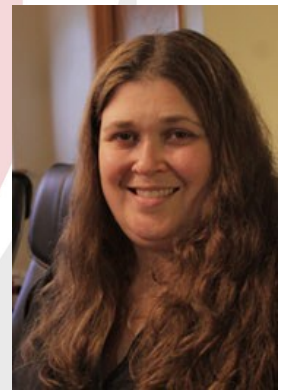
- Do not pay any money or provide any personal information
- Contact a computer professional to remove . . .



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