

# LifeMap<sup>SM</sup>



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

February 24, 2009

## This Week's Message:

**Don't Click Your Way  
Out of a Job.**

**Paths Forward**

**Tired of boring  
meetings??**

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## Don't Click Your Way Out of a Job.

The Computer Industry Almanac reports that in 2006 PC usage was at a billion people worldwide with about a quarter of them in the USA. User comfort with the personal

## Resources

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computer is now almost universal. PCs are in the majority of homes and essential for almost all workplaces from the highest of hi-tech to the mom & pop corner store and local auto junkyard. Our familiarity and ease with the personal computer in general and the Internet in particular can sometimes lull us into forgetting that how we use these incredible tools can sometimes do us as much harm as they can help.

What I know about computer security could fit on a matchbook but even someone with limited technical know-how like me knows that there are a few basic rules:

- Use an Internet firewall.
- Update your computer to use the most recent anti-spyware and anti-virus software.
- Password protect and lock your computer.
- Learn how to safely and securely use wireless Internet.

If you are unsure of what these things mean or how to implement them immediately engage the assistance of someone in your employer's IT department or find a family member or friend to help you. Expect a certain amount of ridicule for your incompetence which is known in the field as TNR (the nerd's revenge).

The suggestions above are about others trying to use the digital world to hurt you. I regret to say that I have encountered many folks who have used their PCs and the Internet to hurt themselves and do great damage to their reputations and to their careers. Once you read my next batch of suggestions for digital survival you'll probably say "Hey, that's just common sense." I hope that's the case but in the event you are committing any of the following computer faux pas now is a chance to protect yourself before you cost yourself a job you can't afford to lose or shoot your career in the foot.

### Paths Forward

• **Whose computer?** Do you use a computer at work? If so you need to learn precisely what your employer's rules, policies and procedures are for using the Internet and for e-mail. If there is not a formal written policy then get someone in authority to send you a memo (that you will read and keep) to indicate that fact and outline what informal rules exist. You may think that because it sits on

*your* desk or *your* lap that it is your computer but it is not; it belongs to your employer as does anything on it. Some employers may opt not to enforce these rules or only enforce them sporadically but are you willing to bet your job that they won't?

• **Games People Play.** I read somewhere that media mogul turned New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg once caught sight of an employee playing computer solitaire and fired him on the spot. Your work computer is a tool to help you perform your job; it is not there to help you entertain yourself. You can argue that you are entitled to relax however you want on a formal break or during lunch. But, again, why risk it? If you need a break get up, walk around, meet a new contact, get some fresh air, go to the break or coffee room and peruse a trade journal or professional publication. I have read of some companies where some employees play strategy games in groups or teams. Unless you work in a gaming company that explicitly directs you to test your or your competitors' products I say stay away. This is the time to look more not less productive, more not less motivated, and more not less engaged.

• **Whose E-mail?** Here's a good rule of thumb for e-mail on a company computer: assume your boss is reading everything you write. At work you have next to no privacy rights or free speech rights and courts of law have consistently sided with employers on these issues. Inappropriate content or speech is something employers need to protect themselves from and will willingly heave you over the side to do so. If you receive something of this nature (unsolicited, of course) send an e-mail instructing the sender that this is your work computer and not to do so again (and keep a copy of that note for your file). If the sender doesn't honor your request you can "bounce" emails from that address in the future or, again, ask an IT person or friend to help you block these job-threatening e-mails.

• **A True CLM!** For those readers who don't know what a CLM is - it is a Career Limiting Move. How do you think your boss would react to the knowledge that you were using his time, his money, his Internet access and his computer to look for a new job? Hmm? Even the best boss is not going to be pleased. Many would think it comprises grounds for termination. But many folks do it and many folks get away with it. My advice is, to paraphrase Dirty Harry, is "Do you feel lucky? Well, do ya?" The least risky thing I can suggest is to e-mail job sites you may stumble onto while at work to

yourself at home and job hunt from there. There is a gray area here regarding salary survey sites and networking sites. Caution suggests that it is safest to access these sites from your home computer.

- **Speak No Evil** Of all the dumb CLMs I've heard of writing and publishing something negative about one's boss or current employer has got to be the dumbest. But people do it and people get fired for it. Writing an intelligent, thoughtful blog (web log) can be a great way to raise your profile with colleagues, contacts and potential employers who may Google you. (More on this in a minute.) Be sure that you get your employer's okay first if you plan on blogging about your profession or your industry. If it's your desire to rant about sports teams, current affairs, politicians or ex-lovers with profane language or scatological references - even on your own time and even from your own computer - know that it will have a negative effect on your career.

- **Clean Up Your SN Profile.** Social networking is a great thing. Web sites such as MySpace, FaceBook, LinkedIn (and dozens of others) build online networks of people who share common interests, participate in common activities or who just want to create a broader network of contacts. SN is creating new ways of gathering information from and sharing information with your network. Some SN sites allow others to post pictures or comments about you. Because prospective employers are increasingly using these sites to gather information about job applicants you should periodically review all sites where you are identified to see if there is any unhelpful information. Should you find anything of this nature contact the site and formally ask to have it removed. Nothing says "*Don't hire me!*" like a pic of you with a beer bong (or worse).

**Life Map** is about wisely using today's technological tools to improve your life and advance your career while being cognizant of the potential risks they bring.

### Tired of boring meetings??

Have Dr. Paul speak at your next off-site meeting or conference. Fast-moving, practical, motivating presentations from an acknowledged leader in the field of career and personal success.

**<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/speakingschedule.html>**

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## Resources

### ***Someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?***

To order the best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. *"Winning Job Interviews: Reduce Interview Anxiety, Outprepare the Other Candidates, Land the Job You Love"* by Dr. Paul Powers, click the link below.

### ***Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?***

Or know someone who is? To order your copy of *"Love Your Job! Loving the Job You Have, Finding a Job You Love"* by Dr. Paul Powers, click the link below.

**<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/booksarticles.html>**

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**Sincerely,**

Dr. Paul

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