

focus @ TECH

Smartphones and HP ProOne 600 business computer in the news

By Art Snyder

The name of the game is connectivity. That's the essence of rink life with year-end holidays and weeks of festivity from October to January. To that end, think smartphones. Yes, rink life and profitability can improve with the connectivity that wireless smartphones now offer. We explore this idea in two segments below. We also have reviews of two business-class devices, a printer from Brother and a computer from Hewlett Packard, that are a fine fit with the skating community.

Smartphones for profits and productivity

This has been the breakout year for smartphones and other mobile technology, and you can turn this news into money-and time-saving advantage as you go about your daily business.

First, there are fewer better ways to stay in touch with your staff — especially the under-45 crowd that uses a smartphone as if it were a natural appendage — than to get and use an iPhone or Android smartphone. When you need to notify your staff about the latest rink news, schedule changes, session changes, closings and the like, just contact everyone right now via your smartphone. Ask someone a question, or be available off-premises when a staffer needs to ask you something. That's the world of 24/7 smartphone productivity.

Beyond the convenience and "now" factor, smartphone use is a great way to stay connected with your public, the young skaters who are the lifeblood of your business achievement and bottom line. That's why you need to set up a Twitter account and start tweeting. Share the real-time excitement of what's happening at your rink. Spread the news about a special New Year's Day session, a Valentine event or other notable draw.

Let the public know about tweet-only 2-for-1 fountain discounts, for example. Tell everyone about the latest inlines in your pro shop, or hot new games, snacks, Pepsi and Coke beverages, and many other items at your rink. When hockey season rolls around, tweet the news near and far. Birthday parties, fundraisers and church and family sessions can get some fresh-news tweets as well.

Remember: One of the basics of business is to stay in touch with your customer. That'll keep 'em coming back, and it'll make excitement and good value synonymous with a visit to your rink. To learn more about tweeting and the host Twitter service and how it can help your rink, visit

the Twitter business page at <https://business.twitter.com/>.

Smartphone wireless networks

With true competition, the consumer wins. That's what life is like from Maine to California these days with wireless telephone networks and smartphone access. Major players like Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile and Sprint continually try to better each other with unlimited minutes, regular phone upgrades and replacements, local and long-distance calling incentives, and Internet s-p-e-e-d (Vroom!), access and options.

For rink operators and all staff members, the right network can spell grand savings, convenience, connectivity and easy

network deal being offered by the major carriers, and a few regional ones, so call, visit or access any in your area to get the best, competitive contract (or no contract!) you can find. Major networks are online at ATT.com, Verizon.com, Sprint.com and T-Mobile.com, and you can visit each to see what types of tailored plans they offer for small businesses. Their incentives to get you and your entire staff aboard can be impressive and compelling. Your rink will be the ultimate winner, and that's to everyone's benefit in today's economy.

Brother HL-2270DW Compact Laser Printer

The world of technology and small business may not be too glamorous, but the Brother HL-2270DW compact laser printer is a genuine hit this year. With ultra-fast

program and save it anywhere on your computer, such as your desktop. Then when you need to locate a document, photo or any other file, click on the SwiftSearch icon to activate the program and simply enter the word or words you want the program to use in its search for you.

It typically and automatically will search your C: drive. Click the Search button and in less than 10 seconds it delivers the file or list of files with your search term. Then click on the listing you want, and it automatically opens in the correct program, like Word or Photoshop. SwiftSearch really helps your staff productivity, and the program is free, no less. Get started with a visit to <http://x.co/2SLcZ>.

HP ProOne 600 G1 All-in-One Business PC

Just what today's rink back office needs with the 2014 budget at hand: A new, compact computer that's made for small business. That's what the HP ProOne 600 G1 All-in-One Business PC is. It features a spacious, energy-saving 21.5-inch LED screen with the CPU trimly integrated into it. The screen is easy to tilt, for any desired level of comfort. A wireless keyboard and mouse complete the picture. No muss, no fuss, no crazy wires all over the desk.

This unit also is enabled for wireless printing, should you have any modern inkjet or laser printer with wireless connectivity. A real bonus: You can get the high-level operating system of your choice: Windows 7 Pro or Windows 8.1 Pro. Both are zippy-fast and highly secure systems that are made for the heavy demands of today's online rink business.

The HP ProOne 600 G1 offers six USB ports for great connectivity, and you can recharge mobile devices like smartphones and tablets via one of these fast-charging ports. Handy and time-saving. For lower operating costs and reduced physical demands, the HP ProOne 600 G1 is ENERGY STAR® qualified. All systems enjoy an industry-leading three-year warranty on parts, labor and onsite service. That's a genuine boon to rink operators and staff who already have their hands full with other duties around the office, on the floor and elsewhere in the rink. For complete information and downloadable data sheets, visit <http://x.co/2SM3S>.

Products mentioned in this column are widely available. Art Snyder is a regular RINKSIDER contributor who specializes in marketing and technology. He lives in Centerville, Ohio. Contact him at ArtSnyder44@cs.com.



A colorful array of new iPhone 5s.

operability, whether users have phones with Apple or Android operating systems. It's a good idea to talk with your staff members about their current smartphone networks and what they think about their contracts (should they be on a contract). Perhaps a staff meeting is in order, to share all the network news from everyone with everyone. Maybe it'll be advantageous for all of you to go with the same network to save money and maybe get a new smartphone in the bargain.

A colorful new iPhone 5c sounds tantalizing! The primary goal, though, is to get everyone connected with each other, for seamless work convenience. This enhances your business, saves money, improves staff morale and lowers staff turnover. To learn more about Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile and Sprint networks — if you want to go with Apple's iPhone — visit <http://x.co/2SOTB> and <http://x.co/2SPB9>. Also check <http://x.co/2SPsN> and <http://x.co/2SQWm> for network comparisons for Android and iPhone operating systems alike.

Finally, each community across the United States seems to have a special

print speed; built-in wireless and Ethernet connectivity, besides convenient hard-wire USB connectivity; and automatic duplex (two-sided) printing, this monochrome laser printer has proven itself ideal for the skating industry. This best-selling printer's trim footprint is a plus when you have tight office space. Print resolution is an impressive 2400-by-600 dpi. The street price is only \$100. Yes, a laser printer that'll make any financial bean-counter happy. And, high-yield, 2,600-page replacement toner cartridges keep operating costs in check. Bravo to Brother! For more, see <http://x.co/1WhwC> and <http://x.co/1Wi4G>.

SwiftSearch

Every once in a while a program comes along that does exactly what you want it to do. Such is the case with SwiftSearch. This tidy little program helps you find any file you need in your Windows computer, and it does so with blazing speed. No indexing or other time-consuming tasks beforehand.

All you have to do is download the