5 Thoughts on Staying Sharp and Relevant

Some thoughts and ideas on learning and thinking for today's IT pros

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Before we start

- Get involved! Audience participation is encouraged and requested.
- If you use Twitter, feel free to tweet about this session (use @UKVMUG or hashtag #UKVMUG)
- I encourage you to take photos or videos of today's session and share them online
- This presentation will be made available online after the event

Agenda

- Two thoughts or ideas about learning
- Three things I think are worth learning
- 2 + 3 = 5

"Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions."

- Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1809-1894

Two thoughts or ideas about learning

- Metacognition: it's useful to think about thinking (specifically with regard to how we learn)
- Rapid pace of change within IT means that we are under constant pressure to learn
- I'd like to share two thoughts or ideas on the learning process
  - First, an approach to assimilating new information
  - Second, some tools for managing information

"An VNI terminated on an NVE may locally associate to one or more VAPs each of which may associated with one or more TESs."

- Taken from IETF document draft-mity-nvo3-use-case-00.txt

“Storage connectivity using Fibre Channel, iSCSI, SVD, and FCoE is supported with VMware vMSC configurations.”

- Taken from VMware vSphere Metro Storage Cluster Case Study

Assimilating new information

- In education, there's a "classical education" approach
- Classical education has three major phases:
  - Grammar: focuses on facts, mechanics, vocabulary
  - Logic: focuses on the reasons behind the facts
  - Rhetoric: focuses on drawing conclusions, presenting information to others
- Classical education is often repetitive, each iteration more in-depth than the previous

Assimilating new information (continued)

- How can we, as IT pros, apply this to our situation?
  - When learning a new product or technology, first define the terminology. (grammar)
  - Once you've learned the vocabulary, then move to a deeper understanding of how it works. (logic)
  - After you understand how it works, find the relationships and connect it to something you already know. (rhetoric)
  - Lather, rinse, repeat!

Managing information

- In 2008, I came across a web page that discussed something called “Q-tools”
- You can find the original article at http://www.davegrayinfo.com/2008/06/04/q-tools/
- These are a set of proposed tools (questions) to help people manage information

Managing information (continued)

- Prism: used to break information down into subgroups
- Razor: used to divide information or for binary sorting
- Generator: used to explore new territory or new ideas
- Peeler: used to drive deeper and deeper into a subject
- Flanker: used for lateral thinking and explore similar ideas
- Splicer: used to build information structures by finding similarities
- Pointer: used to gather information

Managing information (continued)

- How can we, as IT pros, apply these tools to our situation?
  - You're trying to learn a complex new technology with many different parts. (Prism: break it down)
  - You're stuck on a problem and can't seem to make headway. (Flanker: think laterally, or generator: new ideas)
  - You want to gain a better understanding of a particular solution. (Peeler: go deeper)
  - You want to link something you've learned back to existing knowledge. (Splicer: find similarities)

Three things to learn

- Linux
- Automation
  - PowerCLI, vCenter Orchestrator, scripting languages
  - Automation is a lever that multiplies your force
- Configuration management
  - Think Puppet, Chef, or CFEngine
  - Your servers should not be snowflake servers!
  - See http://martinfowler.com/bliki/SnowflakeServer.html

Questions & Answers

Thank you!

Don’t forget to provide feedback and rate this session on the last page of your Program Guide.