



Editor's Note

Welcome to the Spring issue of CVAC's Newsletter!

Isn't Spring one of your most favourite seasons? It certainly is for me. Now that the nights are longer, the kids spend more time outside playing. This gives me more quiet time to sit on the deck overlooking them play and watching them grow up so uniquely. Spring is a time for growth and new possibilities in not just our personal lives but in our business lives as well. Our newsletter (thanks Tammy!) looks and feels like Spring this time around. Change is in the air all around! Happy reading and think Spring! Special thanks to members [Tammy Lorette](#) and [Hilary Feindel](#) for helping us put it all together. Enjoy!



Tawnya Sutherland, CVAC, CIMS
[Mediamage Business Solutions](#)



Founders Note

Exciting Year Ahead!

[Elayne Whitfield, CCVA, MVA, PREVA](#)
[Executive Assistance](#)

[Janice Byer, CCVA, MVA](#)
[Docu-Type Administrative Services](#)



Many of you may have noticed an influx of RFPs that have been coming through recently. We have had some great exposure recently and it doesn't stop there. We are in the works of sending out a press release to over 450 media contacts across Canada in conjunction with Administrative Professionals Day on April 27th. With this there will probably be a whole bunch of new RFPs so if you aren't a full member yet, you may want to consider increasing your membership so you can take advantage of these new opportunities.

Also, we would like to get the word out to more VAs across the country about our organization and perhaps bring in some new members. If you know of ANY VAs who are not members of CVAC, send them to our site to sign up. If they sign up for a Full Membership and indicate that they were referred to us from you, we will take \$5 off your next membership renewal fee.

Our membership continues to climb making us a strong united representation of our industry in Canada. The larger we become, the stronger our voice and the more impact we may have on the growth and popularity of our industry. We are very excited about the upcoming year!!

Janice & Elayne

Administrative Professionals Week

by Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA
Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services
<http://www.docutype.net>

Since 1952, the last full week of April (25-29, 2005) has been designated Administrative Professionals Week (formerly called Secretaries Week) held by the International Association of Administrative Professionals (<http://www.iaap-hq.org/>), with April 27th being the official Administrative Professionals Day.

Traditionally, bosses use this time to show their appreciation to their assistants for all of their hard work throughout the year.

To help bosses along (apart from giving the usual flowers and candy) we contacted several administrative assistants who were more than willing to give us some

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suggestion for bosses to show their appreciation. Each business relationship is different so you may want to talk to your assistant first, but here are some of the ideas that they came up with:

- Take her/him out for a nice, long lunch at a local fine restaurant
- Provide a morning at a local spa
- Give a gift certificate for a dinner for two or an evening at a hotel or resort.
- Arrange for the afternoon off to go shopping and throw in a little spending money
- Provide a long distance calling card
- Arrange for a housekeeper for the day
- Book & pay to have the car tuned up and spring cleaned
- Present a plaque for her/his years of valued work
- Provide a family pass to the movies and plenty of popcorn money
- Arrange to have her/his carpets cleaned or yard prepared for the coming season
- Arrange for groceries to be paid for and delivered
- Find out who is her/his favorite author and buy their latest book
- Offer a three hour lunch.....better yet.....*THE DAY OFF!*
- Outsource some of his/her work to an off-site administrative assistant

Don't forget that this isn't the only time of year you should show your appreciation to your assistant. Ensure that you make them feel valued throughout the year. You'd be amazed at how far a 'thank you' or kind word can go.

Now, if you are an entrepreneur without an assistant, don't let this day go by without patting yourself on the back for handling all of the administrative tasks. Why not outsource some of your work to a Virtual Assistant and give yourself back some personal or revenue generating time.

If you are a Virtual Assistant, feel free to pass on this information in your newsletter or on your website to help inform your clients and readers of this special event.



Janice Byer, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (<http://www.docutype.net>) provides professional, creative and affordable virtual office assistance, small business website design, and website hosting. She is a Certified Canadian Virtual Assistant (CCVA), Master Virtual Assistant (MVA) and co-founder of the Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection (www.CVAC.ca). She is also the author of Surfin' The Net - Docu-Type's Virtual Collection of Links, (<http://www.docutype.net/SurfinTheNet/linksebook.htm>) which is filled with the secrets of her success. Visit her website for more information and to get your copy.

Congratulations on Becoming Members of CVAC



NEW Full Members List

Name	Email Address
May Adshead	emadshead@shaw.ca
Carolina Barroneche	wros@telus.net
Steve Basnett	sbasnett@rogers.com
Sheila Bayer	sheila@officeservices.ca
Laura Cyr	cyber@cyberspaces.ca
Cynthia Duncan	resourceful.va.@sympatico.ca
Kim Fogarty	kimmyfo@hotmail.com
Althea Francis	afrancis@officequest.net
Judy Houghton	judy.positiveoffice@shaw.ca
Caroline Jarzabek	cjarzabek@sympatico.ca
Jolene Kessler	jkessler@klickweb.com
Vicki Kushner	vicki@nhmresearch.com
Nini Larsen	nini@tdcone.com
Lesley Notter	lnotter@rogers.com
Kim Pais	businesslines@sympatico.ca
Frances Palaschuk	info@virtualize-it.ca
Bertram Rajaram	brajaram@sympatico.ca
Sandy Tatarnic	sandy@bwritethere.ca
Pam Watson	info@virtualoaservices.ca
Hope Wishart	wisharts@mts.net
Helene Wolters	wolters@shaw.ca

Partial Members List

Yolanda Wong	Darla Bertling
Kerry Barbieri	Pamela Ivey
Monika Hans	Jennifer Clayton



JOIN CVAC Become a Member

CVAC is by Canadian VAs, for Canadian VAs. Members of CVAC are in a variety of stages of running their Virtual Assistance businesses in Canada. Some have just started, while others have been at it for some time. By being in these different stages, we can share the do's and don'ts of running your business. Veteran VAs have "been there and done that" so they can enlighten others as to what works and what doesn't. New VAs have a fresh perspective and bring new ideas to the group.

Whether you are already established in the VA industry, just opened your virtual business, or are in the research process of setting up your own VA practice and are seeking guidance, CVAC is for you!

Read more about the benefits of joining CVAC at <http://www.cvac.ca/member.php> ❖



Bathing Suit Season is COMING!!!

Here are a few exercises almost anyone can fit into their schedule using any time available and repeating at least three times during the day – right from your office chair.

Neck Extension:

Place hands behind your head with the fingers placed together. Attempt to push your head backward for six seconds (counting one-thousand-one, one thousand two, etc) as you resist with your hands. Resist with head forward, then straight, and all the way back. Stretch your neck as far as you can in all directions.

Squeeze the Desk Together:

Sit at your desk, attempt to compress it by pulling your arms together, resisting for six seconds. This exercise helps to keep the chest muscles strong and the bust firm (for the ladies of course).

Shoulder flexion:

Sit at your desk and raise your arms forward until the backs of your hands are touching the underside of the desk in front of you. Keep your stomach muscles tight and your back straight. Attempt to lift the desk, pushing for six seconds; then relax.

Try some squats:

Stand in front of your office chair with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees as though you're sitting on the chair, keeping your weight on your heels. When your legs are parallel with the seat of the chair, slowly rise to your original standing position.

During a coffee break, try calf raises:

Holding onto your desk or a file cabinet for balance, raise your heels off the floor, then lower. Sitting in your chair or standing, lift and lower your toes while keeping your heels on the ground, or walk around on the heels of your feet.

Burn those buns with a squeeze:

While sitting or standing, squeeze the muscles of your rear end. Hold and then relax.

Do some dips:

With the palms of your hands on your chair and feet on the floor, scoot your rear end off the end of your chair. Bend your elbows, lowering your body, then straighten your arms to return to the starting position.

Be creative. Any movement is better than none, so don't feel like you have to do sprints all day long. Adding short bouts of exercise throughout the day will help you burn more calories and will also reduce stress.

Best Business Opportunities 2005

From [Susan Ward](#)

Here are more of what I think will be the best business opportunities of 2005, for those looking to start or invest in a business:

Rated #6 on the List for 2005 - Virtual Assistants

It's taken a while for businesses to appreciate the concept of virtual work, but most get it now, and the demand for reliable Virtual Assistants will only grow as small businesses start to realize how many different tasks Virtual Assistants are capable of and how Virtual Assistants can be potent, part-time staff.

CVAC LUNCHEONS



JOIN US FOR SOME FUN, FOOD
AND FRIENDS...

NEWMARKET-1ST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY
MONTH

12:00 NOON

THE BUTTERY; 17565 YONGE ST., NEWMARKET, ON
NORTH EAST CORNER OF DAVIS DR. AND YONGE ST.
905-836-0300

ORGANIZED BY LISA MARTYNUIK

BRAMPTON- OCCASIONAL DEPENDING ON ATTENDANCE

12:00 NOON

CASEYS; TRINITY COMMON CENTRE (HWY 410 & BOVAIRD DR)
BRAMPTON 905-799-8464

MEMBERS: ELAYNE WHITFIELD, JANICE BYER, HILARY FEINDEL,
ZIZI VOLFOORD-HULL, AMY EWART AND ORGANIZED ORGANIZED BY
LISA IVALDI

GTA VA BREAKFAST - 3RD SATURDAY EVERY MONTH

10:00AM

PERKINS FAMILY RESTAURANT (HOLIDAY INN)
600 DIXON ROAD (DIXON & MARTIN GROVE) 416-240-9741

ORGANIZED BY LESLY NOTTER

BARRIE LUNCH - 4TH THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

12:00 NOON

KELSEY'S RESTAURANT ON BAYFIELD, BARRIE

DURHAM LUNCH - LAST THURSDAY EVERY MONTH

12:00 NOON

KELSEYS; PICKERING

NORTH OF 401 ON BROCK. IN THE WAL-MART/SAM'S CLUB CENTRE
ON THE EAST SIDE OF BROCK ROAD.

If you would like to be part of these events, please email one of the members from the corresponding event or visit <http://www.cvac.ca/events.php>.

Spam: Not My Idea of a Lunch Meat Anymore - Part 3

By Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA
Docu-Type Administrative & Web Services

In the previous installment in our series on spam, we looked at some ways to help reduce spam in your Inbox. In this part we will look at more ways to help and also what we need to do in the future.

Avoid free email services: Free email services, such as Hotmail or Yahoo, are fabulous to have if you want to access email while not on your main computer. They have most of the same features as hosting email accounts, including spam folders, but there is vulnerability. Having an email address that ends in @hotmail.com is more likely to receive more spam as there are hundreds of thousands of combinations for the prefix of the email that spammers can guess at. There is a higher positive ratio meaning they are more likely to guess a valid email address with so many to choose from.

Encode your email address on your site: There are various ways to try and block email harvesters from grabbing your email address from your website. First, don't actually type the email address in text on your page. Instead, put your name or 'sales department' or whatever you want it to say on your page and include the link to your email address in the coding.

You can also try a couple of approaches to encode your email in the actual coding of your website. First, you can put some JavaScript coding that will help block spammers. It should be noted though that this only works against the infiltration of older or less enhanced harvesting programs. Some of the software has the capabilities to decode the script and display the correct email address.

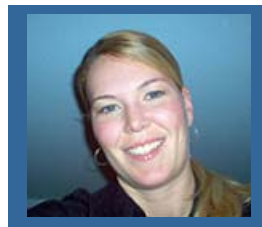
The following is a sample of coding you can use:

```
<script language="JavaScript">
<!--var name = "youremail";
var domain = "yourdomain.com";
document.write('<a href="mailto:' + name + '@' + domain +
'\ ">');
document.write(name + '@' + domain + '</a>'); //-->
</script>
```

You simply replace 'youremail' & 'yourdomain.com' with your specific information. You can also try adding HTML coding directly in the link to disguise it from spammers. The coding replaces one letter before and one letter after the @ sign. The harvesting programs cannot get your full email address and it gets tossed out of the distribution list. Of course, those who write the programs will (if they haven't already) find a way around this trick one day. It doesn't hurt to try it though so give the following a try in your HTML coding:

a a	b b	c c	d d	e e
f f	g g	h h	i i	j j
k k	l l	m m	n n	o o
p p	q q	r r	s s	t t
u u	v v	w w	x x	y y
z z				

For instance, my email address is jbyer@docutype.net. In the 'mailto:' coding in my website, it would read jbyer@docutype.net (I have replaced an e before & after the @ sign with e).



FEATURED CVAC MEMBER Caley Walsh

Assisting 4 U Virtual Assistance was founded in 2003 by Caley Walsh. With her second child on the way she decided to explore options for being closer to her children, rather than working 100kms away. With over 12 years experience in Office Management, Administration and Bookkeeping, she decided that Virtual Assistance was exactly what she was looking for.

Caley has worked in various industry sectors including Telecommunications and Computer Sales & Maintenance. Each of these industries has assisted her in developing strong time-management and organizational skills.

Caley has worked closely with 2 experienced Virtual Assistants who have acted as mentors to her and have helped her through her first year of business. They were able to provide her with insight into the world of Virtual Assistance and taught her the ins and outs of the industry. Caley says, "Without their help, I would have been lost."

Caley doesn't target any specific markets, but offers her services to a wide variety of businesses. She provides a vast array of services some of which include Word Processing, Bookkeeping and Web Design.

"Although there are challenges in starting up your own home-based business, it has been the most rewarding experience of my life."

If you find yourself saying any of the following:

- I don't have enough time to run my business.
- I need a professional web presence.
- We need extra assistance, but we don't want to hire additional staff.
- I need to spend more time at home.

Then you have come to the right place.

Learn more about Assisting 4 U, Virtual Assistance at <http://www.assisting4u.net>



Use designated email addresses: We have our business email addresses which are available online and hopefully will be blocked from harvesters, one way or another. However, try not to use that business address for non-business related reasons. For instance, if during your busy day you enter a contest, have a backup email address to use as your contact address, preferably one that does not use the same domain name as your business email (i.e. @docutype.net). To avoid using the same domain name, you may need to consider getting a free email account.

Turn off “catch all” instructions: As was mentioned earlier, some hosting companies have it set up by default or you can set up ‘catch all’ instructions for your email. What the catch all will do is tell the mail server to send anything that ends with your domain name to your email account, even if you have not actually set up an email alias with that name. Turn this feature off, if possible. It will cut down on the influx of spam mail but you need to be sure that those that you want to hear from have your exact email address.

Don’t agree to “added correspondence”: When filling in email forms, you may see a box that is already filled in asking you if you would like to “receive special offers from our partner sites”. If it says to check the box for yes, it might be best to uncheck the box. Those “partner sites” are more than likely going to be marketing companies that send out mass emails for clients.

If that type of box or question is not on the form (or in the rules, etc.), then look for a Privacy Policy that states that your email address will not be used for anything other than why you are entering it on the form in the first place. If they don’t have a privacy policy, be sure the source that you are sending it to is a trusted source and that the possibilities of them selling their contact list is minimal.

Never click on links in spam: By clicking on a link, you are verifying that to the respondent that your email address is valid. They code the emails to track the results... and you!

You should also avoid buying anything from spam emails. Perhaps by realizing that their mass email campaigns are costing them

more than they are making, spammers will give up and use more ethical forms of marketing their wares like the rest of us.

What does our future hold?

I hate to be the bearer of bad news but it doesn’t look like there will be much that can be done about the problem in the immediate future. Using filters and tricks is simply a Band-Aid solution as it only helps to stop spam from getting through. The real problem that needs to be rectified is the spammers themselves... those that are sending out millions of unsolicited and unwanted emails.

The laws that are in place in some regions have not been all that effective as of yet. Perhaps stiffer penalties for spamming? Who knows?

Task forces will continue to be formed and perhaps one day the right answer, or a combination of answers, will be found. There will probably even be plenty more laws passed. However, I am not holding my breath that there will be any miracle resolutions found but that doesn’t mean I completely give up on the prospect of having less (or no) spam emails in the future.

Government, business and private sectors, and consumers need to work together, take stands against spammers and find the solutions that will empty our Inboxes of unwanted emails.

To read the whole 3-part series, visit <http://www.docutype.net/press.htm>.

Janice Byer, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (<http://www.docutype.net>) provides professional, creative and affordable virtual office assistance, small business website design, and website hosting. She is a Certified Canadian Virtual Assistant (CCVA), Master Virtual Assistant (MVA) and co-founder of the Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection (www.CVAC.ca). She is also the author of Surfin' The Net - Docu-Type's Virtual Collection of Links, (<http://www.docutype.net/SurfinTheNet/linksebook.htm>) which is filled with the secrets of her success. Visit her website for more information and to get your copy.

VA QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME

Q: How do I submit to an email or database using PDF forms online?

A: Convert your InDesign document to a PDF, then add the text fields, radio buttons, drop-down lists and buttons (amongst others) to your form. Consult the Acrobat Professional Help, any one of the Acrobat-related books, websites (such as planetpdf.com) and Adobe’s online tutorials and forums for assistance. In terms of collecting data, there are a number of approaches.

- You can post the form to your website, and include an HTTP submit button on the form. The submit will point to a web script or CGI to collect the data as needed. This works in the same way as an HTML form HTTP submit. Check with your web administrators if you need help with it.

Or, depending on the number and frequency of returns you expect,

- You can include a button on the PDF form with a ‘mailto’ URL. This will return just the data to the email address specified in the button properties. The recipient can then collect the data into a folder and, using Acrobat Professional 7.0, convert all data files into a CSV file for import to databases and spreadsheets. Note, although Acrobat Professional and Standard users can save the data and the form, and therefore fill the form in multiple sessions, Reader users can only fill-and-submit in a single session. ❖

For more on Questions and Answers, Please visit the archives at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CVACconnection>

Spring Cleaning Your PC

by Elayne Whitfield-Parr – [Executive Assistance](#)



Often the most important piece of equipment in our business is our computer yet we neglect it, avoid regular maintenance yet still are surprised when it slows down or stops working altogether.

This Spring let's do a complete clean-up of our PCs.

Temporary Files: How often do you clean out your temporary files? Did you know that the more files that are in this folder the slower your computer boots up and the longer it takes to load certain programs or even to print?

To clean up your temp files go to the Desktop and open My Computer, right-click your C: drive, select Properties, and click the Disk Cleanup button. Make sure the only boxes checked on the Disk Cleanup dialog box are Temporary Files and Recycle Bin, then click OK.

Defragmenting Files: Each time you make changes to a file, the new information usually does not get stored with earlier information from the same file. Over a period of months or years, parts of files become spread around your hard drive in a process called fragmentation. In order to locate the far-flung parts of your files, mechanical heads in the hard drive have to move back and forth between different tracks -- this is very time consuming! In order to reorganize files and correct fragmentation Click on Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmentor. Run this program in the evening because if the disk is really fragmented it might take hours to run this process.

Recycle Bin: Items stored in your recycle bin can take up a lot of room on your hard drive. Each time you delete a file it is stored in your recycle bin rather than being permanently deleted. This can certainly come in hand but you might want to lessen the amount of time that Windows keeps files in the Recycle bin. To do this right-click on the Recycle Bin, select Properties, then change the percentage from 10% to something less. Under Properties, you can also manually empty the bin.

Internet Cache: Each time you visit a Web site, your Web browser captures documents and images from the pages you've viewed and stores them in its cache -- a temporary storage folder. To clean up Internet Explorer's cache and history - From the Start Menu, go to Settings, Control Panel,

Internet Options, and click the Delete Files button in the area titled "Temporary Internet Files." In the same dialog box, you'll see Clear History--just click the button. For a short time your browser will respond sluggishly because it has to save the pages you visit often, but in a few days things will speed up. To reduce your Cache size - Under Tools/Options/Settings in your browser, you can reduce the size of your cache and the number of days that your cache stores records.

File/Folder Clean-up: Over the year(s) you may have saved many files that you no longer need but are taking up disk space. Transfer important computer files you won't need again (like completed projects) to a floppy, a CD-ROM, a Zip disk, or whatever media you prefer, and store in a safe, accessible place. Then free up computer disk space by deleting those files from your hard drive. You should also clean up your email folders which can take up quite a bit of space.

Hardware Clean-up: According to some professionals, as much as 70 percent of all read-and-write errors in a computer may be caused by dust. First let's look at the two things that you use most often -- your keyboard and mouse. Of course you never snack at your desk but still there may be crumbs and dust in your keyboard. First you can just hold it upside down over your wastebasket and shake it to get rid of any debris then most computer supply stores sell products that allow you to direct a stream of compressed air into delicate, hard-to-reach areas of your computer equipment. Your mouse can be taken apart and cleaned with the same stream of compressed air. To clean the drives you can buy a kit at computer supply stores or even Wal-Mart carries them. You simply put cleaning solution onto a disk and push it into a drive, where it rotates and cleans the drive. A build up of dust, smudges and smears on your monitor can cause eye strain. To clean your monitor use non-smearing, antistatic wipes.

So there it is -- you don't have to take a weekend or even a day to do a thorough Spring Clean Up on your computer. Once your computer is running at it's fastest you can use the extra time to get out there and enjoy the Spring weather.

Elayne Whitfield-Parr is the owner of [Executive Assistance](#) providing virtual assistant services as well as full service website design and hosting. Elayne is a Certified Master Virtual Assistant as well as a Bachelor of Arts graduate from the University of Western Ontario where she concentrated in the area of Administrative and Commercial Studies. She is also a co-founder of CVAC. Visit her website to learn more...[Executive Assistance](#).



SEND US YOUR SUGGESTIONS

What would you like to see in upcoming issues of the CVAC newsletter? We are currently looking for articles that you have written and would like to submit. Email us at info@cvac.ca.



CVAC EVENT NOTICE

Please let us know of any CVAC member events that are taking place in your area. We will list you on our event calendar, broadcast the event to the members and post a picture of the event too! CVAC will contribute financially to local networking or trade show events. [Contact us](#) for more information.

Subscribe or Unsubscribe Info:

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<http://www.cvac.ca/newsletter.php>

If you are already a Full or Partial Member of CVAC, you will automatically be added to the newsletter subscriber list so there is no need to fill in the form. ❖