



**ELECTRONIC CORPORATE WORKFLOW**  
 Wow, your company is busy! Lots of moving parts. So what are you doing to make it more efficient, cost effective and user friendly? *We can help.*

## OPERATIONS

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Apartment Toolbox®</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content Management</li> <li>• Policies &amp; Procedures</li> <li>• Business Services</li> <li>• Reporting</li> <li>• Document Storage</li> <li>• Website Management</li> </ul> | <b>Ellipse University<sup>SM</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Tracking</li> <li>• Documentation</li> <li>• <b>Marketing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Branding</li> <li>• Portfolio Management</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <b>Net Mystery Shopper<sup>SM</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leasing Compliance</li> <li>• Reporting</li> <li>• <b>Community Asset Mgmt.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities Management</li> <li>• Service Request Tracking</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <b>Information Technology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network Administration</li> <li>• Application Software</li> <li>• Documentation</li> <li>• Policies &amp; Procedures</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|--|

## LEASING

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Progressive Websites</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Corporate Presence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leasing Center</li> <li>• Community Profile</li> <li>• Contact Center</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Apartment Locators</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Presence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Community Information</li> <li>• Application Center</li> <li>• Resident Screening</li> <li>• Lead Tracking</li> <li>• Streaming Video</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Online Presence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILS(s)</li> <li>• CraigsList</li> <li>• Social Networking               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MySpace™</li> <li>• Facebook™</li> <li>• YouTube™</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Corporate Branding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisement</li> <li>• Exposure</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>SnaptShot<sup>SM</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live Availability</li> <li>• Pricing</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|---|

## COMMUNICATIONS

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Resident Relations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident Portal</li> <li>• Ellipse Service Advisor<sup>SM</sup></li> <li>• Relate 24/7<sup>SM</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Telecom Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice Over IP</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Corporate Relations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branding</li> <li>• Client Acquisitions</li> <li>• Press Releases</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Client Relations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client Reporting Center</li> <li>• Documents</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employee Relations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Documents</li> <li>• Forms</li> <li>• Policies &amp; Procedures</li> <li>• Employment Application</li> <li>• Employee Screening</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Call Center Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call Routing</li> <li>• After Hours Service</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Internet Telecom</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click to Chat</li> <li>• Click to Call</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|---|

## EXECUTIVE

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Financial Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Mgmt. Software</li> <li>• General Ledger</li> <li>• Payment Processing</li> <li>• Portfolio Reporting               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends</li> <li>• Projections</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Human Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies &amp; Procedures</li> <li>• Documents</li> <li>• Relate 24/7<sup>SM</sup></li> <li>• <b>Strategic Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forecasting</li> <li>• Analytics</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acquisitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Analysis</li> <li>• Client Planning</li> <li>• Development</li> <li>• Community Assets</li> <li>• Intellectual Property</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Yield Management</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning &amp; Entitlements</li> <li>• Market Research</li> <li>• Construction Mgmt.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Legal Center</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document Storage</li> <li>• Tracking</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|---|

Ellipse Group  
 14800 Quorum Drive, Suite 420  
 Dallas, TX 75254  
 888.678.3869 Toll Free  
 www.ellipseinc.com



# TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



## Ellipse SYMPHONY<sup>SM</sup>

It will make you want to dance...



### Inside this Issue:

- Making a Difference in People's Lives  
Lee O'Conner
- IT Town Square  
Russ Sandlin
- The High Price For Social Networking  
Lisa Benson
- Target Marketing to Your Target Market  
Page McDonald
- Bringing Your Technology Together  
Page McDonald



# Making a Difference in People's Lives

by Lee O'Conner

Get a Quote

Ellipse Communications, Inc. is a self-funded company founded by Lisa Benson and myself with many goals in mind, and a few simple objectives. We would make decisions for the betterment of our clients, we would change lives, and we would have fun along the way. Ellipse has grown so much over the past three years that we made the "2008 Inc. 5000 Fastest Growing Companies in America" list published by Inc. magazine. Ellipse is ranked number 1,768 in the nation, and is in the top 60 in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. What I write about today is not the growth of Ellipse, but rather what I think our growth can be attributed to and what we have accomplished in such a short amount of time.

Continuing growth is important, but without employee development and corporate knowledge, impossible. Each year Lisa and I choose a book for the entire company to read which focuses on better business practices. After the reading assignment is completed, we hold company meetings and team building sessions that coincide with the book's message. Over the last six years, Ellipse employees have read several books, for a complete list, please see The Ellipse Library to the right. Currently employees are reading *BOOM!, Seven Choices for Blowing the Doors Off Business as Usual* by Kevin and Jackie Freiberg.

Although many of the books are about working in a business environment from the corporate perspective, *BOOM!* focuses on the individual. There are

seven choices in the book that, if practiced, will lead to a much more focused and productive work environment. On Friday mornings,



Ellipse holds a company meeting to discuss the *BOOM!* choice of the week. Our employees gather in the conference room while the executive team delivers a special message that compliments the reading selection for that week.

One question posed to readers is, "What level of service do you live and work in?" During our service discussion, I spoke about how Lisa and I started the company wanting to change the lives of the people we meet. To aid in our goal we often hire people with passion rather than work experience. Our success rate at hiring the right employees is substantial in this regard. There are employees who came, learned and moved on to different opportunities, and there are some who continue to contribute on a daily basis.

Due to our company's growth and the passion displayed by our talented and creative team members, we are able to serve other organizations in their endeavors

to change the world. From our support of Project Pet in South Carolina to our efforts with the Triple Gem Society, a world wide Buddhist humanitarian organization, almost every Ellipse employee has a hand in the projects we want to do for others. The Ellipse team supports many organizations, but recently our hearts and lives were changed forever with the loss of an employee and we rallied to support a different type of organization.

On June 19, 2008 our employee, colleague and friend, Steve Swan was murdered along with Matthew Butler, the only child of Theresa Butler, Executive Assistant to our Vice President of Operations at Ellipse. Everyone at Ellipse felt the immediate loss. We banded together to immortalize Steve and Matt and to make a donation to the National Center for Victims of Crime ([www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)). Our presence at NAA was a solemn one as vendors and attendees alike showed their support by donating to this valued, unfortunately needed organization. With their help, Ellipse was able to contribute \$9,000.00 to the organization in honor of Steve and Matt.

We are asked constantly how we keep growing with all that we do. The answer is simple, the Energy of Service! We create positive energy by our willingness to let go of what we have and give what we have received. We strive for our employees to educate themselves, push their talents, take risks and enjoy the rewards. We play, have fun and push ourselves to be better employers; to really live up to what we wanted to do when we started Ellipse. Our growth as a company comes from giving our time, talents and tithes to all those who our lives effect. In doing so our clients are successful, our employees are flourishing, and Lisa and I are grateful for all the experience and opportunities.

Thank you for nine great years! *Lee*

## Choose Your Corporate Website Administration

### I want Ellipse Symphony<sup>SM</sup>!

Ellipse Symphony<sup>SM</sup> is the most advanced suite of technology tools available to the property management industry today. Designed to help you maximize your marketing, leasing, resident retention and managing opportunities successfully, Ellipse Symphony<sup>SM</sup> sets the standard for others to follow.

### Apartment Toolbox<sup>®</sup> Gold

Our Apartment Toolbox<sup>®</sup> Gold provides pre-determined navigational centers for business applications under a hierarchy of administrative controls with password and function protection. This cost-effective solution is specifically developed for management organizations supporting a portfolio of 5,000 to 15,000 units.

### Apartment Toolbox<sup>®</sup> Platinum

Large property management organizations supporting a portfolio of over 25,000 active units or higher will find this dynamic product impressive. Modular in design, this suite consists of a comprehensive set of services that provide timely, relevant property and communications data to all members within the company's hierarchy.

## Choose Your Executive Tools

- Satisfaction Survey Center
- SuiteMate<sup>SM</sup>
- Occupancy Layout
- EllipseNet<sup>SM</sup>
- Ellipse Service Advisor<sup>SM</sup>
- SnapShot<sup>SM</sup>
- Relate 24/7<sup>SM</sup>
- Net Mystery Shopper<sup>SM</sup>
- Portfolio Report

Fax This Form To:

**972-479-9115**

or Shop Online at

**[www.ellipseinc.com](http://www.ellipseinc.com)**

\*Many of the Ellipse products are on a subscription based service and remain the property or intellectual property of Ellipse Communications, Inc.

## Tell Us About You

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

## Choose Your Website Presence

Ellipse Group, Inc. can work to create an integrated corporate and community Website marketing campaigns, encompassing advanced Website services for marketing efforts. Custom designs, graphics and Adobe Flash<sup>®</sup> technology elements will complete these sophisticated presences.

- Better Than Competitive<sup>SM</sup> Website
  - Basic Website
  - Enhanced Website
  - Advanced Website
  - Corporate Website
  - Corporate Leasing Center Website
  - Golf Trip Option
- Don't know what you want? Let's talk about it on the course.

## Choose Your Website Plug-ins

visit [www.ellipseinc.com](http://www.ellipseinc.com) for a complete description of each item.

- Logo Design
- Marketing Support
- Floorplan Redraws
- Virtual Move-Ins<sup>SM</sup>
- Calendar/Newsletter
- Bulletin Board
- Job Posting Board
- Resident Portal
- Meet the Staff Profiles
- Secured On-line Application
- Site Map
- Pick-A-Floor/Sitemap
- Tell-A-Friend Postcard
- "Flash" Introduction
- Virtual Guest Card<sup>SM</sup>
- Resident Links with Image Control
- Welcome Text Editor
- Resident Referral Center
- Photo Upload
- Resident Links Center
- Specials Coupon Control
- Click to Call
- Click to Chat



## Target Marketing to Your Target Market

by Page McDonald

Of course it is impossible to generalize an entire generation, but basic demographic information is extremely necessary if you want to market toward a target audience. Marketing is a difficult art. The ability to pinpoint your target audience and use their generalizations to help your marketing strategy is very important for any would-be marketer.

Generation Y consists of people born between the years 1977 and 1994. They are the generation of e-commerce and Britney Spears. A complex, extremely diverse group, those born in Generation Y exist to consume. They are materialistic, but not so much that they don't pay special attention and respond to particular advertising strategies. Generation Y is probably one of the most difficult groups to both categorize and market toward. They are second only to their parents, the baby

boomers, in terms of diversification in their buying tendencies. Members of Generation Y are called "echo boomers" by marketers



for two reasons, they are the children of the baby boomers, and they often mimic their parent generation's buying tendencies.

Echo boomers are a cynical group. They are politically savvy and opinionated, but their opinions are extremely diversified.

As a whole, they accept race differences and diversity more easily than any other demographic generation before them. Because they grew up in the age of information, they are unlikely to purchase anything if they are confused or still have unanswered questions. Computers and the internet evolved during their youth, and they are avid digital fans.

Remember that the buying tendencies of the typical echo boomer are very computer-oriented. Anything digital makes your product or company more appealing. If you don't already have a website, develop one very soon. E-commerce is invaluable to Generation Y. Echo boomers are generally very trusting of online credit card transactions (often falling victim to credit card fraud or identity theft) and would prefer an email address to a phone number. ☺

## Ellipse Library

Corporate Development and Growth



*Showing Your True Colors*, M. Miscisin  
*Fish!*, S. Lundin  
*Inside the Tornado*, G. Moore

*Small Giants*, B. Burlingham  
*Boom!*, K. & J. Freiberg  
*Selling is Dead*, M. Miller

*Strategic Selling*, R. Miller & E. Heiman  
*Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, P. Lencioni  
*Six Sigma for Everyone*, G. Eckes

## Bringing Your Technology Together

by Page McDonald

From answering e-mail on your cell phone to downloading music straight from your car stereo, integration technology is everywhere and the Multifamily industry is no exception to this trend. Everyday renters are becoming more and more tech savvy and requiring more online activity. Communities everywhere are striving to provide integrated solutions for online leasing and web based amenities.

Of course technology integration has always been important but the world currently offers unprecedented technological possibilities. New advances in online forms management, web based leasing

information and payment processing have created a multitude of opportunities. To deploy new technology effectively, possibilities for integration must be carefully selected to fit within an increasingly complex and uncertain application context. Some hesitation is to be expected as new technology often experiences turbulent environments in its early stages, which is why finding an integration company with knowledge and skill is important.



Ellipse offers EllipseNet<sup>SM</sup> as a simple solution for integration of your online providers without having to settle for an underdeveloped "umbrella strategy". Smart companies are choosing to retain different providers who specialize in a specific area which can often make cross integration difficult, but with EllipseNet<sup>SM</sup> these companies are able to interface on one data platform. Although some online providers are offering integration they require use of only their applications, which limits choice and makes competitive pricing obsolete. In order to truly integrate, all of your systems must work together on a single interface, creating synergy between each of your chosen providers. While integration is still a new trend, the possibilities are limitless for the Multifamily industry. ☺

## IT Town Square

by Russ Sandlin

Introducing *IT Town Square*, an online forum and seminar program beginning spring 2009, coming to a city near you. The seminar tour is being presented in twelve cities over the Spring/Fall and likely coming to a city near you. The seminar content will focus on our leasing, maintenance and executive/management teams with an interesting twist to the



old applied product driven training programs. This series will be leadership oriented with applied uses of transactional and transformational management in conjunction with IT systems. Simplified, transactional management emphasizes revenue goals and expectations for an organization, and transformational management focuses on employee adoption

of those concepts. A leasing bonus program attached to quarterly budget expectations at a community is transactional; a training program that empowers your leasing team to improve corporate outreach in an effort to obtain those goals is transformational. Using our automated guest card follow up services via Relate 24/7<sup>SM</sup>, tracking your "prospect to resident" close ratios and providing community occupancy values to your executive teams all require IT services. Interestingly enough, leadership skills are necessary to successfully engage all those moving parts.

The online component of IT Town Square is specifically designed to offer multifamily professionals an electronic meeting place to sort out technology questions and concerns faced in today's market. Russ Sandlin, an industry speaking professional, leads this safe haven for both technical and non-technical professionals to meet, discuss and better understand the technology choices

available today and in the future. IT Town Square is more than a website; it's a resource for real time answers about technology designed by multifamily professionals. Content posted to the site will be from guests and experts who understand our industry and how it is impacted by technology. The site will also feature articles, news stories and white papers that meet professional requirements, but are easily understood by everyone in the industry. It will also offer regular surveys and polls of individuals working in our sector to help better understand trends.

We live in the information age and it is important to interpret these trends to determine the best ROI for your technology dollar investments. We are sponsoring this tour; because Ellipse appreciates our technical complexities, and our own ability to facilitate in making them less dramatic and more successful. [www.ittownsquare.com](http://www.ittownsquare.com). ☺

# The High Price for Social Networking

by Lisa Benson

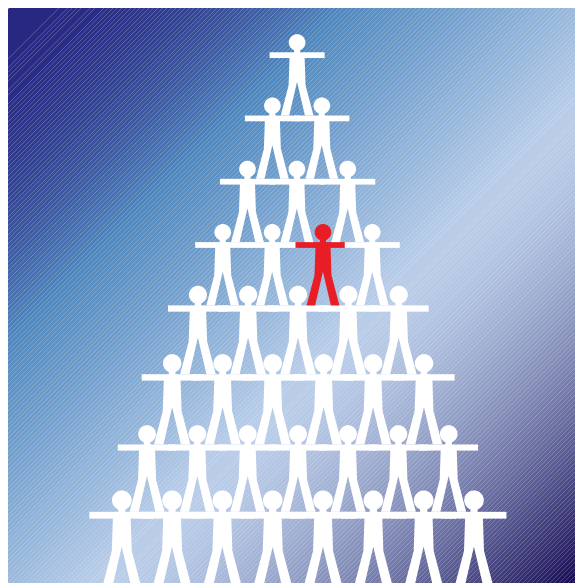
## Decisions to engage any form of new technology or technological practice requires forethought.

Speaking at a recent multifamily education conference on Internet social networking or Web 2.0 social networks; a professional speaker begins the topic by reviewing Ning, the fastest growing social networking system developed by Marc Andresen, Netscape Founder. The presenter introduces this new concept, while providing ways for marketing attendees to create a social network at their communities. Leasing Agent, Suzie, goes home and signs up for a free program, believing she is doing some great marketing efforts. A European hacker crawls the Ning directory, finds the community network site and places a post. Unfortunately, the post includes a hidden link to a BOT/Worm site network based in Eastern Europe, though it looks completely benign to the visitor's read as it is simply a reference site for further information to the topic being reviewed.

Now Suzie, responsible for the site content review approval, displays and reads the post, clicks on the link to the site page for confirmation, reviews the associated post while unwittingly downloading the embedded BOT/Worm onto her leasing desktop. Thinking nothing of it, she continues on her day hopping in and out of her browser, visiting Internet based business applications such as her property management software, resident screening console, banking site, personal checking account, email address and such. All while the Worm does key stroke recording of each site/user name/password and content. Yes, these visits are being captured by the functional BOT code and it will all soon be

relayed to the appropriate database for future exploitation.

All this occurs before the community management/corporate executive/network engineer/leasing agent and, soon legal and public relations team have any idea how on earth their residents' "perceived" private information is being distributed. This is not a dooms day scenario, but what will shortly become an unfortunate reality in the multifamily industry if we don't apply caution as we move into this virtual social environment. Pausing for just a moment to realize our communities are businesses and not social organizations requires managerial responsibility in protecting our financial interests, as well as the benefit of our residents. Decisions to engage any form of new technology or technological practice requires forethought, insight and validation from a user handling and security perspective prior to proceeding. The best part is that it does not require a technical degree, but instead practical vision and effective management to prohibit negative future consequences.



When engaging social networking at your community, there are some simple rules to protect everyone involved.

1. Keep virus protection updated and running on your computer at all times.
2. Keep your system patched against known vulnerabilities. Microsoft releases a new security patch on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. It is advised that your computer technician sets your system to update automatically.
3. Don't download software or applications "designed to enhance" your networking site, as there are plenty of free guides that will help you accomplish the same task.
4. When using a web browser like Internet Explorer you can change the settings so that default active scripting is not allowed. Create a Trusted Sites Security Zone, for sites you feel are safe which require active scripting.
5. Read the user license for the networking site prior to subscribing. Look for a policy in which the site protects against cross site scripting (XSS). Cross site scripting is where a hacker inserts malicious code into an unprotected consumer profile.
6. Make sure your account is secure, and keep passwords private. Use a password that uses letters, numbers, or special characters.
7. The Internet is a public resource. Anyone with an Internet connection has access to it, therefore, it is recommended you post only information you are comfortable sharing with the public.
8. Assess which photos to post. Make sure you include photos acceptable for anyone on the Internet, while reflecting a positive image of your community.
9. Limit your "friends" to those you verify. Never add anonymous invites, because you maybe exposing your identity to potential abusers. And, limit conversations to professionally viewed standards.

Still interested in social networks and how they apply to the industry? Social networking provides a free means of easily interacting with numerous residents and future residents. Emily Moore-Pleasant, Director of Strategic and Internet Marketing for Steven D. Bell says that her company, "...successfully capitalizes on the benefits of online social networking for providing superior customer service, creating buzz, leasing apartments, and even collecting on delinquent rents." She continues by pointing out that, "...most of the marketing in the apartment industry is stale, boring, repetitive, and does not connect directly with the prospect on an emotional level that feels real." Maximizing on this success, Emily says

that all Steven D. Bell properties are now "fully integrated within the major online social networking communities."

In terms of marketing, there aren't many other free platforms that touch so many consumers in such an engaging way. Keep in mind these profiles/pages do a great job of generating interest, but the presence of an individual website which allows the prospect to complete the application process is the key to leasing your community. A great suggestion for your community success would include training and success management through traditional communications already in place, without putting assets at risk. This would include updating your website to include dynamic homepage

text, updatable photos gallery, active unit availability, automated outbound targeted email campaigns, and a resident financial register. Imagine a community with a resident calendar that supplied more than the customary "your rent is late" detail? How about public relations efforts, such as a community garage sale followed up with an online feature in the community website? Resident links are hot and community sponsored neighborhood business's coupons or discounts will be enjoyed. Your existing website or an embedded resident portal to engage your future or current residents will deliver many rewards without the frequent socially unnerving content that comes with the major social networking sites. ☺

Reprinted with permission from *Multihousing Professional Magazine*, Jul. / Aug. issue.

## Adobe® Reader® Breached

Adobe® Reader® has become the number one choice for secure, downloadable document handling, right? Oops, we used the word secure... A security breach was recently discovered in this program for inserting computer language allowing "certain specially crafted PDF files embedded with malicious Java Script content could allow attackers to gain access to vulnerable systems and assume the privileges of a user running Acrobat Reader version 8.1.2." ([www.net-security.org](http://www.net-security.org)). Or, a simplified version of the above technical description, "your computer turns into a zombie, commanded by someone besides you". There is also the risk for exposing secured data to a third party, but less likely. Since many of us rely on Adobe® Reader® for daily file viewing this threat should be addressed immediately. Ellipse recommends upgrading to version 9, available on the Adobe® website. One more thing, don't download files or software from a non-trusted source.

# POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

## Wi-Fi Security

Wi-Fi, once considered a luxury, but no longer; today it is expected to be available by consumers, residents and home owners alike. But really, how secure is wireless? Wireless has different levels of enabled security, and it is a sound idea to become familiar each version. Because when it comes down to it, convenience is not worth minimizing your systems and data.

1. WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy). To be blunt, this is basically the equivalent of having a "No Trespassing" sign, without a fence. Not nearly enough protection.
2. WPA (WiFi Protected Access) Definitely better, but academic researchers are beginning to see the first cracks in this shield.
3. WPA2 (2nd Generation WiFi Protected Access) Worth the investment to upgrade your wireless system, as this protocol provides the strongest un-breached protection available today. We recommend contacting your IT Administrator or Internet Service Provider to find out if this option is available to you, and how to implement.