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Computers in business – past to future

1960's: Only NASA has computers;

1970's: 'EDP Department'; big, expensive and unreliable computers in 'special rooms' driven by 'special people';

1980's: Smaller computers, terminals for accounting 'users'; reports structured and inflexible; Visicalc, the first spreadsheet; out-of-balance ledgers, one-sided journal entries; parallel runs; green and orange screens; DOS!

1990's: Everyone gets a terminal or 'PC' on the 'network', from goods inwards, sales and dispatch to the CEO (some just for show); more paper; word processing and spreadsheets; typing pools dry up; factory computers (PLC's); better understanding of your business; EDP Department dissolves and its people migrate to programming firms to write software which is about to become obsolete...;

Y2K: Everything is thrown out and replaced...just in case;

2000's: Internet; globalisation; knowledge explosion; open communication; instant email (first good, then not so good); mobility; customer databases; better understanding of your customer; Connectivity: everything digital and connects to computers– TV's, phones, copiers, cameras;

GST: Small business adopts computers; steep learning curves and big headaches for some; accountants thinking about retiring in the next 5 years retire now instead;

Now: Shortage of accountants; commoditisation of hardware; information becomes a strategic asset; database and info management; data security; direct marketing capabilities; connectivity leads to convergence of technologies; instant everything... with everyone;

Coming Up: Expect massive increases in productivity; Greater mobility and information access – anything you need to know anywhere you are; on your watch, in your car, on your television or mobile phone; Computers currently hold information – next they will have knowledge and think for you; able to decide on the importance of a call/interruption and whether you should take it;

So, fasten your seatbelts, check your email, phone messages, share prices, business KPI's, news headlines and watch a movie all on your voice controlled virtual reality headset while you are travelling through space at Mach 8 aboard the 8.00am scramjet **for a morning meeting with a new supplier in.....China**

National Marketing Office

ask@supertrac.com T 1800 700 111 F 1800 700 222

PO Box 5403, Maroochydore Q 4558

Supertrac Pty Ltd - ABN 19 080 853 694 - AFSL 340753

SUPERTRAC.COM

BRISBANE | SYDNEY | MELBOURNE