

Talking Technology

Helping to inventory lost contents

By Steve Burns, Capital News contributor

If you are one of the 234 residents of Kelowna who has lost your home I am sure that this is a very trying and busy time.

From dealing with the range of emotions associated with your loss, to finding rental accommodations for your family, to setting up the children for the start of the school year, to dealing with your insurance claim, these past few weeks have no doubt been very hard for you.



Perhaps the information in this column will be helpful.

I was talking with a client of mine who has lost his home in our recent fire.

It is difficult to know what to say to be helpful when life's circumstance has someone completely stressed out.

He was telling me that he did not have enough time to get their most valuable possessions out of the house and certainly does not have an accurate and complete list of his household contents.

I am sure that he, like most of us, was not as prepared as he would like to have been in the event of a disaster like this fire.

There are worries on every turn, such as: Did I have enough insurance on the house, contents and other items?

What if I have no idea what I paid for my contents?

What if I don't have a list of contents and can't "prove" what I did have in my house?

After the conversation with my client, I had an idea about a company in Kelowna called Assured Software Limited (www.assuredsoft-ware.com) that provides software to restoration contractors.

Their Property Content Inventory (POI) software allows a restoration contractor to access a full house template containing 350 of the most commonly found household items and provides average replacement cost pricing information for many items. That can be really useful in determining the value of the content loss in a fire, flood or other disaster.

I recently spoke with Mike Turner, the president and chief executive officer of Assured. His team was already working on ideas for making their software available to homeowners that have lost their home in the Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park fire.

Although they normally deal with restoration contractors and insurance adjusters, they thought that it would be helpful to the homeowner and to the insurance adjusters to provide their software directly to homeowners free of charge for those people who lost their home.

All they need to do is to contact Lisa at 861-7001 and tell her that you have lost your home in the fire and would like to pick up the software package at their offices at 1890 Ethel St.

Please be patient as they expect to have many calls and it may take some time to prepare the software for you.

As the software is designed for fairly complex total and partial content loss situations and is normally operated by experienced restoration contractors that have been provided training on how to use the software, the Assured team is considering the possibility of providing training sessions to homeowners that need a little help in operating the software.

Please contact the company for further information.

For those of us that were fortunate enough to not lose our homes, we certainly now have a heightened interest in ensuring that we are adequately insured and that we have an up-to-date listing of our household contents.

When I talked to Mike Turner about this, he mentioned that if there is sufficient demand, that his company would consider making available to the general public a version of their pre-loss inventory software.

Several changes would be required to scale down the software's standard functionality that most homeowners do not require, such as barcode scanning, videos, etc.

The price would likely be under \$100, a portion of which would be donated to the Okanagan Fire Relief Fund, and is expected to take several months to develop.

If you are interested in this software, please contact the company directly to indicate your interest.

Turner sums up: "Assured Software wants to help to ease the pain of our fellow Kelowna residents that have experienced such an incredible loss. If our software can assist them in any small way to get on with their lives, we are very happy to help make that happen."

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