Security Update

Like it or not, human beings are our own worst enemies online, inviting hackers, viruses, data breaches, data loss, etc., through the seemingly innocent actions taken every day online. In most cases, this is done without malicious intent – but if you as a manager or owner aren't monitoring what websites your employees are visiting, what files they're sending and receiving, and even what they're posting in company e-mail, you could be opening yourself up to a world of hurt.

There are 2 things you can do to protect your business. Make sure you have an Acceptable Use Policy in place and signed by each employee and secondly, make sure your employees are getting security training.

May 2023

This monthly publication provided courtesy of Tom Crossley President of Fairoaks IT

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and security issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"

- Tom Crossley

Get More Done In Less Time
Tech Tips To Improve Productivity And Focus

Technology has become essential to our society. We use it for nearly every aspect of our lives, from entertainment to personal security. Unfortunately, it's not all good, and over time, many of us have developed some negative tech habits. When we're supposed to work or stay productive, we might turn to our phones or tablets and scroll through social media or the news. There's no better time than the present to shake these harmful habits so we can become more productive. The good news is that technology can actually help improve our overall productivity.

The pandemic forced many of us to start working remotely or in a hybrid environment, which makes it even more important for us to use technology to stay focused and productive. Technology does not have to be a distraction: it can help us stay on task and achieve our goals. Below, you'll find a few ways to use technology to improve productivity.

Cleaning Up Your digital Space

For many of us, our workdays revolve around our electronic devices. We spend nearly eight hours each day bouncing from our computers to our cell phones, trying to stay in touch with everyone while keeping up with our workload. Over time, our digital areas can become cluttered with unnecessary documents, e-mails and other information.

Take time to review and reorganize your computer's desktop, smartphone's home screen, e-mail inbox and cloud storage accounts. Delete any unnecessary files, e-mails and apps you no longer need. By doing this, you'll have an easier time navigating through your digital space and locating necessary documents when they're needed.

Using Time-Tracking And Focus Apps

Time can easily slip away from us if we're not paying close attention. We've all gotten lost in a project or task and spent way too much time on it. One of the best ways to stay focused and productive is to track your time. Many apps are available that help you do this, including

Toggl, RescueTime and Harvest. These apps allow you to track how much time you spend on specific tasks and can help you identify where you might be wasting time. By tracking your time, you can make adjustments to your schedule and ensure you're making the most of your hours.

Focus apps like Freedom, Cold Turkey and Self Control can also help you stay productive, as they'll ensure you aren't wasting your time on social media or other websites that take you away from your work. These apps allow you to block access to certain websites or apps for a specified amount of time. In fact, using a focus app is one of the best ways to remove distractions from your workday.

Automating When Possible
Automation has truly revolutionized the way many businesses operate. You can use automation for e-mail communication, marketing efforts, data collection and so much more. Introducing automation to your business can help streamline repetitive, time-consuming tasks that previously had to be done manually. By automating various processes and

> **"Technology does not have to be a distraction: it can help us stay on task and achieve our goals."**

functions, you'll free up more time for your employees to focus on higher-level tasks and improve their productivity. Automated systems are also less prone to errors than human beings, so you won't have to spend as much time going back through your work to fix simple mistakes. Automation improves productivity by reducing the time, effort and resources needed to complete a task, while providing valuable data insights.

Strengthening Your Cyber Security Practices
A successful cyber-attack can completely dismantle your business. It can take days, weeks or even months to recover from a cyber-attack, which can put an end to your hopes of improving productivity. Cyberbreaches, such as malware infections or ransomware attacks, can cause significant downtime for any business. Employees may be unable to access necessary files or systems, leading to delays in work and missed deadlines. Just the risk of a cyber-attack can take you away from your work, as you may constantly worry about the security of your systems or the safety of personal data. When it comes to improving cyber security practices, you must be proactive. Don't wait until a cyber-attack has already occurred; start boosting your cyber security practices as soon as possible.

Improving focus and productivity is not something that happens on its own. It takes time, effort and dedication to make a change that has an impact on your work style. Stop using technology as a distraction and find ways to use it to improve productivity and focus.

The Definitive Guide To Understanding And Implementing CMMC

Here's Some Of What You'll Learn In This Book:

🟢 The #1 risk that is affecting millions of small businesses today, that if left ignored, could result in lost business opportunities, fines, and even jail time.

🟢 9 CMMC key practices every small and medium-sized business (SMB) must have in place if they want to bid, win, or take any part in an extremely lucrative government contract market.

🟢 THE CAUSE OF OVER 90% OF ALL BREACHES and the critical six-step process that helps you successfully weave CMMC compliance into your culture to help protect your company from it.

........And so much more!

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OneNote's Critical Security Update: Protecting Your Business From Malware

File attachments are one of the most common ways that computer malware spreads. As a result, Microsoft recently announced a critical security update for its note-taking app, OneNote.

The update aims to protect users from malware on OneNote. Up to 120 file extensions will be blocked.

Microsoft seeks to align OneNote's security measures with its other apps. For example, in the past, Microsoft rolled out similar updates in Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. This update will be released between late April 2023 and May 2023.

Allowed Access Despite Warnings
Microsoft blocked file extensions due to growing concerns about OneNote's vulnerability.

Before this update, OneNote would warn users about the risks of opening unsafe files. But users still have access.

But the new update will no longer allow users to open files with dangerous extensions. Instead, OneNote now offers the same level of protection as Microsoft's other applications.

The list of file extensions is available for viewing at Microsoft's support site.

If you need to send files with these extensions, instead of emailing these file types, use OneDrive and send a link.
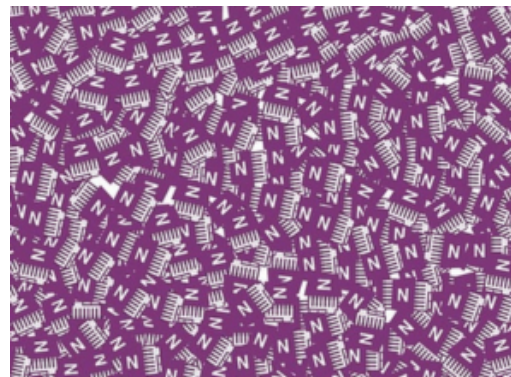
What This Means for Business Owners
This update is a vital step in safeguarding businesses from cyber threats. Companies rely on OneNote for organizing and sharing information. Blocking dangerous file extensions in OneNote enhances data security for businesses.

This update will help business owners protect their operations from malicious attacks.

Actionable Steps to Protect Your Business
Business owners must stay informed about software updates. Here are steps to help protect your business:

1. Regularly update your Microsoft 365 applications to ensure you have the latest security features.

2. Train employees to be cautious when opening files or clicking links, even from trusted sources.

3. Adopt strict security policies and practices to protect your organization's data.

4. Consider investing in a reputable security software suite to check and defend against cyber threats.

A Safer Space for Online Work
Microsoft's update to OneNote helps create a safer space for you and your business. In addition, the new security measure offers protection on par with other Microsoft apps by blocking harmful file extensions. As a user, it's essential to understand how important this update is for keeping your company's critical information secure.

Keep your software updated and follow best practices to protect your business even more. It's also essential to follow strong security guidelines and procedures. Doing so helps ensure the safety of your data and safeguard your operations and customers from potential threats.

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Fairoaks IT Tech Heroes

"Chad offered OUTSTANDING SUPPORT! Another great Fairoaks experience! Bill Shannon"
May 9, 2023

"Excellent support John. Thank you again for your support."
May 9, 2023

"Steve was incredible. He had above and beyond patience with Intuit. As usual Fairoaks comes through again."
May 5, 2023

"Very prompt and professional service."
May 15, 2023

"JB was great! He was very knowledgable and helped fix the problem quickly!"
May 9, 2023

Tom Recommends: AI - What Is It And Why Should I Care?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) describes systems programmed to think and respond like humans. In fact, we asked the AI solution ChatGPT that very question and got this response.

What is Artificial Intelligence?

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think and learn like humans. It involves the development of algorithms and computer programs that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as recognizing speech, understanding natural language, making decisions, and playing games. There are several types of AI, including rule-based AI, expert systems, and machine learning.

What makes AI so powerful is it can simulate the intelligence and reasoning capability of the human mind, but it can analyze exponentially far more information than any human and do it exponentially faster.

The concept of AI is not new. Originally covered in science fiction novels, AI is something that has been in development for decades. The reason you are hearing so much about it now is that for the first time, anyone has the opportunity to interact with and see the true functionality of AI.

ChatGPT, an online-powered AI chat bot, is one of the first publicly available solutions that is able to respond like a real human, passing something called the Turing Test. This test determines a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behavior by having a real human interact with the machine through a text-based chat channel. If the human could not tell whether they were interacting with a machine or person, the machine is said to have passed the test. AI solutions today are the first publicly available that do just that.

However, online conversations are just the beginning of what AI can do. There are now AI solutions that can create a video of a person teaching a class in any language, analyze health records and quickly determine who most likely has cancer, create news articles or essays on the topic of your choice, generate images for children's books, or create code for new computer programs. While AI is not necessarily something to be feared, there are some dangers of which to be aware.

Dangers Of Artificial Intelligence

Recreating You:

AI solutions can take a recording of a person's voice – your voice and then use it to create real-time audio that sounds just like you, saying whatever it wants to impersonate you. So, a cyber attacker could record a phone voice message that sounds like you, tricking your coworkers, your bank, or a family member into thinking you called and asked them to take an action. AI can also do this with pictures or video. Sometimes called Deep Fakes, an AI solution can take an existing picture or video of you and use it to recreate entirely new pictures or videos (including your voice) appearing to show you doing things that you never did.

Wrong Answers:

As for the data or answers AI provides, the solutions can be wrong. AI often uses public information from the Internet, and its answers can be influenced by the biases of its developers. While typical search engines are designed to provide you the "best" or most correct answer to your queries, solutions like AI may be designed to give you the most human-like answer. Which is better depends on what you are attempting to achieve.

Not All Equal:

With AI becoming the latest hot technology, there are literally hundreds of startup companies now offering different AI services. Many of these want your information or credit card for a trial. Be careful - not all AI services are trustworthy. Do your research before signing up and using an AI service.

Your Privacy:

Whenever using or interacting with an AI system, such as when chatting online with ChatGPT, be aware that any information you enter into the system can not only be processed by it but also retained and used to give answers to others. This means if you enter any personal information about yourself or any confidential information from work, that information will be stored and potentially shared with or sold to others. Do not share or enter any information that you consider private.

The Future of AI

Artificial Intelligence is still very much in its infancy, similar to where the Internet was twenty to thirty years ago. While we can expect rapid evolution and adoption of AI, it's very difficult to predict what its impact will be. Just be aware that these capabilities are out there, and when using AI, be very careful what information you enter and share.

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Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Apple AirTag

Losing an important item can be distressing, and Apple is trying to ensure its users will never lose anything again with the Apple AirTag. Apple's AirTag is a small, compact tracking device that allows users to locate their misplaced items effortlessly.

With its sleek and minimalist design, it easily attaches to any item and connects to the Find My app on your Apple devices. The AirTag uses Bluetooth technology to provide precise location information, and it even has a built-in speaker that emits a sound when you're trying to locate your lost item. The AirTag only works with Apple devices and requires the latest operating system to function correctly.

Overall, the Apple AirTag is a useful tool for anyone looking to keep track of their personal belongings.

Why Smart People Make Dumb Career Moves

I love helping people land their dream jobs, but even smart people can make dumb career moves. They do this for two reasons: not having a career strategy and not putting enough time into the job search. For those unfamiliar with the idea of a career strategy, it's a written document that states what your career wishes are, the three paths you are considering and the actions you'll take to make this a reality. And for those wondering how much time is needed to find their dream job, I believe a half day per week for six months will give you a 90% chance of landing whatever position you wish.

Does this sound far-fetched? Perhaps at first it could, but let me give you some examples. I recently spoke with a few business leaders about their job search and how it was coming along. I think you may benefit from hearing their stories.

I first talked with the CEO of a fashion designer brand who felt ready for his next gig but seemed unsure about which direction to take. He did not have a career strategy and spent virtually no time hunting for his dream job. We discussed the positives and negatives of various paths until he settled on his No. 1 path of "finding a mid-size private company to own, run and grow" in a specific industry niche. The more specific his career strategy became – and the clearer the criteria for what he was looking for – the easier it became for us to think of key people he should meet. We identified 20 people to contact, and he committed to contacting them within a couple of months. The more specific you can be in searching for your dream job, the easier it is to generate more opportunities.

Another leader I had a chance to talk with was a senior executive who ran a government agency. She knew her job would end after an election and she needed to find something new, but she had no career strategy because she put absolutely no time into her job search. She said she felt guilty doing a job search while in her current position. She eventually had a job opportunity fall into her lap, but she didn't feel too excited about it. After I talked with her, she decided against it and instead chose to devote more time to searching for the perfect role and creating a career strategy.

The challenge of finding your dream job is to do the hard work to make a career strategy, then invest a half day per week for six months. Once you do, you will put yourself in a leadership role in which you can amplify your positive impact on the world, be successful and have fun in this next stage of your career.

Dr. Geoff Smart is the chairman and founder of ghSMART, a leadership consulting firm that exists to help leaders amplify their positive impact on the world. Dr. Smart and his firm have published multiple New York Times bestsellers. He stays active in his community and has advised many government officials.

Do you know anyone we can help?

We *LOVE* our clients and we want more like you! If you know of any business owners that could benefit from one or more of our services, we would appreciate an introduction. I promise we will treat them with kid gloves! Or You can just drop us an introduction email : Sales@FairoaksIT.com

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You Manage Your Business.
We'll Manage the Technology Behind It.

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Inside This Issue:

■ Conquering Your To-Do List: 2 Reasons You're Not Making Progress

Have you ever gone to work and felt like you couldn't get anything accomplished ? It's a problem that regularly plagues business leaders. You have a list of projects you need to complete, but the end of the day arrives before you can even make a dent. It can be difficult to pinpoint exactly what's preventing you from accomplishing your tasks, but some common culprits exist. Here, you'll find a few reasons why you can't get anything done at work and how to overcome them.

Out Of Sync Work-Life Balance

Working too much is bound to come back and haunt you. It might give you a substantial head start, but over time, you'll find difficulty focusing, and you may even experience the symptoms of burnout. Stop before it's too late and ensure you're giving yourself enough time to enjoy other aspects of your life.

Too Much On Your Plate

Many business leaders have a hard time passing off tasks to other employees, but it's imperative that you delegate less important projects to other employees. It's hard to maintain focus when you have too many things to do. Allow your team to take control of certain tasks so you can focus on what's most important.

■ How To Exceed Customer Expectations And Create Loyal Fans

Strong customer service is at the core of every successful business. There may be times when it feels like you can't please every customer or meet every expectation, but there are things you can do to create a better chance to wow your customers. Perform these strategies well enough, and you may create lifelong, loyal customers.

Personalizing The Experience

Don't treat every customer the same. Build and develop a relationship through your interactions.

Having Fun With Your Work

Customers do not want to be helped by someone who acts as if they hate their job. Try to have fun while you work, as it will create a more enjoyable experience for your customers and co-workers.

Under Promising And Overdelivering

Many businesses promise their customers the world but fail to live up to expectations. Promise what you know you can do. Anything extra will appear as a pleasant surprise to your customers.

"The computer's acting funny."

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