



Gulfcoast Networking Newsletter

Your IT Management Experts

February 2020

Hello! We're pleased to send you this monthly issue of the Gulfcoast Networking Newsletter. It's our way of saying that you're important to us and we truly value your business. Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to friends and colleagues. Enjoy!

MONTHLY QUOTES:

"Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared."

Buddha

"A mediocre idea that generates enthusiasm will go further than a great idea that inspires no one."

Mary Kay Ash

"Let us act on what we have, since we have not what we wish."

John Henry Newman

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. How to Leverage Technology to Increase Employee Productivity
2. The Hidden Corners of Google Maps
3. News Bytes
4. Question of the Month
5. Save the Trees and Cut Your Costs when Printing
6. APP OF THE MONTH: EFAX

How to Leverage Technology to Increase Employee Productivity

If you're managing employees, tracking their productivity is vital. In recent years much new technology has come to market that helps in this essential monitoring. The ability to monitor and so increase employee productivity can make a massive difference to a company. Below are some of the things you can use to boost productivity.

Internet Site Blockers: We all know how easy it is to be distracted by the Internet, spending time on Facebook, etc. when we should be working. Many different tools are available to prevent employees spending your time on their social media etc. It's quite simple to block access to the sites that waste time at no benefit to the company. Imagine a company with 50 workers, each of whom spends half an hour day checking their Facebook, Instagram, etc. while at work: over a year that's over 6000 worker hours lost, or \$120,000 – equivalent to wages of three fulltime workers!

Production Trackers: Companies that have workers on the factory floor can now take advantage of wearable technology that can return important production monitoring metrics such as steps walked in a day, number of units produced, time spent on the premises, etc. Research has demonstrated that employees who know they are being monitored are, on average, more productive than those who are not.

Software to Block Mobile Apps: A number of providers now offer software that can block selected mobile apps on a company's network. Most employees' work these days involves using a mobile device at least some of the time; with these apps you can make sure that when they are using their devices it is for company work, not their own entertainment. Additionally, blocking selected apps can improve your network security.

Inactivity Trackers: These are somewhat controversial with employees and unions, so should be introduced sensitively, but we all know that guy who spends his whole day wandering around the office chatting instead of getting his work done, distracting others from their work at the same time. Trackers can monitor how long a particular workstation is inactive, and so encourage workers to stay at their desks and deal with their tasks.

Create a Company Culture: It's no good assuming that your company is so great to work for that people will be motivated no matter what. Good companies create a culture that not only encourages hard work but makes employees feel valued as well as motivated to work hard.

The Hidden Corners of Google Maps

Google Maps has been around as long as the Internet, or at least it feels that way. So many new features have been added since the basic product was launched that it's pretty likely that you're missing out on functions that could enhance your user experience, make your journeys smoother, and improve your vacations.

Below are a few features that you might not know about.

Location sharing: Plenty of times when you're on vacation your group will want to split up and do different things. If you're using Google Maps to navigate, you can all make sure that you don't lose track of each other. All you have to do is open the menu in Google Maps (the three-line icon at the top of the search bar), select "Location sharing", and choose which contacts will be able to see where you are on Google Maps on their device.

Sharing ETA: When you're traveling to meet someone, it can be difficult to keep them up-to-date with your expected arrival time, especially if you're driving. If you planned your trip on Google Maps, all you have to do is swipe up from the bottom of the app to open your trip menu, select "Share trip

progress" and choose those contacts you want to see your progress; they will be automatically updated as to your ETA.

Make your own maps: You can save a lot of fiddling about when you're on the move by creating your own map before you set out. On a computer, go to the Google Website, and go to Your places > Maps > See all your maps > Create a new map. Now you can search out all the hotels, restaurants, museums, etc. you want to visit and add them to your map. When you're on the move, open the Google Maps app then "Your places" and "Maps", open the map you've made and you can easily navigate to all the locations you previously selected.

Book a table: You can now make restaurant reservations without having to navigate away from Google Maps: search for a restaurant by its name or by tapping on the "Explore" tab you can be shown all the restaurants in your vicinity. Tapping on a restaurant will call up the facility to make a reservation.

News Bytes

Vulnerable Explorer: Microsoft has released a warning that its Internet Explorer app has a zero-day vulnerability that could be used for targeted attacks. This vulnerability is present in every supported version of Windows for those using Explorer to browse the web. Attackers who gain access to systems using the vulnerability could install new software, view data, or even create their own account on the system. Worryingly, there is no security patch available from Microsoft at present, although its website does offer suggestions for protecting against attack. Users should be particularly careful about following unknown links from websites or emails that could contain booby-traps to exploit the vulnerability. The most recent versions of Windows have Edge as their default browser, but Internet Explorer is still installed; if you have Edge, it may be best to use that or another browser instead of Internet Explorer until this vulnerability is fixed.

Data Thieves Captured: The FBI has announced that it has shut down a website that was selling personal data obtained through data breaches for prices as low as \$2 for 24 hours' access to billions of records. The WeLeakInfo.com website held searchable data obtained illegally through more than 10,000 data breaches; the data included names, emails, user names, telephone numbers, and account passwords. These could be used by anyone subscribing to the site to commit identity theft, harvest even more personal details, etc. The FBI worked with UK, German, and Dutch law enforcement to shut down the site and two suspects have been arrested on suspicion of running it.

If you are worried that your login details may have been compromised by data breaches, you can check using the Chrome and Firefox browsers, and other services, and make changes as necessary.



Question of the Month

Question: *What's the best way to protect my privacy on a public WiFi network?*

Answer:

We're all used to being able to access Wi-Fi wherever we go these days, but how often do we actually consider the security of the handy coffee shop, airport terminal, etc. hotspots that we're using? When you are using public Wi-Fi, there are numerous security risks that you need to be aware of. Hackers can use public hotspots to harvest your passwords, hijack your Internet session and gain control of cookies that allow them to pretend that they are you on other websites, or they can even set up "honeypots" that trick you into thinking you are using legitimate Wi-Fi while you are in fact sending them all your private information.

The first thing to do when using public Wi-Fi is to make sure you are on a genuine service. If you're not sure, ask an employee of the business or institution you are in for the correct details.

Make sure that your connection is secure: always look for the HTTPS acronym at the beginning of a web address, and type addresses in yourself instead of clicking on links in emails or on websites. This means the traffic between yourself and the website will be encrypted. Using a VPN will encrypt all your data and offers excellent protection against hackers, although this does cost money and can interfere with the use of certain services such as Netflix.

Two-factor authentication, which is offered by most big players in the Internet nowadays, is a curse for hackers, because even if they obtain your password, they can't get the secondary code needed to access services. If it's offered, use it. Finally, make sure that you don't make it easy for hackers by having filesharing activated on your computer when you're connected to public Wi-Fi (you might be using it to share files with your family or colleagues, fine at home or in the office but not in public). In Windows you can find sharing in the Network and Internet settings (Network and Sharing Center for Windows 7); for Macs sharing can be found in System Preferences.

Save the Trees and Cut Your Costs when Printing

Paper and printing costs are a major expenditure for many businesses: it has been suggested that the average office worker uses 10,000 sheets of paper per annum, and 70% of that ends up being thrown away.

The costs are monumental; Citigroup carried out research that showed that if every employee saved a single sheet of paper a week by using double-sided copying, the company could save \$700,000 a year! Below are some tips to cut down the damage unnecessary paper use and printing does to the environment and your balance sheet.

Cut down on your printing: It seems obvious, but lots of printing is unnecessary. Many people make multiple copies for meetings and presentations when they could simply send the information online. Online documents are preferable for sharing annotations and notes as well. A simple sign by your printers asking employees to think about how many copies they really need can work wonders. Modern printers often have the facility to monitor how much printing is done by each employee, and research has shown that those who know they are being monitored will be more careful about waste.

Join the digital revolution: Across the USA, companies spend a staggering \$120 billion a year printing out forms that are usually thrown away in favor of an updated form within three months. Furthermore, it is estimated that every employee

wastes up to \$700-worth of work time each year searching for forms, etc. in filing cabinets. It is easy to create and update electronic forms on your computer system, saving paper, printing costs, and employee time.

Adjust your settings: If you must use hard copies, there are a number of simple steps you can take to reduce paper waste and printing costs. Set your printers and copiers to automatically print in black and white and double-sided, so that workers have to make a positive decision to use more expensive settings. Set narrow margins in your Word documents, which can save a surprising number of pages over a long document. Similarly, significant savings can be made by making the company default font size 10 instead of 12. You can even save (a little) printer ink by using sans serif fonts like Arial instead of serif ones like Times New Roman.

Recycle: Recycling doesn't just mean separating your paper from your other trash for the municipality to recycle (although you should do that, of course): make sure employees have made the most out of their paper before it goes into the recycling. If anything is printed single-sided, or uses only half of the sheet of paper, when it's ready for the trash, use the spare white space for notes, lists, and reminders before you throw it away instead of starting everything on a pristine new sheet.

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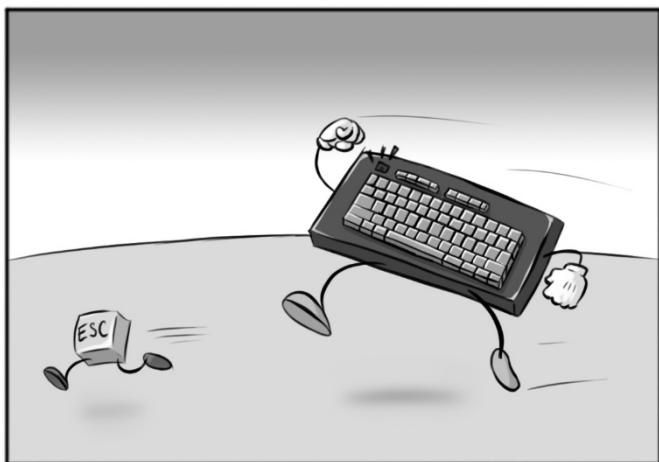
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A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER TO INFORM AND ENTERTAIN OUR CLIENTS

FEBRUARY 2020

APP OF THE MONTH: EFAx

You might have thought the fax is dead, but it's still used for many special purposes, e.g. legal documents. eFax allows you to create PDF files that can be faxed directly to a machine. Documents can be pulled from DropBox, OneDrive, iCloud, and other storage services and sent as faxes; you can add notes or an electronic signature before sending. You can also receive communications from fax machines with the app and view them on your device. The app is available on a 30-day free trial, after which you can send up to 150 pages a month for \$16.95, with extra pages costing \$0.10 per page. Larger plans are available if you need them. This app works on both iOS and Android.



The Final "Escape"

Gulfcoast Networking, Inc

FROM THE DESK OF:

Rob Marlowe

If you don't have a managed-service agreement in place, please let us know and we'll conduct a needs analysis and provide you with a proposal free of charge!

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OFFER OF THE MONTH

Try Cloudcare AV for 30 days FREE! Go to <https://Gulfcoastnetworking.com/special/> for details.