



Gulfcoast Networking Newsletter

Your IT Professionals

April 2021

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:

"The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool."

William Shakespeare

"For every minute you are angry you lose sixty seconds of happiness."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"If you can't explain it to a six year old, you don't understand it yourself."

Albert Einstein

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. Avoid Getting Caught by Spear-Phishing
2. Cloud Computing Cost Savings
3. News Bytes
4. Question of the Month
5. How to Turbocharge Your Excel Data Entry
6. APP OF THE MONTH: MICROSOFT LAUNCHER

Avoid Getting Caught by Spear-Phishing

Many people will have heard of phishing attacks online, attempts to persuade people to hand over personal details, account passwords etc., but they may not be as aware of spear-phishing, even though it actually makes up 91% of all successful Internet attacks.

The difference between the two is that phishing is a very general form of attack, trying to trick users into handing over information with broad-based tactics. Spear-phishing, on the other hand, uses personal details to specifically target a victim: criminals will use personal details such as the name of the victim's employer, their hobbies, the names of their friends, etc, to give the victim more confidence that the email they are receiving is legitimate, and so to make them more likely to follow instructions or click on links that it contains.

Spear-phishing has become increasingly sophisticated, to the extent that now it is very hard to identify this type of attack unless the victim is properly aware of the way in which these attacks work. The perpetrators will harvest as much personal information as they can from social media, e.g. friends lists, and then leverage this to gain the information they desire.

Fortunately, spear-phishing can be relatively easily combated by following a few simple rules, as follows:

- Be careful about what you post on the Internet and think about the amount of personal information an attacker can access. Try to limit the levels of personal information you share and configure your privacy settings to make it more difficult for them.
- Don't use the same password for more than one account. This is really basic Internet security: using securely generated passwords is one of the best ways of protecting yourself.
- Always install the latest software updates which will have the best chance of defeating new forms of attack.
- Avoid email links: don't automatically click on links in emails, think about who the email is from and where it is taking you. If you hover over a link, you can see the address and can check that it is going to a legitimate website.
- Use common sense: if you get an email from a friend asking you for a password, don't reply directly, check back with that friend via a known and trusted email address to see if it was really them asking.
- Make sure you have proper malware protection at both home and work, ensuring that your system will identify and quash spear-phishing attacks even if you don't.

Cloud Computing Cost Savings

Cloud computing is now firmly established as the number one choice for many companies, large and small, to run their computer operations. There are numerous reasons for this, including better security, less likelihood of data loss, and faster operations, but one of the main attractions will always be the cost savings that cloud computing can make.

For those unfamiliar with the concept, cloud computing involves using IT resources that are based on the Internet: all company data can be stored in the cloud, and all necessary applications, e.g. spreadsheet software, email, websites etc, are accessed from any authorised location or device.

Here are the main ways in which switching cloud computing could save you and your business money:

Big reductions in set up costs: because cloud computing is generally done on a subscription, pay-as-you-go basis, it makes setting up an IT operation remarkably inexpensive. You don't have to pay for expensive hardware, storage capacity, software packages or maintenance contracts.

Best use of hardware: everything you need for your operations will be stored in the cloud, which can be accessed

from any mobile device, laptop, home computer etc. You don't need to worry about keeping and maintaining servers, continually upgrading hardware, etc: as long as you have an Internet connection, you've got access to everything you need.

Energy consumption: IT infrastructure uses a massive amount of electricity, particularly if you have to keep servers running round the clock. Cloud computing companies make enormous economies of scale, and this benefit you as you will pay far lower prices for running your system than you would if you kept it in house.

No need for an IT team: with everything taken care of in the cloud, you won't need an in-house IT team to manage your operations, saving on salaries, office space, benefits, training and more.

No unnecessary duplicated hardware: if you run your IT systems in house, you essentially have to pay for two of everything to make sure that you have backup in the event of a systems failure or disastrous occurrence such as a fire or flood. This obviously runs into money. If all your information is stored in the cloud, whatever happens to your physical premises you can keep your business running with a minimum of fuss.

News Bytes

Android Malware

A new Android malware threat has been identified that can mine an infected device and transmit sensitive information to its controllers. This new threat comes disguised as a system update, telling users to download it from a third-party store. Once it's downloaded, it follows the instructions of a command-and-control server that's capable of spying on virtually every feature of an Android device, including recording phone calls, taking pictures, stealing images, sending data location information, stealing address books, viewing browsing history, etc. Worryingly, WhatsApp, the most popular messaging application, is vulnerable to database theft using this app. Once the app has found its way onto a device, it can be very difficult to identify, as it hides its icon and only steals thumbnails when a user is using mobile data, so they are not tipped off by the increased bandwidth use; once the user is connected to Wi-Fi, the app sends out the full information.

Obviously, the best way to combat this malicious app is never to download it in the first place. Users should never download apps from third-party sources; going through Google Play Store adds an order of magnitude of security, and Google have confirmed that this malware was never available for download on their store.

Bank Robbery

Flagstar Bank, which has headquarters in Michigan and is in the top 75 largest US banks list, has had to admit that cyber criminals from the Clop ransomware gang successfully infiltrated its infrastructure and stole the private details of staff and customers. The criminals soon up the ante to make the bank pay the ransom by publishing details of staff addresses and contacting customers to inform them that they were in possession of personal information. Many customers have expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the way the bank has handled matters, particularly customers who left the bank some time ago but whose details we are still being held. The bank has attempted to apologise by offering all affected customers two years of free credit monitoring and identity protection services, although whether customers will want to trust the bank with the information required to set these up considering what has happened remains to be seen. In the meantime, the bank has warned customers to doublecheck any communication which allegedly comes from the bank, as it may in fact come from the criminals; customers may also benefit from closely monitoring their accounts to check unusual activity and to report it immediately it occurs.



Question of the Month

Question: *How can I get deleted stories or posts on Instagram back?*

Answer:

You might delete an Instagram story or post for lots of reasons, or you might just do it by accident, and then decide that actually you want it back. Fortunately, Instagram has recognised that human beings change their mind, and anything you delete goes into a trash folder from which you can retrieve anything you need.

The first step is to click on your profile picture icon, at the bottom right-hand corner of the opening screen in the Instagram app. This will take you to your profile page, where you should go to the three-line button in the top right-hand corner and select Settings > Account > Recently Deleted.

This will show you everything that you deleted over the last 30 days, and any stories you deleted in the last 24 hours. All you have to do is tap on the content you want to restore, and you'll be given the option either to delete it permanently or return it to your profile (if you restore a story that you shared in the last 24 hours, it will appear in your story line again).

You also have the option to move posts to the archive folder where they will not be seen on your profile, but you will be able to visit them. Don't forget that any content you delete and don't either restore or archive will be permanently deleted from your trash folder after 30 days.

How to Turbocharge Your Excel Data Entry

You can't beat using Excel when you've got serious quantities of calculations to handle, but we all know how boring and time-consuming it can be to get all the data you need into your spreadsheets. Fortunately, there are a couple of ways that you can try to shortcut your way into saving time and effort.

It's often necessary when creating a spreadsheet to separate combined data into different cells, for example if you have a list of names you will often need to have first names and last names in separate cells for data handling purposes. Rather than retype them all, try using Flash Fill to achieve your aims.

This is how you do it:

- Enable Flash Fill by clicking on File and selecting Options
- In the Options dialogue box, select Advanced from the list down the left-hand side
- Tick the check box marked Automatically Flash Fill and click OK.
- Start inputting your list of first names
- Once you've put in three or four names, select those names and drag the selection box down to the bottom right; if all works as it should, Excel will recognise what you're trying to do and populate the rest of your list.

Bear in mind that Flash Fill isn't perfect by any means, but it frequently does work and could save you an awful lot of time, so it's well worth a try.

Another potential timesaver is the Auto Fill feature. This can identify when you are trying to create a data list that has a specific pattern to it, and it can take over a lot of the spadework.

Imagine, for example, that you want to create a list of cells containing the numbers 1 to 10. Simply enter 1 into your first cell, press enter, select the cell and hover your mouse over the bottom right corner until your cursor turns into a +. Then simply drag down 10 rows and let go. If all goes according to plan, you'll have your numbered list. However, sometimes Excel doesn't quite get it right and you might end up with 10 boxes all filled with the number 1. If this happens, simply go to the bottom right corner of the selection again and click the Auto Fill Options button and select Fill Series.

If you've got a more complicated pattern of data, e.g. increasing in increments of 0.75, just give Excel a little more information by entering 0.75 in the first cell, 1.50 in the next, 2.25 in the next, and then dragging down.

Auto Fill can handle other data formats as well, such as dates, so, for example, if you need a weekly list, fill in the first few dates, e.g. October 11, October 18, October 25, and drag down, Excel will continue the series.

Your Newsletter

Gulfcoast Networking, Inc.

6335 Grand Blvd

New Port Richey, FL 34652

727-847-2424

rob@gulfcoastnetworking.com

<https://gulfcoastnetworking.com>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER TO INFORM AND ENTERTAIN OUR CLIENTS

APRIL 2021

APP OF THE MONTH: MICROSOFT LAUNCHER

Microsoft has recently released a new Microsoft Launcher for Android, with a new design and extra features for its home screen manager. Amongst the improvements are the ability to get personalised news focusing on your areas of interest, new landscape mode to give a choice of orientations, customised icons, new wallpapers, a new dark theme to alleviate eyestrain in low light situations, and better performance with lower memory use and better battery efficiency.



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!

Email: rob@gulfcoastnetworking.com

Phone: 727-847-2424 ext 103