



Gulfcoast Networking Newsletter

Your IT Management Experts

May 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:

"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence."

Vince Lombardi

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

Aesop

"Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."

Warren Buffett

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Five Windows 10 Built-in Security Features

With integrity and security being the watchwords for the computer industry for many years, Windows 10 naturally came with an impressive array of integral security features. Windows Defender, its proprietary antivirus system, is recognized as being as good as, if not better than, many expensive standalone programs. However, there are a number of other security tools that are less well-known and that you might not have turned on for your computer: below we describe five of the best.

Scanning Options: Windows Defender carries out automatic scans for malware. It is also possible to run a more detailed scan either as part of your regular security practices or if you have a particular concern. This can be accessed by clicking on the Windows Defender shield icon on the taskbar, selecting Virus & threat protection, and choosing Full scan in the Scan options menu.

Parental Controls: In Windows Security, by going to Family options > View family settings you can open a website that allows you to set up parental controls for your children. Note that these only work when children are signed in to your PC or Xbox with a Microsoft email account. The controls allow you to limit screen times, filter content, and block or control access to any apps or games you choose. You can also provide children with an allowance for app and game purchases, and if they use a laptop you can locate it geographically when they're away.

System Restore: System Restore isn't so much a security device as a way of protecting yourself after a security breach. If your system has become infected by malware, it's possible to restore it to a previous point in time with all your settings and programs as they were at that point, i.e., uninfected. By searching for system restore in the desktop search bar, it's simple to find the options that allow Windows to take a snapshot of your system at that point for future reference. Bear in mind this won't help you to recover any lost documents etc., you should be already carrying out regular backups for that.

Memory Integrity: This feature (which can be turned on by going to Windows Security > Device Security > Core Isolation > Core isolation details and turning on "Memory Integrity") isolates a section of memory that runs key Windows processes and makes it harder for malware to attack.

Dynamic Lock: This can be accessed via Settings > Devices > Add Bluetooth or other device. Once activated, Windows will lock your computer any time your phone gets a certain distance from it, meaning you never have to worry about forgetting to secure your computer before walking away.

Backing Up / Restoring Windows

It's very rare that a computer user hasn't at some point experienced the trauma of losing documents, files, and other valuable data to a crash, malware or other catastrophe. There is only one sure way to avoid this, and that is always to back up your data regularly and save it elsewhere. Below we detail the ways in which you can make sure your data is always fully protected.

Firstly, use File History. This is an integral tool in Windows that permits you to recover any accidentally-deleted files. To use this feature, you'll need a network location, substantial flash drive, or external hard drive; you can then instruct Windows to save items from all the locations you choose, e.g. desktop, favorites, etc., at intervals.

The System Image tool can be used to create a complete picture of your entire hard drive, so that you can restore your PC from a completely different drive if your regular one should fail for any reason. This process can be found within Settings > Updates and security > Backup.

Creating a System Restore point is another very effective way of protecting your data. This feature is disabled by default on Windows 10, so you will have to switch it on to

create a System Point. This feature will remember how your computer was at the specific time you set it, and so you will always have the option to return to those settings. You should always do this before installing major updates or complex new programs.

If you visit the Advanced Option section of Windows 10, you'll find tools that allow you to create a USB recovery drive, so that if something should go wrong, you can always reboot your computer from the USB drive, which will allow you to fix a variety of issues.

It's always a good idea to store your data somewhere far away from your computer where no technical or physical harm can touch it – for example, it's no good having all your data stored on an external hard drive that's in the same office as your computer; in the event of a burglary or fire, you're most likely lose both and all your data with it. There are numerous subscription offsite backup services available that can keep your data and release it back to you when you need it.

News Bytes

Password Heist

Up to 29,000 people who use the Passwordstate app have been infected with a malicious update that culled the app's data and sent it to a server controlled by hackers. The creators of the app, Click Studios, informed customers that the upgrade process had been hijacked to place a file entitled "moserware.secretsplitter.dll" on their computers that could investigate their computer system for password data which was then sent to the criminals' server.

The attack and subsequent data compromise has highlighted the potential danger of password managers, which are usually recommended by IT experts to ensure that users have unique and complex passwords for every account. Clearly, if attackers can acquire access to the password manager, these features are not enough to prevent damage being done. It's recommended that two factor authentication should be used at all times, meaning that any malicious actor cannot simply access accounts and data just because they are in possession of the password. In the meantime, all users of Passwordstate should immediately instruct the app to create new passwords for all their protected accounts.

Bank Robbery

A vulnerability has been found in the iOS-based Clubhouse app, which runs audio chat rooms for users and has become extremely popular during the pandemic. Essentially, users were able to "ghost" themselves, meaning that they could remain in a chat room without any other user or moderator knowing that they were there. The process of doing this is quite simple: all the user needs is two iPhones with different Clubhouse accounts. They can log in to a room with one phone, then when they log in to the same room with the other phone the first phone should be locked out, but in fact although the user's avatar will disappear from the room, they will still be able to hear what's going on and to make comments completely anonymously. This clearly has serious implications in terms of data protection, harassment, hate speech, etc; when users are being secretly monitored by anonymous entities, or those entities are making remarks with no fear of being sanctioned, whatever they say, the integrity of the chat room is compromised. However, Clubhouse have now addressed the issue and claim that they have fixed all bugs that allowed it to happen.



Question of the Month

Question: *Is it possible to disable iCloud photo sync from a Mac?*

Answer:

iCloud Photos is an application that allows for the uploading and syncing of every image taken with an Apple device, allowing all your Apple devices to access them. This is really useful for backing up your images, but it can be very heavy on storage, which can slow down your computer. Fortunately, there is a way of disabling this feature.

iCloud Photos works through the Photos app. If you switch it on when setting up your Apple device, every photo you take will be stored at low resolution in your iCloud account. If you take 10 photos with your Mac and delete nine of them, just keeping the one you like, you still have nine photos in your photo library that you're never going to use. You can save such a waste of space by disabling iCloud Photos. Simply open the Photos app, click the Photos button and select Preferences > iCloud, where you can uncheck the "iCloud Photos" option. This will stop your Mac saving all your photographs even when you've deleted them, although iCloud Photos will carry on working on iPhones and iPads.

You may find that even if you have disabled the iCloud Photo services, your previous photographs are still present; to remove these and free up the memory, go to the Library tab in the Photos app, delete all the photos you don't want, then select "recently deleted" and choose "Delete all."

Five Top Apps for Work from Home

For obvious reasons, the last year or so has seen a greater focus on the potential for working from home than at any other time in modern history. It's hard to imagine how the economies of many nations could have survived without the help of IT solutions that allowed many people to carry on almost as normal from their spare rooms or kitchen tables.

Below we list five of the best apps for working from home intelligently and productively.

Slack

A pre-requisite of successful homeworking is that teams should be able to communicate flawlessly with each other. Slack is generally regarded as the number one option for communicating and data sharing between team members: it can be customized, expanded, you can share files, and it can run in dark mode. Slack is free to use with a 10,000 message capacity, integration for 10 third-party apps, 5 GB of storage and one-to-one video and voice calling; the Standard plan with more features is \$6.67 per month, and the fully featured Plus plan is \$12.50 per month per user.

Teams

Microsoft Teams is effectively the company's homegrown version of Slack and is available as part of the Office 365 suite. There is a free version with some limits on functionality, or you can choose the paid version, starting at \$5 a month per user.

Zoom

With the pandemic lockdowns, Zoom has arguably become the most recognized brand of the last year, providing video calling solutions for business and personal users. The Zoom app works well for chatting, presentations, meetings, interviews, and more, and it has immense popularity, although some questions have been asked about the company's claims of end-to-end encryption that don't stand up to scrutiny. There are many free versions of Zoom, but they all come with limitations; the paid for versions begin at \$14.99 per month.

Trello

The Trello app is designed to assist users in tracking their work and synchronizing with their teammates, arranging tasks, meetings and more using a virtual card-based system.

Time Doctor

One of the biggest anxieties for companies during the homeworking boom caused by the pandemic has been the fact that it is difficult to know whether employees are actually working for the company or enjoying a beer out on the porch during working hours. The Time Doctor app makes sure that employees remain productive by checking and reporting on what they are doing during working hours without invading their privacy.

Your Newsletter

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Appointments are generally between 9am and 5pm, Monday through Friday. Evenings and weekends are also available, if necessary.

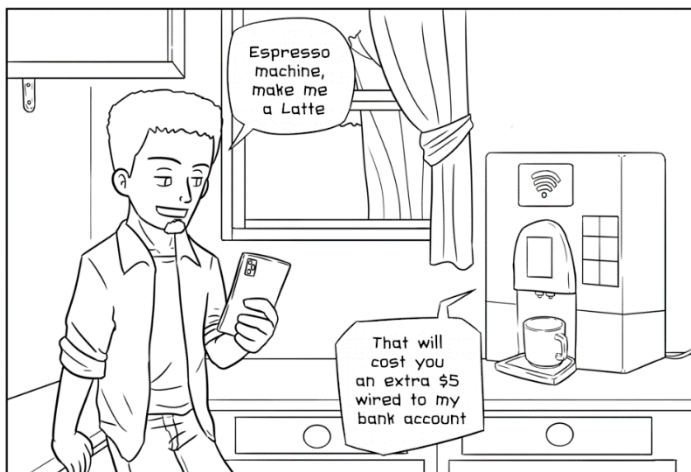
Emergency support for our commercial clients is available 24x7.

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER TO INFORM AND ENTERTAIN OUR CLIENTS

MAY 2021

APP OF THE MONTH: CAMERA +2

Camera+ 2 is a powerful app for editing photos on your iPhone. It contains a massive toolbox of ways to find tune your picture, filter colors, sharpen photos, etc. It allows for shooting in RAW mode, providing the most precise images for editing. On iPhones with multiple lenses, the app automatically select the best lens for your picture, and a number of shooting assist tools can help you capture exactly the right shot. Camera+ 2 is available now on the App Store for \$7.99.



Gulfcoast Networking, Inc

FROM THE DESK OF:

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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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