Gulfcoast Networking Newsletter

Your IT Management Experts

June 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:

"Tough times never last but tough people do."

Robert H. Schiuller

"Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans."

John Lennon

"The opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference."

Elie Wiesel

IN THIS ISSUE:

Five Neat Hidden Features in iOS 14

The latest update to iOS 14 contains many hundreds of new features, most of which are quite clear to users, but some of them are less obvious but useful. Below we list five of our favorites.

Sound Recognition
With the sound recognition feature, users can program their phones to recognize a range of different sounds, for example a dog barking, a smoke alarm going off, a baby crying, a doorbell, etc. When the phone identifies one of these sounds, it will send you a notification telling you what it has heard. This could be a particularly useful feature for those with hearing difficulties.

Mirror Front Camera
Many social media users like to take selfies of themselves by taking a picture in the mirror, and so we are used to seeing mirror images. With the standard iPhone front facing camera, the image is automatically flipped from a mirror image so that your picture appears as someone standing in front of you would see it. There is now an option, by toggling "Mirror Front Camera", for your selfies to appear as if they have been taken in a mirror.

FaceTime Eye Contact
A good feature for people who are easily distracted but don't want to look rude, the FaceTime Eye Contact feature, accessible in the FaceTime section of Settings, subtly changes the image the person you are talking to sees so that it still looks as if you are making eye contact with them, even if you are looking elsewhere on your phone.

Volume Up/Down Camera Controls
These new controls add extra functionality to your camera, allowing you to control the shutter. When you have the camera app open, if you press and hold down the volume up button the camera will shoot in "burst" mode, taking a series of photographs in quick succession. Holding the volume down button allows a QuickTake video will be shot, i.e., one that doesn't need you to go back to the camera settings to change from still camera to video. This feature is available by default, but the "volume up for burst" feature has to be enabled in settings.

Back Tap
The back tap feature allows users to access predefined functions by tapping on the back of their iPhone, either with a double tap or triple tap. In the accessibility settings, users can choose from a range of options, such as taking a screenshot, turning the volume down, etc., which will be activated when the phone detects the preset tap action.

Top Five Reasons Why You Should Consider Softphones

Even in the age of the Internet, telephone calls still play a massive role in business communication, never more so than after the last year also with so much remote working.

Because of this, many businesses are now looking at softphones as the ideal solution for employee communications. A softphone is essentially a phone that runs on software on a desktop, laptop, or mobile device. It has all the features of a normal phone, i.e., the keypad, transfer buttons, etc., and often many additional features made possible by the fact that it is powered by a computer. Below we list five advantages of furnishing your employees with softphones rather than desk phones.

Keeping your business phone with you: softphones allow employees to carry their business phone with them wherever they are, offsite, moving between offices, in meetings, etc. Of course this could be accomplished with a mobile phone, but many people still like to call a traditional phone and the costs are lower.

Protecting cell numbers: many employees will appreciate the fact that with a softphone they can have all the advantages of a cellphone but only have to give out their office number, meaning they can keep their private cellphone completely private, as well as not having to spend their data allowance on company business.

Efficient working: as mentioned above, because a softphone is run on a computer or device, it can have much more power and features than a desk phone. Calls can be transferred, you can see lists of calls made, notified of who is calling you, and so on.

Video calling: most softphones allow for in-app video calling, meaning no need for basements in videophones, frequently with conference calling features that can cut the bills normally run up by using paid for providers such as Zoom.

Tidying up the office space: a standard desk phone may have three or more cords, power cord, ethernet connection, standard cord... if everyone in an office uses a softphone, a lot of desk space is freed up and a lot of unsightly, trip hazard wiring can be removed.

News Bytes

Google Fuchsia
Google has recently confirmed the rollout of a new OS named Fuchsia. Normally it would be expected that this would be something of a big deal, but even Google themselves have not publicized it widely. This is in part because it is only for one specific device, the Google Nest Hub first generation. It is believed that the new OS has been in development since at least 2017, and it is known to be a rarity in that it does not use Linux as its base.

The operating system was built from the ground up, and its main language for developing apps is Flutter, a multi-platform UI toolkit. Using this language has made it possible for Google to simply and stealthily strip out the old Cast operating system and insert Future with exactly the same user interface.

Farewell Explorer
Microsoft's somewhat unloved Internet Explorer browser is officially being retired on June 15, 2022. The unpopular browser has remained a feature of all Windows operating systems, mainly due to the fact that many businesses had made their websites and interfaces solely using IE functionality and didn't wish to re-write them. However, Microsoft says that its new Edge browser, based on the Chromium system, has built-in compatibility with Explorer, meaning that any legacy websites/apps based on the browser can still be operated. However, Explorer will continue to function on Windows 10 LTSC and every current version of Windows Server, and Microsoft promises that the functionality in Edge will be supported up to 2029 at the earliest.

Scrapping Explorer in this way means that Microsoft can streamline operations as there are 5 million lines of code that no longer need supporting, and IT departments will no longer have the concern that people are, for whatever reason, using the notoriously insecure browser on sites that don't need it.

Question of the Month

Question: *How can I see older versions of my Word document?*

Answer:

It's often useful when dealing with a document to be able to see your previously saved versions to check for changes and so on. This is now an easy process in Microsoft Word, provided that you have a Microsoft 365 subscription with your files being saved to OneDrive (1 TB of OneDrive storage comes as standard with a subscription).

To View previous versions of the document you're working on, you can either click the file name in Word's top bar or click File > Info; in either case then select Version History. You will be presented with a list of saved versions of your document, starting with the most recent, and you can examine any document simply by clicking "Open version."

Additionally, you can click on the "Compare" button and Word will migrate the previous document data over to your latest version where you can click on Revisions and see what changes were made and by whom.

If you want more detail, select Simple Markup in the Review menu and word will show you line by line, character by character what has been taken out or added between the two documents: excisions will be highlighted with a red strikethrough, and additions will be highlighted with red characters and a red underline.

If you decide you prefer your old document, you can click on the Restore option in the Version History window and this will make the older version your latest version.

Prepare for the Upcoming Google Data Caps

Starting June 1, anyone using Google Applications such as Gmail, Photos, and Drive, will have a hard cap on how much they can store in the cloud.

Certain loopholes that were open in the past will now be closed, e.g., the one that allowed photos of 16 megapixels or fewer not to count against your data allowance has gone. Photos uploaded after the June 1 introduction, photos uploaded beforehand will still not count, and the loophole remains open for anyone using a Google Pixel phone.

Users who will exceed the data allowance in the new system will have 24 months to rectify the issue, and after that Google will start deleting files. Below we list five things all users should do before the cap comes into effect.

Check your storage: by going to https://one.google.com/storage you can discover how much storage you have left, and see exactly which applications are using up the data.

Throw out what you don't need: you can also use the Storage Management option at the same address to review and delete files you no longer need, for example large email attachments.

Use other providers: have a look around and see what other providers are offering. For example, if you have an Amazon Prime account, that comes complete with free unlimited storage for full resolution photos and 5 GB of video – if you use the Amazon Photos at your photos will be automatically uploaded. Alternatively, if you subscribe to Microsoft Office 365, you will have a massive 1 TB of OneDrive storage available as part of your subscription.

Beware of inactivity: Google has stated that data held by inactive users, i.e., those who have not used a particular service for 24 months or more, may be deleted. The company has promised that it will do its best to inform a user before deleting data, but it's probably safest just to make sure you login to all the services you use on a semi-regular basis, say once every six months.

Pay up!: it might seem a radical choice, given that we are so used to getting things for free on the Internet, but there is always the paid option. A Google One subscription costs $2 a month for 100 GB of storage (across all services) up to $10 per month for 2 TB. Prices are slightly cheaper if you pay by the year. There are also other paid for alternatives such as iCloud, Dropbox and others, along with the storage previously mentioned provided with Amazon and Microsoft subscriptions, amongst others.

Your Newsletter

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APP OF THE MONTH: MOMONDO

There are literally hundreds of travel apps out there that can find you the cheapest and most convenient flights, but Momondo has a USP in its Friends compass feature. This feature takes all of your Facebook friends and when you switch on the future it will point to their location and show you the fastest and cheapest way you can get there. You can also set a budget and ask who you can afford to visit within it, ask who is in the hottest and coldest place, and who is closest or furthest away. Finally, you can also set parameters to find friends within your region, your nation, or across the world. The app is completely free for both Android and iOS and can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play.
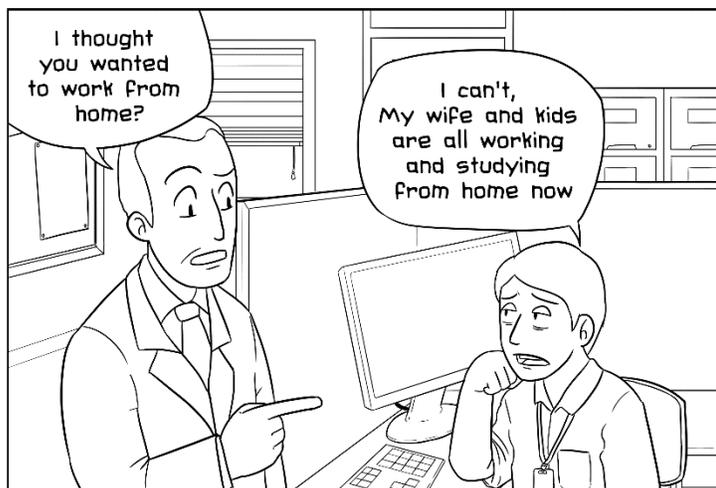
Gulfcoast Networking, Inc.

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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