



Gulfcoast Networking Newsletter

Your IT Management Experts

October 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:

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

Mahatma Gandhi

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

Theodore Roosevelt

"If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door."

Milton Berle

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The Rise of Contactless Payment Systems

Traditional payment systems that require the manual manipulation of currency are being phased out and contactless payment options are replacing or supplementing them for touchless transactions. Chip-enabled cards, mobile wallets, and QR codes show real promise in an age of disease spread.

As a small business owner, you may be considering an upgrade or supplement to your point of sale (POS) system to provide contactless payment to your customers. Adding some form of this technology has many benefits and can be simple to implement.

One of the many challenges for business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic has been the sanitation requirements needed to keep employees and consumers safe during the payment process. Contactless options have been very effective in cutting down on the time and cost for sanitation. A recent study by Visa reported that 20% of small businesses have adopted these solutions for just this reason.

The concept of the mobile wallet is transforming the way we shop. Mobile wallets from providers like Apple, Google, and Samsung have gained popularity for their simplicity and security. Deeper data encryption provides a greater level of security and RFID hacks decrease significantly. Issuing banks are more willing to protect against fraud which means your dispute rate drops. The ultimate benefit is the efficiency and speed it brings to your business process, translating into a more positive customer experience and the potential for increased loyalty.

There are two contactless payment technologies to choose from: near field communication (NFC) and quick response (QR) codes. As the leader in North America, NFC transactions require two devices equipped with an NFC chip. Many credit card providers have released cards embedded with the NFC chip and newer smartphones support mobile payments with two-way NFC communication. When chips come within close range of one another, magnetic induction charges them and gives them enough power to transfer data, requiring less power and promoting faster data transfer than Bluetooth.

QR codes are the most popular contactless method internationally. Most consumers have already used the digitized square and are familiar with the scanning process from their smartphone camera. The link to a payment portal simplifies the selection of preferred method of payment and amount, and payment approval notification provides clear feedback to both buyer and seller.

Unlock the Potential of Microsoft OneNote

Microsoft OneNote is often overshadowed by its siblings Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, but it is the hidden gem in the MS Office Suite. If you know how to use it, it can be your digital notebook, pulling together text, video, audio, and other visual resources.

Compared with other notetaking apps, OneNote always wins the race. Let's talk about the best ways to use it:

Customization: You may not like the default pages but that's not really a problem. Customize paper styles with lined sheets or a yellow background by going to View > Page Setup > Rule Lines. The View tab has other options such as Full Page View for a no-distraction workspace and Dock to Desktop for web browsing with your notes in the background.

Organizing: Use tag options in the Home tab to find content with ease. You can get lost in your digital notebook so use the advanced search feature to find text, recent edits, and other important information faster.

Sourcing: Automatically add hyperlinks to keep track of sources when you're copying and pasting from the web.

Embedding: Improve your notes by inserting multiple media sources and file types. Embed math equations, scan

handwritten notes, and take audio recordings. Add in the ability to search within a video or audio recording by clicking on File > Options > Audio and Video.

Handwriting: OneNote's built-in optical character recognition (OCR) technology recognizes handwriting and converts it to text. This is particularly useful for stylus users. For instant conversion click on the Ink to Text feature for handwriting or Ink to Math for equations.

Shortcutting: We all know how hard it is to bold, italicize, or bullet notes in the midst of a conversation. But with OneNote's keyboard shortcuts, it is easier and faster than ever. You can add tags, format notes with headings, or insert tables without having to use your mouse. Detailed lists can be created in one step by highlighting text and selecting Ctrl+1 to pair it with a checkbox. You can add an asterisk with Ctrl+2, a question mark with Ctrl+3, or a check mark with Ctrl+Shift+3.

Accessing: For times when you just want to jot something down, use Win+N to open a quick note or Win+S to take a screenshot. Both actions automatically save to OneNote. The OneNote icon in the taskbar provides quick access. Even easier may be sending your notes to yourself by emailing to your dedicated @onenote.com email address.

News Bytes

Azure AD Vulnerability

Cybersecurity researchers have disclosed an unpatched vulnerability in Microsoft's Azure Active Directory (AAD) that allows potential threat actors to perform single-factor brute-force attacks without generating sign-in events.

AAD is Microsoft's enterprise cloud-based identity and access management solution designed for seamless single sign-on (SSO) and multi-factor authentication. It is also a core component of Microsoft 365, with capabilities to provide authentication to other applications via OAuth.

The weakness resides in the SSO feature that allows employees to automatically sign into enterprise networks on corporate devices without using passwords. SSO can be 'opportunistic' in times when the sign in process fails because the login falls back to default and causes the user to re-enter their password.

While successful authentication events create sign-in logs upon sending access tokens, autologon authentication to AAD is not captured, meaning brute-force attacks occur undetected.

Chromebook Demand is Down

The global COVID-19 pandemic may not be over but there is a significant deceleration in laptop sales. Trendforce, the market research firm, has stated in a new report that increased vaccination rates and decreased work from home options is causing the demand for Chromebooks to slide over 50%. In fact, notebook shipments for the remainder of the year are expected to see increased demand shifts.

Shipments are predicted to fall by 10-20% from the first half of 2021 to the second half, but the news is not all downhill. Thirty-six million Chromebooks are expected to ship by year end 2021. The United States FCC recently released the Emergency Connectivity Fund (\$7.17 billion) to facilitate the purchase of notebooks, tablets, and network connectivity devices by schools and libraries. Laptop shipments are also expected to get a boost from people upgrading to Intel's next-gen CPU and Windows 11.

Next year it is predicted that vaccinations will be more prevalent and laptop shipments will decrease 7-8% year on year. Though the trendline points downward, it is still important to note these numbers are an improvement over 2019, ahead of the pandemic.



Question of the Month

Question: *Which uses less battery power on a Windows laptop, sleep or hibernate mode?*

Answer:

If you own a laptop, sleep mode is your default every time you close your lid. You probably find a low or dead battery when you open the lid later. There's a quick solution for this problem; put your laptop in hibernate mode instead. Hibernating your device for long periods of time can actually make the battery last longer.

There's a time and place for sleep mode but you have to decide ahead of time whether you're going to take a short or long break. A short break might include a meal break or a power nap (pun intended). A long break might mean your closing up the laptop and transiting to another location.

To be clear, both modes sip juice. When you place your device in sleep mode, you move it into a low power state while keeping your programs and data alive in random access memory (RAM) or current state. Your battery continues to drain but a little more slowly. And that can sap your battery over a matter of a few hours in some models.

Hibernation is a more complex process. It takes a snapshot of the RAM to your hard drive and completely shuts the laptop down. While the laptop is shut down, it draws almost no power, leaving the level of juice in your battery almost untouched. The only real downside to hibernating is the startup time when you reboot to the previous state when it's time to get back to get back to work.

You should also verify your power setting for hibernate mode has not been disabled. It's a quick fix to reenable it. If you replace your laptop's hard drive with a solid state device (SSD) you're boot time will be faster, so you can get back to work much more quickly.

Master Microsoft Word with these Simple Tips

Microsoft Office may be one of the most popular apps around but in terms of word processing, it can be a challenge to keep up with its features. To ensure you're receiving maximum benefit, always keep in mind the more you learn about Word capabilities, the more productive you will be.

Composing

You can use your Word file as a whiteboard and create content anywhere on the page. Double tap where you need to start your content and start writing.

Editing

The Smart Lookup feature is accessible when you highlight a word, right-click, and select Smart Lookup. A popup containing information about the word appears, saving you research time. Use ctrl+K to quickly add hyperlinks.

Pasting

You don't need to cut and paste to move text around. The shortcuts Cut (ctrl+X) and Paste (ctrl+V) help you move content around in Word, but there is another way that may be faster. Highlight the text you want to move, select F2, place your cursor where you want to put the content, and hit Enter. Presto, the content appears in its new location.

Deleting

Instead of holding down the backspace key, use ctrl+backspace to delete one word at a time, rather than one character at a time.

Capitalizing

Ever find yourself needing to change the case of content from lower to upper case and wish there was a way to do it on the fly? Pick the text you want to switch, hit shift+F3 and select the case you want. Options include all upper, all lower, and camel (first letter of the sentence capitalized).

Highlighting

An entire sentence can be highlighted by selecting ctrl+windows keys. Mac users select the command key, click on the beginning of the statement you want to highlight and the rest of the sentence auto-highlights.

Protecting

There are several embedded safety measure options to encrypt your document. Select file > info > protect to choose restrict editing, encrypt with password, or restrict access. Encrypt with password provides an added layer of security by allowing you to manage viewing and editing permissions.

Helping

Newer versions of Word (2016 and above) have "Tell me what to do", a shortcut for help with formats and features. If you need assistance inserting GIFs or JPGs, typing "Insert Pictures" provides options for inserting an image. In times when you simply don't know how or where to access functionality, this tool can be quite powerful.

Your Newsletter

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A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER TO INFORM AND ENTERTAIN OUR CLIENTS

OCTOBER 2021

APP OF THE MONTH: HOPPER

We're keeping our fingers crossed that travel continues to stay safe and available. We recommend Hopper as the most powerful app when you want to book flights on the cheap. Hopper excels at predicting flight prices with 95% accuracy up to 1 year in advance. It makes it possible to watch a trip right in the app and get notified immediately when it's the best time to book.

It's helped 30+ million travelers save more than \$1.8 billion to date. That's a savings of up to 40%. Featuring most major carriers, you'll have access to flight information with color coded cheapest days to fly, filters for custom predictions, and personalized recommendations for deals.



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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