Happy Memorial Day!

microTECH Times

Covered I.T. 24/7—Never Worry Again!

9 Quick Tips For Work-From-Home Professionals

As COVID-19 sweeps around the world, many people have now settled into the new norm of working from home. However, there are many security concerns to think about that may impact your business. Take a look at these 9 essential security tips to keep your company information safe for work-from-home professionals.

Establish boundaries: when, where and how you work.
Working from home lends for more flexibility between your professional and personal life, but also leaves workers overwhelmed. Be sure to set working hours and keep your tail in your seat to get your work done. Setup a stable work place away from your busy family so you know exactly where you're working each day. Schedule yourself time for your regular tasks. How you work is just as important as when and where. These 9 tips will help get the ball rolling.

1. Set and maintain regular work hours.
Set a regular schedule to help you balance your day and give you set break times to exercise as well as address other personal tasks throughout the day. The easiest way we've found to balance time is to calendar your breaks and lunch time so your coworkers and family can count on time when you are in and out of the office.

2. Physical location for your work-at-home office.
Where you work is essential to keep you focused on your tasks too. Select a workspace away from running appliances, electronic media devices, and if at all possible stay away from doors with frequent traffic (your front door, refrigerator, or kitchen cabinets). This will cut down on distractions in your visual view. In addition, use a headset with your preferred white noise or work music to reduce distractions from your household.

3. Create a system for sharing information.
Working at home doesn't mean you have to e-mail everything. There are many solutions to share information and even collaborate with other live within documents. If you are struggling e-mailing things back and forth just to get through the day, give us a call. We offer a handful of services to give you more flexible access to your company data when you need it.

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What's Inside

Remembering

"Heroism doesn't always happen in a burst of glory. Sometimes small triumphs and large hears change the course of history."
~Mary Roach

"This nation will remain the land of the free only as long as it is the home of the brave."
~Elmer Davis

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter the words, but to live by them."
~John F. Kennedy

Happy Memorial Day!

Memorial Day is Monday, May 25th, 2020. For many Americans, this marks a time of community, family and good grillin'. Take a look at these Memorial Day facts.

Origins of Memorial Day.
Since the 1860's Decoration Day, now known as Memorial Day, has been a commemorative day set aside to honor and remember those who have served in military service. Even though it didn't truly become a federal holiday until 1971, more than 27 states held some sort of ceremony every year for over 50 years to commemorate soldiers past and present in May.

Observances today...
3:00pm local time marks a moment of remembrance each Memorial Day. Many communities come together to host parades, barbeques, and historical events. Cities and towns across the states incorporate military personnel and members of veterans' organizations in the festivities to honor those who have

9 Quick Tips For Work-From-Home Pros...

(Continued from page 1)

4. Pay attention to ergonomics.

Many work-at-home professional find it easier to stay in their chairs when they don't have coworkers asking questions

or walking by their desk. Working at home inspires many of us to log more hours. However, longer hours in a chair may also mean more issues for your back. Use the most comfortable chair you have and, if necessary, invest in a seat and/or back support cushion to ensure your body stays aligned properly. Also, pop in your earbuds for longer calls or invest in a hands free headset for regular communication. Sitting on a wooden kitchen chair balancing your cell phone between your chin and shoulder is not a long term solution.

5. Overcommunicate.

While working remotely offers a slew of flexibility. You're not top of mind for coworkers anymore. They don't see you daily, therefore communication is key. If you're not sure your colleague received something or knows what they need to know, check in with them. Send a follow-up e-mail or message them so you know the details have made it to the right person.

6. Create clear expectations for your team.

Talk with your team about your expectations each week. What are the priorities? What does success look like? What hours are team members available for work? We suggest a set

weekly meeting to check-in with everyone and make sure everyone is rowing in the same direction, projects are reaching their respective milestones, and the entire team is engaged.

7. Get dressed!

This one may seem simple but you'd be surprised how important it is. Your morning routine can help put you in a healthy mindset for the day. You will find that you're more productive when you've showered, dressed and brushed your teeth. Working from home is still working.

8. Use video whenever possible.

Even if it seems unnecessary or uncomfortable, video conferencing helps people stay more connected. Human interaction can make a substantial difference in productivity and emotional well-being. Focus on your camera and stay engaged with your team.

9. Limit your e-mail chains.

E-mails back and forth can get confusing especially when there are 3-5 recipients. If your e-mail thread has more than 5 messages in it, it's time to schedule a video call. Reach out to the recipients and create time for a meeting to discuss the topic. Long e-mail threads leave to much room to confusion and misinterpretation; not to mention unintentional emotional developments.

Missing a few components?

Working from home comes with great benefits and a ton of responsibilities. Discipline yourself. Give yourself structure so you know when, where and how you plan to work through the day, week, or even month. If you would like to explore more collaboration tools, a better document solution, or even if you just need to get your computer upgraded… give us a call. We can perform a Network Security Audit ensure you have the proper security and tools in place to handle your staff working at home.

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Assessment
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Coronavirus Is Now Phishing Too!

Beware! Now coronavirus is being used as bait in phishing attacks.

We've all be watching and isolating

as the Wuhan coronavirus spreads around the world, and now it's being used in e-mail phishing attacks to infect computers too.

The infected e-mails

contain links to pdfs or .doc files that purport to be a list of people in the area infected with the virus. The links may appear to come from the Centers for Disease Control, but in fact, redirect users to a page that appears to be Outlook. Or, it can offer 'safety measures' in the form of a pdf. Clicking on any of these links exposes users to malware designed to access bank accounts, financial data, and bitcoin wallets, according to Bleeping Computer.

Protect yourself ...

by never opening attachments unless confirming over the phone with the sender and informing your staff of the dangers afoot. Implement an anti-spam solution for your business to help stop e-mail born threats before they reach your network. A combination of network security and e-mail filtering solutions are truly the best way to stop phishing and avoid ransomware.

Happy Memorial Day...

served. The largest parades for Memorial Day generally take place in Chicago, New York and Washington D.C. Some standard traditions include:

- Flying the American flag at half-staff until noon, then raise it to the top.
- 3:00pm local time moment of remembrance.
- The red poppy.

Why a red poppy?
Back in 1915, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, after a rough time while serving in the military, caught sight of a patch of bright red flowers against the dreary backdrop of a battlefield. It inspired him to write a poem "In Flanders Field" about those who lost their lives. Inspired by McCrae's work, writer Moina Michael's poem "We Shall Keep the Faith" began a campaign to make the red poppy a tribute to all who have died in war. Even today, it remains a symbol of remembrance for Memorial Day.

Celebrate this year...
Show your support with a quick phone or video call, social media post, or even mail a card to say thank you to veterans in your life. Thank you to all of you who served to keep our country safe.

How The Epidemic Is Making Businesses Sick

Essential and non-essential businesses alike are seeing changes in the way business is conducted, not to mention the dramatic changes in purchasing trends.

A pretty little shopping village
in Oxfordshire, England, is eerily quiet due to COVID. Bicester Village is famous among Chinese tourists for its string of 160 small luxury shops. About a half million Chinese tourists visited England in the 12 months ending September 2019. They made up a large chunk of the 7 million tourists who visited Bicester Village in 2019 as well.

Traffic is now slower than most winter seasons,
according to the BBC. In fact, the entire fashion industry has been disrupted by the coronavirus. Chinese editions of New York Fashion Week, and shows in London, Milan, Parish and Shanghai have been cancelled. That is no small issue. According to the Weekly Standard UK, Chinese consumers account for a third of the global luxury goods sold.

These are sales deferred, not lost.
The $2.5 trillion industry is threatened with a major financial hit. This is not the only industry suffering. The hospitality, food service, entertainment markets are struggling. They are seeing catastrophic losses due to closures as well as social distancing restrictions.

Consumers be aware.
A Wells Fargo report warned in February that even big box retailers like Target, Best Buy, and Walmart could have empty shelves this month. Shoppers may find fewer goods available until mid-summer.

The bottom line
is consumers are losing confidence in the markets and social distancing is driving non-essential businesses down. Stay home, support your local businesses online, and be safe.

Why Your Phone Number May Be A Vulnerability

Suppose for some reason you lose your phone number or retire it for something local. Then suppose it is recycled to people with bad intent. Could the number be used to fetch passwords? Could they get into your e-mail?

You bet they could! Millions of people get new phone numbers, some of which have been used in the past by someone else. In the best case, the new owner gets annoying FaceTime requests from teenagers. In the worst case, they get texts every time the previous owner makes a bank deposit. Why? That someone hasn't changed his phone number with their bank.

Many companies have built their user authentication programs around phone numbers. One person who tested the security of phone numbers found this out. He got a new number then went to a large e-mail provider and typed the new number in the login. The provider then offered to reset his password and sent a SMS message with a code. He got in using the code. Except for one thing: He got in to another persons e-mail, the one who previously owned the phone number.

Our phone numbers are tied to our identity. It's not just recycled phone numbers that can be vulnerable either, since there are hacks that allow the theft of numbers. That makes everyone with a phone vulnerable, but there are some things you can do: 1. Close accounts you don't use. 2. If you don't have to give your phone number online, don't. 3. If your number has changed, go to every account and update your phone number. 4. You can also disable SMS text codes.

"I can work days, evenings, nights...I'm very flexible."

"We make all of your computer problems go away without adding additional full-time I.T. staff!"

Ask about our fixed price service agreements — Computer support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for, just like payroll!

Inquiring Minds...

What Is A Quantum Computer? What makes a quantum computer different? Honeywell recently announced it created the biggest and baddest quantum computer ever made with 64 qubits. Here is what qubits are all about.

Bits vs qubits... You probably know by now that regular computers use bits to hold information. Each bit of information is either a 0 or a 1. So when a regular computer, even supercomputers, process information, they are powerful because of the speed at which they do one calculation at a time.

What's really inside... Quantum computers use qubits as the basic unit of information. The qubit isn't just 0 or 1. It can be both. That is called superposition and it is what allows quantum computers to work on millions of computations at the same time. And that means that immensely complicated problems can be solved before the best super-computers can get started.

Quantum computer issues... Most attempts at quantum computing have run into problems with storing information or just preserving the existence of qubits. But, these problems seem to have been mostly solved and stable machines have been created.

What are quantum computers used for? While quantum computers are impressive, you may be scratching your head and asking your self, "what are they actually used for?" Quantum computing is used for artificial intelligence, molecular modeling, cryptography, weather forecasting, particle physics and even financial modeling. Many companies are scrambling to make use of this amazing technology in industries like cybersecurity, banking, and aerospace. As this new technology evolves, we will see new opportunities arise with a new era of computation capacity.

"Zoom-bombing" With millions of users now converting to virtual meetings in order to continue collaborating and serving their clients, new concerns have risen. "Zoom-bombing" is when a stranger joins a meeting just to wreak havoc on the participants by showing threatening or disheartening content.

Use the meeting features. When your meeting starts, be sure to set these basic tools in place by clicking on "participants" and the "more" menu. Use the "lock meeting" feature to lock the meeting down if everyone is in attendance so no extra people can join during the meeting. Elect to mute participants on entry so they cannot just start talking over you causing a disturbance. Zoom recently announced a 90 day freeze on new features to focus on fixing privacy and security issues. They are pushing new standards like passwords for meetings and default waiting rooms so meeting hosts will have to verify attendees.

Looking for solutions? Need a virtual meeting program for your company? Or are you looking for a more secure solution? Give us a call today to explore options for your company.

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