TECHNOLOGY TODAY

FC Friendly Connections IT
STAY CONNECTED

Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, And More Profitably

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Inside This Issue…

If you were "Upgraded to Win 10" without your permission

Microsoft continues to pound the computer public with Windows 10. A lot of people like it. A lot of people don't like it. Nothing new there with a new OS. But we see a stream of people who were upgraded without their permission. MS puts a clock on the update saying that you've got some period—maybe two hours– to say no. Which is fine unless it happens in the middle of the night when you can't say no.

See page 4 for the fix.

We're seeing a lot of crypto viruses recently

And again with this newsletter I'm kicking off another discussion about security. It seems like a lot of today's innovation is the criminal world. We see it coming through the door every day. In addition to seeing the problems our customers have I ready my share of security blogs. Sophos, a well regarded security company, recently released some information which included the most common types of cyber attacks. According to their numbers 55% of the attacks come from Phishing and Social Engineering. These are numbers based on businesses. I'd say that number is low.

The number one reason our customers have their computers compromised is by clicking on something in an email. The number two way and one we're seeing more is 'poison' or compromised web sites. Just clicking on the site can result in a downloaded piece of malware. Once that has a foot hold it goes quickly downhill.

I wrote a fairly lengthy piece a while back about how to avoid viruses. I've just republished it in the blog section of Fcofg.com. I won't go into it in this column but will add a pitch for something I find keeps me out of trouble. It is easy to click on that link off of Fox News. Then the link on that page and maybe the next ("5 amazing ways you can do…."). Before you know it you are off in a place where crypto viruses live. I use an extension on my Chrome browser from www.mywot.com. It tells me which sites might not be safe. It is not perfect but I've used it for years I do recommend it. It is community updated based on user experience so when they say a site is questionable, I stay away and get my five AMAZING ways to do something elsewhere.

Nothing beats using your noggin and going slow but the www.myWOT.com plugin to Chrome helps.

Bill Schubert

Taking advantage of entry-level workstations

Most knowledge workers have access to low end desktop and notebook computers. They are used for everyday tasks such as word processing and web-based email. Access to higher level workstations, however, is typically reserved for processor and graphic-intensive tasks not typically associated with administration staff. But a new wave of entry-level workstation technology is poised to change how workstations are procured and the types of applications they can perform.

Workstations can deliver a new level of power and stability for 3D and 2D design applications, website development, back office operations and front office applications in industries like healthcare. The increase in speed and memory over PCs gives workstations a compelling advantage for both traditional and emerging application technology.

Computing and storage in one

The global server market is moving to more "hyper-converged" infrastructure in the datacenter, where single systems integrate computing, virtualization, and storage. Workstations are well placed to drive the same level of simplicity and performance on the desktop.

High-end CPU, memory, graphics, and storage options in workstations support the most demanding applications, including innovative interfaces like 3D modeling and visual representations of data.

Advances in component technology have helped make entry-level workstations smaller than ever, ensuring a suitable form for most working environments.

Benefits

Entry-level workstations offer many business benefits:

◊ The processing power for emerging visual data processing requirements, e.g. virtual reality
◊ Support options for remote management similar to regular business PC standards
◊ Secure, locked-down workspaces for multiple end-users
◊ The capability to host local virtual desktops for testing and development and isolated workspaces
◊ Better quality displays and the ability to support multiple displays from one workstation

Design and engineering for all

Entry-level workstations allow organizations to expand their innovation potential by providing a platform for more people to collaborate on product and service design and development.

Design and engineering capability was once the domain of high-end workstations provided to a select few in the organization (part of this was due to cost). But today:

◊ Entry-level workstations can be provided to more people.
◊ Native and virtual desktop applications can be accessed by more knowledge workers.

The potential for design thinking and product engineering has expanded greatly, as people have access to the tools to drive it coupled with the ability to share ideas throughout the development lifecycle—from concept to customer feedback.

Take the leap into entry-level workstations to discover a new level of productivity and collaborative innovation. Today's workstations are more affordable and flexible than ever.

Advising employees on setting up a home office

Work, they say, is no longer a location—it's an activity. That means the IT department has a major role to play in making sure work can be done from anywhere, including if the employee never leaves home. Even if you don't want to dictate what employees use in terms of technology, it's still a good idea to provide advice.

Hardware - Your hardware or mine? If your employees don't have work laptops they can take home, it's worth detailing the minimum specifications for a home computer. Don't assume your employee will automatically buy a computer equivalent to or better than their work machine. Few employees would be able to tell you (or a salesman) the specifications of their work computer. Employees aren't going to be productive at home if they're working on an under-powered machine.

The right monitor An external monitor will boost productivity and doesn't have to be expensive, so having some recommendations here is a good idea as well.

Webcam If your employee isn't buying a laptop with a built-in webcam, recommend an external webcam. Video conferencing is becoming the norm for keeping in touch with a team. It's even baked into software like Microsoft Office 2016.

Software - At whose expense? The employee is going to need software. If you're not providing a laptop loaded with the applications your company provides, who's going to pay for it? You might have a two-tier system where you expect the employees to pay for software they might need for personal reasons as well—like Microsoft Office—but provide enterprise software they wouldn't otherwise use.

Which applications? What applications are minimum requirements? This is an especially important question if you aren't willing to pay for them all. Software costs could add considerably to an employee's expense setting up a home office.

Antivirus This isn't negotiable. You should have policies requiring minimum standards and installing updates regardless of who owns the machine.

Internet Employees are going to need to access information from your servers and the cloud while collaborating with their colleagues. A good Internet connection is essential. Are there recommendations you can make or is there a deal you can strike with your preferred ISP?

The done-for-you home office Employees working from home is the way of the future, but it raises understandable concerns with IT professionals. One potential solution is to come to an arrangement with your IT vendor to provide equipment and service to employees similar to what they receive in the office. A recent survey of 8,600 workers by global recruitment firm Hays found that more than half were prepared to drop their pay up to 20 percent to be allowed to work from home. If you're willing to take a pay cut to work from home, it shouldn't be a big leap to invest in a company-approved home office setup instead.
Your bargaining power with your vendor can be used to negotiate a price that makes this attractive to employees while you have the comfort of knowing they're using suitable tools. It's a win-win.

'Microlearning' features five-minute courses

How do you train people who gulp down information in 10-second bites then move on? Thanks to smartphones, on-demand entertainment and social media, the average attention span in North America dropped from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2015, according to a 2015 Microsoft study. Attention span is the time a person can stay focused on a single task and filter out distractions. So, large employers are using microlearnng apps and websites to deliver training in short lessons. The practice is becoming favored because workers who want the training take less time out of their work day to get it.

Some that develop the programs are Linkedin, Lynda.com, Grovo and Duolingo for language skills.

They include a mix of video and interactive lessons that take under five minutes and include a quiz. Companies make the lessons available to users whenever they want to access them online or with their smartphones. Duolingo is used by Uber Technologies in Mexico and other South American countries. Uber offers it to drivers who want to brush up on their English so they can attract more fares.

Microlearning encourages workers through spaced repetition, which is more effective than cramming a lot of content into a long in-person seminar.

Roll back Windows 10

I started to break one of my rules about writing a newsletter by giving step by step directions about rolling back from Windows 10. I went out and did a search only to find that none of the sites did the complete job.

Following any of them might result in an apparently successful rollback but would also result in a bunch of problems in the background that the majority of users would not see or understand.

Unless you understand how to correct corrupt tasks in the task scheduler, among other things, my recommendation is to take your computer to your Friendly neighborhood computer company and get it done right.

Quotes

If a person doesn't want to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions, they may try to blame others. Don't accept blame or try to fix things for them when you've done nothing wrong. They need to learn that if they want different outcomes, they will have to make different choices.
Doe Zantamata, author of Happiness in Your Life book series

You have to learn the rules of the game. And then you have to play better than anyone else.
Albert Einstein: German Physicist

How did it get so late so soon? Its night before its afternoon.

December is here before its June. My goodness how the time has flewn.

How did it get so late so soon?
Dr. Seuss

"I'd like to be self-employed, but for a better boss."