This Issue:

Is Your Business Ready to Return to "Normal"?

The rollout of vaccinations have brought many businesses the hope of returning to normalcy, to a time before COVID-19 was the driving factor in how they ran their business. However, the reality is, most companies will not be returning to pre-coronavirus operations; the "new" normal is just the norm now. Your team and customers have adapted to the way things are done now, not the way they were done before...

Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/returnnorm

The Connected Things are Getting Smarter with IoT

For the past several years there has been a steady stream of news hitting the public consciousness about the Internet of Things (IoT). IoT are all the "smart" devices that have been on the market. Some are designed to make managing your utilities more effective; some have been rolled out for businesses to make inventory management and distribution more efficient; some are just commercial products that provide ease of use or analysis that can make a person's life easier. What you are beginning to see are these smart devices rolled out for more important purposes. This month we wanted to dedicate an article to the innovations we are seeing in the IoT, and how they are ultimately going to change the way things are done.
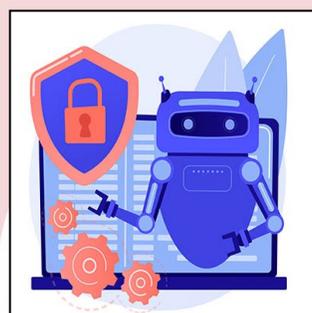
A Brief Description of the Internet of Things

We summarized it up above, but for those of you who aren't familiar with the Internet of Things in theory, you probably already are in practice. Smart devices are everywhere, after all. The Internet of Things is the name for the ecosystem that supports the millions of devices that can be connected to the Internet. These devices bring a lot of options where only a short time ago there were none.

To be a smart device, not only does it have to have some utility, it also has to be able to be connected directly to the Internet. For years it was hard for small businesses to come up with an effective strategy to use IoT devices because of the perception—in many cases rightly—that the security risks were simply too high. Today, however, innovations to IoT device effectiveness and security, plus an understanding of just how to strategically leverage smart devices, has made IoT an option for the growing business. Let's take a look at three ways small businesses can incorporate smart devices into their business.

Taking a Look at Innovative New Cybersecurity Tools

In 2020, conducting business was hard enough without having to constantly worry that your business was going to be the victim of a cyberattack. Unfortunately, it is an issue that isn't going away, and can result in massive expenses and alter the course of your business significantly.
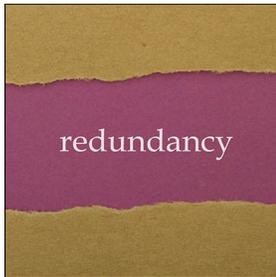
Today, it's not enough to have an antivirus or firewall. You need solutions designed to actively protect your network and data from those that are actively trying to gain access to them. So while it may not be enough, making sure that your firewall and antivirus software are updated with the latest threat definitions, and that your other solutions like spam blocking and virtual private networks are being utilized properly, can set you up for success. This month, we thought we'd look at four additional strategies that extend traditional cybersecurity into the modern age.

Network Monitoring

Network monitoring is a solid strategy that will allow you to keep tabs on what is happening on your network. Today, there are remote monitoring tools that feature cutting-edge automated features designed to ensure that if something is funky on your network, or with

est. 1993

YEARS IN BUSINESS

Redundancy Can Be a Good Thing

redundancy

Data is the backbone of any modern business. Since your organization relies so much on it, you need to have measures put into place to ensure that your business can access it in some way, shape or form at all times. This is easier said than done, especially for a business on a budget. We'll walk you through how you can implement a comprehensive data backup solution to protect your organization.

Ordinarily, the word redundant would be used for something that's not needed. For example, having two jugs of milk in your refrigerator would be considered redundant because you only ever need one at a time. Your data, on the other hand, needs to be considered in a different way. You not only want a second, you'll likely need more, just to be on the safe side

Your business will be completely stymied if you ever encounter a situation where your data is unavailable. Here are some of the major considerations that you want to remember when thinking about data redundancy, as well as data backup and disaster recovery.

How Much Data You're Recovering
Depending on your data backup solution, you could either be taking backups once a day or you could be taking them multiple times a day. If you're only taking them once at the end of the day, you could lose up to an entire day's worth of data in the event of a hardware failure. On the other hand, if you use an incremental backup solution, you only take backups of data that has changed since the last time you took one, allowing you to back up your data as often as every fifteen minutes. It's the ideal way to back up your data, and it allows you to keep it as redundant as possible.

How Long Your Recovery Takes
If you have a lot of data that needs to be recovered, the process could take much longer than you expect. If you're restoring from an old, outdated tape backup system, you'll be opting for a longer restore time, and thus more downtime. A localized BDR allows your organization to restore data directly to the server (or hot swap a brand new or temporary server if the original hardware is down). The BDR can also temporarily act as a replacement to your downed server to minimize downtime in the event of a data loss incident.

If your BDR is destroyed in the disaster— let's say it was a flood or a

fire—your data can be restored onto a new BDR at the cloud data center we back up to, and overnighted to your office or temporary location. That way, you can continue to operate while the disaster is being mitigated.

Where You're Storing Your Data Backups
Finally, we get to the redundancy aspect of your business' data backup system. Redundancy is all about having multiple copies of your device, but it's where you're storing them that makes a major difference for your organization. You should follow the 3-2-1 rule for data backup and disaster recovery. Basically, you want three copies of your data overall (at least), with two of those being stored off-site in some capacity (like in the cloud or a secure off-site data center), and one on-site in the event you need it.

Does your organization need help with data redundancy or backup and disaster recovery? Directive can help. To learn more, reach out to us at 607.433.2200.

Share this Article!
https://dti.io/goodbackup

The Connected Things are Getting Smarter with IoT

Tracking Time
For most businesses time is the x-factor. How long your team—or even an individual—takes on a certain task is the difference between profit and loss. One way that IoT can really benefit a business is by using mobile devices, often your employee's mobile devices, to get an idea about how to maximize productivity. This may seem like a rudimentary way to use technology, but think about how much money your organization wastes in inefficiency each year? If you could make faster decisions to maximize your staff's use of time, you can cut out a lot of inefficiencies,

no? By linking computers to mobile devices, you can get more out of your team, period.

Managing Costs
Some of the most utilized IoT devices for the home can be used for small businesses to help maximize value. Smart devices can be used to more effectively manage your business' energy consumption. You wouldn't believe what you can save by linking your business' appliances, machines, and other equipment up to smart devices that modulate their controls. Regardless whether your business chooses to use smart devices to lock doors, modulate

lighting or temperature, you can see substantial cost savings over time.

Getting Smarter
They are called smart devices for a reason. Using IoT-connected technology can help your business get smarter. Since these devices are on your network and constantly collecting data, there is more of it to make more informed decisions. This in itself makes your business smarter. Think about it…

Read the rest Online!
https://dti.io/connectiot

Taking a Look at Innovative New Cybersecurity Tools

your infrastructure, that you know about it before it becomes a major problem. Your IT support team should be outfitted with these tools as active monitoring may be the only strategy that can truly keep your network and infrastructure secure.

Mobile Device and Endpoint Management
More businesses were relying on remote workers anyway, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, that number has risen by several hundred percent. Mobile device management allows an organization to control the access each mobile user has to company resources, which applications employees can access on the network, while also providing control over the flow of mobile data. Securing endpoint access can

go a long way toward protecting organizational computing resources from possible threats that users may have on their remote computers.

Security Training and Management
Today's biggest threats often come into a network from user mistakes or negligence. In order to mitigate these instances, ensuring that your staff is properly trained is more important than ever. Not only will you want to provide them with the information needed to secure your network, you will also want to test them to ensure they are capable and willing to follow the company-outlined protocol on how to deal with threats.

Threat Management and Detection
Despite your increased reliance on your staff to ensure that nefarious people

don't gain access to your network, there are still tools designed to identify threats and mitigate their existence. From firewalls to antivirus to powerful new threat management tools, if protecting your network from outside threats is a priority, making investments in solutions designed to eliminate threats is prudent.

Directive is the Upstate New York expert in IT security. Call our expert technicians today at 607.433.2200 to learn more about what you should be doing to secure your network and infrastructure.

Share this Article!
https://dti.io/newtools

Small Businesses Can Rely On Managed IT Services for Key Improvements

What makes a small to medium-sized business so different from a large, enterprise-sized one? The amount of

people and moving parts, of course, but if you really consider it, there isn't all that much. This is why when looking to control your small business' IT support costs, choosing managed IT services is a good option. This month, we thought we'd take a look at some of the other benefits managed IT can bring your organization:

Operational Focus
In a small business, defined roles can be rare. Often, small business leaders are stuck in a position where they have to see to other responsibilities that could have a negative impact on the business. Many times, this includes IT.

We can help resolve this conflict. Rather than having your core employees diverting their attention to these other

tasks, we will handle the IT management remotely—and proactively—so that your people can focus on tasks that promote revenue growth.

Stronger Technology Strategy
It isn't that many small and medium-sized businesses completely lack any technology planning, it's just that reacting to problems with information systems not only promotes downtime, it promotes rising costs, a situation that no business likes to see.

Part of our responsibility as an MSP (Managed Services Provider) is to work with you to identify your business' needs, both imminent and impending, and create a strategy to fulfill them all. While our experts at Directive can still appreciate technology that provides cool features, we also understand that the most important technology allows you to run your business more effectively...

Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/improveit

Cybersecurity Tips

Your Incident Response Plan – Part 2: Detection and Response

Creating an incident response plan can help us navigate cybersecurity events outside of the office. A good plan will focus on five key areas; Preparation, Detection, Response, Recovery and Learning.

Learn more about creating an incident response plan and the five key areas to focus on. **https://dti.io/incidntplan**

Get our Cybersecurity Tips to your inbox weekly!
Each week we send an email with **FREE** cybersecurity tips to help you to avoid a data breach. These tips can be used to educate yourself and your employees on security best practices.

Sign up today!
https://dti.io/gettips

Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

Rules to Tweet By

Twitter has been transformed by the B2B marketing community by offering another platform to engage with your audience, to address their questions, to contribute valuable knowledge, to accentuate what your company stands for. Every day there are opportunities that you could be embracing from being active on social media. Whether you turn these opportunistic moments into high-quality leads, well that is your prerogative.

In the first quarter of 2016, Twitter averaged 330 million monthly active users, your target audience is somewhere among that crowd. Twitter is the place where global conversations happen among people, their companies, and their brands; which invites the chance for industries to overlap with each other. This is reshaping how the business-to-business community interacts and communicates with each other. And to be frank, some are transitioning better.

Rules 1Like any good marketer, you have read through countless articles, preparing yourself to only demonstrate proper Twitter usage, how to dominate on Twitter, how to become a lead authoritative figure but have you read any that will tell you what not to do? It is imperative that you avoid bad Twitter practices because they will cause great damage despite all the good practices you demonstrate. Like many other social media marketing concepts, it ties back to social psychology. The theory is that the "bad" makes a stronger impression than the "good." Meaning that bad impressions and/or bad stereotypes are quicker to form and more resilient on your reputation. How does this relate to your Twitter account? You can do a world of good, but just a couple of bad practices will hinder any advancement.

Keep recycling to plastics and paper, and out of your tweets. Your purpose on Twitter is to pass along educational insights, helpful tips that will assist your audience with their problems, to showcase that you are the expert in your industry. So, how would a reused tweet be beneficial to you? If you do get tempted, look back at a post that received high engagement and respin it. Consider making creating a custom graphic to display the information or provide additional information to the topic.

Make your tweets stand apart from other posts on your social media platforms, meaning do not share the same post across the board. Twitter will no longer include your photos, videos, GIFS, polls, or Quote Tweets in your 140 character count. Facebook posts are meant to offer detail, LinkedIn is known for offering insightful posts, and Tweets cut right to the point. Keep in mind that the lifespan of a tweet is only one hour, so timeliness is a high priority.

There is a line you do not want to cross when it comes to hashtags. Hashtags are meant to increase engagement, but tweets with more than two hashtags show a 17% drop in engagement. One or two relevant hashtags are sufficient to get your point across. This will keep your audience engaged without becoming an annoyance to your readers. Create a memorable hashtag that will lead your audience to your business page and direct all...

Read the Rest Online!
https://dti.io/rule2tweet

We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.

Chris Chase
CEO

Charlotte Chase
COO

Directive

330 Pony Farm Road
Suite #3
Oneonta, NY 13820
Toll-Free 888-546-4384
Voice: 607-433-2200

Visit us **online** at:
newsletter.directive.com

newsletter@directive.com

facebook.directive.com

linkedin.directive.com

twitter.directive.com

blog.directive.com

instagram.directive.com