VIRTUAL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC

TECHMinutes

October 2022

Your Small Business Technology Information Source!

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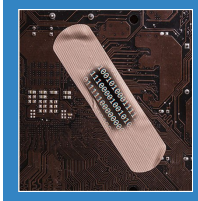
The Big Difference Between Patches and Updates



It's easy to use the terms "patches" and "updates" as if they mean the same thing, and they are often used interchangeably within the same context. However, understanding the difference between the two can make a world of difference in terms of how you approach implementing each of them...

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About Virtual Business Solutions

We're in this business to help other small businesses grow and move forward. It's as simple as that. We're driven by the philosophy that if we help local businesses solve their IT issues so they can become more profitable and successful, then we will inherently grow along with them.

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What Every Business Owner Needs to Know About Security Training

The effectiveness of your business' IT security is largely contingent on how your IT operates. As a result, it is extremely important to ensure that your staff understands the role they play in protecting your business' assets. This month, we discuss what you should prioritize when putting together a security training platform; an essential part of any business' attempts to keep their IT secure.

Security Posture

One term you may have heard is "security posture". This speaks to how aggressive a person is in protecting themselves online. Much of today's computing is done through cloud-based apps and many companies have embraced remote workforces and need their staff to actively participate in their organizational cybersecurity efforts. This means tightening up their security practices.

Every person that uses computing systems needs to actively participate in cybersecurity efforts if the organization is going to maintain data and network security. Here are four considerations that can help you plot out your cybersecurity strategy.

Get Employees to Relate

Educating a bunch of people (who don't work in security) to learn about something as yawn-inspiring as network security isn't impossible, but it takes a little creativity. If someone can

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Collaboration is More than Just Meetings

Most business owners are looking for a way to cut their costs. One way that many firms can see some cost reduction is to increase productivity through solid collaboration. Today, there are many digital tools designed to get more eyes on a project, but they may not completely fit your strategy. Let's look at some strategies that are used to promote collaboration, and some tools that can fuel these enhanced collaborative efforts.

Every business needs some small amount of collaboration to operate. After all, most people wouldn't get paid without some collaboration. People from different departments always need to work together to make workflows move efficiently, get projects done on time, and create reliable revenue streams. Therefore, the demand for tools that integrate collaboration options is extremely high.

Video Conferencing

Some of the most helpful (albeit insecure) apps during the COVID-19 era and beyond were the video conferencing apps. They effectively allow teams to meet at the click of a button. This technology was valuable for businesses that had remote workers before, but since over 20% of businesses moved from onsite workers to having completely remote workforces basically overnight, businesses know how to

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New Tech Making Business Tools More Dynamic

For all the events that have made business more difficult over the past several years, you probably wouldn't be surprised to learn that businesses have been more open to change the way they do things if it means that they can meet the demands placed on them by the market. These days, there are some technologies that will be a big part of business headed forward, but you may think that they are out of your business' price range. Think again. Let's take a look at three robust technologies and how you can use them in your business.

Artificial Intelligence

If there is a technology that is synonymous with the future it is artificial intelligence. The question is: what business wouldn't want to automate the things that don't help pull in revenue? The fact is that up until recently people handled a lot of the tasks that today's AI-integrated software is more than capable of handling. This can not only significantly cut your costs, it can put your business in an advantageous position going forward.

Of course AI, being the top industry buzzword, covers a lot of ground. There are AI-based solutions that work for any type of business. For manufacturers that depend on creating quality products, there are AI systems that can scan and evaluate their work, rather than paying a team of quality assurance specialists to do it. As flaws are reported, the software learns more and more about the products, providing terrific QA without the massive expense.

Many different types of businesses lean on their supply chain and another way artificial intelligence is being used is to control inventory and track resources. By automating resource-intensive processes, your business can focus more on revenue generation and less on the minutiae.

Support is one of those platforms that a business needs, but isn't going to bring in much in the way of revenue. Today, AI-fueled chatbots can give your customers the product and service support that they depend on without the human resource cost that comprehensive support typically commands.

Blockchain

Another technology that is seemingly too new to have any practical applications for a small business, blockchain is famously the technology behind cryptocurrency. Fortunately, there are companies out there that are providing blockchain-fueled applications that can work for small businesses.

One of the most noteworthy ways that businesses are using blockchain is for their digital contracts. The benefit that blockchain provides is that it is like a digital ledger, with every transaction on the chain sporting its own block (node). This immutability provides the security that allows blockchain technology to fuel...

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Collaboration is More than Just Meetings

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better leverage it now. Additionally, many VoIP platforms come with video conferencing functionality.

Some of the most important features of a video conferencing solution include:

- Screen sharing
- Instant messaging and group chat features
- HD Video
- Recording
- Multiple-webcam options
- Encrypted file sharing

Video conferencing may be the tool your business has been waiting for without even knowing it.

Collaboration Apps

There are new collaboration apps that have been developed with so many integrations that you can basically pick the tools you use inside the collaboration app itself. These apps are part online forum, part instant messaging platform. The combination of the two—and the addition of dozens of integrations—make available a centralized communication platform for project and service management, alike.

Productivity Suites

The productivity suite has been around for decades. Today's productivity suite isn't your dad's platform, however. The modern productivity suite provides secure cloud storage, sharing, and sync; email; collaborative word processing, spreadsheets, presentation creation; and more. These productivity suites are generally managed by the provider, which adds useful benefits.

The modern productivity suite is the epitome of collaborative innovation for the modern business. If your business would like to learn more about how to build more collaborative processes, or if you simply want to talk to one of our knowledgeable consultants about getting the technology you need to be more successful, call us today at (504) 840-9800 ext. 105.

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What Every Business Owner Needs to Know About Security Training

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relate to a victim, it's easier for them to do things they wouldn't typically do because they don't want to be responsible for another. Use real world examples in your education materials. Chances are some of them have been the victim of identity theft or they've had their data leaked as a result of negligent behavior. Show them that many of the things they can do to protect the company are things that they already do to protect their own data.

Continuously Promote Security

If history has taught us one thing about people, it is that people are impressionable. If they are constantly surrounded by a certain message, they will typically accept that message. Creating a company culture that is rooted in security will do a lot of the heavy lifting for you. If your company consistently pushes the need for comprehensive security, you better believe that most of your staff will get the message loud and clear.

Provide Consistent Training and Test Regularly

Pushing security can go a long way, but without training that is designed to educate around exactly the problems being addressed by the procedures that are put in place, the whole thing is completely pointless. Employees need to understand:

- How to avoid becoming a victim of phishing
- What network resources they have access to
- The importance their role has in protecting company and customer data
- Solid password management and best practices
- What to do if they make a security mistake.

If every employee you have has a good handle on these five concepts, there...

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How to Determine the Costs Associated with Your Printing

Sad to say, but for the foreseeable future, cost control is going to be the number one priority for almost every business. With the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic still lingering, and revenue streams interrupted, many businesses are still being extremely cautious with their capital. One place where most businesses can cut back is on printing. Let's discuss how to cut your organization's printing costs.

Outlining the Metric That Will Save You Money

If yours is a business that typically relies heavily on printing, you probably pay a lot for ink/toner. It makes up for a large portion of any business' printing costs. If your business uses color printers, this cost skyrockets. A metric that can help you ascertain exactly what your printing costs are is cost-per-page. It basically takes all your print-related costs and divides it by the number of prints you can get with all your printing resources.

How to Calculate the Average Cost-Per-Page

To calculate the average cost per printed page all you need to do is divide the price of your ink/toner by the cartridge yield rating. This can be found on the packaging.

$22 on a cartridge of black ink with a yield of 518 pages, your formula would look like this...

22/518 = 0.042

...giving you a cost of about 4 cents per page.

Of course, not all ink cartridges you use are the same. Your organization may have several different types of printers that use different types of ink/toner. In calculating the total cost per page, you will be confronted with all of your different ink/toner purchases, your hardware costs, your maintenance costs, the cost to run the machine, and the paper you are using. That makes the equation much more difficult to solve, especially as the number of variables increases. All told, if you aren't actively looking to manage your printing costs, it can come in at something like $.10 per page. That adds up quickly.

Controlling Printing Costs

For organizations that depend on their printers and their printed resources, the best way to manage all the moving parts is by integrating a print management solution. With a print management system, you can actively control your printing costs by dictating who can print on certain machines, what they can print, and even provide an option to limit a specific user's printer access.

Another way to cut down on your printing costs is to deploy a document management system. These systems, typically used by organizations that are looking to go paperless, allow an organization to digitize all documents. This means that you are printing less but retaining all the valuable information that you would have typically filed away in a metal filing cabinet someplace in your office. With document management, you can have access to any document in your database at any time, on nearly every device. It also allows your company to reduce its carbon footprint.

If you are looking for a way to control your printing costs, or if you just want to remove a few shekels from your technology expenses, call the knowledgeable consultants at Virtual Business Solutions today at (504) 840-9800 ext. 105.

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Emotions Can Run High in the Workplace... Here's How to Manage Yours

The average person will spend an estimated one-third of their life at work. One third. That's a lot of time, providing plenty of opportunity to accumulate stress. Over time, these emotions could potentially overwhelm your employees and lead to a breakdown. This is, naturally, harmful to your business, so let's explore some strategies you can share with your team to help them deal with their workday stresses.

Separate Yourself from Your Stress

The feeling of rising stress is unmistakable, particularly when you've experienced it before. Sometimes, escaping this stress is a matter of actually moving yourself away from it. Take a break, walk away, and do some deep breathing. Removing yourself from the situation can make all the difference, allowing you to rally and recover.

On the emotional side of things, practice looking at things from an outside perspective. While the situation will still be stressful, doing your best to take yourself out of it and considering it as though it is happening to someone else can help to take off the pressure until you can collect yourself. It can also give you the insight needed to see the stress-inducing issues from a new perspective, allowing you to solve them more effectively.

Identify What Triggers Your Stress

If you want to avoid emotional breakdowns at work, it's important that you are able to figure out what sets you off so that you can adjust to avoid or minimize them. For instance, maybe you have a rough time handling criticism, or you get a little bit of stage fright while making a presentation. Once you've identified these triggers, you can start to create techniques to help you manage your response...maybe a quick conversation with a trusted coworker before you have to speak, or (as we alluded to above) taking a walk to process the criticism you've received.

Work Through Emotions

Speaking of processing criticism, it's important that any and all negative feelings are appropriately dealt with so that they don't interfere with workplace processes or relationships. Simply trying to push these feelings down and lock them away is exhausting and, frankly, unsustainable. This is why it is so important to take the time to process these emotions before they lead to the dreaded meltdown...

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Virtual Business Solutions has been serving the Metairie area since 1999, providing IT Support such as technical helpdesk support, computer support and consulting to small and medium-sized businesses. It's always been our goal to provide enterprise-level IT practices and solutions to the small business sector, with small business prices. Our experience has allowed us to build and develop the infrastructure needed to keep our prices affordable and our clients up and running.

Tech Trivia

The unified communications market is expected to grow to $48.3 billion by 2023.

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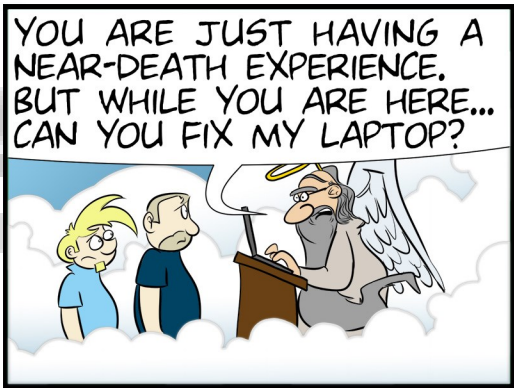
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