

Better Passwords: Keep Your Information Secure!



Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, south-east Michigan's leading small business computer support company.

It could be your email, your pictures, or your company documents and files - whatever you have on your computer needs to be protected from hackers,

identity thieves, nosy employees and other cyber troublemakers.

Imagine if all of your private, personal and company information were available on the public Internet. And then, take a few minutes to follow the steps below and help make your systems more secure.

Use a different password for each important service

Make sure you have a different password for every important account you have. Hackers will steal your username and password from one site, and then use them to try to log into lots of other sites where you might have an account.

Even large, reputable sites sometimes have their password databases stolen. If you use the same password

across many different sites, there's a greater chance it might end up on a list of stolen passwords. And the more accounts you have that use that password, the more data you might lose if that password is stolen.

Giving an account its own, strong password helps protect you and your information in that account.

Make your password hard to guess

"password." "123456." "My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die!" These examples are terrible passwords because everyone knows them - including potential attackers.

Making your passwords longer or more complicated makes them harder to guess for both bad guys and people who know you.

Complex and lengthy passwords can be a pain - the average password is shorter than eight characters, and many just contain letters. Analysis shows that only 54 percent of passwords include numbers, and only 3.7 percent have special characters like & or \$.

One way to build a strong password is to think of a phrase or sentence that other people wouldn't know and then use that to build your password.

For example, for your email you could think of a personal message like "I want to get better at responding to emails quickly and concisely" and then build your password from numbers, symbols, and the first letters of each word—"iw2gb@r2eq&c".

Don't use popular phrases or lyrics to build your password—research suggests that people gravitate to the same phrases, and you want your password to be something only you know.

Keep your password somewhere safe

Research shows that worrying about remembering too many passwords is the chief reason people reuse certain passwords across multiple services.

But don't worry - if you've created so many passwords that it's hard to remember them, it's OK to make a list and write them down. Just make sure you keep your list in a safe place, where you won't lose it and others won't be able to find it.

If you'd prefer to manage your passwords digitally, a trusted password manager might be a good option. Many web browsers have free password managers built into them, and there are many independent options as well.

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The Advantages Of Managed Services Over Traditional IT Services

by Frank Wright,
Service Manager

Of all the important aspects to a successful business, your company's IT systems are arguably the most important since these systems can impact all aspects of a business.

Many companies handle their IT resources in different ways, from having an in-house IT employee, to not having anyone, to managed services.

What exactly are all of these ways of taking care of your IT systems? With all the different approaches to taking care of your business what's the best option?

Some businesses choose not to have in-house IT staff as it's too expensive and instead go without IT support and try to fix problems on their own or ignore the issues all together.

The biggest problem with this approach, also known as a "Break Fix" approach, is that you generally always have downtime and issues with your IT systems since they are not properly cared for.

In addition to the high costs of downtime, when businesses finally break down and call for help the support can be very expensive since they are not on a support contract.

While many larger companies choose to have an in-house IT employee, or several for very large companies, this is not always the best option either.

One of the biggest problems with in-house IT staff is that they tend to have a knowledge base that is centered on one business's network so when problems arise it can be difficult for them to figure out what

the issue is.

When you use a service provider like Tech Experts, you are getting an IT tech that has a broad base of knowledge and can

very quickly adapt to your network and use knowledge of similar issues other organizations have had to correct your problem much faster.

For small to medium size businesses the cost of having an in-house IT employee is simply too expensive so they tend to go with the first option.

It is possible for small to medium sized businesses to get the same level of service or higher than having one in-house IT employee at a fraction of the cost as well.

The third option and the best option is called Managed Services. Managed Services give the IT provider the ability to proactively monitor the important aspects of your business's workstations and servers to prevent major issues before they cause costly downtime.

With our Managed Services platform, we offer a large number of software and hardware checks to keep your servers and workstations secure from hackers and running great for years.



We also offer several other benefits when combined in an all-inclusive, unlimited support, service contract. Our Managed Services platform offers the ability for us to connect to your computer and work with you remotely.

In most cases, we can solve your problem quickly so you don't have to wait for a tech to travel to your location.

We also offer offsite backups as an option to protect your business from a catastrophic data loss that can cause a company to go under in a few months after such an event.

Managed services are simply the best option for small to medium sized businesses due to the flexibility they offer and the high amount of protection offered.

If you would like to see what Managed Services can do for your company give us a call and we can setup a meeting to take a look at your current systems and get you a quote on what this would cost your business today!

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Why Are Windows And Software Updates Important?

by *Jeremy Miller,*
Technician

Everyone who owns a computer running Microsoft Windows has seen that pop-up alerting you that you have updates to install or that they have been installed. Updates are fixes for a known issue.

Microsoft uses an application called Windows Update Service to look for new updates, and then it categorizes the various updates by how critical they are.

There are security updates which patch vulnerabilities that can compromise your system.

Critical updates fix major issues found with Microsoft products that can cause errors or unusual behavior. Software updates are non-critical issues such as more features and minor bug fixes.

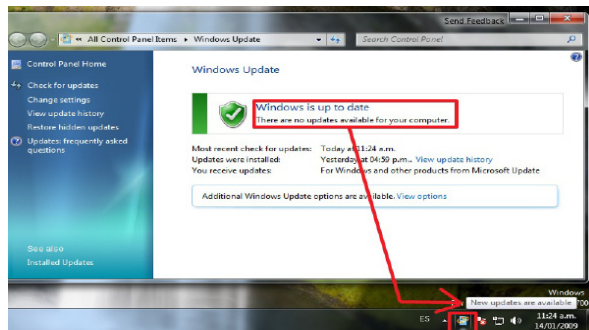
Service packs contain all updates and patches prior to the service pack. You can install a service pack to apply a large amount of updates at once. Also service packs can determine which software you can run.

It is important to update your computer to keep your computing environment stable. If you allow your computer to get too out of date such as not installing a service pack, you may not be able to run a lot of software.

Even worse if you do not install security updates you will have a larger “known” attack surface for exploits.

Windows is not the only software that updates. You have probably seen Adobe Reader, Flash Player, or Java letting you know that there are updates available for install in your system tray. They update for the same reason that Microsoft updates Windows.

Updates are important to keep your system secure and relatively issue free. Updates can also cause issues



sometimes. It is better to install the update on a computer to see if there will be an issue before deploying it to the entire network.

A good example of this is if Internet Explorer 10 has just been installed on your computer and now all of a sudden you cannot print a report, the latest update may be the issue. You should first attempt to work with the new update.

Internet Explorer 10 has compatibility mode to work with older websites, if that does not work you

may have to uninstall the update and use Internet Explorer 9. This happens because the company you are printing the report from is not compatible with the new Internet Explorer 10 browser.

You will have to wait until either the company updates their server to be compliant with Internet Explorer 10 or you will have to wait until Internet Explorer 10's compatibility will work with the site.

Keeping your software up to date is an important part of secure computing. Threats and security holes are

discovered every day; it is critical you apply any updates the manufacturer releases.

Not all updates apply to every environment, which means that not everyone will get the same updates; it is based on the software you have installed and when you installed it.

The only software that you should always update would be any anti-virus software. This software usually updates automatically several times a day. The moment your anti-virus gets out of date you are not protected with the latest anti-virus definitions.

If you are having trouble with updates and patching or if you have any questions give us a call. We can make sure your computers are up to date and keep you worry free.

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Advertising Via Social Media Sites

For all the hype that surrounds the use of social media when it comes to small businesses, many owners have learned the hard way that a Facebook or Twitter account alone is not going to drive up sales.

Successful social media campaigns need forethought, planning and skill and using a few tips can assist you to give more traction to your social media campaigns.

Advertisers often see Facebook as the social media site of choice but other social networks might actually be more effective for your particular brand.

LinkedIn for instance offers a wide array of users from the world of business while B2B clients might find Slideshare the ideal vehicle.

Advertising a niche product in a magazine aimed at the mass market is an obvious 'no-no' and the same applies to social networks.

Profile pages offer an amazing amount of data about users and this can be used very effectively to target the audience that best fits the demographic that you are targeting with your product or services.

Make use of video marketing

Seventy two percent of business executives watch videos that are related to business on business websites a minimum of once a week, according to Forbes. This means that you are seriously missing out on what may be one of the greatest lead generation techniques ever devised.

The bottom line is that creating an informative and compelling video is an excellent method of attracting attention from other businesses and

indeed today video marketing is almost essential as a lead generation technique.

The main thing when it comes to using video marketing is to have a plan.

Think about the audience that you are attempting to reach with this video, as there are likely to be different approaches and language used when trying to reach executives as opposed to average people.

You also need to think about the benefits that targeted viewers can glean from the video as without benefits there will be not much in the way of follow-up!

Keep things short, make sure the sound quality is good and include the logo of your company at both the start and end of the video.

Content publishing tips

Having a good hold on content generates a lot of opportunities before you have even started promoting your business due to the fact that you can create and edit and then even publish that content by yourself.

When you have become efficient enough to be able to cope with B2B content you will then be able to help the online reputation of your business grow. Publishing content leads to increased exposure over the internet and results in more and more potential clients

paying a visit to your website, so making sure that there is a good representation of that business is obviously going to help you generate and keep a good reputation.

The website's content should be free from errors and feature appropriate and accurate material. The accomplishment of the website, and by extension your business, is dependent on the content being of the absolute highest quality possible, which means there should be no compromises made of any kind.

There are a number of different techniques, both classic and decidedly offbeat, that can be used to help turn customers into subscribers and even passionate advocates for your business and brand.

One tried and trusted method is to give special treatment to your subscribers. This can take the form of office perks, offering services to subscribers (plus their networks) or one-day specials on products via your social media channels, providing online recognition by asking your followers to post their own stories about your services and products.

McHUMOR.com by T. McCracken



"Dear, could I suggest one small change for our next custom built tandem?"