

Avoid These Five Email Annoyances



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

Email is a primary form of communication in the business world because it allows people to work within their own schedules and time-management styles.

With its ease of use, however, we may be sending more messages than necessary, contributing to a general email overload that can mask which items are most important.

Here are some common pet peeves in regards to this lightning-fast communication that may help you refine your email practices:

Sending/Responding to All

Before you send a mass email to all of your contacts or reply to all on an email, ask yourself if each of those people really have a need to know the information within your message.

While this may cover all bases, it

is disrespectful to the recipients of your message that aren't an essential part of the conversation by wasting their time and clogging their inbox.

Attempting Complicated Conversations

If you know that an exchange is likely to require, well, a lot of exchanges, then email isn't the right venue for the job.

Although you will have a record of everything said, important information could be delayed and there will be a lot of unnecessary messages back and forth.

Your issue will be resolved more quickly if you just make a phone call.

Vague Subject Lines

Until your message's recipient actually opens your communication, all that will be visible is the subject line.

Since you don't know the other person's schedule, be respectful of their time and create a subject line that gives a real inkling as to the content of your message.

This way, he or she can scan the inbox and still have an idea if it's

crucial to open your communication right then or if it can wait until later in the day.

Eleventh-Hour Cancellations

If you need to cancel or reschedule a meeting at the last minute, this is definitely a time to pick up a phone and call.

You don't know for sure if the other person or group is even going to see that email before showing up at a meeting or event, and leaving such a thing to chance could wreak havoc with their schedule when their time could be better spent on other things.

Not Responding

Although generic emails don't usually require a response, don't forget to respond to legitimate emails.

Even if you're short on time and won't be able to answer a question posed in an email fully, it only takes a few moments to shoot a message that says, "I'll look into that and be back with you later today."

This lets the sender know you've seen the email and will address its contents in due time. Be sure to flag it for followup, so you remember to send the response.

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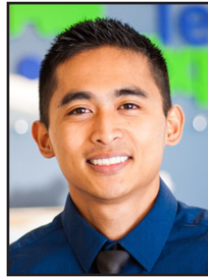


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Benefits Of Remote Monitoring And Management

“Remote technology is such a great tool that any industry can take advantage of its uses.”



Michael Menor is Vice President of Support Services for Tech Experts.

Remote technology is so efficient and popular that it’s infiltrating many industries that you’d

be surprised to hear about. One such sector is the healthcare department.

Some doctors are taking advantage of the leaps and bounds made by technology to help their patients get back on their feet as easily as possible.

As managed service providers, our primary goal is to use remote technology to help users solve their IT crises. Similarly, doctors can use remote technology to diagnose and treat patients, much like how we do with our own systems.

United Healthcare, one of the largest health insurance providers in the United States, supports what WIRED magazine calls “telemedicine,” a video visit from a doctor who offers consultation services rather than an in-person appointment. As reported by WIRED:

United says it will cover virtual doctor visits offered through Now-Clinic, Doctor on Demand, and American Well. These platforms connect patients with thousands of doctors—albeit not the patient’s usual doctor—via video

chat. These consultations typically cost \$40 to \$50 a pop, but now that United is covering these visits, members will only have to pay their usual co-pay, making virtual medicine much more affordable for more people. For now, these virtual visits will be available only to UnitedHealth’s self-funded customers, but the feature will expand to most members by next year.

Remote technology is helping more people stay healthy simply by allowing them to access a doctor’s consultation whenever they need to.

This makes it more convenient for not only the patient, but the doctor as well. They don’t have to arrange for an on-site diagnosis and they can avoid contagious sicknesses more easily.

It’s simply a much more efficient way of doing things and allows for more affordable healthcare in general.

In fact, remote technology is such a great tool that any industry can take advantage of its uses, from teaching or training to communicating between other locations to customer service.

Personally, we at Tech Experts perform most of our maintenance remotely. Managed IT companies use remote technology to ensure that a business’s operations continue to run smoothly.

With the assistance of remote technology, Tech Experts can

monitor your business’s systems for critical security flaws and administer patches accordingly. This helps us prevent damage that cannot be undone, like a loss of business data or personal information.

The primary reason remote technology is so useful for managed IT service providers is that your business avoids most on-site visits, eliminating the costs associated with them.

This frees up a significant amount from your budget and allows for more effective use of your IT expenses. Every time you opt for remote management and maintenance, you’re saving your business money.

In fact, most issues can be resolved without an on-site visit. Granted, some hardware problems cannot be resolved remotely, so you can’t completely eliminate the costs of on-site visits; however, being able to mitigate them is often more than enough to make a difference.

Here at Tech Experts, we’re happy to see that remote support is breaking free of the stigma of only being used by hackers to control your PC.

It’s finally being embraced as a useful, beneficial tool that all businesses can use to save time and money.

If you have any questions about remote possibilities, give us a call!

Create new service requests, check ticket status and review invoices in our client portal: <http://www.TechSupportRequest.com>

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IT Consultations: Trust In Those That Know



Scott Blake is a Senior Network Engineer with Tech Experts.

It seems that these days anyone can read an article or watch a video online and consider themselves an expert

in one way or another, but when it comes to upgrading or making changes to your business infrastructure, is it wise to take and follow the advice of someone that has no hands-on or working knowledge of the IT industry or your business?

Ask yourself this: if your car needed repairs, would you take it to a lawyer or a mechanic?

Instantly, you answer “the mechanic” because the mechanic works on cars.

So in comparison, should you follow the advice of a visiting client, sales rep, or friend of an employee?

No, because none of these people know the intricacies of your business IT needs and functionality.

Will they know to check with your software vendors to verify compatibility with a new operating system?

If the plan calls for upgrading workstations and/or servers that are running outdated, unsupported operating systems, you need to check and make sure your existing software is supported on the new operating system.

Usually, accounting and office

productivity software are the types most affected by changes in operating system platforms.

In some cases, a business may have spent large amounts of money to have specialized software written years ago, but unfortunately, it may not install or run on a modern operating system.

Will they know how to check and see if your internal network wiring needs to be upgraded?

If the plan calls to move your business phone system to a VOIP system, you need to make sure your existing network cabling will support it.

Cabling has categories and certain categories are more applicable to your needs than others.

Whoever is handling your IT needs to recognize what would be best and what wouldn't work in your situation.

Keep in mind that when upgrading, you're also future-proofing. It's best to spend a little more on higher-quality equipment to extend the life of your upgrade.

Will they know how to calculate the amount of disk and cloud storage your business will require?

Electronic storage for your business is key. Knowing what needs to stay local and what needs to be stored in the cloud is paramount to your business' success (and recovery, should there be a disaster).

The cost of secure cloud storage needs to be weighed against the cost of maintaining on-site local

data storage. Localized storage will allow for faster access while in the building.

However, if your business has remote employees, cloud storage would be the optimal way to allow access to documents, applications, and software without having to support RDP or VPN connections into your network. This reduces the risk of outside intrusion.

Are they able to suggest the correct security devices and software for your business?

The security needs for every business are different. What works for Bob's Golf Land may not be the best solution for your business.

A proper evaluation of your business network needs to be performed. Certain questions need to be asked and answered, such as “is a software-based firewall best for your business?” or “will you need dual WAN routers to allow for multiple ISP connections?”

If you have any doubt after considering these questions, you've got the wrong person for the job.

Seek out an experience and established IT professional and before making any changes, consult with them. Trust their advice. They will evaluate your business infrastructure and build a plan of action for successfully upgrading your business network and equipment.

Interested in a network evaluation or an infrastructure upgrade consultation? We can do those too... and we do it right! Contact us at Tech Experts — (734) 457-5000, or info@mytechexperts.com.

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Contact Information

24 Hour Computer
Emergency Hotline
(734) 240-0200

General Support
(734) 457-5001
(888) 457-5001

support@MyTechExperts.com

Sales Inquiries
(734) 457-5001
(888) 457-5001

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TECH
EXPERTS

15347 South Dixie Highway

Monroe, MI 48161

Tel (734) 457-5001

Fax (734) 457-4332

info@MyTechExperts.com

Buying A New Printer? Here's What To Look For

Printers are essential in day-to-day office use. Whether one is needed to create fillable forms or prepare handouts for a presentation, a printer is a valuable tool in general productivity and collaborative projects.

As such, the investment in a new printer is a big deal, and here are some of the most important things to consider when choosing one.

Black vs. Color

Monochrome printers that just use black ink or toner are usually cheaper and may be sufficient for office needs. Full color printers, however, can be used in creating eye-catching booklets, brochures, or flyers, but these are often more expensive for the initial purchase and upkeep.

Functions

Printing isn't the only thing a

printer can do. There are a host of other functions available from copying to faxing to scanning. Review what other office equipment is on hand, and that may narrow the functions needed. For instance, if the office already has a copier, then that function really isn't necessary in a new printer.

Paper Handling Characteristics

A printer's paper handling encompasses more than one thing. It refers to how much paper it can hold, which can be crucial for busy office settings, and also the sizes of paper it can handle. The ability to do double-sided printing or presence of an automatic document feeder are other things to consider.

Type of Connectivity

There are three primary modes of connectivity for printers – USB, Ethernet, and wireless – and a

printer could have just one or all three. Nowadays, nearly all printers have USB connectivity, but Ethernet connectivity is important for wired office networks. If you want to reduce cords and use it on your wireless network, wireless connectivity is a must.

Replacement Toner/Ink Cost

The total cost of a new printer does not end with the initial purchase; the toner or ink will need periodic replacement. Often, toner and ink are far more expensive than the printer itself, so getting a good deal on the device doesn't necessarily translate into a good deal for the long run.

It only takes a few moments to check the price of replacement toner and ink, and this can save the company a lot of money in the future.

Can Your Car Really Be Hijacked?

On your daily commute, imagine your car suddenly not responding to your driving cues. Turn the steering wheel, and nothing happens. Push the brake, and you don't stop. Few things could be more frightening than hurdling through space at any speed and not knowing what will happen. This scenario may sound like a scene from a science fiction or adventure movie, but it is certainly possible. Wired reporter, Andy Greenwood, recently proved that today's smart vehicles can be remotely accessed and controlled by hackers.

While the likelihood of someone with the means and know-how to hack your personal vehicle may be low, the mere possibility of it happening shakes our very foundation of how we see the world. After all, there's enough to worry about when driving:

from animals suddenly crossing in front of you to weather conditions with the potential to send you careening off the road. Now, there's this. Pretty much any device with a CPU is at risk to being hacked and controlled from afar, whether it is a pacemaker or a washing machine.

This is what Andy Greenburg set out to illustrate when he arranged for his Jeep Cherokee to be hijacked by two car-hacking researchers. The researchers were able to gain control of Greenburg's vehicle, transforming his role from driver to passenger in little time. They turned the steering wheel, jerked on the reporter's seat belt, and even disabled the brakes using the Internet. Much of the not-so-amusing shenanigans were controlled through Fiat Chrysler's "Uconnect" feature, which electronically manages

a vehicle's navigation, entertainment features, and more. Basically, a vulnerability in this system let the hackers in.

While it is possible to remotely hijack vehicles without this Uconnect feature, this vulnerability is now well-known and puts certain Chryslers at an even greater risk to this new technological danger. The Uconnect package is an option offered for 2013 through 2015 Chrysler and Dodge cars and trucks, including the Jeep Cherokee, Dodge Ram, and Dodge Charger. The good news is that, if you have a vehicle featuring the Uconnect package, there is a fix that can be installed. Although it is possible to do it yourself by visiting the Chrysler website and downloading it onto a USB drive, this is a job perhaps best left to the dealership.