June 2020

TechTidbit.com

brought to you by Tech Experts

The Latest Small Business Security SNAFU? Zoom

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

With everyone now working from home and finding new ways to collaborate and get things done, Zoom has become one of the most popular video conferencing applications, reporting growth of 378% over just one year ago.

As its popularity has grown, so has the allure for hackers. The FBI in Boston reported that two online high school classes had been interrupted by individuals who began yelling obscenities and the address of the teacher to another which displayed swastika tattoos. So how does this happen?

To start, most recurring meetings use the same meeting IDs. Someone, in an effort to make sure other attendees were aware of the event, would share it in an unsecured way, such as on Facebook or other social media. Hackers can pick up this information, and even after the event was over, they could use the same information to gain access to the next meeting. Fortune Magazine has reported that dark web dedicated forums have popped up on popular sites like Reddit, and all a hacker would need to do on Facebook is search for "zoom.us" to find any public post containing the targeted words.

So what is a business to do to secure their meetings and avoid the potential sharing of sensitive corporate information during this time of extensive virtual meetings? First, and foremost, set your meeting to private. This means that there is a password required for each participant to enter. Although Zoom has now changed this setting to be the default setting, some users are still opting to make the meeting public for the sake of convenience.

As inconvenient as it is to have invitees enter a password to get into their meeting, it's even more inconvenient to have sensitive corporate information released. Also... and this might seem to be stating the obvious but do not share your meeting invite over social media.

No matter our security settings on social media profiles, it's best to assume that nothing you say on there will stay private. Another way to ensure the security of your zoom meeting is to use the feature of the waiting room. This means that each invitee who logs in will first be placed into a room where the meeting host then has to approve their entry and allowing the host to assess each attendee before they enter the room.

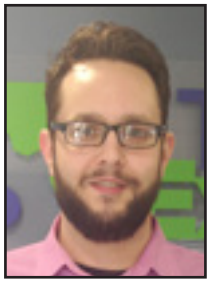
Also, never use your personal ID. Each zoom user has a personal virtual meeting room assigned when they create an account. Defaulting to using your assigned virtual meeting room can make it easier for hackers to enter in from old meeting announcements.

You know the phrase, what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas? Yeah. When it comes to Zoom (and any virtual meeting for that matter) assume what happens in Zoom does not stay in Zoom. If the information that is going to be shared is of such critical nature, you should find another medium where you have no chance of being overheard.

Another way to ensure the security of your zoom meeting is to use the feature of the waiting room. This means that each invitee who logs in will first be placed into a room where the meeting host then has to approve their entry and allowing the host to assess each attendee before they enter the room.

Covid-19's Effects On The Tech We Use Every Day

"With no manufacturing, there was no inventory being created, including PC parts. This affected the entire sector and the shortage is on-going."



Jason Cooley is Support Services Manager at Tech Experts.

As we all know, most of the world was basically shut down earlier this year. There was no planning or infrastructure in place to help ease the burden of entire populations staying home. Consequently, the domino effect hit hard.

People rushed out to stock up on essentials like toilet paper and sanitizer. Overbuying then created a new issue as supply chains struggled to keep up with demand. Shipping times overall started to slow.

Amazon, whose Prime subscription service is famous for its 1-2 day shipping time, prioritized essential items for their guaranteed delivery. From personal experience, I had an Amazon item that did not ship for two weeks after ordering. This was solely due to the de-prioritization of nonessential goods.

The United States Post Office has had severe delays as well, specifically in their larger Metropolitan areas, and have been buried under a Christmas season-like load with a much smaller workforce.

Manufacturing as a whole took an almost immediate hit. Most manufacturing facilities have a large number of employees in an enclosed area. This presented a huge risk for the spread of the disease, causing automobile manufacturers, food processing plants, and computer manufacturers to send their employees home and shut their doors.

Why does manufacturing being put on hold matter so much? Once again, it's due to the struggle to meet demands.

While many industries did put a hold on their business, many others made a quick transition to remote work. Many companies, both big and small, scrambled to obtain laptops for their employees to allow them to work from home.

While companies worked out remote solutions for their employees, schools had also closed down all over the country.

Some schools had existing devices for their students, such as Chromebooks, but many schools did not. To continue the learning process during the pandemic, more computers were needed for students to do their work. All of these new needs for computers – primarily from online retailers – created a huge surge in PC sales, but also created a real issue. Inventory was running out all over the United States and a computer shortage began.

With no manufacturing, there was no inventory being created, including PC parts. This affected the entire sector and the shortage is on-going.

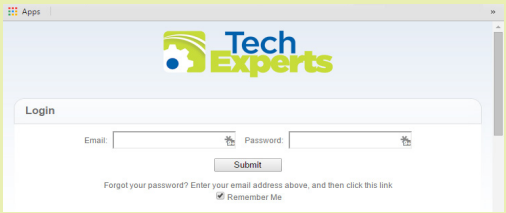
All faces of technology – from the big guys like Amazon to smaller companies – have felt the effects of the pandemic. They have also done their part to help.

Auto plants changed their lines over from making cars to making respirators. Amazon put a high priority on essential items and medical supplies. Many other industries and businesses have shifted their production to meet immediate needs such as masks.

There is some silver lining in all of this. Seeing companies band together for the good of people without thinking of profit has been reassuring. The phrase "unprecedented times" has been used more times than we can count, but now that we have that precedent, let's hope we can learn from it.

Create new service requests, check ticket status, and review invoices in our client portal:

http://TechSupportRequest.com



Should I Go, Or Should I Wait? Re-opening Tips

Stay at home orders are being lifted, businesses are beginning to reopen. Our world is being turned on its head again, and normal will never be the same again.

As we begin to reopen our doors and essentially relaunch our businesses, here are some things to think about to get you started.

Be very careful about what and where you make cost cuts

Uncertainty naturally causes us to restrict, and this is by no means bad. You may have to make cuts in order to get things back on their feet. But Inc Magazine contributor, Graham Winfrey, cautions to you make those cuts wisely.

In his interview with Manny Cosme, the CEO and President of a CFO and Bookkeeping business, he was advised to make projections before you make cuts. Cosme said that businesses need to think about growing their way out of the crisis.

He said, "Every cut that you make is going to cut your ability to generate revenue or keep your business going, which is not something you want to be doing right now." So think very carefully about what, and even if, you are going to make any cuts as you reopen.

Look closely at your business model

No matter how much we wish we could just go back to the way things were, we have all experienced significant changes over the last few weeks. Nothing feels better than returning to some sort of normalcy.

But one thing we have learned over this global health crisis is the ability of the entrepreneur and the business owner to pivot and meet their consumers' needs where they are. Changing your business model in light of the pandemic just might be what saves your business.

Graham Winfrey suggests you ask yourself 3 questions:

- What should your business model be when you come out of this?
- Is your current business model viable? If so, how can you hang on until it's viable again?
- Are there ways you can pivot all of your expertise into a better revenue stream?

All Phases	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
• Develop policies for social distancing, cleaning, business travel, and other areas • Monitor workforce for indicative symptoms • Develop policies for contact tracing following positive COVID-19 test	• Encourage telework • Return to work in phases • Close common areas or enforce **strict** protocols • Minimize nonessential travel • Special accommodations for members of a vulnerable population	• Encourage telework • Close common areas or enforce **moderate** protocols • Nonessential travel can resume • Special accommodations for members of a vulnerable population	• Resume unrestricted staffing of worksites

Along with his panelist in the article on Inc, Cosme believes that it comes down to changing one or more of the following within your business model:

- What you sell
- Whom you sell it to
- How you deliver it

Evaluate local support options

Throughout this crisis, many federal and local supports have been extended to small business and their employees. Graham suggests that you look to your local chamber of commerce to see what local support programs may have been crafted to help you as you reopen your doors.

Create policies to ensure the safety of both your employees and customers

After you have completed the above steps, now you should create your communication plan for letting your customers know you will be open for business.

George Brandt in his article in Forbes suggests you approach it in three steps: Emotional, rational, and inspirational.

Be authentic

George suggests that you connect with your audience in an authentic, relatable and compassionate way.

Empathize with your consumer that you know this was difficult for them as well as for you. George quotes PrimeGenesis' saying, "No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

Lay out the facts

With calm composure, polite and authoritative, lay out the hard facts of the current situation. For them and for you.

George defines the facts as "things that any rational person would agree are true no matter what bias or perspective they bring to the situation – objective, scientific truths as opposed to subjective, personal, cultural or political truths, opinions or conclusions."

Think ahead and paint an optimistic view

George recommends that you ground all your communication with Mayfield and Mayfield's meaning-making and direction-giving language, meaning providing purpose and value: be - do - say.

The New Normal COVID-19 Office Security

With continued WFH policies and multiplied COVID-19 scams and threats, the importance of good cyber security stands out. Indeed, with a workforce that is highly dependent on digital services for the foreseeable future, the new normal COVID-19 office security is necessarily stronger, more vigilant, and more dispersed.

Yet, a lot of questions remain unanswered. For example, will behavioral surveillance be part of the new normal? As organizations plan to implement contact tracing, privacy advocates voice their concerns.

Given the uncertainty, we expect to see these non-intrusive measures with clearly defined benefits coming to the new normal.

Thermal cameras for passive temperature checking

The advantages of temperature detection for a business COVID-19 strategy include early discovery and reporting leading to early isolation and treatment.

Advanced temperature detection technology is not a substitute for medical grade FDA approved thermometers. The advantage of an advanced thermal camera system is that it can pick out personnel with abnormal body temperatures in heavy traffic areas to be assessed later by a professional with medically approved equipment.

These systems use an HD video camera and thermal camera side by side looking at the same field of view. The resulting video and metadata output, when combined with advanced artificial intelligence, gives sensible temperature data on multiple objects simultaneously.

Some systems employ facial detection technology paired with a face database and a high temperature detection alarm. They can identify up to 16 targets with a temperature accuracy of .54° F and come with an easy to use interface.

In-office security cameras

Also likely to become more common, in-office security cameras provide a video record of events. They function as a tool to answer concerns about what happened if a COVID-19 behavioral complaint surfaces. The societal resistance to surveillance will likely be counter-balanced by the desire to maintain a safe work environment.

Plexiglas barriers

Plexiglas® extruded acrylic sheets promote both worker and consumer safety to help control the spread of the virus.

Sneeze guards made from Plexiglas make sense. So, it is logical to see their use extended in the office to create barriers between closely seated workers. We'll see them in other areas to promote social distancing.

Health questions

The CDC recently issued guidance recommending that employers actively encourage sick employees to stay home. Interpreting this guidance, the EEOC confirmed that the rules of the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act continue to apply but do not prevent employers from following guidelines from the CDC and other public health authorities regarding COVID-19.

Per the EEOC's guidance, employers may ask employees who report feeling ill at work, or who call in sick, questions about their symptoms to determine if they may have COVID-19. In addition, they may require employees to stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms, screen applicants for symptoms of COVID-19, delay the start date or withdraw the offer of an applicant with symptoms.

Thus, employers may find it necessary to ask employees about their symptoms. They might require notification of high body temperatures, and request disclosure of recent proximity to individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. In doing so, they must be mindful to do it consistently and avoid discriminatory use of the results.

To simplify the process and avoid collecting unnecessary information, employers may simply ask employees to stay home if they show certain symptoms, rather than asking them about the specific symptoms they have.

Work from home security

The WFH new normal creates multiple security challenges that must be addressed. From simple provisioning issues like shredders for employees handling sensitive documents to updated incident response plans, new circumstances demand new security responses.

For example, the company's business continuity plan should be updated to address new fail-over and backup procedures. Also, the difficulty of securing and verifying credentials in a remote environment will encourage the use of multifactor authentication.

In addition, with less physical oversight of employees, organizations may need to focus more on user activity. Access logs and user behavior analysis come to mind. Increased threats require increased employee education. And, employees also need to know how to report security risks or threats through all the currently used communication channels (in addition to email).

Contact Information

24 Hour Computer Emergency Hotline
(734) 240-0200

General Support
(734) 457-5000
(888) 457-5001
support@MyTechExperts.com

Sales Inquiries
(734) 457-5000
(888) 457-5001
sales@MyTechExperts.com

Take advantage of our client portal!
Log on at:
www.TechSupportRequest.com

TECH EXPERTS

15347 South Dixie Highway
Monroe, MI 48161
Tel (734) 457-5000
Fax (734) 457-4332
info@MyTechExperts.com