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Are You Making Yourself Vulnerable Over Social Media?



Social media might make it easy to stay connected, but it comes with a lot of negative side-effects

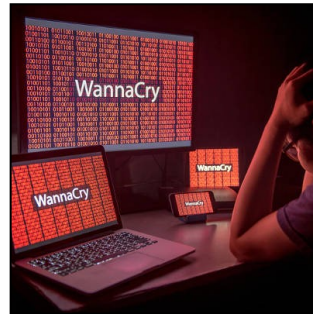
--particularly in regard to security for both personal and professional use. If social media isn't used properly, it could spell trouble for your organization. How can you foster proper social media usage so that your organization doesn't suffer from poor security practices? It all starts by spreading awareness.

There are a lot of reasons why social media can be troublesome. For one, it's simply not safe...



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A New Perspective on Ransomware



We are going to switch things up a bit and walk you through a retelling of a ransomware attack through the eyes of a business owner. Usually when we talk about these types of threats, we approach it from our perspective and talk about what you should do to prepare and what the threats are, but we wanted to try to show you what an event like this could feel like, for you, in your position, and in your own eyes. We hope that this will raise awareness of how crippling an event like this can be on your company, and we hope you let us know if this perspective helps you, your colleagues, and your staff get a more personal sense of what ransomware can do. Enjoy!

What a day it has been!

Typically, when I have a day like I just had, I wouldn't sit here and write about it, but since our story is sure to help people, I thought that I should. Besides, my adrenaline is still pumping, and I don't think I can sleep yet anyway.

The day I had was terrifying but started just like any other. I got through my morning routine and made my way to the office. I even stopped at the shoppe to get coffee. Once I entered the building I knew something was wrong. I had two employees beat me to the office. They were milling around almost aimlessly in the hallway. Before I even reached my desk, I was inundated with bad news.

"We are locked out!"

"What are we supposed to do?"

After getting past my employees into my office, I tried to ascertain what the problem was. It was evident very quickly that we had a major problem on our hands.

@!#!? It's ransomware! I can't believe it!

It could only be ransomware.

I wasn't sure what allowed this to happen. Did one of my staff click on a bad link? Was our network vulnerable from the get go? Since the ransomware had spread onto the network, I could tell that the affected computer had to be used to manage other endpoints, pushing ransomware to all the endpoints the terminal had managed. This is why the computers that were on the network had the same message. This means that it ended up stealing usernames and passwords to open each endpoint and lock down the data on them.

It is during this period that the entity that unleashed this beast on us would look to take as much data as they could. It turned out that my company was using a global password configuration and the ransomware spread throughout our network like wildfire. So, when I was met with the message, I knew exactly what I was dealing with.

I never for a second thought that it would happen to us. Our business doesn't deal with major financial institutions or medical records, so it would seem to keep us safe from these kinds of security breaches. I guess I'm just the latest person to ask, "why us?"

For those who don't know, ransomware is any type of malicious application that "kidnaps"

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5G Improves Upon What 3G and 4G Established



You might see 3G and 4G on your mobile devices and wonder what it all means. If so, we have an answer for you, and just in time for a brand-new iteration: 5G. With this new technology on its way, it's time to take a look at what exactly 5G should be capable of, and how it can differentiate itself from its predecessors.

Keep in mind that we still likely won't receive 5G in any meaningful capacity before 2020, although we should be able to glean important insights from how it can affect business and connectivity on a greater scale.

What Does 5G Stand For?

As the technology behind it is on its fifth generation, 5G is simply an abbreviation for "fifth generation." This is according to the IEEE 802.11ac standard put in place for broadband technology. It's predicted that 5G will focus primarily on connectivity, user experience,

enhanced services, system performance, and business management. As reported by TechWorld, 5G technology needs to have these features in order to be a 5G device:

- One to 10Gbps connections to end points in the field
- One millisecond end-to-end round-trip delay
- 1000x bandwidth per unit area
- 10 to 100x number of connected devices
- (Perception of) 99.999 percent availability
- (Perception of) 100 percent coverage
- 90 percent reduction in network energy usage
- Up to ten-year battery life for low power, machine-type devices

3G and 4G were also known for bringing about unique improvements that showcased the strong points of technology at their time of implementation. 3G focused on improving connectivity, whereas 4G took measures to improve the speed of this connection. As it stands now, 5G could be an even faster connection, and it's suspected that this

will be used to leverage great opportunities for businesses and consumers.

Some Downsides

Even though 5G seems to present a considerable advantage over its predecessors, it's expected that 5G won't be available for everyone after it is officially released. The reason for this is specifically the pricing of brand new technology, but the price will likely fall as time progresses. In the meantime, it's possible that devices manufactured with 5G connectivity will also suffer in price, but at this cost, they will also be less prone to falling out of date, like 3G or 4G will inevitably do.

Thankfully, much of the technology industry is embracing 5G with open arms. Major producers of technology solutions such as Samsung, Nokia, and Qualcomm have already begun to invest in 5G, so the future is already bright for this new communications medium.



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A New Perspective on Ransomware

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the data and holds it for ransom. It can shut down the files of a single computer, or in our experience, it can spread over the network to several endpoints; effectively shutting down operations for long stretches of time. I wanted to share my experience to help you know what to expect if you are one of the unfortunate business owners that have to have all the answers.

Don't Panic

No matter how prepared you are for something like this, at first, you feel panic. Typically, you are immediately overwhelmed and are left kind of dumbfounded, glancing around the room, looking for answers that aren't there. Regrettably, if you are doing that, the damage is done and there is nothing

you can do about that. Scenarios race by in your head and the more they turn negative, the more the fear builds up in the base of your neck, in your throat, or in the pit of your stomach. You need to stay as calm as you can and begin troubleshooting immediately. The thing about ransomware is you can't just wait it out. Once that wave of fear subsides, you have to make a measured response, because you likely have people that are on the clock, and an IT infrastructure that is locked down.

After the initial shock, I went to work.

Fighting Ransomware

I learned quickly that there are two main types of ransomware:

- **Locker** - Malware that locks the computer or device.

- **Crypto** - Malware that encrypts data and files.

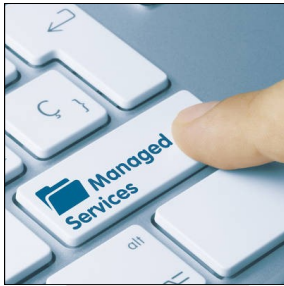
The type we were unfortunate enough to encounter was WannaCry, a crypto ransomware that has infected millions of people worldwide by taking advantage of an unpatched Windows vulnerability. As a small business, our technology management was pieced together, but after this event, and all we've learned from it, we will definitely be sure to make our staff cognizant of how to avoid situations like this.

For us, we had three machines infected with a variant of WannaCry...



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<https://dti.io/perspective>

Reduce Your Technology Headaches Go with Managed IT



Does your business have trouble with managing and maintaining your technology? If so, you're not

alone. Many small businesses struggle with even the most basic elements of IT maintenance. Wouldn't it be nice if you could just take this responsibility and shift it off of your employees? The best way to approach technology maintenance is to implement managed IT services.

Small businesses often neglect IT maintenance because they can't afford to hire in-house technicians. These kinds of skills are in high demand, which often means that small businesses--with their limited budgets--have trouble finding technicians that they can afford. Furthermore, these skills might be region-locked, meaning that they are more difficult to find in certain areas

than others, making it challenging to find the skills you need, when they're needed.

A lot of businesses tend to do one of two things: have their current employees (who aren't trained IT technicians) perform most of the work, or they simply don't get the work done at all. Both of these situations are far from desirable. Either the work will get done poorly, or the work doesn't get done at all. In fact, a project implementation gone wrong could be even more costly if it has to be redone, putting even more pressure on your organization.

In these types of situations, it's helpful to have someone you rely on to get the work done right. Managed IT services allow small businesses to take advantage of many services that allow them to focus on creating revenue, rather than managing technology. Your company can leverage all of the great technology solutions that larger businesses don't think twice about. Whether you need supplemental technology

maintenance or full-on management of your in-house network, Directive has you covered.

We offer several services to small businesses in your area, including:

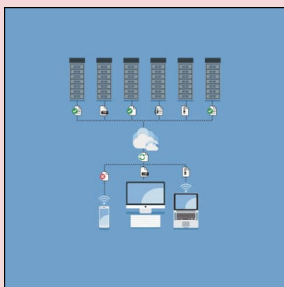
- Security solutions: Spam protection, content filtering, anti-virus, and firewalls
- Business continuity: Data backup, disaster recovery
- Communications: Voice over Internet Protocol, email hosting
- Network management: Remote monitoring and management
- Software and hardware procurement

Does your business need help managing technology? Directive wants to make sure that you're always on top of your technology maintenance. To learn more, reach out to us at 607.433.2200.



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Hosted Utility Computing Allows Businesses to Centralize Their IT



Your business relies on technology to ensure operations proceed smoothly, but the way that it's man-

aged can have a major impact on the way your company functions. Think about it like this: if you have software solutions hosted on different computers, but not in any centralized location, only those computers will be able to use these solutions--potentially hampering your staff's ability to be productive. How can you make sure that this doesn't become a major problem?

Centralizing your company's IT assets should be a priority, as it promotes accessibility and flexibility for your entire company. When you have your business

network assets centralized in one location, all sorts of possibilities open up. For example, you don't have to worry about data being inaccessible at any point, which can often be a major hurdle.

For a lot of businesses, centralization means hosting company assets in a place where every single employee can access what they need to do their job. In essence, it means utilizing an innovative technology plan led by cloud computing. Cloud computing is the act of making assets available through the virtual environment known as the cloud. It can be something as simple as email access, or it can be something as complex as infrastructure hosting.

Either way, the point that we're trying to get across is that it's a centralized location for important information.

There are many important factors to keep in mind that stem from centralizing your business' IT. Here are just a few of them.

- **Near-constant access:** Hosting applications and programs in your cloud solution allows for access to just about anything that a business might need to remain active. Since access is near-constant, your employees will be able to work remotely if needed, allowing them to either catch up on missed work or get ahead from anywhere there is an Internet connection.
- **User-based delegation:** If your employees have access to all information on your network, you're managing a considerable amount...



Read the Rest Online!
<https://dti.io/centralizeit>

Leveraging Content Marketing in a B2B Strategy



When engaging in business-to-business marketing, your content plays a huge role in your success. Whether you're creating social media content, blogging, creating articles for your web pages, creating newsletter content, or even working an in-person event, you need to make sure your content is effectively benefitting your marketing.

We're here to help, so we've compiled some key considerations to make as you shape your content marketing strategy through each of the above tactics.

Social Media Content

The first rule of using social media as a marketing tool: be consistent. In order for your social media to be effective, your audience needs to see that you are able to provide value on a regular, predictable basis. By setting, and sticking to, a pattern to base your social media activities to, your audience will start to see you as dependable, meaning that they will more likely turn to you first. Furthermore, as you construct your social media content, it helps to follow some tried, tested, and true techniques in your copywriting.

PAS - Problem + Agitation + Solution

Presenting and/or reminding your audience of a potential issue they could face (or may be currently suffering from) is not only one way to get your audience's attention, it also establishes you as someone who understands their particular issues. As a result, the solution you then offer is only more enticing for them to click on.

AIDA - Attention + Interest + Desire + Action

In order to make an impression on your audience, you first have to get their attention. Composing your social media posts to grab this attention before eliciting some desire in your audience will help you to introduce the idea that you can fulfil one of their needs. By immediately following this idea with an opportunity to learn more about how you can help them, you can catch your audience at the moment that their interest is piqued.

PAPA - Problem + Advantages + Proof + Action

Once again starting the conversation by bringing up a commonly experienced problem or deficit, the PAPA method then has one bring up the advantages of no longer experiencing that problem or deficit. These advantages are then validated with some fact or statistic, with a call-to-action driving your audience toward your desired action.

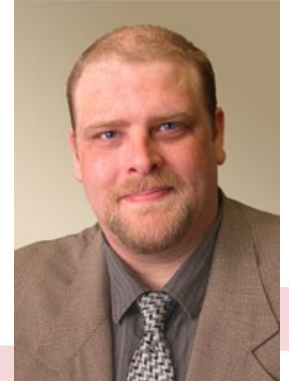
Of course, you also need to keep the best practices for each social network in mind that will allow you to leverage each one's algorithm. This will help you to maximize your content's visibility on these social networks, garnering more impressions to ultimately nurture into conversions.

Blog Content

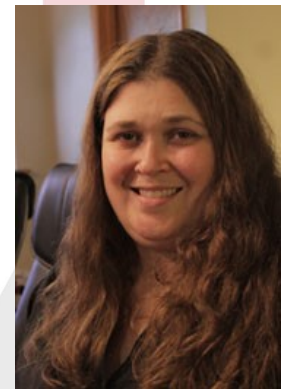
While creating blog content may seem like a simple prospect on the surface, it takes premeditation and strategy to use a...



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