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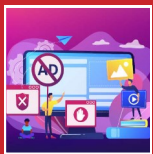
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What's the Benefit of Content Filtering?



Wasting time is a big concern in any business, and this is one place where the Internet can potentially hurt as much as it helps. Of course, it does still help, as the Internet is where many of today's business tools are accessed. How can you ensure that your team is spending their time working, rather than on social media or other distracting websites?

Directive has the answer in a content filtering solution. Let's review



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Cyberattacks Have Gone Way Up Since the Pandemic Started



We've been predicting it, and feeling it, but now the numbers are in. Officially, cybersecurity attacks have increased significantly since the start of the COVID-19 crisis - in particular the lockdown.

What Tipped Us Off - It Fits the Patterns of the Cybercriminal Playbook

First, it's important to understand that cybercriminals are opportunists. If a critical flaw or vulnerability is found in a popular piece of software, they try to take advantage of it before the entire world updates the software. This is called a zero-day attack.

On the other hand, if they can profit without needing to develop malware or other software (that can take time and money to produce), they will. We see this a lot with phishing attacks. There is nothing revolutionary about a phishing attack. It's not difficult to spoof an email to try to trick somebody. The fact that it works so well is why it is one of the most prominent and dangerous types of attacks targeting businesses today.

Cybercriminals have been known to take advantage of chaotic situations. Just look at how most phishing attacks work - the messaging sounds urgent, often claiming that if the user

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Structure Your Backup Platform to Your Business' Needs



There are a lot of different ways that companies and organizations approach data backup, ranging from backing up everything to backing up literally nothing (which we do not recommend). In many ways, backup is simply a form of insurance—the difference being that you're investing in a solution to a problem, rather than a means to cover your business' damages.

While there are assorted backup strategies available to businesses, the most important consideration to make is which of them will best fit your purposes. After all, different businesses create and collect different types of data, and losing that data therefore has different consequences for one than it would for another. Let's take a moment to examine the prospect of shaping a backup strategy to the way your business operates.

Focusing on Operability

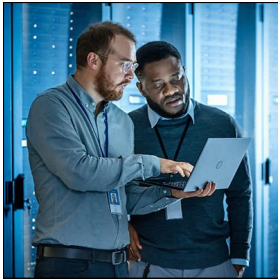
Take a moment and consider something: of all the data you have, what could you simply not continue to function without? What data could land your business in major trouble if it were to be lost? As your data powers your daily operations, you probably have a pretty good idea of what is most essential to your business' continued survival.

However, it isn't that simple. Unfortunately, you can't be sure that your data is safe—after all, if it were saved on a single server in a reinforced, completely secure room, that data could still be lost. The server could malfunction, or catch fire, and your data would be gone. Data loss doesn't always mean data theft.

No, there is no guarantee that your data will be safe, so you need to address this risk through preventative action. This is why an operational backup strategy is so useful. By

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Data Services Your Business Should Be Using



Your business' data is one of its most important assets. Today, there are ways to utilize data to help build a better business. Let's take a look at the data services that are designed to help the modern business get the most out of this resource.

Before we get into how businesses are changing the way they analyze data, we should talk a little bit about the data. You've probably heard about the "big data" trend. This is the active collection of all types of data once reserved for large companies. Recently, as information technology has been implemented, and its price has dropped, small businesses are now beginning to use these systems to improve their businesses.

When we refer to data services, we are referring to business intelligence, business analytics, and backup and disaster recovery. These three play varying roles for a business, but can, if leveraged correctly, really bring a lot of value. Let's look at them individually.

Backup and Disaster Recovery

For the business that wants to build a big data strategy, the protection of the data has to be a priority. In fact, protecting your data should be, no matter how you choose to use data. The backup and disaster recovery (BDR) platform works to back up assigned data regularly to ensure that if there is a need for recovery--from a disaster, a malware attack, or human error--that the files that are recovered are relatively up to date.

The BDR is a network-attached device that takes incremental backups of your data and pushes a copy to a secure offsite data center. This ensures that if

your hardware were to fail or your business faces a disaster of some kind, that you still have the data available for recovery. The good news is that a backup and disaster recovery system is a core part of a managed IT services agreement.

Business Intelligence

Using data to maintain, optimize and streamline a business' operations is called business intelligence (BI). BI supports data-centric planning, and fuels intelligent business decision making. A well-constructed BI program will use data-driven reports and visualization to help increase overall productivity and improve efficiency. BI works by organizing data into summaries in order to give decision makers answers to how the business is functioning and has functioned...



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Cyberattacks Have Gone Way Up Since the Pandemic Started

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doesn't take action right away, they will lose money or access to their account. A lot of phishing attacks claim that an account is being hacked or compromised, which then leads the user to get tricked, which then leads them to actually get compromised.

Remember when fake antivirus software was a huge emerging problem? Websites would beep at you and pop ups would come up saying that your computer is at risk and viruses were detected on your computer. It would have you install a fake antivirus application that then either demanded money or simply infected your computer even more.

We saw it happen in 2014 with the Ebola crisis. Cybercriminals sent out spam emails offering Ebola virus safety tips that turned out to be malware.

It's going to be an ongoing trend - when the general public is undergoing an

event that causes any kind of anxiety or stress, there will be a cyberthreat to go along with it. It's a new fact of life, and we all need to live with it, understand it, and not let it trick us.

How Cybercriminals are Exploiting Businesses During the Pandemic

Let's be honest, we've been talking about the COVID-19 pandemic pretty regularly in our blog. The entire world has been talking about it. This has been an event, to say the least. We'll all be telling our grandkids about that time we all had to stay inside, and how for a while, it was impossible to buy toilet paper. We've yet to see how the pandemic ends - we're still living in it. It's been stressful. It's become a political hotpoint. It's exhausting and we're all just trying to work through it. For many, the strong threads that keep everything normal and keep us alert and diligent have worn down and frayed a little bit from this whole ordeal.

It's pretty safe to say that many people have their guard down, when it comes

to cybersecurity. They are worried about their jobs, worried about getting a new job, worried about their kids, worried about their parents, worried about the economy. You get the idea.

With all that anxiety, it's much easier to let your guard down. I'm not just talking about you - reading an article about cybersecurity shows that you are still thinking about it, and we're really glad. I'm talking about all of your co-workers, all of your employees, and, if your staff is working from home on personal devices, all of their family members.

Some cybersecurity experts are recording a 260% rise in cyberattacks since the beginning of the pandemic. These attacks are, in a small part, due to less strict security on home computers for remote workers, but it's primarily due...



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Structure Your Backup Platform to Your Business' Needs

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incorporating insights into which data is used most often and how that data is put to use, an operational backup combines the benefits of incremental and differential backup strategies.

In short, when the chips are down, you'll know you can restore your necessary data as the need arises.

Why Does Operational Recovery Matter?

From here, we will proceed under the assumption that you have hired human beings to work in your business. Guess what is directly responsible for the majority of a given company's data loss?

If you guessed "humans", you'd be right. Human beings can make mistakes. Some are negligent, some are

vindictive, and others just don't grasp the importance of your information systems' care. Therefore, a data backup is a smart investment.

That's without even mentioning that a lot of data loss can happen without the "help" of your employees. Consider your central hardware. If that fails for any reason, or is somehow damaged, your business' IT could be suddenly left unmanaged and unconfigured. Access control systems and email platforms could be lost, along with all the important information they contain, and you would then need to spend days and weeks rebuilding them from the ground up. Alternatively, a backup could help you avoid this stress and expense.

Operational Recovery

The data recovery process--especially in

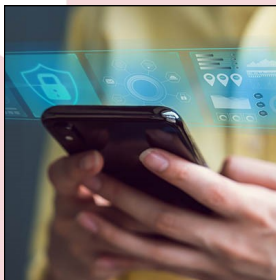
those times when you are fully migrating data from one server to another --is notoriously slow. The trouble is that if you are trying to recover data, it is problematic when the recovery process takes a long time. The longer you are without data, the more downtime you face. Downtime is wasted money. With the BDR, however, the restore times are much faster, especially since you can choose to restore from either the BDR itself or the data center it is backed up to.

Call Directive at 607.433.2200 to talk to one of our consultants about the BDR and all the good it can do for your business today.



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Your Business Needs a Well-Structured Mobile Device Policy



Smartphones are basically the most popular piece of technology ever. They can be used for much of the compu-

ting that people deem necessary. It's no surprise that since they pay over \$1,000 for these devices that your employees are going to take them everywhere, including your office. There was a time when employers were horrified by this fact, but today smartphones can just as easily be used for work as they are for distraction.

It's on you to dictate how mobile devices can be utilized in your business. This month, we thought we'd go into what your business' mobile device policy needs to cover to ensure that they are used to help your business.

Looking at Mobile Security Standards

Setting up a mobile security policy is the first, and probably most important, aspect of utilizing smartphones. Here are a few suggestions:

- All devices must have a password protecting the contents of the device. You'll need to set up a minimum-security standard for passwords that removes less secure means of unlocking a device.
- Employees need to use work profiles or limit the applications they install to ones that have been cleared by the company's IT administrator.
- Any devices not included in the acceptable list, or that are not a part of a BYOD policy (e.g, ones that are exclusively for personal use) may not connect to the network.
- Employee agrees that lost or stolen devices will be wiped by your IT administrator.

You can scale up or back but ensuring that the basics of mobile security are maintained is extremely important.

Accepting Risk

To keep things secure, you will want to make sure that you are protecting...



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<https://dti.io/safemobile>

Cybersecurity Tips

Credit Card Skimming

Credit card skimming is a criminal's attempt to steal the financial information residing on a debit or credit card via a malicious card reader. With so much emphasis on digital security threats, it's important not to overlook these physical threats as well.

Learn how you can use current safety precautions to combat credit card skimming. <https://dti.io/tipccskim>

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Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

5 Digital Marketing Trends to Look Out For in 2020



The world is ever-changing and the marketing world isn't exempted from that steady change. To keep your marketing up-to-date, we've summarized five digital marketing trends that will be key in 2020. Let's look ahead!

Looking Ahead!
Your business' marketing

initiatives should be up to date and constantly changing to fit the current trends. You should never be passive or inattentive when it comes to your marketing, lest you risk falling behind the rest and be labeled as "outdated" or "old school". It is never a good thing to be seen as behind the times. To help keep you up on the latest trends, we have outlined five key digital marketing trends of 2020.

1. Social Media Commerce
Usually when one brings up social media in conjunction with marketing, it's to use social media as a means of marketing, which is also something that you should be doing, but not what we will be discussing. In this case, one would use social media as the literal place of commerce...



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We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.

Employee Spotlight - Sean O'Brien



Sean O'Brien is one of our copywriters here at Directive, and as such, is involved in a lot of what we do. That's one reason that we've decided to tell you more about him in this month's employee highlight.

When he's not looking up blog topic ideas online, Sean can be found hanging out with his spoiled rotten and entitled dog, Benny. He very much enjoys cooking, watching movies and television shows, and spending time with his family whenever he can. Luckily for him, these activities often overlap. While he is unfortunately no longer able to participate in martial arts, he had accomplished the rank of black belt at one point in time, and is grateful for the lessons he learned through this experience. One of his goals is to one day be a published author and add fiction to his bibliography. He also hopes to raise a family of his own.

Sean very much likes the atmosphere at Directive, where he feels that people are encouraged to be themselves and celebrate their own personalities. The longer he has worked at Directive, the more this has been his experience. He thinks Crock-Pot Thursdays are pretty great, too, of course, and he loves the fact that everyone's pets can visit the office so often. While the current situation means that he has been stuck working remotely for some time, he can't wait until he can safely rejoin his teammates in Directive's office.

We can't wait to see you again, too, Sean! Thank you for all you do for us.



Chris Chase
Solutions Integrator



Charlotte Chase
Solutions Integrator

Sean was raised in Ilion, New York, and attended college at St. Bonaventure University. Graduating with a degree in Journalism and Mass Communications in 2015, he returned home to seek out a job. Thanks to a personal connection, Oneonta--and Directive--seemed to be the perfect place to look, and to what he calls his "good fortune," he was hired.

Directive

330 Pony Farm Road
Suite #3
Oneonta, NY 13820
Toll-Free 888-546-4384
Voice: 607-433-2200

Visit us **online** at:
newsletter.directive.com



newsletter@directive.com



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