This Issue:

Activating Android Guest Mode

While you probably aren't super enthusiastic about loaning out your mobile device right now, you may not have ever been. After all, you're effectively handing over a bunch of personal data bundled into a convenient package. However, Android has had a feature that makes it substantially more secure to share your device for some time now.

This feature is known as Android Guest Mode and debuted with Android 5.0 Lollipop in 2014.

What Does Guest Mode Do?
Guest Mode effectively takes the teeth from one of the most...

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Happy Holidays and a great New Year from all of us! Season's greetings to you and yours!

A Look at Modern Networking

There are times when people take their technology for granted. One of the most under-the-radar, yet still critical parts of a business' technology infrastructure is the networking equipment. By this we mean the hardware that connects your business to the Internet and to your network. We are talking cables, switches, and routers. This month, we will take a look at typical office networking found in 2020 and the technologies that are primed to replace them.

Connecting Your Office

The modern office functions a lot like the office of twenty years ago in terms of networking. Most of the time, endpoints connect to switches that connect to routers that connect to servers and the internet. This has been the way it has been for a couple of decades. Sure, the technology itself has been improved drastically, modern bandwidth dwarfs older connection speeds, but all-in-all it is pretty similar to the way that office networking has been structured for some time.

Is Automation Really a Threat for Workers?
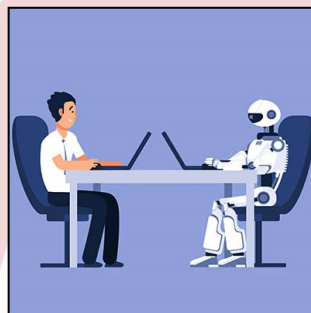
Automation has helped many businesses improve their output and efficiency, but what is the cost to the people that work for these organizations? Many systems rely on the autonomy of artificial intelligence systems to keep certain tasks and workflows on point. Automation could replace up to a quarter of the current workforce in the next ten years, so people are naturally skeptical and worried about how safe their jobs are going to be with more and more businesses utilizing software automation.

Why Are More Things Being Automated?

Competition is the major driving force for many businesses, and automation helps businesses by streamlining operations to the point where they can reduce costs on payroll. Automation services are particularly helpful for assisting with repetitive jobs, opening up the opportunity for people's jobs being replaced by machines and software. Unfortunately, workers don't understand that businesses are benefiting from automation, and instead see it as an opportunity to just turn a profit at the expense of workers and job seekers. In reality, the only reason automation is used is to make certain tasks more cost-efficient.

How Does Automation Help Businesses?

Automation can help with specific processes for any business. Sales is a process that has

"The real problem is not whether machines think but whether men do." - B.F. Skinner

Knowing Your Technology Means Knowing What to Expect

For most businesses, inventory is a big deal. That's why it is so surprising that many of the same businesses that depend on their inventory and supply chain fail to properly inventory their technology. This month, we'll discuss the importance of keeping a technology inventory.

Maintaining your business' technology requires more than just updating your firewall or running a virus scan every once and a while. It requires a basic understanding of each component and an easy way to accomplish this is to keep thorough records.

To avoid bouts of downtime, each part of your IT infrastructure has to be managed and maintained. In order to successfully accomplish that, you need to utilize a collection of advanced tools that allow oversight of your functional IT. The cutting-edge technology we use allows us to see how each piece of your business' technology is functioning, and provides us the access we need to ensure that technology is working as intended.

In the course of managing your business' IT, there is a lot of documentation you could keep if you so choose. This includes:

- All network-attached devices you have, from your networking devices to every company-owned endpoint and peripheral that attaches to it.
- The proper configuration for each of these devices.
- The date that each of these devices was installed.
- The licenses that your business needs to maintain, and the status of the ones you have.
- A comprehensive history of all service that each of these devices has received.

The major benefit of this is that it allows your IT administrator, whether that be you, a managed IT services provider like Directive, or a dedicated IT admin that you hired, to more completely understand the technology your business uses. It can also go a long way toward helping you plan out your business' future IT investments.

If you would like to talk to one of our knowledgeable IT professionals today about getting a complete roster of your company's IT, get that technology managed by professional IT technicians, or if you just want to discuss your next step, give us a call today at 607.433.2200.

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A Look at Modern Networking

(Continued from page 1)
One major change is the reliance on Wi-Fi. Wireless internet provides a more flexible work environment, giving staff a better ability to collaborate through the use of mobile devices such as laptops and smartphones. The incorporation of wireless connections necessitates the integration of security infrastructure and policies that work to keep unauthorized entities off of the business' computing network.

How is this Changing?
You can count on one hand the inventions that have had the type of impact that the Internet has had on modern society. It's no secret that there is a worldwide push for ubiquitous Internet access. This push will no-doubt be felt inside the offices of businesses big and small for years to come. There are new considerations coming to the forefront of networking technology, some of which promise to change the way networking works. These include:

Improvements to Wi-Fi
Wi-Fi 6, or 802.11ax, upgrades the current highest-speed Wi-Fi available, 802.11ac. It brings a substantial improvement in efficiency across all current Wi-Fi bands, including older frequencies, such as 2.4 GHz. The biggest improvement Wi-Fi 6 brings is it increases the density of devices that can co-exist in a single space, increasing the networking speed on all devices. This is huge, since modern offices are seeing exponentially more devices connecting to the network.

Additionally, Wi-Fi 6 will improve performance by supporting packet scheduling that will make for dramatic improvements in power utilization by mobile devices. This will improve the wireless experience for every user and will substantially improve the way the Internet of Things is leveraged in the workplace.

Improvements to Wireless Mobile Networks
The fifth-generation wireless network is going to be a game changer. Wireless carriers are beginning to roll out 5G slowly, and today manufacturers are beginning to go all-in on building 5G devices. Soon 5G will be the predominant wireless Internet platform, and it will bring a significant shift. 5G will bring improved speed and battery life to smartphones and expand high-speed Internet for some home users.

For the business, 5G will have less of an impact, but it will definitely have one. 5G fixed access could become a useful option as a WAN connection for organizations that have multiple branches. Additionally, as 5G rolls out, it will present more opportunities for organizations to leverage the Internet of...

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Is Automation Really a Threat for Workers?

(Continued from page 1)
traditionally taken a considerable amount of time, as it entails capturing leads, pursuing those leads, and working with them all the way down the sales funnel and through the service's fulfillment. This might also include following up with the customer to investigate service satisfaction, as well as to find out if there are other services that the customer might need.

Software designed to streamline this process leans on automation. This makes the job of a company's sales team much easier and more manageable, but more than anything else, it helps them cut costs.

How Is This Bad for Workers?
Automation is creating millions of new jobs, that is undeniable. Unfortunately for many workers, the kind of jobs being created are much different than the ones that are being automated. This creates a significant imbalance. One popular example of this is truck driving. There is a considerable push to create self-driving trucks that can eliminate truck drivers and cut down on shipping costs by effectively eliminating some payroll. After all, if a truck can get where it needs to go without a human driver, why pay a human? This shift has made the demand for software engineers greater, but how many truck drivers have coding knowledge, or the

means to gain that knowledge? This is where the problem lies. Obviously, trucking is hardly the only industry affected by this issue. Automation is likely to have an effect on many industries, and as more organizations adopt automation, more engineers and developers will need to be hired to manage and maintain automated solutions. This means that more skilled workers will be needed, while other workers will be left to compete for other unskilled work. It's a complicated issue with a complicated solution...

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The Help Desk Keeps Business Running Smoothly
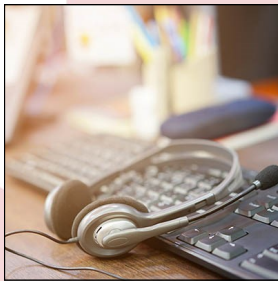
When there's a computer problem, downtime ensues, and productivity suffers. It's really that simple. Your staff isn't running on all cylinders because they are always having to restart, the software they need isn't working properly, or they simply forgot their password.

They need help.

That's why, as a part of our managed IT service, we offer a comprehensive help desk that every member of your organization has to access as they need it. When you grant your staff access to a help desk solution, they can call in and get a certified technician ready to help them with their IT problem. With a help desk your employees no longer need to interrupt other people. They can simply reach out to the help desk for their minor IT issues. Best yet, they can have the confidence that they can just pick up the phone or email in a ticket describing their problem and it gets handled.

If your employees are empowered to report issues and get help, they feel

more appreciated and more in control over their own work. If they need to get approval or be told that the issue is too minor to pay for a support call, it demeans their perception of their position.

That's why, at Directive, we encourage our clients to use our help desk service. It really works to remedy many common issues that would normally cause downtime or slow down production.

It's time to give your staff the freedom to get support. It will save you time, and increase their productivity. Want to learn how we do it? Give us a call at 607.433.2200.

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Cybersecurity Tips

5 Facebook Security Tips

As the leading social networking site, Facebook has become a hotbed for cybercriminals to target their victims. While Facebook has ramped up their security measures, you are still the best bodyguard in the fight to keep your information safe.

https://dti.io/fivefbtips

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Marketing Ideas & Tips for Your SMB

How to Understand User Intent

The goal of SEO and marketing is to drive traffic to your website for you to introduce them to your services and convince them to take a chance with you. However, while SEO can drive traffic to your site, it can't make visitors stay if your website is out of touch with user intent.

What is User Intent?

It's not an exaggeration to say that to Google, user intent is the primary driving force for search engine rankings. Over the decades, Google has been shifting from focusing solely on keywords, which can be manipulated, providing the searcher with poor user experience, and instead focusing on results that garner positive user experience.

In other words; provide a great experience for your ideal audience, and you'll be more likely to draw in more traffic.

Understanding user intent is critical to ensuring when visitors reach your site; they stay because the longer you can keep a visitor on your website, the higher your chance is for them to convert. While user intent is continually expanding, here are four basic examples.

Four Basic Categories Of User Intent:

Informational queries – These are queries covering a broad topic, for example, cybersecurity or remote workforce. For 'generic' terms like these, there may be thousands of relevant results. These results can include blogs, whitepapers, videos, and any content that provides the searcher more information about a topic. One thing to consider is while informational queries rarely have commercial intent, proving yourself an expert in the subject can inspire the searcher to take a chance on you or at least stay on your site long enough to convert.

On top of that, most users don't search for what you think they are searching for. More often than not, all those big high-value keywords that you long to rank number one for are not going to pull in the traffic you want. Instead, more and more traffic comes from longer-tail keywords. Users are asking Google questions to understand a topic before they even begin to search for someone who will sell them something.

Navigational queries – These are queries seeking a single website or web page of a known entity. Navigational searches are brand-based searches. For example, if someone is searching for YouTube, Google will provide YouTube as the search result, because it was clear that was what the user was searching for. For businesses, this often doesn't result in a click to the website anymore, because Google tries to provide relevant information right on the search result page, such as your phone number and address.

Transactional queries – Queries that reflect the user's intent to perform an action, like purchasing a firewall or downloading a whitepaper. Examples of transactional searches would include, "Get a computer quote" or "best business firewall."

Local queries - Localized queries provide the searcher with information about…

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