TECHNOLOGY TIMES

"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably"

What's New?

Use This App To Pinpoint Dangerous Drivers

Nexar asks you to mount your phone to your dashboard, and it will monitor surrounding traffic. If someone starts driving dangerously, it will ask if you want to record what's going on with a 30-second video. The goal is to capture license plates of bad or hostile drivers. This is useful if you witness a crash or a criminal offense. Nexar also uploads data to a central database. It will let you know if someone with a bad driving history enters the camera's field of vision, helping you spot potential bad drivers.

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pact-one
OPTIMIZING TECHNOLOGY

Technology Times is provided courtesy of Dan Edwards, CEO of Pact-One.

How To Keep Your Employees From Leaking Confidential Information

Back in 2014, Code Spaces was murdered. The company offered tools for source code management, but they didn't have solid control over sensitive information — including their backups. One cyberattack later, and Code Spaces was out of business. Their killer had used some standard techniques, but the most effective was getting an unwitting Code Space employee to help — likely via a phishing attack.

When it comes to cybercrime that targets businesses, employees are the largest risks. Sure, your IT guys and gals are trained to recognize phishing attempts, funky websites, and other things that just don't seem right. But can you say the same thing about the people in reception, or the folks over in sales?

Sure, those employees might know that clicking on links or opening attachments in strange emails can cause issues. But things have become pretty sophisticated; cybercriminals can make it look like someone in your office is sending the email, even if the content looks funny. It only takes a click to compromise the system. It also only takes a click to Google a funny-looking link or ask IT about a weird download you don't recognize.

Just as you can't trust people to be email-savvy, you also can't trust them to come up with good people still use birthdays, pet names, or even "password" as their passcodes — or they meet the bare-minimum standards for required passcode complexity. Randomly generated passcodes are always better, and requiring multiple levels of authentication for secure data access is a must-do.

Remember, that's just for the office. Once employees start working outside of your network, even more

issues crop up. It's not always possible to keep them from working from home, or from a coffee shop on the road.

But it is possible to invest in security tools, like email encryption, that keep data more secure if they have to work outside your network. And if people are working remotely, remind them that walking away from the computer is a no-no.

Anybody could lean over and see what they're working on, download malware or spyware, or even swipe the entire device and walk out — all of which are cybersecurity disasters.

Last but not least, you need to consider the possibility of a deliberate security compromise. Whether they're setting themselves up for a future job or setting you up for a vengeful fall, this common occurrence is hard to prevent.

It's possible that Code Space's demise was the result of malice, so let it be a warning to you as well! Whenever an employee leaves the company for any reason, remove their accounts and access to your data. And make it clear to employees that this behavior is considered stealing, or worse, and will be treated as such in criminal and civil court.

You really have your work cut out for you, huh? Fortunately, it's still possible to run a secure-enough company in today's world. Keep

> *"It only takes a click to compromise the system."*

an eye on your data and on your employees.

Lastly, you must foster an open communication that allows you to spot potential — or developing — compromises as soon as possible.

Surface Studio: All Beauty, A Little Brains

"We want to move from people needing Windows…to loving Windows."

So said CEO Satya Nadella after taking over Microsoft. And their new Surface Studio takes a bold step in that direction.

In a bid to win over creative types, they designed the Studio with a gorgeous desktop screen that easily glides from vertical to almost horizontal, like an artist's sketchpad. With its Apple Computer-like brushed aluminum finish and ultra-thin screen, it's feels right at home in an open-plan office with microbrews on tap.

The guts of the machine are stuffed into a nine-inch-long base that's joined to the screen with an überslick hinge design, allowing it to fold nearly flat for stylus- or touch-driven design work.

Downsides? Well, you'll pay at least $3,000. And it's a bit underpowered to be in that price range. But all in all, even the graphically challenged will find this machine tantalizing.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

OctoGripper, the Octopus-Inspired Robotic Arm

The animal kingdom is a reliable place to turn for mechanical inspiration.

The German automation company Festo just made a robotic arm that takes its cue from an octopus. Meet the OctoGripper!

Festo figured it's hard to beat the octopus' flexibility. Built with a soft silicone structure that can be pneumatically controlled, the device bends inward to grip an item with two rows of suction cups. These create a vacuum, allowing the gripper to hold onto objects tightly while moving quickly — a common challenge in robotics.

This isn't the only thing Festo is taking from nature. They want to see the OctoGripper incorporated into their BionicMotion Robot, which is inspired by an elephant's trunk. These could work side by side with humans, perhaps speeding up work.

Or they could pair up with Boston Dynamics and start the best robotic zoo this side of "Horizon: Zero Dawn."

Believe You Can Be Extraordinary

I left my home some 7,000 miles away with little money in my pocket. I was eager – and just 17.

My father died when I was six, and I came to America for college with the words of my mother still ringing in my ears: "If you want to be a great person, you have to walk side by side, hand in hand, with great people."

She was right. I have been blessed. And so many people have helped.

Before coming to High Point College, I lived off campus at Mt. Olive College, and the housemother slipped into my bank account enough money for me to buy my first car – a used car. She told me she'd rather invest her money in a promising young man than park it somewhere in a bank. What an angel.

In 1993, two years after High Point College became High Point University, the school elected me to its board of trustees. Eleven years later, my fellow board members asked a question that would change my future forever.

Nido, they asked, will you lead HPU?
In January 2005, HPU appointed me as its seventh president, and I saw my alma mater to be a God, family and country school that could emphasize the values and fundamentals that built America.

No apologies for that. As a patriot to the core, I remember what this country and campus did for me – and what higher education needs to do for others in the 21st century.

Students come to campus armed with iPhones loaded with apps, and they've gotten used to accessing anything in the world with a touch of their screen. Good for them – and us. But we must not confuse accessing information with obtaining knowledge. The two are not the same.

An education must be holistic, impacting the mind, heart and soul. And that includes understanding not just the how, but the why.

Couple that with an entrepreneurial spirit and an awareness of what built America in the first place, and I believe an education like this will set students on a trajectory of achievement and stewardship.

At High Point University, in the seminars I teach for freshmen and seniors, we cover all kinds of topics, from time management to fiscal literacy.

But the timeless principles I focus on pertain to all of us.
Who you spend time with is who you become. Be a job creator, not a job taker. Stand for something or you will fall for anything. Change your words and change your world.

They need to hear someone say, "You can make it. You are created in God's image."

They need to remember the words of Scottish theologian William Barclay: "Always give without remembering. Always receive without forgetting."

They need to know we are the by-products of the beliefs we keep close.

They need to believe they can be… *extraordinary*.

It is a choice, after all. And the best is yet to be.

By Dr. Nido Qubein

Here's a quick nine-step checklist we use to ensure that a company's computer network, and the data for that business, is safe and secure from disruption, if not absolute devastation:

1. A written recovery plan.
Simply thinking through what needs to happen when things go south, and documenting it all IN ADVANCE, can go a long way toward getting your network back up and running quickly if it gets hacked, impacted by natural disaster or compromised by human error.

2. Have a clear communication plan.
What if your employees can't access your office, e-mail or phone system? How will they communicate with you? Make sure your communications plan details every alternative, including MULTIPLE ways to stay in touch in the event of a disaster.

3. Automate your data backups.
THE #1 cause of data loss is human error. If your backup system depends on a human being always doing something right, it's a recipe for disaster. Automate your backups wherever possible so they run like clockwork.

4. Have redundant off-site backups.
On-site backups are a good first step, but if they get flooded, burned or hacked along with your server, you're out of luck. ALWAYS maintain a recent copy of your data off-site.

5. Enable remote network access.
Without remote access to your network, you and your staff won't be able to keep working in the event that you can't get into your office. To keep your business going, at the very minimum, you need a way for your IT specialist to quickly step in when needed.

6. System images are critical.
Storing your data off-site is a good first step. But if your system is compromised, the software and architecture that handles all that data MUST be restored for it to be useful. Imaging your server creates a replica of the original, saving you an enormous amount of time and energy in getting your network back in gear, should the need arise. Without it, you risk losing all your preferences, configurations, favorites and more.

7. Maintain an up-to-date network "blueprint."

To rebuild all or part of your network, you'll need a blueprint of the software, data, systems and hardware that comprise your company's network. An IT professional can create this for you. It could save you a huge amount of time and money in the event your network needs to be restored.

8. Don't ignore routine maintenance.
While fires, flooding and other natural disasters are always a risk, it's ever more likely that you'll have downtime due to a software or hardware glitch or cyber-attack. That's why it's critical to keep your network patched, secure and up-to-date. Deteriorating hardware and corrupted software can wipe you out. Replace and update them as needed to steer clear of this threat.

9. Test, Test, Test!
If you're going to go to the trouble of setting up a plan, at least make sure it works! An IT professional can check monthly to make sure your systems work properly and your data is secure. After all, the worst time to test your parachute is AFTER you jump out of the plane.

SHOULD YOU HAVE A MOBILE APP FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

One of the great things about apps is that you don't need to be a big developer or company to build one. In fact, according to smallbusinesscomputing.com, 42% of small businesses in the United States have their own mobile app.

By the end of the year, that figure is expected to hit 67%! Somewhat unsurprisingly, the most cited reason SMBs said they decided to build mobile apps is to increase sales, followed by improving customers service.

Others turn to mobile apps as a competitive advantage in specific markets, while for some organizations, their parent company suggested an app.

But with apps becoming more affordable than ever, there are lots of reasons to invest in your own app — and lots of ways to recoup that investment.

What would your ideal app do?