Connectability Corner

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Ted Shafran, President of Connectability

Sneaky Ways Cybercriminals Access Your Network

And What You Can Do To Prevent It TODAY

Hackers prefer the little guy. The high-profile data breaches you read about in the news — your Facebooks and Equifaxes and T-Mobiles — are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the digital crimes being perpetrated day after day, especially against small businesses. Today, according to a report by the National Cyber Security Alliance, 70 percent of hackers specifically target small businesses. Attracted by the prospect of easy money, they search for those organizations who underspend on protection, who have employees untrained to spot security risks, and who subscribe to woefully out-of-date practices to protect their data. As a result, more than 50 percent of small businesses have been hacked, while 60 percent of companies breached are forced to close their doors within six months.

Most business owners have no idea the danger they're putting their livelihood in by leaving cyber security up to chance.

According to a survey conducted by Paychex, 68 percent of small-business owners aren't concerned about their current cyber security standards, despite the fact that around 70 percent of them aren't adequately protected. In the face of an imminent, global threat to the very existence of small businesses everywhere, most CEOs offer up a collective shrug.

The tactics and software available to hackers become more sophisticated by the day, but with so many unwitting victims, most criminals don't even need to work that hard to net a six-figure income. By sticking to two tried-and-tested tools of the trade — phishing, ransomware and the subtle art of guessing users' passwords — they leech comfortably off the earnest efforts of small businesses all over the world.

So, what's to be done? Well, first things first: You need to educate yourself and your team. Protect your organization

against phishing by fostering a healthy skepticism of any email that enters your inbox. Make it a habit of hovering over hyperlinks to check their actual destination before you click. If an email is coming from someone you know, but the email address is different, verify it with the other party. And never, ever send passwords or personal details to anyone over the internet if you can avoid it.

Speaking of passwords, you probably need to upgrade yours. The majority of folks use the same password for everything from their Facebook account to their business email. The fact that this includes your employees should make you shudder. It may not seem like a big deal — who's going to take the time to guess SoCcErMoM666? — but aside from the fact that simple software enables hackers to guess even complicated passwords in minutes, that's not even usually necessary. Instead, they can just look at the data dumps from a recent more high-profile breach — think the Equifax fiasco — pull your old password from there and type it into whatever profile they want to access. If you keep all your passwords the same across sites, it won't take them long to dig into your most precious assets. To avoid this, implement a strict set of password regulations for your business, preferably incorporating two-factor authentication and mandatory password changes every month, or at the very least quarterly.

> **"In the face of an imminent global threat to the very existence of small businesses everywhere, most CEOs offer up a collective shrug."**

Of course, you can read up on hacking techniques and teach them to your team until you're blue in the face, and a data breach can still occur. Cybercrime is constantly evolving, and staying abreast of its breakneck pace takes a dedicated awareness of the latest protective tools and measures. That's why your single best weapon to defend you against the hackers at your door is to find a managed service provider (MSP) with a background in defending against digital threats to partner with your organization. These companies not only regularly monitor your network, they also keep it updated with the latest patches and measures to prevent the worst. And if crisis somehow still strikes, they'll be able to get your network back up in minutes rather than days, equipped with an expert knowledge of your systems and years of experience in the field.

In today's digital world, leaving your cyber security up to a subpar antivirus and some wishful thinking is more than irresponsible — it's an existential threat to your company. But with a little savvy, a bit of investment and a second opinion on the circumstances of your company's security, you can rest easy knowing that no matter what comes, you're protected.

Help Us Out And We'll Give You A Brand-New Amazon Echo For Your Trouble

We love having you as a customer and, quite honestly, wish we had more like you! So instead of just wishing, we've decided to hold a special "refer a friend" event during the month of February.

Simply refer any company with 10 or more computers to our office and they will receive a FREE computer network assessment (a $397 value). Once we've completed our initial appointment with your referral, we'll rush YOU a free Amazon Echo as a thank-you (or donate $100 to your favorite charity ... your choice!).

Simply call us at **416-966-3306** or e-mail us at **info@connectability.com** with your referral's name and contact information today!

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

This Smartphone Is Also A Projector: Introducing The Movi

Sure, your big honking iPhone or massive Android is impressive, but does it have a screen the size of an entire wall?

The Movi is the first smartphone to integrate a built-in pico projector into its design, allowing users to project 720p images up to 200 inches in size wherever they are. At only $599, it's a bargain when compared to other comparable projectors.

However, there are caveats: the Movi's FHD phone screen can't compare to its higher-end OLED competitors, and its camera leaves something to be desired. But if you're an avid video buff with a mind for convenience, the Movi may be just what you're looking for.

Watch Your Doors
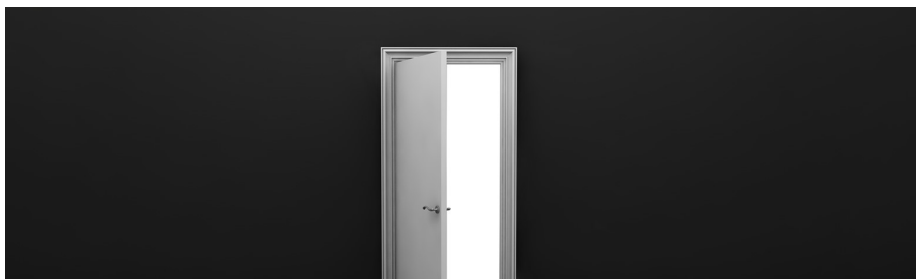
When was the last time you looked at the doors to your business? It isn't just about who comes in; it's also about how.

Let me give an example. A new restaurant opened near my office. It's been very successful, and I eat there regularly. The only problem is the horrendous door you have to go through to get in. Opening it causes an obnoxious grating sound, not unlike a few metal tomcats duking it out in an alley. The pull is hard and inconsistent. At first I thought they'd fix it, but since it hasn't been dealt with in months, it's clear to me that the owners don't give much thought to the first impression it creates.

Actual doors are important, but the metaphorical doors to your business are even more important. These "doors" are entry points, drawing people in or keeping them out. They can welcome or they can warn.

What about the doors to your business?

Your website is your online door. Is it aesthetically pleasing? Easy to navigate? Up-to-date? Can a visitor quickly find contact information? Does it just advertise, or does it make it easy for visitors to actually take action?

Your phone is a door too. Whether answered by a person or a recorded message, it speaks volumes about your professionalism and punctuality.

The way you handle service and support is yet another door. How easy is it for a customer to schedule you? Do you and your employees arrive when promised? Are they professional in appearance and friendly in demeanor?

Then there's your social media accounts. What image do your various platforms convey? Does your social media support or detract from your brand?

Your office environment is another. Is it a place customers enjoy or endure? If you serve coffee, how good is it?

Gordon Hinckley said, "Eternal vigilance is the price of eternal development." Paying attention consistently will allow you to develop and achieve success. Ignoring the doors, literal and metaphorical, can be costly.

A good door makes it easy for customers to enter. A great door invites them in and sets the tone for what follows. Make sure yours immediately conveys everything you want others to know about your business.

-Written By Mark Sanborn

Client Spotlight: Sleep Diagnostics Centre

Please welcome **The Sleep Diagnostics Centre** to the Connectability family!

With offices in Toronto, Barrie and Newmarket, The Sleep Diagnostics Centre is dedicated to diagnosing and treating a variety of sleep disorders that can impact the quality of your sleep, and cause serious health complications.

SDC's goal is to improve patients quality of life, prevent cardiovascular diseases, and promote healthy sleep – all with the aim to make their patients' lives better and more fulfilling.

If you'd like to learn more about The Sleep Diagnostics Centre and the different services they provide, go to **www.sleepdiagnosticscentre.com**

■ 4 Reasons You Should Move Your Data To The Cloud TODAY

If you're one of the skeptics holding out on incorporating cloud technology into your business, you're in the minority. Today, a full 93% of businesses use the cloud in their day-to-day operations, according to RightScale. Here's why.

- The cloud increases profits. The nimble, location-flexible nature of the cloud enables lean, remote operation from anywhere in the world, increasing the bottom line of SMBs.

- The cloud boosts efficiency. Without the need for data silos, cloud applications can drastically reduce bottlenecks and failures.

- The cloud saves money. Instead of paying to maintain unused hardware, the cloud allows you to pay low monthly fees, reducing wasted funds.

- The cloud is more secure. Backups are that much easier to implement and access, meaning that your business can be up and running after a data breach in minutes rather than days. *Smallbiztrends.com, 11/27/2018*

■ Top Tactics To Improve Company Culture

A healthy company culture does more than make work life bearable – it draws in talent and increases productivity. But contrary to what some CEOs may believe, culture begins with leadership. To bolster a positive, winning environment in your business, make sure that above all, your team embodies the core values of your organization. Hire and fire by the standards you've set, and build an organization that seeks to bring meaning to the business you do.

Also, be sure to maintain transparency at every turn. Nothing erodes trust and good vibes like secrets or the rumors they spawn, yet many leaders struggle to understand that, when faced with a difficult situation, a thorough explanation will win the loyalty and consideration of those you work with.

Finally, keep your vision locked on your organization's long-term goals. With a clear focus in mind for your employees, it's that much easier for everyone to stay on the same page and continue to push forward in earnest. Short-term wins are important, sure, but it's the visionary in you that will become someone to rally around for the long haul.

Cybersecurity Video Series: Update Your Computer NOW

In this months **Cyber SecuriTip**, Ted discusses why you need to update your computer regularly. It's no secret most people view computer updates as a nuisance. They click "Remind me later" and continue working. That's not a problem if you do it occasionally, but if you do it consistently you're asking for trouble.

Updating your computer is the easiest, and cheapest way to keep your computers, and your company network safe from newly discovered vulnerabilities. Plus they can have a big effect on system performance.

To learn more, go to YouTube, look up **Connectability IT Support** and look for the video *"Update Your Computer NOW"* OR you can go to our website at **www.connectability.com,** hover over **"Resources & Videos"** and select **"Videos".**

This month we will be making a donation to **Habitat for Humanity GTA**

Founded in 1988, Habitat for Humanity GTA is a nonprofit housing organization that believes everyone deserves a safe and decent place to live. They help working, lower-income families build strength, stability and self-reliance through affordable homeownership.

With the help of volunteers, donors, and community partners they have built more than 360 homes for families across the GTA!

If you'd like to contribute to Habitat for Humanity, we'd love your help! Email us at: **info@connectability.com** or call **(416) 966 3306**