Inside This Issue…

What You Need To Know About Your Passwords

In today's technology-laden world, we are increasingly dependent on a web of passwords, pins and security codes. We have credit card pins, email passwords, online banking passwords, computer passwords, network passwords, **Dropbox or Microsoft Office 365 passwords,** not to mention passwords for popular sites like **Facebook**, **Amazon**, **and Twitter.**

The problem is: **how do you remember so many passwords?**

A lot of people use the **same** password for everything. But if a malicious person gets his hands on that password, your entire life is up for grabs. He can empty your bank accounts, shop online, and even defraud your friends. It's not pretty!

So how do you solve this quandary? How do you keep your personal information safe and still remember all of your passwords? Here are 5 simple suggestions for doing that:

1. **Don't** use the same password for everything. At a **bare** minimum, use one password for low-security sites like Twitter, and another for things like online banking. Ideally, you should have more than 2 passwords, but this approach is still better than the alternative.

2. **Don't** choose simple or obvious passwords. Your child's name, for example, is a poor choice. And if you **do** use a familiar name, make sure to add capital letters and numbers to keep it safe. For example, instead of "**michael**", you might use "**M1chael32**".

3. **Do** change your passwords periodically. It's no guarantee, but the more you change your passwords, the less vulnerable you are to a security breach.

4. **Do** delete logins for users who are no longer employed there. If there's any chance that those employees know other passwords, you **must** force a password change for all users.

5. **Do** use a password manager. It shocks us when we ask a customer for the passwords for their router or server and they don't have the password or they've forgotten it.

There are sophisticated password managers for consumers and businesses and many are free or very inexpensive. You just need to remember a **single** master password. Your other passwords are then saved in a secure, encrypted format.

Every business should have a master password list, stored in a secure location. If you're letting **someone else** keep the keys to your kingdom, or - worse still - forgotten your key passwords, you may be putting your business at risk by leaving it open to outside attacks.

And one final word: just because you have the passwords for your server or router, it doesn't mean that you should use them. Changing key settings on your server or router without knowing **exactly** what you're doing can have disastrous effects.

If you need assistance cleaning up your passwords, just give your friendly Connectability rep a call, and we'll work with you to make sure that **all of your information** is safe and secure.

The 7 Deadly I.T. Sins

Windows 10 is coming but.....

On July 29, Microsoft will release its latest desktop operating system: **Windows 10**.

Windows 10 will include many new features including: faster startup, a new "Start" button, a new web browser and Cortana - Microsoft's answer to Siri and Google Now.

Best of all, Windows 10 will be a **free** upgrade for computers running Windows 7, 8 or 8.1. In fact, some of you may already see a button appear in your **System Tray** which allows you to reserve your copy of the Windows 10 upgrade.

HOWEVER: we are **strongly** recommending that you **wait**!

Windows 10 has lots of promise and we began evaluating it a couple of months ago.

But, in our experience, new operating systems **frequently** have bugs and unexpected incompatibilities. And, as your IT provider, it's our responsibility to ensure that your IT environment remains stable and secure.

We'll be running **extensive** testing of Windows 10 over the summer. As soon as we're comfortable that it's ready for general use, we'll be in touch with you to make arrangements to install it.

Until then, we'd advise you to wait. It's always tempting to reach for that shiny new bauble, but sometimes the tried-and-true is the safer bet.

This month's deadly IT "sin" is the faulty firewall.

Most businesses are so busy fighting fires from day to day that they don't have the energy to worry about network security. That being said, network security should be a **major concern** for any business.

Your firewall – a critical security component – is only effective when it is **configured correctly**. And even a properly configured firewall won't deliver optimal protection from intrusions unless it is **enterprise grade.** A firewall can block port scans, thwart data-stealing malware, control Facebook access, and prioritize bandwidth for corporate applications – to name a few key features – so it is extremely important for protecting your data.

If you're using a consumer-grade firewall / router combination for your business, you are putting your network in **danger**. Consumer-grade devices are generally configured incorrectly making them more **susceptible** to attacks from hackers.

When you browse on the Internet and view or download files, an enterprise-grade firewall will scan these documents to ensure that they are virus and malware free. On the other hand, a consumer-grade device has **no intelligence** and is therefore unable to identify whether a file is hazardous or not.

Imagine you receive a document from a colleague whose computer—unbeknownst to him—has been infected with malware that attaches itself to the file. If you have a consumer-grade firewall you would open the attachment and be **immediately infected**. But with a commercial-grade device would remove the file before it gets to you, and mark the message with an alert, leaving your computer free of virus or malware infections.

One particularly nasty piece of malware is **Ransomware**. Ransomware will encrypt your data, making it impossible to access without paying a hacker an exorbitant fee to remove the encryption. And if you do pay, the hacker community will know that not only does your network have a weak point, but you are willing to pay up.

To reduce the likelihood of these threats, **all** business owners should invest in a commercial-grade firewall. Think of it as insurance against data-theft and security intrusions. If you already have a strong firewall, but it hasn't been configured it is **vital** that you correct this weakness. What's the point of having an alarm if it's not on? Or having a car if there's no gas? Without proper configuration, having a good firewall is no more effective than having a low-end consumer-grade device.

We hope this information was helpful. If you or anyone you know needs help installing or configuring a firewall we're just a call away at **416-966-3306.**

You can learn more about avoiding other threats by following our segment **The 7 Deadly I.T. Sins** in the upcoming months.

Gadget of the Month: Intel Compute Stick

Nowadays many people haves a "media centre", an area in their house dedicated to relaxing and viewing media content. And devices like the Google Chromecast, Apple TV, and the Roku are key parts of these areas.

The issue is that the full functionality of these devices requires the use of a computer. For example, the Chromecast streams content from your computer, but without the computer there is no content. The Apple TV can be used to view YouTube content, but entering the video name takes a long time and often you can't find what you are looking for.

That's where the Intel Compute Stick shines. It's compatible with any TV or monitor that supports HDMI and is about the size of a Chromecast. But it packs the punch of a full sized computer. No more getting up to get your computer or tablet. You can do it all from the comfort of your own couch.

The device is not only small and fast, it's also cheap. For $150 you can have a fully functional Windows 8.1 or Linux operating system. The Compute Stick makes it possible to have a true "media center" in the sense that all the media you want to consume is centralized. You no longer need a tablet or a laptop handy, and you don't need an expensive media PC. It's as simple as plug and play, or more accurately, plug and browse.

Client Story of the Month:
MD+A Health Solutions

Our spotlight this month is on a recent addition to the Connectability family: *MD+A Health Solutions*.

MD+A Health Solutions is a Toronto-based consulting firm with focused expertise in the strategic planning, evaluation, selection, deployment and use of information management and information technology (IM-IT) solutions for local, provincial, national and international health organizations.

Their projects have served small non-profit organizations and national governments alike; they deliver solutions that range from highly targeted research analyses to multi-year, multi-million dollar web applications.

MD+A was looking for a new IT provider who would bring improved skills and response times to the table and in April of this year, they engaged Connectability.

By leveraging our Fully Managed Services plan, MD+A is getting the level and volume of service which they require, at a *fixed, predictable* monthly cost. Those services include email hosting, anti-virus and anti-malware software, disaster planning, remote access, remote monitoring and management software and, most important, unlimited onsite and remote support, consulting time, virtual CIO services, and proactive, process driven management for ALL of their IT.

In the short time we've been working together we have set up more effective file sharing, a stable, secure VPN (very important for a mobile organization), replaced an out-of-date firewall, installed several new computers, and are working on a new VoIP implementation.

The best part? They'll never have to worry about a dizzying support bill. With our Managed Services plans, our customers pay one low monthly cost and in return get all the service they can "eat". That's a key part of Connectability's service equation.

Connectability's Referral Program
Help us help you!

As many of you know, we get most of our customers through referrals and we're always looking for ways to grow our business.

To entice you to spread the word to friends, family, and business contacts we'd like to offer **$100** for making an introduction with a bona fide business prospect. If they sign up you'll get **$1,000** as a thank-you for putting us in touch! Simply by helping us you can reduce your IT costs!

For details about what constitutes a business prospect please go to our website at **www.connectability.com/referrals**

Hosted Email Exchange: Making The Switch

How do you manage your business emails? Do you host your own Exchange server? Do you use a generic Gmail or Yahoo account? Or is your email hosted externally? If you have your own Exchange server or use a generic email platform, consider this:

We ran a cost comparison between owning your own server and using a hosted solution. Over six years, an office of 15 hosting their email internally would need to replace their server twice and would spend $8,620 more than with a hosted solution.

Costs (Over 6 yrs)	Hosted Exchange	Internal Exchange
Server Hardware	$0	$6,000
Microsoft Exchange	$0	$2,000 (2 licenses)
User Licenses	$0	$3,600 (2 rounds)
Operating System	$0	$2,600 (2 licenses)
Cloud Backup	$0	$3,600 ($50/month)
Subscription Cost	$9,180 (15 x $8.50 x 72 months)	$0
Total	**$9,180**	**$17,800**

The cost difference is huge. These figures are very conservative and don't even include the labour for setup. In addition, if you host internally you will need to pay for updates and backup, both of which are included with hosted Exchange. Without updates you could be missing key features and without backup you could lose all your emails.

You could try using generic email platforms like Gmail and Yahoo. You can customize these accounts to look like business email, but they lack some of the key features in Exchange. Organizing your email is very important. It's often difficult to find a message in your mailbox especially if you're an email "pack rat". That's why Exchange allows you to organize emails into folders. Gmail allows you to organize with labels, but there are no sublabels, resulting in a one level hierarchy. We strongly recommend ANYONE who is self-hosting or using generic email move to a hosted Exchange solution.

Right now we're offering **50% off implementation** for anyone looking to move to a hosted Exchange solution. If you have any questions or would like to discuss hosted Exchange please call us at 416-966-3306, or email me at teds@connectability.com

Connectability to the Rescue!

Last Thursday night we received a call from a panicked business owner looking for support for their network. Their users couldn't connect to the Internet or to each other and, as a result, they couldn't get any work done. We had a technician onsite the next morning as soon as they opened. Within a few hours the issues were resolved and the customer was back up and running!

We understand that if you can't do your work it directly hurts your bottom line, and that's why we always prioritize emergencies first. If you experience an emergency, call us. If necessary we will drop less pressing work to address your concerns, because at Connectability emergencies always come first.

Joke of the Month:

Bill Gates and the Genie:

Bill Gates is at the beach when he discovers a bottle. He opens it and a Genie appears.

The Genie says, "I have been trapped for 1000 years. As a reward you can make a wish."

Gates thinks about it as he carries the bottle back to his beach cottage.

Once there, he goes to a bookshelf, pulls out an atlas, and turns to a map of the Middle East.

"This area has seen conflict and suffering for hundreds of years. What I wish for is peace in the Middle East."

The Genie replies, "I don't know. I can do a lot, but this? Don't you have another wish?"

Bill Gates thinks and finally says, OK.

"The whole world hates Microsoft because we have conquered the software market and because Windows still crashes. I wish you would make everybody love us."

The Genie says, "Let me see that map again."