Connectability Corner

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER.

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CONSUMER CHOICE AWARD 2019 GTA — 2 YEAR WINNER

We are excited to welcome **Patient News** to the Connectability family!

Founded in Haliburton, Ontario in 1993, Patient News is a dental marketing company that truly connects dentists with their target market. They even guarantee your satisfaction with their quality and service.

Patient News started by producing and mailing dental patient newsletters, but quickly grew and began offering new-patient newsletters, practice brochures, referral cards, patient surveys, and unparalleled market research services. These days, Patient News provides a full suite of marketing services, including print, digital, business intelligence, and campaign management. All of this with an eye to strengthening their clients' relationships with their patients, while simultaneously contributing to their growth.

To learn more about Patient News and the services they offer, go to: **https://patientnews.com/**

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

Are YOU Prepared For The End Of Windows 7?

On January 14, 2020, the world will bid a fond farewell to the beloved Windows 7 operating system. Well, sort of. Microsoft has declared that, after that date, it will no longer update or support the system. It's the final nail in the coffin for a trustworthy, oft-touted software package that's been running on fumes since newer versions hit the scene. And, as with any funeral, there are some arrangements to be made for the millions of businesses that have stuck it out to the end. Here's everything you need to know about the coming changes – and what you should do now to prepare.

The End Of An Era

The news of Microsoft closing down Windows 7 support may come as a surprise to some of us, but the operating system has been on its last legs for a while. In fact, Microsoft stopped adding new features and honouring warranties for the platform back in 2015. When 2020 comes, it will cease releasing patches and updates for good.

This doesn't mean that Windows 7 PCs will suddenly stop working in January; you'll still be able to boot up in the operating system if you keep it installed. But if you value your privacy, your data and your sanity, it's time to upgrade.

Those Microsoft updates that pop up from time to time don't exist just to annoy you; they patch security vulnerabilities and protect you against new viruses and malware. Without that ongoing support, Windows 7 users will become fish in a barrel to sophisticated cybercriminals looking for a quick buck.

That's why it's essential that you call in the professionals to prepare your business for the switch to Windows 10 – or an alternative operating system – now, not later.

It's A Requirement, Not A Choice

Upgrading your operating system well in advance of the Windows 7 end-of-life date may seem like a decision you should make for your peace of mind, but it's even more critical than that. Of course, as time leaves Windows 7 behind, it's certain that pieces of software will steadily become incompatible with the OS. Programs your company uses day-to-day suddenly becoming unusable will present serious headaches, but the real problem lies in the security of your network.

Windows developers are in a constant arms race with cybercriminals looking to exploit vulnerabilities in their platform. Each patch brings a host of bug fixes and security upgrades, but cybercriminals almost always find a new way in. Thus, the developers hastily put together a new patch, and the cycle continues.

> **"Like maggots drawn to rotting meat, they flock to the abandoned platform and dig into the networks of those stubbornly clinging to the outdated OS."**

When an operating system loses support from these developers, its users are left completely vulnerable to hackers. Like maggots drawn to rotting meat, they flock to the abandoned platform and dig into the networks of those stubbornly clinging to the outdated OS. This process is expected to be especially nasty after Windows 7's end of life, since so many businesses still use the OS and likely will forget (or refuse) to upgrade.

If you value your business at all, it's not a choice. You need to upgrade before time runs out.

Avoid The Crunch

Not only should you enlist your IT experts to facilitate the upgrade, but you should do it ASAP. As the clock ticks down on Windows 7, tech companies are expecting a flood of upgrade requests as businesses scramble to leave the OS behind before it's too late. Many of these IT providers will have a lot on their plate later in the year as they hurry to upgrade hundreds, if not thousands, of individual PCs. If you wait it out, you're likely to find yourself at the back of a long, long line, potentially to the point that you breeze past January 14 without a solution. If you do, you're almost certain to regret it.

Every day, the need for an upgrade becomes more urgent. Give the task the ample time required, and avoid needless stress. Reach out to your IT provider and ask them to start the upgrade process today.

Another Win for Connectability!

Established in 1987, Consumer Choice Award recognizes and promotes business excellence in small and medium businesses across Canada. The recipients of these awards are not selected by judges, but consumers themselves, with the criteria being brand reputation, customer satisfaction, and business excellence.

For both 2018 and 2019, Connectability has been recognized as the **BEST Managed Service Provider in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)**. Consumers voted for Connectability because we deliver high-quality IT services and support, and we offer a wide variety of IT solutions to small and medium sized businesses across the GTA.

With 24 years of experience, cost effective solutions, and a range of IT services, we are your one-stop shop for all your technology needs. Connectability not only ensures that our clients receive top-notch IT support, we also work hard to ensure that they have a positive experience, and are completely satisfied. Winning Best Managed Services Provider for two consecutive years is a win for us, but it is also a win for our customers because they know they are working with Toronto's best.

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

VIZR Hopes To Revolutionize Your Dashboard

When it comes to driving, the forces that aim to keep us safe seem to be in constant battle with the pull of convenience. We're supposed to keep our eyes glued to the road while trying to navigate through Google Maps without missing a single turn. It's an inherently dangerous combination.

With their new VIZR tool, FIXD automotive hopes to fix that. After selecting the feature you want, you connect the device to your phone and place it on your dashboard, where it creates a transparent display. This way, FIXD says, you can seamlessly navigate without ever glancing at your phone and putting your life in jeopardy.

Though VIZR is a great idea, the reviews indicate it might not be all it's cracked up to be. You might want to wait until all the bugs are sorted out. For now, just keep your eyes on the road the old-fashioned way.

Expect, Inspect, Correct

It's no coincidence that we have so many ways to say we made a mistake: botched, flubbed, mishandled, misjudged, mucked, messed, screwed or goofed up – just to name a few.

As a leader, you'll hear each of these (some more than others, and likely some more explicit than the ones I've named here) pretty often. When you do, it's important to first try to remember that whoever made the mistake probably didn't mean to.

Put yourself in their shoes. Ask yourself if you have ever made a mistake. A bad decision? Have you ever said something you regret? Ever disappointed your boss? Jumped to the wrong conclusion? Done something foolish or outright stupid? Everyone has. Sometimes a simple reminder of our past failings enables us to be a little more tolerant of others' missteps.

Mistakes don't have to be the end of the world.

Mistakes are inevitable and are often essential to learning and progress. They should guide you, not define you, on you and your employees' journey to success. Mistakes show effort, and if you learn from them, they can be some of the best tools for growth.

I've heard it said before that the only people who don't make mistakes are those who do nothing at all. To me, the most interesting part about errors is the gradual evolution in how they're classified. First, they start as mistakes. Then they turn into lessons, followed by experiences and finally as gifts that help us succeed.

Therefore, the only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing. Keep that in mind as you're dealing with your employees or considering your own shortcomings. It's one thing to recognize that mistakes are learning opportunities – it's another to actually implement that concept in your organization.

Cybersecurity Video Series:
How To Hack-Proof Your Devices

In this month's **Cyber SecuriTip**, Ted provides five simple steps you can apply to your business to reduce the risks around mobile devices. These tips will minimize your chances of a data breach. Every business needs a mobile device policy that outlines how employees should use devices, especially when they access sensitive company data.

If you don't already have a policy, or you aren't sure your current policy is up to the task, you should watch this video NOW. At the very least it will open your eyes to potential security gaps, and how you can fill them.

Without a policy and staff training, your business is vulnerable to data loss, exposure of confidential data, and even negative PR and liability associated with exposing client information.

To learn more, go to YouTube, look up **Connectability IT Support** and find the video *"How To Hack-Proof Your Devices"* OR go to our website at **www.connectability.com,** hover over **"Resources & Videos"** and select **"Videos".**

■ Read These Top Tips To Avoid Getting Hacked!

Everyone knows how damaging data breaches can be to a business, but a few actually realize that 81% of these hacks are not the result of elaborate scams carried out by sophisticated hackers. They happen because of poor passwords.

Do what you can to prevent your business from being targeted. Demand that your employees create strong passwords: between 8 and 10 characters in length, with letters, numbers and symbols scattered throughout. Instruct them to avoid real dictionary words and to steer clear of the bone-headedly obvious ones like "12345" or "password."

You can test the strength of your password online at Microsoft's Security and Safety Center. If you can, enable two-factor authentication, because it can go a long way toward your overall security.

Even if you use a secure password yourself, you'd likely be amazed (and terrified) to discover how many members of your team do not. In 2019, a strong password is essential. Make sure every one of your employees takes care to create one. *1/3/2019*

■ Easy Ways To Prevent Great Hires From Getting Away

Today's labour market is tighter than it's been in years. With this in mind, it's essential that you do all you can to attract top talent. One of the best and simplest ways to do that is to improve your hiring process.

First, make sure the job description sounds like a true sales pitch. You should feature the benefits of working in that job above the preferred credentials. Once the applications start coming in, ensure you're keeping in regular contact with your prospects. When it comes time for interviews, make the process as straightforward and comfortable as possible and cater to their scheduling needs. Finally, ask for feedback about your hiring process – checking into reviews on sites like Glassdoor can provide valuable insight. *Inc.com, 2/1/2019*

Who Else Wants To Win A $25 Gift Card?

Our last quiz question was: **The QWERTY keyboard has basically been in use since the late 1870s. How could you tell that the keyboard in front of you uses the QWERTY layout?**

The answer was: **A) The first six letter keys on the top row spell QWERTY**

You can be the Grand Prize Winner of this month's Trivia Challenge Quiz! Just be the first person to correctly answer this month's trivia question and receive a **$25 gift card to Starbucks**. Ready? Call us right now with your answer! Which of these is not a computer operating system?

   A) **Linux**
   B) **Microsoft Windows**
   C) **Apple OS X**
   D) **Photoshop**

Call us right now with your answer! (647) 492-4406

This month we will be donating to **Rethink Breast Cancer**.

Rethink Breast Cancer empowers young individuals globally who are concerned about and affected by breast cancer. It is a young women's breast cancer movement, that focuses on ground-breaking education, support, and advocacy primarily for millennials.

Rethink focuses on thinking differently about breast cancer, with a breakthrough approach by prompting bold, stylish, fear-free awareness, while simultaneously dismissing the myth that breast cancer is only an "old lady disease". Rethink provides care and relief for young women with breast cancer to make their journey a little bit easier.

If you would like to contribute to Rethink Breast Cancer we would love your help! Email: info@connectability.com or call: (416) 966 3306.