Connectability Corner

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER.

Powered by: **Connectability**

CONSUMER CHOICE AWARD 2020 GTA — 3 YEAR WINNER

February 2021

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

You NEVER See It Coming! But Once It Hits, Everyone Says, "I Wish I Would Have_____"

A year ago, no one could have predicted that countless businesses would shift to a remote work model. The pandemic hit hard and fast, and small businesses had to think on their toes. Many had only a few weeks to adapt. It was stressful and extremely challenging.

Looking back on it, many SMBs wish they'd had a plan in place that would have made things easier. When the pandemic hit in February/March 2020, SMBs had to absorb the huge cost of getting their employees up and running off-site. Not only was it costly, but it also took a lot of coordination and on-the-fly planning. This meant things slipped through the cracks, including cyber security.

As they say, hindsight is 20/20. You may wish you had a plan in place or had more time, but you didn't. A vast majority didn't. However, you can still plan for the future! While you never know when disaster is going to strike, you CAN be prepared for it. Whether that disaster is a pandemic, flood, fire or even hardware failure, there are steps you can implement today that will put you in a better place tomorrow. Here's how to get started.

Put Your Plan Into Writing.
First and foremost, you should have a standard operating procedure to call on should something go wrong. For example, in early 2020, many SMBs didn't have a security plan in place, let alone a *remote* work security plan. They had to make it up as they went, which just added to the challenges they were already experiencing.

To get over this challenge, work with an experienced IT services company or managed services provider (MSP)

to put together a plan. This plan should include a cyber security protocol. It should define what malware software employees should be using, what number they should call for 24/7 support, who to contact when they receive suspicious emails, how to identify suspicious emails and so on.

More than that, it should outline exactly what needs to happen when disaster strikes. Pandemic? Here's how we operate. Fire? Here's what you need to know. Hardware failure? Call this number immediately. The list goes on, and it can be pretty extensive. This, again, is why it's so important to work with an MSP. They've already put together plans for other SMBs, and they know where to start when they customize a plan with you.

Invest In Security And Backups.
While every business should have network security already in place, the reality is that many don't. There are a ton of reasons why (cost concerns, lack of time, lack of resources, etc.), but those reasons why aren't going to stop a cyber-attack. Hackers don't care that you didn't have time to put malware protection on your PCs; they just want money and to wreak havoc.

When you have IT security in place, including firewall protection, malware software, strong passwords and a

> **"When you have IT security in place, including firewall protection, malware software, strong passwords and a company-wide IT security policy, you put your business and all your employees in a much better place."**

company-wide IT security policy, you put your business and all your employees in a much better place. **All of this** should be in place for both on-site employees and remote workers. With more people working from home going into 2021, having reliable IT security in place is more important than ever before.

On top of that, you should have secure backups in place. Investing in cloud storage is a great way to go. That way, if anything happens on-site or to your primary data storage, you have backups you can rely on to restore lost or inaccessible data. Plus, having a solid cloud storage option gives remote employees ready access to any data they might need while at home or on the go.

Where Do You Begin?
Some SMBs have the time, money and resources to invest in on-site IT personnel, but most don't. It is a big investment. This is where partnering with an experienced IT services firm can really pay off. You may have employees in-office or you may have a team working remotely – or you may have a mix of both. You need support that can take care of everyone in your organization while taking care of the data security of the business itself. This is where your IT partner comes into play. They are someone you can rely on 24/7 and someone who will be there for you during a pandemic or any other disaster.

Welcome The Newest Member Of The Connectability Team!

Connectability has grown a lot over the past few years. To continue that aggressive growth we've also grown our team. Please help us welcome Adam Alderdice to Connectability! Adam is our newest Network Engineer. His role at Connectability is to troubleshoot and resolve your IT issues, proactively monitor your network, and help improve your productivity by leveraging technology.

Adam has worked in IT for over 20 years and has provided technical support to clients across a wide range of industries. With over 15 years of software developing experience, Adam is ready to solve your IT problems, and to help educate you about your technology. Call our office and speak to Adam today!

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

FitTrack: A Revolutionary Scale Lets You Look Inside Your Body

Right now, countless people have gotten lax on their New Year's resolutions and given up on their goals. One of the most popular resolutions is to get fit. It is also one of the most challenging ones to see through to the end. The FitTrack smart scale is here to make that a little less challenging!

FitTrack has earned its designation as a smart scale. It does much more than tell you your weight. With a number of other sensors, as well as data you input into the FitTrack app, it can tell you all sorts of things. Yes, it will tell you your weight, but it will also tell you things like body mass index, muscle and bone mass and hydration levels, to name just a few. In total, it can track 17 key health insights.

As you work toward your fitness goals for the year, don't miss out on a companion that will give you crucial data along your fitness journey. Discover more about FitTrack at **bit.ly/2VOg7Vs.**

Why Se cure Passwords Need Len gth!

The truth is, no matter how many times we see a warning about protecting our online identity, we take the easy route. It's like the verification box we're forced to check accepting the terms and conditions when we create a new online account, whether it's for Facebook or a bank account. At most, we skim through the agreement and hope that nothing bad happens. And this mentality applies to everything. Unfortunately, that means that most people take the same approach when creating passwords. Creating strong and hard to guess passwords is difficult, so most of us instead opt to keep it simple and hope for the best!

Passwords are an extremely important component of protecting your online identity. They are the first line of defense against unauthorized access to your accounts and confidential information. The more complex your password is, the more difficult it is for hackers to break in.

Traditional password practices include selecting a word and adding numbers, uppercase letters, and special characters. For instance, it could be your cat's name: Chl0e25@. Now, most of us would agree this password is complex, regardless of its length. However, the FBI has chimed in and clarified that longer passwords which include simple words and constructs, are better than short passwords with special characters.

A general rule of thumb is that your password should be at least 15 characters. The issue here is trying to remember multiple 15-character passwords. That's why we recommend using passphrases. Passphrases are a string of words, that make it harder for cyber criminals to crack, while also making it easier for you to remember. A passphrase uses spaces and symbols. It also doesn't have to be a proper sentence or grammatically correct. For example, it could be Chloe Luvs Her Yarn! What you use is entirely up to you but using passphrases can be a good way of locking down your accounts to prevent unauthorized access. In addition, to help remember all your passwords, you should consider using a password management program. There are many inexpensive and free password managers that use the same encryption as major banks.

To keep your business protected, it's important to use long and complex passwords. A password is the first "lock" on the front door of your business. If a hacker cracks this open, they can rummage through your personal information and cause chaos. Don't take the easy way out – use passphrases NOW!

Antivirus Isn't Enough– Stack Your Defenses

The cyberworld isn't safe anymore. It doesn't matter whether you are a billion dollar multi-national or a small mom and pop shop - your business is at risk. Cybercriminals are constantly finding new methods to get into your network and cause chaos. To protect your business, you need to establish and maintain strong cyber defenses.

If your business is not protected, a hacker can remain in your network undetected for days, months, or even years. That's why you need to layer your defenses to stay ahead of threats. No single tool is effective at defending against all kinds of attack. To fully protect your business, you need to have a number of traditional tools such as a business grade firewall, anti-virus software, and email filtering. But you also need to have an advanced threat detection tool to help identify the hackers entry points into your network.

If you're concerned about cybersecurity, watch this video now. You will learn why your business needs to "stack" its security solutions, and how Threat Detection can help. To access it, go to YouTube, look up Connectability IT Support and find the video **"Why Antivirus Isn't Enough & How To Close Security Holes Hackers Use To Get Into Your Company"** OR go to our website at www.connectability.com, hover over "Resources & Videos" and select "Videos".

■ 3 Ways To Protect Your Data During COVID-19

1. Manage Your Passwords. You've heard it before, and you'll hear it again – one of the best ways to keep intruders out of your data is to lock it behind strong passwords that are updated every 60 to 90 days. Even better: use passphrases instead of long and complex passwords. They're easier to remember and harder to crack!

2. Secure All Data. Who are you sharing your data with? Do former employees still have access? What about former clients? Take time to see who has permission to access your network and data. While you're at it, clean up old or useless data that may be just taking up space. When you know what data you're saving – and who has permission to access that data – you can better protect it.

3. Adopt Best Practices. When was the last time your team received IT security training? Never? Five years ago? It's time to get back on it. Train your team on the latest cyber security threats and how to handle them. Then, adopt best practices so your team knows what to do when they receive a phishing email or there's a threat to your network. *Inc., Nov. 20, 2020*

■ Confidence Is Key: How To Self-Promote For Greater Success

We often don't like to talk about ourselves. But there are many times when it is important to talk about yourself and to convey your accomplishments. Maybe you're applying for a new position within your organization, you're trying to establish a partnership with another company or you want to expand your professional network. Either

way, here are a few ways to self-promote without sounding like a brag.

Lean Into Your Expertise. Call on your experience. If someone is dealing with an issue you're familiar with, walk them through it. Or, take on the role of mentor with others in your organization or community.

Be Receptive To Feedback. This is how we grow. Listen to what people have to say and respond by taking action. Make adjustments as they make sense. When you receive positive feedback, accept it graciously.

Emphasize "Together." Don't make things just about you. Share credit when it deserves to be shared. Be a supportive and motivational voice. Uplift others. *Forbes, Nov. 23, 2020*

Client Spotlight:
Landlord Property & Rental Management

Meet **Landlord Property & Rental Management**, the newest member of the Connectability client family!

Founded in 1995, Landlord Property & Rental Management Inc helps investors with every stage of property investing because their company is made up of a property management company, a real estate brokerage, and a renovations team. What makes LandLord stand out is their one-stop-shop approach to property investing, and their online client portal which is available 24/7 from any device. They help investors buy and sell, upgrade and renovate, and manage everything involved in leasing their property. Their clients can access the online portal to view their financial records, property inspection reports with photographs, and invoices.

Beyond that, Landlord Property & Rental Management maintains an average Google Review of over 4.7 stars and are known by their clients for having excellent customer service, prompt response times, and extensive expertise in their field.

Connectability is now Landlord Property & Rental Management's technology partner. We monitor their network and computers to guarantee their network is safe, and that their online portal is accessible 24/7. We are also proactive – so we predict when issues might occur to prevent downtime, lost productivity, and employee frustration. We support their business to ensure that they are always operational, and their data is secure and confidential.

If you would like to learn more about Landlord Property & Rental Management, please go to: https://landlord.net/

This month we will be donating to the **Children's Wish Foundation of Canada.**

Founded in 1985, Children's Wish Foundation is a charity committed to granting wishes to Canadian children who are diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Children's Wish Foundation of Canada is the largest and only all-Canadian charity and has granted more than 25,000 children and their families with their wishes.

There are offices and staff in every province, and every family has a dedicated Wish Coordinator, who can accomplish the wish to meet the needs of the child and their family. The Children's Wish Foundation enhances the quality of life for children between the ages 3-17, and their families, by making their heartfelt wish come true and creating hope and happiness.

If you want to contribute to the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada, we would love your help! Email: **info@connectability.com** or call **(647) 492-4406.**