TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

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Boost your team's engagement with better tech?

The stresses and pressures of the cost of living crisis are hitting many people hard. That makes employee engagement more of a challenge than ever.

As a business, you might be finding it hard yourself. It may not be possible to offer salary rises that keep pace with inflation.

And at the same time you might be asking more of your people, or making changes to the workplace that are hard for some to adjust to.

The last thing you want is to lose good people just when you need everyone firing on all cylinders.

That's why some of the most effective engagement strategies right now involve relieving the stress and tedium of repetitive tasks, and removing workplace frustration – with the added benefit that you become more efficient in the process.

Most businesses now offer some form of remote working. But it's common for people to feel 'left out in the cold' if it's not easy for them to keep communication channels open. Making team interactions seamless can make a big difference to the happiness of your people – and even to your customers.

How do you do this? Start with better collaboration tools. They can improve project management, strengthen relationships, reduce wasted time, and even encourage better feedback. Technology can also automate dull and repetitive tasks. No-one's going to complain about that, and faster working will provide a productivity boost.

When you respond to your people's frustrations by providing the right tools, they'll feel listened to and valued. And if they feel that they're getting things done, they'll become more engaged and more motivated.

There's an overwhelming range of tools available that often make bold claims about their ability to transform your business.

We can help to cut through the sales patter and get to the heart of what's right for you. So if you're looking at a tech solution to improve employee engagement, let's talk.

DID YOU KNOW...

OneNote is blocking files

OneNote in Microsoft 365 is blocking more than 100 file extensions to try to prevent malware being distributed through the application. This will include file types .XXL, .ISO, and .BAT.

Other Office programs such as Outlook, Word, and Excel will all follow suit.

Technology update

If your business suffered a data breach, your first priorities would be to stop it and minimize the damage caused by the attack.

But would you report it to the authorities?

Reporting security incidents could be key to removing some of the threat to businesses of all sizes. But small and medium sized businesses can be reluctant to reveal what's happened for fear of bad press or potential repercussions from attackers.
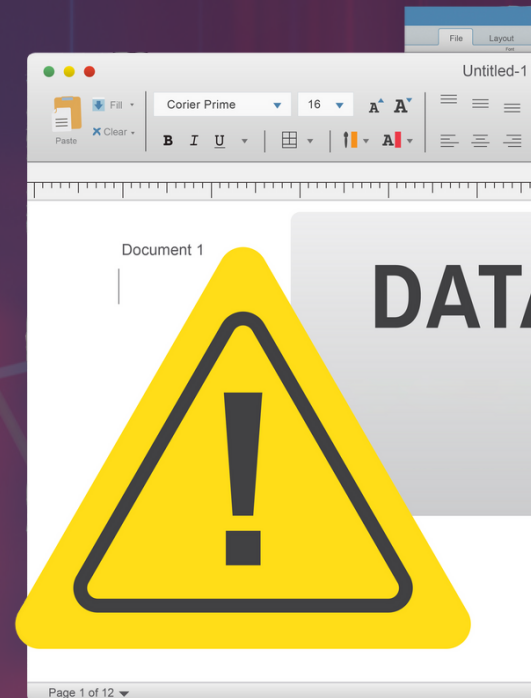
What do you think about this kind of transparency?

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Your income is directly related to your philosophy, not the economy."

Jim Rohn, Entrepreneur and Author

Document 1

DATA

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Tech Facts

1

In the original Pac-Man, the ghosts had unique traits. The red one was programmed to follow behind Pac-Man, the pink one in front, but the cyan ghost was designed to be unpredictable

2

The most efficient keyboard layout is called Colemak, which is designed to reduce finger movements by half. It uses the home row 74% of the time, compared to Qwerty's 34%
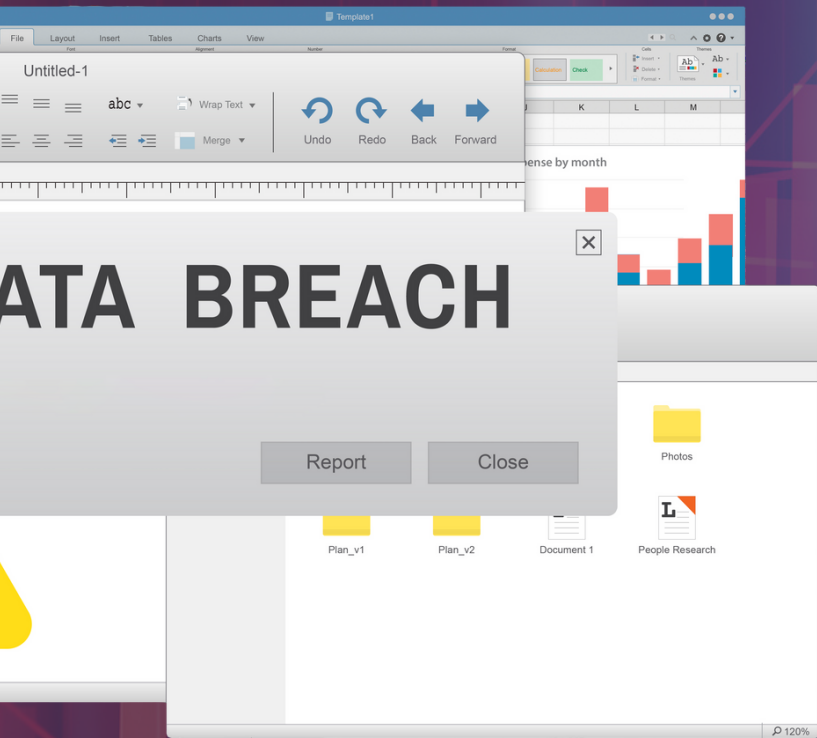
3

QR codes were invented in 1994. They were first used to track vehicles on the assembly line

NEW TO
MICROSOFT
365

Bye bye Teams backgrounds (sort of)

Microsoft's improving the experience on Windows to make it look like everyone on the call is in the same room.

It'll use AI to remove everyone's individual backgrounds, and add the same background for every person. Clever.

ANOTHER MONTH MEANS A NEW TECH QUIZ!

The winner gets to leave work 30 minutes early today! (not really)

1) Which search engine almost bought Google in the 90s?

2) What was the world's first widely-used web browser?

3) In computing history, who were the dirty dozen?

4) What are Android releases named after?

5) In old PCs what was the function of the Turbo button?

The answers are below.

1) Excite
2) Mosaic
3) Engineers who created the first IBM PC
4) Sweets and desserts
5) Strangely, it made the computer run slower, so it could run software designed for slower machines

Fake software ads used to distribute malware

Google is most people's first port of call for help or information online – something cyber criminals are using to their advantage.

Specifically, they are targeting Google ads, impersonating campaigns for popular software such as Grammarly, Slack, Ring and many others. This is nothing to do with those companies, but to the untrained eye they look like the real deal... which is how they're tricking people into clicking the ads.

If you're not using an ad blocker, you'll see promoted pages at the top of your Google search results. These look almost identical to the non-promoted, down page organic search results, so you or your people could easily be tempted to click.

It's a complicated scam. Criminals clone the official software websites, but instead of distributing the genuine product, when you click download they install 'trojanized' versions. That's geek speak for malware that disguises itself as real software.

Google is working to protect us by blocking campaigns it's able to identify as malicious. But criminals have tricky ways around that too.

Ads first take you to a benign-looking website – which the crooks have created. This then redirects you to a malicious site that convincingly impersonates a genuine page. That's where the malware lurks waiting for a click, beyond Google's reach.

Worse, in many cases you'll still get the software you're trying to download, along with a hidden payload of malware. That makes it harder to tell that your device or network has been infected, and may give the malware longer to do its job.

To stay protected, train your team about the dangers and make sure everyone is on the lookout for anything that doesn't seem quite right.

Encourage people to scroll down the Google results until they find the official domain of the company they're looking for, and make it a policy that people seek permission before downloading any software – no matter how innocent it may seem.

You could also consider using an ad blocker in your browser. That will filter out any promoted results from your Google search for some extra peace of mind.

For help and advice with training and software policies, give us a call.

Business gadget of the month

Timekettle WT2 Plus translator

Real-time, simultaneous AI translation with support for 40 languages. Stick one of these in your ear, give one to the other person and talk normally to each other in your respective languages, while the Timekettle translates like a real life Babelfish. I mean... wow.

$359.98. Ships worldwide from www.timekettle.co
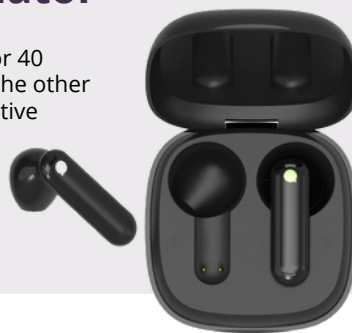
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