T. Daniels Consulting

THE T. DANIELS TIMES

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What's New

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness month. Originally launched in 2004 as a collaboration between the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), it is a broad effort to help all Americans stay safer and more secure online.

The theme for 2020 is **"Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart."** If everyone does their part – implementing stronger security practices, raising community awareness, educating vulnerable audiences or training employees – our interconnected world will be safer and more resilient for everyone.

For tips on how to be Cyber Smart, visit **Page 3** inside, call us at **810-629-0131** or send an email to: **info@tdaniels.com**

October 2020

This monthly publication provided courtesy of Timothy D. Ricketts, President of T. Daniels Consulting.

"Thank you for the confidence you have given our entire team to manage and protect your valuable assets. We take great pride with our goal to exceed your expectations every day!"

Employees Are Letting Hackers Into Your Network ...

What You Can Do To Stop It

Cyberthreats are everywhere these days. Hackers, scammers and cybercriminals are working overtime to break into your network – and the network of just about every business, non-profit ,and local government organization out there. They have a huge arsenal of tools at their disposal, from automated bots to malicious advertising networks, to make it possible.

But there is one "tool" that *you* may be putting directly into their hands: your employees. Specifically, **your employees' lack of IT security training**.

While most of us expect hackers to attack from the outside using malware or brute-force attacks (hacking, in a more traditional sense), the truth is that most hackers love it when they can get others to do their work for them.

In other words, if they can fool your employees into clicking on a link in an e-mail or downloading unapproved software onto a company device, all the hackers have to do is sit back while your employees wreak havoc. The worst part is that your employees may not even realize that their actions are compromising your network. And that's a problem.

Even if you have other forms of network security in place – malware protection, firewalls, secure cloud backup, etc. – it won't be enough if your employees lack good IT security training. In fact, a lack of training is the single biggest threat to your network!

It's time to do something about it. Comprehensive network security training accomplishes several things, including:

1. Identifying Phishing E-Mails
Phishing e-mails are constantly evolving. It used to be that the average phishing e-mail included a message littered with bad grammar and misspelled words. Plus, it was generally from someone you'd never heard of.

These days, phishing e-mails are a lot more clever. Hackers can spoof legitimate

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e-mail addresses and websites and make their e-mails look like they're coming from a sender you actually know. They can disguise these e-mails as messages from your bank or other employees within your business.

You can still identify these fake e-mails by paying attention to little details that give them away, such as inconsistencies in URLs in the body of the e-mail. Inconsistencies can include odd strings of numbers in the web address or links to YourBank.**net** instead of YourBank.**com**. Good training can help your employees recognize these types of red flags.

2. Avoiding Malware Or Ransomware Attacks One reason why malware attacks work is because an employee clicks a link or downloads a program they shouldn't. They might think they're about to download a useful new program to their company computer, but the reality is very different.

Malware comes from many different sources. It can come from phishing e-mails, but it also comes from malicious ads on the Internet or by connecting an infected device to your network. For example, an employee might be using their USB thumb drive from home to transfer files (don't let this happen!), and that thumb drive happens to be carrying a virus. The next thing you know, it's on your network and spreading.

This is why endpoint protection across the board is so important. Every device on your network should be firewalled and have updated malware and ransomware protection in place. If you have remote employees, they should only use verified and protected devices to connect to your network. (They should also be using a VPN, or virtual private network, for even more security.) But more importantly, your employees should be trained on this security. They should understand why it's in place and why they should only connect to your network using secured devices.

3. Updating Poor Or Outdated Passwords If you want to make a hacker's job easier than ever, all you have to do is never change your password. Or use a weak password, like "QWERTY" or "PASSWORD." Even in enterprise, people still use bad passwords that never get changed. Don't let this be you!

A good IT security training program stresses the importance of updating passwords regularly. Even better, it shows employees the best practices in updating the passwords and in choosing secure passwords that will offer an extra layer of protection between your business and the outside world.

If you or your employees haven't updated their passwords recently, a good rule of thumb is to consider all current passwords compromised. When hackers attack your network, two of the big things they look for are usernames and passwords. It doesn't matter what they're for – hackers just want this information. Why? Because most people do not change their passwords regularly, and because many people are in the habit of reusing passwords for multiple applications, hackers will try to use these passwords in other places, including bank accounts.

Don't let your employees become your biggest liability. These are just a few examples of how comprehensive IT and network security training can give your employees the knowledge and resources they need to help protect themselves and your business. **Just remember, you do not have to do this by yourself! Good IT training programs are hard to find, and we are here to help.**

> **"Every device on your network should be firewalled and have updated malware and ransomware protection in place."**

Free Report Download: Critical Facts Every Business Owner, Non Profit Organization, And Government Leader *Must* Know Before Transitioning To A 'Virtual Network' To Allow Employees To Securely and Efficiently 'Work From Home'.

If you are the owner/leader of a small to mid-sized business, nonprofit organization or local government entity and would like the option to implement a 'work from home' program for your employees - DON'T - until you read this eye-opening guide.

This report will explain in plain, non-technical terms best practices for setting up remote access for you and your staff, as well important questions you should ask any computer consultant to avoid making the most commonly and costly mistakes made when setting up the technology for a 'work from home' program.

Get your FREE copy today:
https://www.tdaniels.com/wfh-1020

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

Ovo Portable Steam Iron And Garment Steamer

The **Ovo Portable Steam Iron And Garment Steamer** is much smaller than your average iron and yet capable of so much more. It's an iron *and* a steamer and the perfect companion for when you're traveling and want to look sharp. Or keep the Ovo at home to save space!

The Ovo fits easily in your hand. It's lightweight and won't take up much space in your luggage. Plus, it holds enough water to create up to 10 minutes of steam. You can quickly switch from the metal ironing plate to the brush attachment to add finishing touches to delicate fabrics (and remove any lint or pet hair). It even comes with a heat-resistant travel case. Learn more about this mini-marvel at **bit.ly/2CgQzJG**!

October: National Cyber Security Awareness Month

CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Here are the top tips to help you: Do Your Part To #BeCyberSmart

Shake Up Your Password Protocol:

According to National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) guidance, you should consider using the longest password or passphrase permissible. Get creative and customize your password for different sites, which can prevent cybercriminals from gaining access to these accounts and protect you in the event of a breach. Use password managers to generate and remember different, complex passwords for each of your accounts.

If You Connect, You Must Protect:

Whether it's your computer, smartphone, game device, or other network devices, the best defense against viruses and malware is to update to the latest security software, web browser, and operating systems. Sign up for automatic updates, if you can, and protect your devices with antivirus software.

Play Hard To Get With Strangers:

Cybercriminals use phishing tactics, hoping to fool their victims. If you're unsure who an email is from—even if the details appear accurate— or if the email looks "phishy," do not respond and do not click on any links or attachments found in that email. When available use the "junk" or "block" option to no longer receive messages from a particular sender.

Never Click And Tell:

Limit what information you post on social media—from personal addresses to where you like to grab coffee. What many people don't realize is that these seemingly random details are all criminals need to know to target you, your loved ones, and your physical belongings—online and in the physical world. Keep Social Security numbers, account numbers, and passwords private, as well as specific information about yourself, such as your full name, address, birthday, and even vacation plans.

Disable location services that allow anyone to see where you are – and where you aren't – at any given time.

Keep Tabs On Your Apps:

Most connected appliances, toys, and devices are supported by a mobile application. Your mobile device could be filled with suspicious apps running in the background or using default permissions you never realized you approved—gathering your personal information without your knowledge while also putting your identity and privacy at risk. Check your app permissions and use the "rule of least privilege" to delete what you don't need or no longer use. Learn to just say "no" to privilege requests that don't make sense. Only download apps from trusted vendors and sources.

Stay Protected While Connected:

Before you connect to any public wireless hotspot – like at an airport, hotel, or café – be sure to confirm the name of the network and exact login procedures with appropriate staff to ensure that the network is legitimate. If you do use an unsecured public access point, practice good Internet hygiene by avoiding sensitive activities (e.g., banking) that require passwords or credit cards. Your personal hotspot is often a safer alternative to free Wi-Fi. Only use sites that begin with "https://" when online shopping or banking.

T. Daniels Consulting can help you and your business become more cyber secure. To learn more, visit: https://www.tdaniels.com or call us at 810-629-0131.

The T. Daniels Difference

25 YEARS
1994 ~ 2019
T. DANIELS CONSULTING

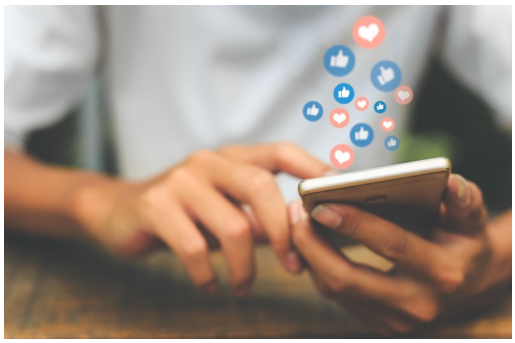
For over 25 years, T. Daniels Consulting has provided Small and Medium sized organizations with excellent customer service. Our Microsoft Certified Professionals and Engineers have an average 10 years' experience benefiting you by fixing problems quickly and correctly the first time. No other competitor comes close to our level of knowledge, experience and professionalism. We are continuously adding new and improved services to meet your ongoing needs. We never stop improving. That is the **T. Daniels Difference**. Thanks to all of our customers for making us one of Michigan's fastest growing IT consulting and service companies.

Do These Things To Protect Your Business From Getting Hacked

1. Train Employees. Your team needs to know how to identify and handle today's IT security threats. Cybercriminals often rely on your employees' lack of training to break into your network. Ongoing training gives employees tools and resources to overcome this and many other IT security challenges. Make training a top priority!

2. Hold Employees (And Yourself) Accountable. Training and company guidelines don't mean much without accountability. When you set rules, follow them, just as you follow industry and government rules and regulations when operating your business. Be willing to hold anyone who does not accountable.

3. Have A Disaster Recovery Plan. Things happen. When you store sensitive data, you need to have a plan in place to recover and restore that data should anything happen. This doesn't just include data loss from malicious attacks but other types of disasters, including hardware failure, fire and flood. How is your data being backed up and saved? Who do you notify in the event of a breach? Who do your employees call in the event of disaster? *SmallBiz Technology, Dec. 26, 2019*



Tips To Get Projects Done On Time With A Small Team

1. Give Them The Tools And Resources They Need
We all need tools to get things done – project management software, content creation tools, messaging apps, virtual private network access and more. Have a conversation about what each team member needs to maximize productivity and work closely with them to meet that need.

2. Set Aside Time For Proper Research
Don't jump headfirst into a project without jumping into research first. Information is a powerful tool to get things done efficiently and effectively.

3. Assign Accordingly
Before the team goes to work, make sure assignments or responsibilities are delegated properly and check in with everyone on a regular basis to make sure things are going smoothly (or to see if they need help).

4. Plan And Plan Again
Plan out the project before you set to work. Give yourself and your team a map to follow as you work through the project. As with any project, expect obstacles along the way and be willing to update your map accordingly. *Small Business Trends, July 4, 2020*