

May 2021

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This monthly publication is provided courtesy of Eric Engbretson, Cyber Analyst and Partner — Action DataTel.



How To Enable Remote Work Without Exposing Your Entire Business To Cybercriminals

A record number of businesses said goodbye to the traditional in-office work model in 2020. They embraced the remote work model as they adapted to the new COVID-19 reality. It was a huge shift that came with many challenges, and some of those challenges are still felt today.

One of those challenges was – and is – cyber security. Businesses wanted to get their remote workforce up and running, but there were a lot of questions about how they would keep their newly remote employees secure.

So, how can you enable remote work while keeping your business and your employees secure? How do you keep cybercriminals out? The answer is multifaceted. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to cyber security – that would make things much easier! But there are several steps you can take to help your remote team stay productive while keeping the cybercriminals out.

Here are three things you need to do:

1. Skip the public WiFi. This is Cyber Security 101. Never use unsecured, public WiFi, especially when working. For remote employees who have the option to work from anywhere, using public WiFi is tempting. It's just so easy to access, but it comes with huge risks, including the potential to expose your device to intruders.

Thankfully, there are plenty of options to help keep employees connected without having to worry about snoops. The most popular is the VPN, or virtual private network. VPNs allow remote workers to securely access the Internet, even through public WiFi. VPNs are ideal for remote workers who need to routinely access your network.

Another option is the personal hotspot. This is a portable WiFi access point, usually

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paired with data service through a telecom like Verizon, AT&T or T-Mobile. It gives remote workers flexibility to work anywhere they can get high-speed data service. Because the remote worker is the only person on the hotspot (and should be the only person), there is less worry about hackers snooping for your data.

2. Have a strong device policy. When it comes to cost-cutting, it can be appealing to let employees use their own devices while working remotely. Avoid this, if possible. The bring-your-own-device (BYOD) approach has its benefits, including keeping costs down, but the security costs could be massive, especially if an employee gets hacked or misplaces crucial data. In short, BYOD can get complicated fast, especially for businesses unfamiliar with the BYOD approach.

That said, many businesses work with an IT services company or managed services provider to create a list of approved devices (PCs, laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) that employees can use. Then those devices are loaded up with malware protection, a VPN, and other security solutions. So, while employees may be using a variety of devices, they all have the same security and other necessary software in order to perform their duties.

The best device policy, however, is to provide employees with

work devices. This ensures that everyone is using the same hardware and software, and this makes it much easier to keep everyone up-to-date and secure. It takes a little more effort logistically, and it has a higher up-front cost, but when it comes to keeping your business secure, it's worth it.

3. Don't forget about physical security. While a lot of businesses are focusing on digital security right now, they're not putting a similar focus on physical security. They may have a team of people working remotely spread across different neighborhoods, towns, states or countries. This mobility comes with the risk of device theft or loss.

If employees will be carrying their work devices with them for any reason, those devices should be kept nearby at all times. That means *never* leaving work devices in vehicles or unattended at a café or airport (or any location). Never leave a device where it has the potential to be taken.

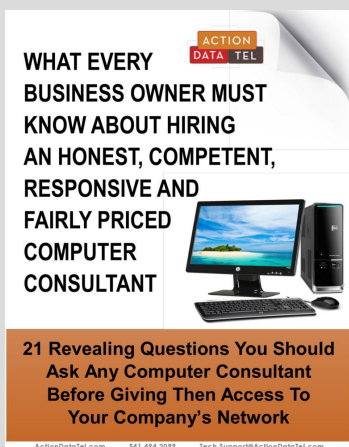
It's also important to remind employees to not only keep their doors locked but also keep work devices out of sight. You wouldn't want to set up a home office in a room facing the street outside while leaving the windows open and the door unlocked, because you never know who may walk or drive by. Just as cybercriminals are always looking for ways to break into your network, criminals are looking for opportunities to walk away with high-value items.

The way we work is changing, so we must be prepared for whatever happens next. Implementing these three steps will give you a starting point, but they aren't the end point. Work with an experienced MSP to get the most out of your remote work approach. Many businesses will not be returning to the traditional in-office model, so the more steps we take to secure our businesses and our remote teams, the better off we'll all be.

"There is no one-size-fits-all approach to cyber security – that would make things much easier!"

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Product Spotlight

VoIP Phone Service

What is it and what can it do?

VoIP, or voice-over-Internet Protocol, is a phone service that uses a high speed internet connection to make and receive phone calls.

"Why should I change from traditional phone service," you ask? Migrating to VoIP is easier than you think and there are many benefits to you and your business by migrating systems.

Low Cost- traditional multi-line phone systems can cost a fortune. With VoIP, the cost for equipment is low, replacements are readily available, and you only pay for your usage. Phones last for years and many are less than \$100 to purchase. Clients typically see monthly savings of 30%!

Receive more calls- With traditional phone service the number of lines you have controls the number of simultaneous calls you can have. VoIP allows your phone system more flexibility to field numerous calls at once. You are no longer limited by "phone lines". As long as you have enough phones and people, you can stop missing calls.



Office portability- More businesses are incorporating part or full-time work-at-home positions into their workforce. This can cause a headache when it comes to phone service. With VoIP, there are so many options to transition your service from office to home. It is as simple as relocating the physical phone to the home office. You can now answer your phone from virtually anywhere! VoIP also has several other features allowing you to link your phone system to your mobile phones- handy for internet outages or when you've stepped out of the office but need to be accessible to clients or co-workers.

These are some of the many ways VoIP can help elevate your office productivity. There are even more reasons why VoIP is quickly becoming the standard for businesses when it comes to phone service.

To learn more about VoIP business phone systems and the features offered, or to schedule a free consultation with one of our experienced technicians, call **541-499-4099** or visit our website at **www.actiondatatel.com/voip**

Communication In Times Of Fatigue

In light of all the videoconferencing and Zoom meetings, communication is changing both internally and externally.

Some companies think working remotely is the best thing they've ever done, while others say it's awful because they thrive on personal, face-to-face relationships.

Oftentimes, dominant personalities can overrun the room in person, but on a video call, the indirectness of virtual communication can help more soft-spoken team members feel comfortable speaking up.

When companies are together in person, they grab a coffee and a meeting breaks out, but when you have that on video it's awkward. There has to be more structure to the meetings because people don't want to spend an excessive amount of time like they would in person. They want to make it as short and efficient as possible.

Where people could get better is in their external messages on video chats. When you speak to your team, use a different tone. Simple things like charisma, lighting and talking to your audience – the things people master for TV and film – take a lot more effort than chatting with your team in person. Not having this skill is hurting some on the marketing side.

In planning for 2021, companies are running into big issues and plans may need to change.

It's time for the annual reset and the One-Page Strategic Plan (OPSP) – the gift that gives back for the next four quarters. We set our annual key initiatives – six to eight things over the next 12 months to move the business forward – but what often gets left behind is time to reset ourselves.



We need to be mindful of what we're doing with our people to keep them on track on a personal-growth level. We're all a little out of our rhythm right now, but so goes the person, so goes the business. We need to develop the *whole* person to get the best results in the new year.

Answer the question: what do you want? Don't let your logic stifle what your true goals are. Once you define it, then you can set out and figure out how to achieve it.

With upcoming changes, necessary planning and so much more, how can organizations combat the fatigue?

We must make time to take a break and step away for a moment. Set some boundaries.

It's easy for us right now to just keep working – especially working from home. You have to make yourself "go home." Do simple things, like changing your clothes after work, to turn the "work" switch off. Make yourself "commute" home. At 5 p.m., go to the store and drive back home. Give your body and mind the shift change. Honor a schedule because it is easy not to.



Chip Gallent's career has taken him through a number of C-level roles with a nonprofit, a technology development company, a publicly traded dot-com firm where he served as president and more! With an extensive background in marketing, and as a fervent entrepreneur, he's led many businesses to success. Now, as a Petra Coach, he's helping others do the same.

■ 3 Top SEO Myths Completely Busted!

Myth 1: You Can Skip Mobile

Optimization. You may have spent a lot of time and money on your full website, but don't stop there.

Google cares about mobile optimization, as mobile search is quickly taking over desktop search, so Google wants to cater to those people. If you don't optimize for mobile, it will hurt your rankings.

Myth 2: Links Are More Important

Than Content. Yes, linking is important, but you absolutely need solid content on your website to present yourself as a valid and credible site. Web users don't stick around websites with poor content or just links. And when users quickly leave, the value of your links drop. Quality content is key.

Myth 3: Ranking Is More

Important Than Anything Else.

Some businesses only care about being on Page 1 or in the top five search results, but making that happen can be incredibly difficult.

It's more important to entice the searching public to click on your content regardless of placement. It comes back to having quality content on your website, content that solves or answers a question (adds value) for the user.

Inc., Jan. 18, 2021

■ Customer Service Employees And Negativity Don't Mix

When your customer service employees are in a bad mood, it can come across in their work. Customers may notice, which can reflect on your business. Even if you've hired a stellar customer service (CS) team, sometimes negativity breaks through. Here are the top reasons.

They're Frustrated. This is common for not just CS employees but also employees in any department. When they lack proper tools or resources and/or are understaffed, it leads to friction. Their job becomes much harder than it should be, and that doesn't take

long to show in customer-facing interactions.

They Lack Training. Sometimes the hiring process goes a little too quickly and CS employees are dropped into the role without full training. Even if they're experienced in CS, they need to know your expectations and how you do things.

They Lack Support. This is the most important. Every employee needs support to succeed. In a CS position, lack of support can hurt your overall business. Be flexible and be there for your team to meet their needs.

Forbes, Jan. 16, 2021

■ Why You Need To Unplug Every Once In A While

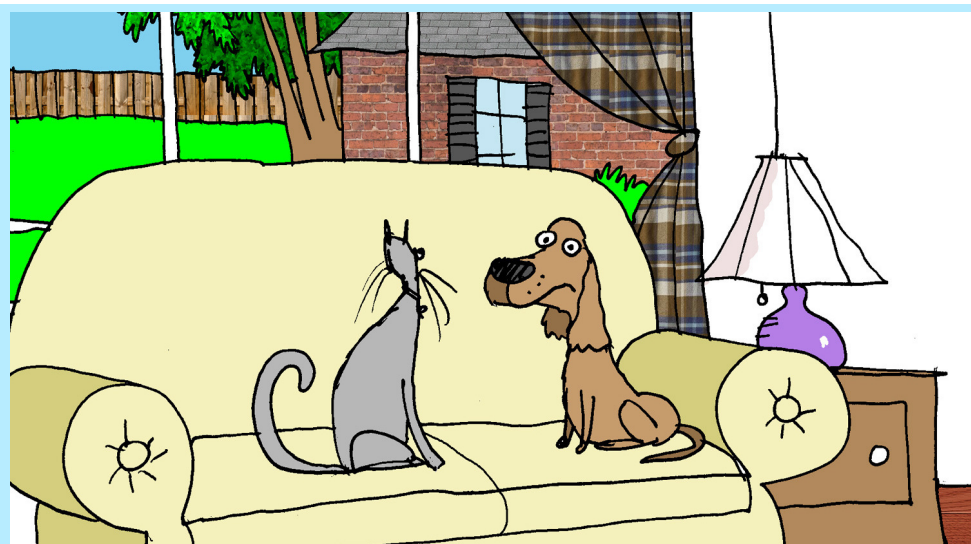
Putting down the phone, stepping away from the computer and turning off the TV can do wonders. Here are just a few of the benefits you can experience.

It Reduces Stress. The news and social media is packed with negativity. When you cut yourself off from the negativity, the stress melts away.

It Boosts Productivity. We live in the era of information overload. Spending too much time behind a screen clutters our brains and slows us down. Take a break to get perspective and regain focus.

It Just Helps You Feel Better. It gives your brain a chance to rest. Blue light given off by screens is overstimulating. Turning off the screen gives you a chance to recuperate mentally, emotionally and even physically.

Forbes, Jan. 15, 2021



"Your name is 123456. That's the reason they use my name instead of yours for their password. It's a security issue."