

# Technology Insider



YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, WRITTEN FOR HUMANS NOT GEEKS

July 2021

## Let's ditch the passwords...

**Don't panic, we haven't gone completely crazy. We're still the security-conscious company you know and love.**

**But passwords are a pain:**

- First it was “remember to change your password frequently”
- Then it was “use randomly generated passwords”
- And then “don't forget to use a password manager”

Things change so often it's hard to keep up. However, we're lucky that we're being given new, more secure ways to keep our people and data protected.

And with biometrics becoming more widely used, it's time you make some more changes to the way you log into your devices. Sorry.

What are biometrics? You may already be using them – it's when you use facial or fingerprint recognition to unlock your device. Retinal scanning is even a thing (although not yet widespread for everyday devices). And they give you an added layer of security, because someone can't steal your fingerprint or your

face!

You can also use biometrics across your apps and software to give you more protection from cyber criminals. It means that should someone steal your device, or access it remotely, they can't access your accounts and data. What better way is there to protect your accounts?

If you haven't got biometrics set up within your business, give it a try.

We can guarantee that this technology is only going to increase in popularity thanks to the added protection it gives you.



**To talk to us about your technology book a call using our live diary by clicking this link - [Online calendar](#)**

## 4 Signs you're already under attack



Ransomware is big business. It's one of the fastest growing online crimes, and if you haven't already been targeted, it's likely you will be at some point in the future.

Fortunately, there are a number of signs you can be on the lookout for, to identify an attack and stop it in its tracks. This is the most technical thing you will ever read from us; but it's important you know what to look out for.

### 1. OPEN RDP LINKS

RDP - or Remote Desk Protocol - is Microsoft tech that allows a local PC to connect to a remote device. You'd use it if you've worked from home. And many people neglect to close their open RDP links when they've finished with the connection, allowing cyber criminals easy access. Scan for open ports regularly and start using multi-factor authentication (where you generate a login code on another device) if you don't already.

### 2. UNFAMILIAR SOFTWARE

Noticed new software on your device lately? It's probably not an update. Hackers typically gain access to one device, and then use particular

software tools to access the entire network. Look out for anything you haven't noticed before, but particularly apps called Angry IP, Advanced Port Scanner, and Microsoft Process Explorer.

### 3. NEW ADMINISTRATORS

Noticed a new admin on your system? It's worth double checking that your IT team hasn't added the new person.

Cyber criminals will set themselves up as administrators so that they can download the tools they need to carry out their attack of your network. And to do this, as well as the software mentioned above, they may also use other software called Process Hacker, IOBitUninstaller, or PCHunter.

### 4. DISABLED SOFTWARE

Of course, to carry out the perfect attack, your security software needs to be disabled. Some things called Active Controller and domain controllers will be disabled when the attack is imminent, and it's likely that your back-up will be corrupted too.

Ensure that someone is regularly checking that software is active, and your backup is working as it should be.

## GLOBAL CHIP SHORTAGE

Worldwide chip manufacturers have been overwhelmed with the sharp increase in demand due to the rebound in business activity following the lifting of restrictions. This has resulted in shortages of chips expecting to continue well into 2022 and possibly the start of 2023.

So many business essential devices rely on these chips, so planning ahead for your hardware is going to be critical for your business survival.

Many factors have impacted production across the last 12 months. First we had the pandemic forcing businesses to quickly and unexpectedly purchase laptops to accommodate homeworkers. We then have the potential rush of people upgrading to 5G phones coming later in the year. Combine that with two mass manufacturing site disasters; a fire in Japan and a power outage in the US and you've got a real output concern.

Also, as political tensions have grown between China and the US over the last few months, Chinese tech companies have been stockpiling chips and chip making equipment.

What is more, chip production is a real fine art and it's expensive too. So, it's not like you'll see new chip manufacturers pop up out of nowhere to plug these gaps.

We'd urge business owners and managers to assess their hardware needs now and put the orders in as early as they can.

Get in touch today on 01392 796 779 or email [ask@bluegrass-group.com](mailto:ask@bluegrass-group.com).

**This is how you can get in touch with us:**

**CALL:** 01392 796779 | **EMAIL** [ask@bluegrass-group.com](mailto:ask@bluegrass-group.com)

**WEBSITE:** [www.bluegrass-group.com](http://www.bluegrass-group.com)

## Eco tips for a greener office



### We all care about the environment right?

With most of us back in the office (at least a few days a week) it's perfect timing to consider your office energy usage.

Follow our top tips for a greener approach to your technology:

#### Reduce your screens brightness

You'll barely notice this one. Just reduce brightness from 100% down to 70% and you can save up to 20% of your monitors energy.

#### Turn off your computer

Heading home? Turn off screens and computers. Most devices boot up quickly these days, so a small wait in the morning is well worth the energy saving.

#### Charge correctly

Did you know charging your phone to 100% overnight can also age your lithium-ion smart phone battery? Most smart phone makers actually suggest keeping your phone at around 30% - 50% charged to help extend your battery lifespan.

#### Use Ecosia instead of Google

How many times a day do you do a

Google search? By switching from Google to Ecosia you'll support a non-profit search engine which plants trees with its advertising revenue. To date they have planted over 100 million trees from search revenue.

#### Recycle old devices

Lots of our tech uses earth's rare elements and with some of these elements predicted to be dissipated within the next 100 years, we all need to think twice before we throw devices away.

Consider gifting old devices to school or charities to help extend their use.

#### Go paperless

Digitalisation and online collaboration tools are meaning the paperless office is becoming even more possible. Make use of real-time document editing software and cloud storage to reduce your printer use. Save money and the environment.

**Thinking 'green' when it comes to technology is not only good for the environment and your wallet, it's also good for your brand too.**

#### What's not to love?



### DID YOU KNOW?

#### You don't need a third party app to screen share?

If you found yourself teaching older members of your family how to use Zoom last year, you'll understand the frustration of trying to explain something without being able to see what the other person can see. In these cases, screen sharing can be very helpful.

However, downloading a third party app to do this isn't always straightforward. And it relies on the other person being able to do the same.

Here's the answer. Did you know you can use Quick Assist on Windows PC?

Just type 'quick assist' in the taskbar. You'll be given two options: 'Give assistance' and 'Get assistance'. Select the one you need and simply follow the instructions on screen.

A word of warning: only allow this kind of access to your device to someone you know and trust.

## This is how you can get in touch with us:

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## Monthly update from Dave



Is it time you took a break from technology?

Taking a step back from our devices can bring so many benefits; closer relationships, less stress, more motivation... I could go on. But it's not easy when you run a business, is it?

Fortunately, there are loads of tools available that can give you that time away from the things that are most distracting. Take social media, for example. Wow, it can suck you down a hole and steal literally hours from your week. What else could you be doing with that time?

Try Cold Turkey, an app for Microsoft 365 that allows you to block social media (and any other distractions) for an amount of time dictated by you. And there are alternatives for your smart phones - Screen Time on iOS allows you to block apps or give yourself time limits on each one.

There's also evidence to suggest that switching your phone's display to a grayscale can help you cut down on time spent on distracting apps. Use that saved time doing something productive. Or something to help you unwind and see what a difference it can make.

Have you tried any of these ideas already? How did they work for you? We'd love to hear the tricks you use to cut down on your tech time, and the ways it has improved your life or business. Let us know, at [ask@bluegrass-group.com](mailto:ask@bluegrass-group.com)

Until then, stay safe,

Joint Managing Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave".

## Not delighted with your IT? Let's talk...

Here's two quick questions for you:

1. Do you currently have an IT support company?
2. How happy are you with them?

If the answer isn't utterly delighted, we'd love to chat.

If you want proactive, friendly and flexible IT support and solutions from a company who cares, you've found it.

Book a call here - [Online calendar](#).

Or speak to us now by calling 01392 796 779.

### Question

I know I just saved a document, but I can't find where it went

### Answer

This is more common than you think. You click 'save' and when you try and reopen your file, it's not in the folder you thought you'd saved it to. Don't worry, simply open up a folder, click on 'recents' and your document should be there. Look at the file information and it will show you where you've saved it.

### Question

I clicked a link in a phishing email. What do I do?

### Answer

First, do not enter any data. Disconnect your device from the internet. If you've got malware, this will stop it from spreading. Run a full malware scan. And then consult an IT expert. They'll advise how safe your backups are, and whether you need to change any passwords.

### Question

My apps keep crashing, what's wrong?

### Answer

In true IT support style: have you tried turning your device off and on again? If it's still happening, try deleting the app and reinstalling it. If it's still happening, you may be low on storage space.

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