

# Technology Insider



March 2023

YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, WRITTEN FOR HUMANS NOT GEEKS

## Should you spy on your employees daily work?



**Since the pandemic, employers around the world have needed to change. They've had to shift how their employees operate. Remote work is very much here to stay. Organisations and employees can both benefit from the work from home and hybrid work revolution.**

Cost savings is a driver for supporting remote work. Employee morale and productivity also can be higher when employers grant this flexibility. A majority of organisations support some type of remote work. Statistics show that:

- 16% of companies are completely remote
- 40% support hybrid office/remote working
- 44% don't allow employees to work remotely

While there are benefits, there are also challenges to this new environment. Employers worry about the cybersecurity risks of remote teams. Managers can find it more challenging to make sure employees are doing what they should do.

The remote and hybrid work environment has led to the rise of employee monitoring tools. These tools have mixed reviews from employees.

### WHAT IS EMPLOYEE MONITORING SOFTWARE?

Employee monitoring software tracks digital movements. This can include everything from general clock-in clock-out tracking to taking screenshots of an employee's computer several times per hour, with information sent in a daily or weekly report to the company.

The most invasive of tools can even track the sounds and video of the employee.

Tracking can be visible, so the employee knows about it, or the

tracking can be completely hidden from the employee. This depends on the tool used and the cultural and ethical considerations of the employer. Let's go through the pros and cons before you set up this type of system.

### MONITORING TOOLS PROS

#### 1. Understand time inputs

Knowing exactly how much time employees spend on a project can help with future with ROI projections.

#### 2. Reduce time wasting

About half of monitored employees spend 3+ hours per day on non-work activities. When employees know that their boss is monitoring their app usage, they're less likely to goof off.

#### 3. Billing time tracking

If you invoice your clients based on time, Monitoring Tools can help capture the teams time correctly so it's billed properly.

### MONITORING TOOL CONS

#### 1. Hurts team morale

Many employees feel they are put in a cage when monitoring is introduced. Morale can plummet, which takes productivity and trust along with it.

#### 2. Activity isn't productivity

Many tools simply report on keyboard and mouse activity. But what if the employee must solve a workflow issue and needs to use their brain for a few hours, not their mouse?

#### 3. Good employees leave

Nearly half (47%) of surveyed tech employees said they would quit if their boss tracked them. What is the cost of replacing the person?

Which ever decision you make it's vital that you ask yourself whether the pros outweigh the cons. This topic requires careful thought as it can damage your organisation if you get it wrong.



## Is that a real text from your CEO or a scam?

Imagine you're going about your day when suddenly you receive a text from the CEO.

The head of the company is asking for your help. They're out doing customer visits and someone else dropped the ball in providing gift cards. The CEO needs you to buy six £200 gift cards and text the information right away.

The CEO promises to reimburse you before the end of the day. Oh, and by the way, you won't be able to reach them by phone for the next two hours because they'll be in meetings. One last thing, this is a high priority. They need those gift cards urgently.

Would this kind of request make you pause and wonder? Or would you quickly pull out your credit card to do as the message asked?

A surprising number of employees fall for this gift card scam.

There are also many variations. Such as your boss being stuck without petrol or some other dire situation that only you can help with.

Without proper training, 32.4% of employees are prone to fall for a phishing scam.

Variations of this scam are prevalent and

can lead to significant financial losses, both personally and in the business.

### TIPS FOR AVOIDING A COSTLY SCAM

#### 1. Always double check unusual requests

Despite what a message might say about being unreachable, check in person or by phone anyhow.

If you receive any unusual requests, especially relating to money, verify them.

Contact the sender through other means to make sure it's legitimate.

#### 2. Don't react emotionally

Scammers often try to get victims to act before they have time to think.

Just a few minutes of sitting back and looking at a message objectively is often all that's needed to realise it's a scam.

Don't react emotionally, instead ask if this seems real or is it out of the ordinary.

#### 3. Get a second opinion

Ask a colleague, or better yet, your IT partner, to take look at the message. Getting a second opinion keeps you from reacting right away. It can save you from making a very costly judgment error and only takes a few extra minutes.

#### Need help with employee phishing awareness training?

Give us a call today to schedule a training session to shore up your team's defences.

## NEW TO Microsoft 365

### Automate tasks in Excel

Excel lovers have been waiting for this one. The Automate tab was previously only available in the web version, but now it's arrived in the desktop app for Windows and Mac.

The tool allows you to create and modify scripts to automate repetitive tasks.

### Microsoft Teams busy on busy

Microsoft Teams keeps rolling out new features.

Now it's allowing you to decide how calls are handled when you're already on a call or in a meeting.

'Busy on busy' lets you choose to either use a busy signal, redirect calls, or let them come through anyway. It was previously available only to admins, but now everyone can use it.

**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)



## 6 ways to prevent one of the most common sources of data breaches

**Misconfiguration of Cloud Solutions is often overlooked when companies plan Cybersecurity Strategies.**

Cloud apps are typically quick and easy to sign up for so users often assume that they don't need to worry about security because it's handled.

This is a bad assumption because Cloud Security is a shared model. The Provider/Vendor handles securing the backend infrastructure. But the user/client is responsible for configuring security settings in their account.

Here are some tips to improve your Cloud Security:

1. Enable visibility into your Cloud infrastructure
2. Restrict privileged accounts
3. Put in place automated security policies
4. Use a Cloud security audit tool (Like Microsoft Secure Score)
5. Set up alerts for when configurations change
6. Run regular security setting audits
7. Ensure each user has their own account (no sharing of accounts)
8. Have a Cloud expert check your Cloud settings



## Cool Windows 11 features you may like

**Every time Microsoft releases a new Operating System, some people love it and some people hate it.**

(Although I think we can all agree that everyone hated Windows Vista)

Here are some areas in Microsoft's latest Operation System, Windows 11, that Microsoft has focused on to help you work easier and faster:

- Snap layouts
- Master search
- Clipchamp Video editor
- MS Teams Video, Audio & Text Messaging
- Accessibility features
- Collections in Microsoft Edge
- Microsoft Defender SmartScreen

You may well have also noticed they have redesigned and centred the Start Menu / Task Bar, perhaps taking inspiration from Apple's Mac.

Call us today if you want to know more about Windows 11.

## Tech Reminder!

Microsoft have started to increase their prices for 365 cloud services. For example, Business Basic is increasing from £3.80 to £4.50, and Enterprise E3 is going from £17.60 to £20.20



## DID YOU KNOW?

**As Denmark moves towards being a cashless society, it reported no bank robberies at all in 2022. That's the first time ever.**

Instead, criminals are turning to online banking fraud and other cyber crimes. There has been a surge in APP (bank transfer) fraud around the world.

Criminals are tricking businesses and consumers into authorising payments using fake websites and emails.

This affects businesses everywhere. Warn your teams to be cautious of payment requests, and don't forget to keep your cyber security training up to date.

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## Monthly update from Dave



Vulnerabilities are an unfortunate side effect of all the technological advancements these days. Software developers rush out their next releases, then hackers comb that code for vulnerabilities they can exploit.

In 2022, there were estimated to be over 22,500 IT security vulnerabilities worldwide.

These vulnerabilities act as gateways to cybercriminals. They use them to find backdoors into a system, elevate privileges, and enable other types of breaches. To stay on top of them takes a comprehensive vulnerability management strategy that begins with an assessment.

By proactively assessing, identifying, and fixing vulnerabilities in your network, you can greatly improve cybersecurity. It's also a requirement for complying with many types of data privacy regulations.

Would you like some help with a vulnerability assessment? Give us a call on 01392 796779 and we'll help work out what we can do for you.

One other thing I'd like to mention is a reminder that Microsoft are increasing their cloud 365 prices on a number of services. In fact, some price rises have already been implemented. If you want more information on what items are increasing please get in touch

Hope you have a good and profitable month.

Regards

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

**Joint Managing Director**

## Not delighted with your IT Support?

**We'd love to chat.**

We offer flexible IT support packages that can be tailored to your business.

We support in house teams or can be your complete IT Partner.

**Request a quote today.**

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**Question: My employees want fewer video meetings, should we cut down?**

**Answer:** Yes, if you can condense or combine them. Follow in the footsteps of big tech companies like Shopify and reduce the number of big meetings you hold. Your people will be happier, and you'll likely save a lot of time.

**Question: Should my business upgrade to Windows 11?**

**Answer:** In short, yes. It's not urgent but Windows 10 will no longer be receiving new features and updates. So it's good to make the move sooner than later.

**Question: I know I need a password manager, but which is best?**

**Answer:** Good question... and there are lots of options. Different businesses have different requirements, so it really all depends on you. We'd be happy to make a recommendation once we understand your needs. Get in touch.