MTC TECH TALK

For Humans Not Geeks!

Your resource for the latest technology updates and opportunities for your success.

7 Easy Ways to Save Money and "Go Green"

What's In This Issue?

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Do you like saving money? Of course, you do! Do you like protecting the environment? Who doesn't? What if we told you that you could do both at the same time?

Whether you're looking to cut costs at home or work, saving money is important, especially in today's economy. With some simple steps, you can reduce your energy consumption, save money on your electric bill, and reduce your carbon footprint, helping to protect the environment for future generations.

And the good news is that a green program doesn't have to cost a fortune, and you don't have to hug a tree or wear tie-dye shirts (unless you want to of course). Instead, try these simple steps to kick off your sustainability program.

Power Down Your Servers and Workstations at Night
One of the easiest ways to save money and reduce your carbon footprint is to power down your servers and workstations at night. According to a recent Gartner study, PCs/monitors, data centers, and fixed-line telecommunications systems are the top three sources of carbon emissions. PCs and monitors alone contribute 40% of total carbon emissions, while data centers contribute around 23%.

In fact, PCs worldwide consume about 80 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity every year. That's a lot! According to Kevin Klustner, CEO of Verdiem, an IT energy monitoring and management company, as much as two-thirds of that energy is wasted. That translates to $5.4 billion of energy waste each year.

Recycle and Reuse
How often do you toss old papers, used glass, and plastics into the trash bin? Come on, admit it! Why not look into your community's

recycling program, purchase recycled paper products and ink cartridges? Even certain furniture and other big-ticket items contain recycled goods.

Stop Printing Non-Essential Emails, Faxes, & Documents
A significant contributor of paper and ink waste results from printing non-essential emails, faxes, and documents is not only wasteful but can also be costly. Ink and toner are expensive, and printing unnecessary items can quickly add up.

Instead of printing everything, try to go paperless as much as possible. By digitizing internal paper-based systems, you don't only reduce printing costs but other operational costs as well. For example, there's no longer a need to purchase filing cabinets or use valuable floor space to store paper or keep hard copies for future reference. And because you transition from manual to automated workflows, you streamline business processes and save (even more) money.

Pay the Bills Online
This is a simple fix. By stopping mail-in bill paying and setting up online direct transfers, you cut your paper mail and paper recycling, save time, save money and decrease clutter while improving your financial management.

Remember that checks include a lot of personal information that, when lost or stolen can be used as part of identity theft scams. Criminals often use information such as name, address, routing, and account numbers in scams pretending to be you when opening bank accounts and applying for loans.

Change Your Power Settings
Almost all computers have lower energy settings that will power down the computer (or parts of the computer) that aren't being used. For example, after 10 minutes of inactivity, set your PC to power off the monitor, modem, and spin down the hard disks. Most systems have pre-determined profiles that make it easy to set up. Changing your power settings is an easy way to save

energy and money. Not only will you reduce your carbon footprint, but you'll also lower your electricity bill. It's a win-win!

Turn Off Peripheral Devices
In addition to powering down your servers and workstations, turning off peripheral devices also saves energy and reduces your carbon footprint. These devices include printers, scanners, and other devices that are not in constant use.

Many peripheral devices have a sleep mode that can be activated after a certain period of inactivity. This will save energy and money while also reducing your environmental impact. However, it's important to note that some devices may take longer to warm up after being turned off, so make sure to balance energy savings with convenience and productivity.

Bonus tip:
Electronic waste, also called e-waste, is the quickest-growing stream of waste worldwide, with more than 50 million metric tons of e-waste generated globally every year. Recycling your old electronic devices or donating them to charities or schools in your local area are two options that are worth considering.

Check out www.earth911.org or www.youthfortechnology.org to donate to charities that refurbish old computers. Or contact us if you have a computer, monitor, and/or accessories at home or in your office that you no longer use or need. We'd love to find a great new home for them! Go to www.meetingtreecomputer.com/mtc-cares/ and let us know how we can help.

For older or broken devices consider using companies like www.pcdisposal.com or www.1800gotjunk.com to safely dispose of them.

April is Earth Day, a global event dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of environmental protection. These steps may seem small but combining them can make a big difference.

STOP!

Monthly Technology Update

Have you recently done some software research and now you're seeing lots of ads?

STOP! Think twice before you click. Criminals have started to distribute fake ads for popular apps in order to spread malware – and it's fooling a lot of people.

The malware is an info-stealer and it is bypassing antivirus software thanks to a clever hack that makes the file size appear larger than it is.

Of course, there are plenty of perfectly legitimate software advertisements. But you should be extra cautious before you start any download. Always check with us if you're not 100% sure if what you're seeing is legit.

Smartphones Are Now the Preferred Device for Mobile Work

Smartphones have taken over from laptops as most people's preferred portable work tool.

They enjoy the flexibility and, perhaps obviously, phones are easier to carry around than a laptop or a tablet.

If a number of your people need a phone to do their job, here's a big thought: Would they be better off using a work-issued phone instead?

If an employee has contact with customers, would you want to own their phone number in case they left?

And there are security considerations that might be best handled on company-issued phones. That includes rolling out security updates, managing secure mobile gateways, and administering passwords.

You should make sure data on the device is encrypted, not only to protect data from cyber criminals, but to make sure your information is safe should the phone be lost or stolen. Can the phone be remotely wiped?

The software installed on the phone should be policed too. You may need a policy that limits or blocks the use of third-party software. This can also help establish a boundary between work and personal tasks.

As with most tech, this isn't a case of set it and forget it. You need to make sure updates are run on time, and remotely audit company-issued devices to ensure they're secure and protected.

Is this something we can help with?

Your technology headaches are exciting for us! Get in touch.

Tax Season is Here: Is Your Return Secure?
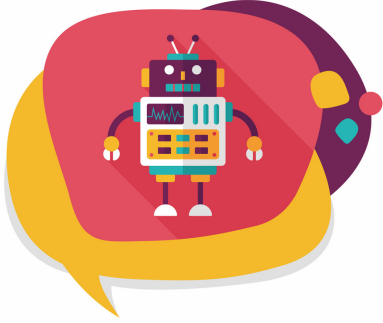
Tax season is here! Are you ready to file?

While preparing all the necessary documents and getting your ducks in a row can be time-consuming enough, it's not the only downside of doing taxes. Did you know that cybercriminals also take this opportunity to increase their identity theft and fraud activities?

Cybercriminals will steal hundreds if not thousands of dollars on your tax returns if they have the opportunity. In 2020, the IRS reported $2.3B in tax fraud. The confusing nature of tax season can be made more stressful by concerns about threat actors. Protect yourself from tax-related scams with some of the following tips:

- Don't give your Social Security number or employee ID over the phone.
- Do not send money to solicitors without verifying the demand on encrypted government websites.
- Enable multi-factor authentication on your accounts.
- Use strong, complex passwords like those provided by secure password managers.
- Download and update your antivirus software.
- Protect your network with a secured VPN.
- Before the filing deadline this April, take these steps into consideration whether you're sending your return in online or by mail. When in doubt, it's best to stay cautious when identity theft is on the line.

What's All The Fuss About ChatGPT?

ChatGPT is a chatbot that uses artificial intelligence, allowing you to talk to it in a very human way. It's been making the news around the world for some of the remarkable possibilities it seems to be creating. But what exactly is it, and why is it making such waves?

ChatGPT is trained on real human language. It can answer questions, and even compose documents, like emails, essays and computer code. The exciting thing is the way it allows you to have a natural-feeling conversation with it to generate different responses – perhaps adding more detail, or asking it to use less technical language.

It's different to a search engine because it's designed with conversation in mind. While it can answer questions, it doesn't search the internet for information.

Everything is learned from training data (it has no knowledge past 2021). So, while many people have started using ChatGPT to write essays and articles, the facts may not be accurate. In fact, tech media website CNET recently had to issue multiple major corrections after it created 78 articles using the chatbot.

Because it's trained on huge amounts of text published online by humans, it's had trouble telling fact from fiction, and has also been found to reproduce some unwanted biases – for instance against women and people of color.

It was created by research company OpenAI, which is funded and managed by some of the most influential names in tech. And while it's still in its research and feedback-collection phase, it's currently free to use (with limitations).

It's not changing the world just yet. But it's already clear that there is huge potential for both individuals and businesses alike.

Have you tried ChatGPT yet? What are your feelings about using AI in your business? We'd love to hear your thoughts.

PS: A human wrote this article 😀

We Hope Everyone Embraces New Technology This Spring 😆

THEONION.COM
Home Depot Releases New Bluetooth Cordless Hose

This is how you can get in touch with us:

Q&A

What's the best way to make sure my people are following security best practice?

If you have good security in place and you're regularly training your people – but find you're still seeing human-error security issues – consider creating a strict policy that sets out the rules they need to follow… and the consequences of not doing so.

How can I tell if all my applications are up to date?

It can be a big task to ensure everything is up to date and patched as required. An IT health check will show you everything you need to do. We can help with that. Just get in touch.

I have an in-house IT tech but need extra help. Should I outsource it all?

It doesn't have to be an either/or solution. An external IT specialist can work seamlessly with an in-house team with great results.

Submit Your Questions Here:
info@meetingtreecomputer.com