YOUR ICT, IN SAFE HANDS

Newsletter
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computercare

Message from Anna:

My main role at Computer Care is to ensure that the Support Helpdesk is running smoothly and efficiently.

My day generally starts by checking the New Calls queue and the Support mailbox for any urgent queries. I'll then check the monitoring alerts. This consists of actioning any clients' system Backup queries, Anti-virus reports flagged via the *Trend Micro* management portal and going through *AVG (Avast)* alerts, which monitors customers' device activity for problems, ie. server performance issues.

Every morning I'll have a *Skype For Business* video conference with the team for our daily meeting. Some of our engineers work remotely from home, so this is a good opportunity for everyone to catch up to discuss workloads, for me to go through new incoming queries for the day ahead and any other business related projects.

If you call the Support Line, you'll usually get through to me or one of my 1st/2nd Line Support colleagues. We will always attempt to fix the issue there and then, but if this is not possible or if a higher level of expertise is required ie. 3rd Line or consultancy, we always log the call and escalate it accordingly.

One of the services we provide is to source, order and set up IT equipment for our customers, so if I've had an order request come through, I will try and get the best deal through the many suppliers we use based on the specifications required. This would usually involve creating a quotation, ordering the equipment (or software) and then arranging for an engineer to install or set it up.

The wide variety of tasks I encounter on a day-to-day basis can often be very intense; answering the phone, resolving technical issues, updating the website, ordering office suppliers, organising staff uniforms and arranging couriers to name but a few. This puts multi-tasking into a whole new category, but I love my job and the people I work with and I am privileged to be part of a growing company that is going from strength-to-strength.

Anna Eggleton, IT Helpdesk Manager

Business 2 Business

Over the past four months we have been attending a series of exhibitions which affect our industry and more importantly, our clients. The first one I attended this year was the SCTX which stands for Security & Counter Terror Expo, held in Olympia. With a high focus on combating Cyber Crime and educating both private and public sectors alike, it was quite ironic that just two days after the show the *Wanna Cry* virus was released and caused havoc within the NHS. The level of presentations was very high, with speakers from GCHQ, The National Centre for Cyber Security and ICT industry leaders, all desperately trying to reinforce the need for robust ICT defence solutions. With a massive 1.2m current job vacancies unfilled across Europe for security roles with IT, it's no wonder that there are countless holes in the fence right now.

The next event we attended was the Unified Communications event held at Excel Docklands. We have seen a rise in the use of Office 365 and wanted to support our latest UC&C supplier, Nfon AG, as they announced the launch of their Skype for Business partnership through Westcoast, the channel distributor. If you follow the link below to YouTube, it shows just what the interface/ integration enables your business to accomplish with just one comms tool for all instant messaging | video | telephony | mobile | conference | screen sharing. We also attended a briefing by Microsoft at the Reading HQ as they highlighted that Sfb is now the main product of choice for all enterprise' looking to meet digital communication demands both now and in the future.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J85N2Ti0e_4
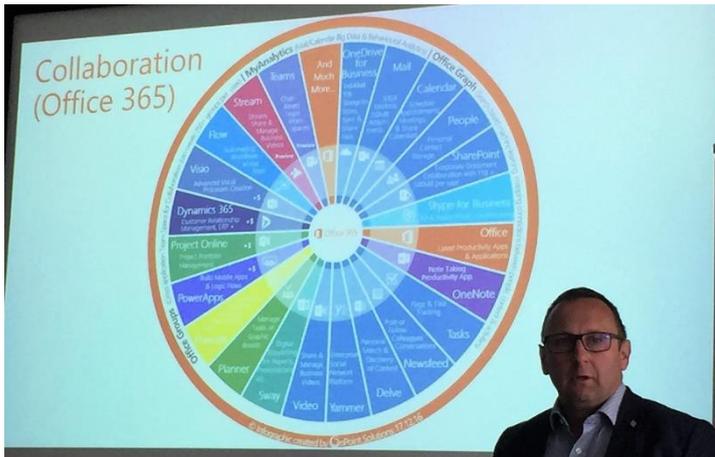
The most recent event attended was the INFO Security Expo at Olympia, which was the largest I ever seen in 20 years. The cyber security presentations were both fascinating and chilling as we watched live hacking scenarios and a full panel of real 'C Suite' staff (CEO, COO, CSO,CIOs) deal with a fast paced major cyber-attack and being held to ransom. The scenario was hosted by Microsoft and PWC and supported by a MET Police DCI from Falcon – SC07, a media Rep and a Data Protection lawyer. Decisions affecting tXtel (a fictitious Telco company), with a client base of 6 million users had to be made within seconds and it was very interesting who they thought held the right keys to the open /start the next move in the crisis.

Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by: Anna Eggleton

No two days are the same at Computer Care and we sometimes deal with some challenging issues, but we do also get a lot of recurring queries from the many companies we support. Here are a few examples and possible solutions that might fix them in the first instance;

### I've forgotten my password to get into my PC

If your computer is part of a network (domain) and we manage your company's devices, we can reset your password on the server. If it is not part of a domain, but we have carried out some work on your computer in the past, we quite often create a local administrator account as a backup in case such an event should occur. If you have a Mac, we can walk you through how to reset your password.

I'm getting a black screen when starting my machine

Disconnect everything (remove all cables connected to the machine). Unplug the power and remove the battery if you are on a laptop. Push the power button 2 or 3 times to clear out the remaining current (or hold for 1 minute on a laptop). Reconnect all the cables and battery again. Power on the machine.

I'm getting the Blue Screen of Death (BSOD) on my PC

Providing you can get into your computer after the blue screen has disappeared (Windows should automatically restart), we can collate information from the Minidump files to established what the issue is. Usually it's down to a hardware or driver problem.
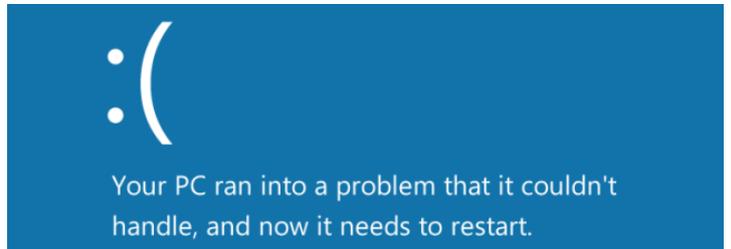
All my files have lost their application icons and have a similar name at the end of the file name

It's most likely that your computer has an encryption virus. First of all, DON'T PANIC! Just disconnect your machine from the internet either by removing the Ethernet cable or switching off the Wi-Fi, then power the machine off until we can advise you further. Providing your company has a good Backup system in place - either an on-site external device or a Cloud-based solution - often we can retrieve and restore your data. If you're unsure what sort of Backup solution you have, contact the Support team and we can check your system and then give you some options that best suit your company.

My computer is running slow

There could be several reasons, but the most common are; programs running in the background, temporary files, lack of

storage space or memory (RAM), bad or corrupted hard drive files, Windows or driver updates required or it's just an old computer. One other possibility could be that it has a virus or malware; malicious software designed to change your settings, cause errors or open your computer to attacks. Most of our customers use a product called Trend Micro which we manage on their behalf via an online portal. We monitor any alerts daily and if Trend hasn't fixed the issue automatically, then we will contact the user of the machine directly and make arrangements to run additional scans to clean the machine.

I can't send or receive emails in Outlook

Check your computer has an internet connection by using your Web browser, ie. Internet Explorer or Chrome. Are your email credentials correct? Sometimes restarting the application will bring up a login prompt. Make sure your entered the correct email address/username and password. Your email server might not be available. Check if your colleagues are having the same problem.

My shared drives are disconnected

If you work at a company that uses shared drives, first check that you are not the only person that's having the problem as its most likely to be a problem with the server if this is the case. Do you use a VPN (Virtual Private Network) connection? If so, check that this is still connected. If it is and still no connection is available, contact us and we'll do some troubleshooting for you.

My computer is running out of storage space

There are several places that could be taking up unnecessary disk space. Here are a few suggestions to free up some space; Empty your Recycle Bin (on the Desktop). Empty your Downloads Folder (every file and application you download saves a copy here). Clear out temporary files. Clear out unwanted Cloud storage. Archive data onto an External Drive

My program has frozen

Firstly, check there aren't any hidden windows in the background waiting for you to respond. Secondly, open Task Manager by hitting Ctrl+Alt+Delete (or Open Force Quit on a Mac by pressing Command+Option) on your keyboard. If the program is Not Responding, select it and click on 'End Task' or 'Force Quit'.

If you require any further assistance and need to get in touch, just call our Support Team on 0207 100 9317 or email: support@computerc.co.uk.

Tech Talk : Security Patching

Glen Lynam, 3rd Line Support Engineer

I would like to speak to you about the necessity of keeping anything software driven up to date with the latest security patches.

We are talking all digital devices from laptops to mobiles, servers to networking equipment, anti- virus to anti- malware and even simple things like the new amazon dash board buttons. If it is software driven, then there will be security exploits that come with it and if they are network connected the hack just got easier. At least with a closed network you must breach physical security to gain access.

Software isn't just what you use to write an email or look at a web page, the hardware in your device also needs software to run and this is just as susceptible to attack. This is where Security Updates / Patching comes in. These are updates to software which not only add functionality but to also block these holes.

You can never be completely safe even with the latest updates there are still what are known as Zero Day Exploits, these are the new exploits that haven't been picked up yet. As far as software vendors and hardware manufacturers are aware they don't exist. Take the recent WannaCry attack, this had already affected around 200,000 computers and networks before it was identified. Microsoft had released a patch to block this hole weeks before but not everybody had installed it.

Whilst performing updates and security patching is a time-consuming process, it is critical. What's worse spending an extra few minutes doing a reboot to apply those annoying patches or finding that all your photos have been encrypted and you haven't gotten around to completing a backup yet.

Moving onto a real-world example… WordPress, WordPress currently runs around 27% of the websites around the world. That is a lot of websites, according to: www.internetlivestats.com there are at the time of writing this article, 1,225,842,900 websites on the internet. If my maths is correct that makes about 331 million WordPress sites. In version 4.4 a feature was introduced called Rest API, at this point in time though this API lay dormant however in 4.7.0 & 4.7.1 this feature was enabled by default. This led to all sites on this version being susceptible to attack. Where

we can alter posts without being authenticated on the site. Not good practice.

As with a lot of software WordPress does currently offer an auto update feature but this is quite often turned off due to wanting to test the latest versions with plugins first. So, there will be some of those 331 million sites on these versions.

I have created a fictional domain on our hosted server, please click here to see this security hole exploited in video.

So, this is one exploit, in one piece of software and one version of that software. Now think of how many software and version combinations exist…

Disaster Recovery Planning

Simon Pardo, Director

It's estimated that in 2016 UK business lost 149 million hours due to internet downtime with an estimated cost to the economy of approximately £12.3bn.

When you consider how much time and money could be lost through not having a proper IT recovery plan in place, it's surprising and alarming that more businesses, whatever size they are, do not have a thorough tested plan in place. IT systems can fail for numerous reasons from malicious attacks right through to environmental factors such as flooding and fire.

An IT disaster recovery plan is more than just having a backup - it's about having comprehensive documentation with well-planned and tested actions. It should form part of the overall business continuity plan.

The main aims of an IT Disaster Recovery Plan are:

- Minimising disruption to the business operations
- Having reliable backup systems
- Ensuring a level of security
- The restoring of operations quickly

Disaster Recovery Team

For businesses drawing up a plan, we suggest putting in place a disaster recovery team to begin with which should be made up of core members of the organization from the top down.

Risk Assessments and Business Impact Analysis

Risk assessments and business impact analysis then need to be undertaken for different scenarios. This should include all possible scenarios - environmental and manmade. The recent Weybridge Health Centre fire was a good example of a good IT disaster recovery plan in place - patients' records were still able to be accessed securely despite the building completely burning down.

Critical Requirements

The organisation's critical requirements will need assessing for the disaster recovery plan. This includes policies, procedure, documentation, data, services, processes, operations, vital resources. Based on priority, these should be categorised and ordered such as Essential, Important and Non-essential.

Economic Loss and Disruption

Developing a good IT disaster recovery plan will enable organisations to minimise potential economic loss and disruption to operations in the face of a disaster.

WARNING DON'T FALL VICTIM

Get in touch today to see how we can help you with your IT Disaster Recovery Plan

sales@computerc.co.uk

0203 627 4403