TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

13

Notifications:
Striking a balance at work and home

Your monthly newsletter, written for humans not geeks

Notifications have become a part of our daily lives. Whether it's the ping of a new email, a message from a colleague on Teams, or a meeting reminder on your calendar, these little nudges constantly battle for our attention.

But are we reaching a tipping point with notifications?

According to recent research, the answer might be a big "YES". The study revealed that the ping, ping, ping of notifications from collaboration tools is not only a distraction at work but is also taking a toll on our precious work-life balance.

So, why are notifications becoming a nuisance, and what can we do about it?

We're living in the era of collaboration tools. From video conferencing to project management platforms, we rely on these tools to stay connected and productive.

But... the more tools we use, the more notifications flood our screens.

During the traditional 9-5, the constant barrage of notifications can derail focus and productivity. But what's annoying is when notifications creep into our downtime. One in three workers report that notifications

outside of working hours have spiked over the past year.

As a society, we've created a situation where notifications disrupt our relaxation and family time. A third of young workers aged 21-34 struggle to fully enjoy time with loved ones due to work notifications. And that may put you at risk of losing your best people.

Here's our three step take on tackling the notifications dilemma:

1. **Set clear boundaries**: Make it understood that messages should be replied to within working hours. Practice what you preach by not sending messages outside of your own working hours (schedule send where possible).

2. **Reduce tool overload:** Evaluate the collaboration tools you use. Streamline where possible.

3. **Empower your employees**: Teach them to use do not disturb, and how to mute non-urgent notifications.

While technology has revolutionised the way we work, it shouldn't come at the cost of our wellbeing.

If we can help you and your team strike a better balance, get in touch.

DID YOU KNOW...

Firewalls are named after concrete walls?

Every business should use firewalls to protect systems from cyber attacks. Did you know that firewall software was named after physical walls made of concrete. These are built to prevent fires spreading throughout buildings.

We also have firewalls made of steel in the floorboards of our cars.

1

810 million websites use WordPress as their CMS (Content Management System). **That's 43% of all websites on the internet. And more than 500 sites are built using WordPress every day.**

2

56.5% of all email is spam. Not all of this gets through to us, thanks to junk mail filters, but more than a third of our inbox is spam email.

3

The US has most active Twitter (X) users at 77.75 million. Japan comes in second, with 58.2 million, and India is third, with 24.45 million. **The UK comes in fifth place, with 19.05 million active users.**

MICROSOFT

Voice Access takes over from Windows speech recognition

Microsoft has officially deprecated Windows speech recognition, which means there will be no further updates for the feature. It's being replaced by Voice Access, which is available in Windows 11 version 22H2 or later.

Voice Access has more capabilities as well as supporting more dialects.

If you aren't using Windows 11, speech recognition will still work.

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"You don't have to be a genius or a visionary or even a college graduate to be successful. You just need a framework and a dream."

Michael Dell, CEO of Dell

SHARE

Technology update

Nearby sharing is about to become easier in Windows 11

Microsoft is testing an update that will streamline its nearby sharing feature in Windows 11.

If tests go well, when you enable nearby sharing through quick settings, both Wi-Fi and Bluetooth will automatically be enabled too if they're switched off. If you turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, nearby sharing will also turn off.

FEBRUARY'S FUN TECH QUIZ – WHO WILL BE THE QUIZ VALENTINE?

1. Which AI company is considering making its own AI chip?
2. How old will Google turn later this year?
3. Which social media platform wants to go ad-free?
4. In which year did the first virtual event take place?
5. What was the first mobile phone with internet connectivity?

The answers are below.

1. Open AI
2. 26
3. X (Twitter)
4. 1993 (it was a virtual trade show)
5. The Nokia 9000 Communicator, back in 1996

VOICE CONTROL

Encryption: Your security must-have

Keeping sensitive business data safe is a top priority. When you're managing a team of employees that use PCs, phones, and tablets, the importance of encryption can't be stressed enough.

Encryption is a secret code for your digital information. It scrambles your data into an unreadable format, and only someone with the right "key" can unscramble and access it. Think of it as a lock and key system for your digital assets, ensuring that even if someone gains unauthorised access to your devices or data, they can't make head nor tail of it without the key.

Your business likely stores tons of sensitive information, from financial records to customer data. Encryption ensures that even if a device is lost or stolen, your data remains safe and confidential.
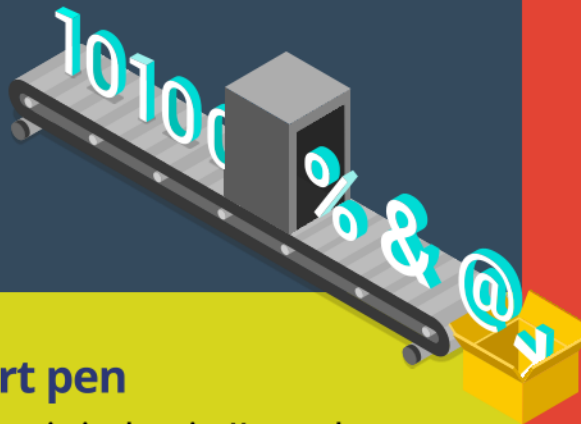
And there are loads of other benefits too…

- Lots of industries have strict regulations regarding data security and privacy (think GDPR). Encryption helps you stay compliant, avoiding expensive fines and legal troubles.

- When clients or customers know that you take their data security seriously, it builds trust. People are more likely to do business with a company that safeguards their information.

- With the rise of remote work, your employees might be accessing company data from various locations. Encryption ensures that sensitive information is secure no matter where they are.

- Encrypting your emails and messages keeps your communication confidential, protecting sensitive business discussions and strategies.

When you're setting up encryption for the first time you need to think about both device encryption and data encryption. You also need to consider encryption both while data is at rest (where it's stored) and when it's in transit (being sent from person to person). And while that may sound intimidating, you don't have to do it alone - we can help.

You may also consider training your people on encryption best practice, to make sure there are no weak links in your team. After all, it only takes one false move to leave your data vulnerable. Helping everyone understand the importance of encryption and how to use it effectively is a strong protective measure.

If this is something we can help you do, we'd love to assist. Get in touch.

Q: Can I use my browser's built-in password manager?

A: It's a bad idea. Dedicated password managers are more secure and designed for business use. We can help you find the most suitable one.

Q: When should I replace employee PCs?

A: There comes a point when it starts to cost more to maintain a device than it would to replace it. Typically, the lifespan of a PC is around 5 years. If you'd like an audit of your devices, we can help.

Q: Does my business have to upgrade to Windows 11?

A: No. But it's a good idea if you want to take advantage of some of the new features designed to aid business productivity. We can help make the process easy – get in touch.

This is how you can get in touch with us:

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