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### Ransomware is Still a Major Threat



Ransomware is the scariest type of malware out there. It can have a myriad of negative effects on a business, yet it seems to still be on the fringe of the mainstream. Today, we thought we would give somewhat of a refresher course on ransomware.

#### What is Ransomware?

Simply put, ransomware is malware that holds either files or entire drives ransom, until the perpetrator of the attack is paid via cryptocurrency. If the scammer isn't paid in the time...



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## About White Mountain

We are a technology consulting firm specializing in technology implementation and management for businesses. We're known for providing big-business, Enterprise-Level IT services to small and medium-sized businesses.

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## Get Your Business Back on Track



After dealing with months of regrettable news, a lot of businesses are trying to find the right strategy to navigate all the challenges their road ahead presents. With costs rising and revenues shrinking, there needs to be a strategic urgency that will allow your business to sustain operations when other companies are laying off their workers and folding into obscurity. Today, we take a look at some of the technology services that you can use to keep your business afloat during the economic downturn.

### Managed IT Services

It's true that many businesses that are looking to cut back on their expenses have already moved over to a managed service provider (MSP) in order to reduce their IT support costs. Many of today's businesses depend on their technology, and one of the best ways to cut back on your IT-related expenses is to outsource some or all of the management.

Your business has probably committed to a certain level of productivity, and more than likely COVID-19 has reconfigured those expectations. When your staff was laid off or working remotely, you may have seen the effect it has on your bottom line already, but more likely as things return to "normal" you will see revenues hindered from all types of outside factors and the productivity of your staff may not be your biggest concern. It may be keeping people employed. Unfortunately, in today's austere business climate, that may not be possible.

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## Do You Have a Plan for What's Next?



If you have been running a business for any length of time, you definitely don't need to be told how important risk management is. One problem you see from business owners today is that while they understand just how many problems there are--and which ones they need to find solutions for first--they want to grow their company fast, and as a result, they overlook potential problems and end up hurting their business as a result.

One of the major problems a business owner needs to confront is the situation surrounding sustained downtime. Business continuity demands a lot of assessment and a whole lot of action be taken in a short amount of time. After all, downtime is a business killer. The establishment of a continuity plan not only solves the immediate problems (e.g. a server failure), they return your business to a productive state, fast.

All businesses struggle with hiccups of continuity. Something as simple as a cloud application being down for 20 minutes can cost a company a lot of money. When downtime is sustained, however, the costs add up by the second. A business that is forced into stagnation by downtime can fail within days.

### Modern Continuity

Today's business continuity plan is not much different than it was 50 years ago. The assets have just changed. Today, most of the assets that need to be protected are through reliable

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Hardware Workers Need in 2020



The office is in itself a tool designed to improve business. Remember the office? Some long for the day when they can

get back there, while a majority of remote workers enjoy it. One thing is certain, many people are still working from home, sent home in March. Many, with no return date in sight. Today, we'll take a look at a couple pieces of technology that are popular with the remote work crowd.

When you last were at the office, you had everything that you needed to do your job: your work PC, all the accessories, access to the Internet, printers, and other internal resources. During the pandemic's stay-at-home orders, you didn't have access. You may be back at your office today, but if you aren't you are probably using the mandatory COVID-19 home office technology. Let's take a look at it.

## Do You Have a Plan for What's Next?

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digital means. This means that if you want to look for a place to start, look at your organization's IT.

Like you would have done with established business continuity methods, you will want to make a list of the people who need to know if continuity is broken, and who is in charge of relaying that information down the corporate tree. Typically, there will be one person that is tasked with relaying information to department heads, and they will take it from there. Ensuring that there is a plan in place to mitigate cost in the case of sustained downtime is essential to mitigating problematic situations.

### Take Action

In business continuity, action is the name of the game. Depending on the situation, after your people are informed

### Laptop

The home office isn't like the real office. First of all, going into March 2-in-3 people didn't have a dedicated workspace. If you tried to work from the couch, your favorite chair, or worse yet, your bed, you may have found productivity hard to come by. Once it was clear that nobody was going back to the office for a while, most people made a solid effort to dedicate a small part of their living quarters into a makeshift office. If you are like millions of other people that had to work from home (or are still working from home), having a PC was essential to getting your work done; but, if you don't have a lot of room, a laptop is perfect. Not only can you take it with you, but many laptops are more powerful than the typical workstation that your company would give you.

### Smartphone

For a sudden shift to telework, no piece of technology has been as important as the smartphone. At first, many companies were just trying to figure out if they could run their businesses remotely. The

of a breach of continuity, the next step is to mitigate the problem. Some situations are more difficult to rebound from than others, but ultimately a solid business continuity plan is an incremental approach to getting your business back up and running properly. It could take a minute or a couple of weeks, but ensuring that every mission-critical resource is covered under your plan, and that there are defined actions that need to take place will work to return operations to normal more effectively. All continuity tasks should be assigned a specific timeline for completion, with the highest priority tasks coming first.

### Customer Relations

Customer care is a big part of a business' continuity strategy. In fact, if you are dealing with a major outage, keeping your customers supported can work to stem service mutiny. You'll need to

contact your suppliers and vendors to keep other company's supply chains from grinding to a halt. Keeping your relationships solid will alleviate one big headache if you are dealing with sustained downtime.

mobility provided by smartphones largely made the shift possible. Not only could the smartphone be used as a business phone (through a VoIP platform and its softphone app), it can be great for collaboration. Today, most smartphones can be configured with work profiles, which provides a dedicated app drawer for all your business apps. This not only allows the company to manage their data better, it also is advantageous for users who can turn access to work on and off with a tap of their finger.

### Collaboration Apps

Software is important for almost every business, but for the business relying on remote workers, it is quite literally a business' saving grace. With a remote staff, collaboration becomes even more crucial and software of all kinds are adding in cooperative options. Productivity software like Microsoft 365 or...



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contact your suppliers and vendors to keep other company's supply chains from grinding to a halt. Keeping your relationships solid will alleviate one big headache if you are dealing with sustained downtime.

### Technology and Data

You will want to have identified what hardware and software are essential, as well as have a good idea about how long it will take to restore your data and other systems into working condition. This also applies to any equipment that is necessary to restore operations. You'll want to make sure that you know exactly what tools you need and the length of time that it will take to get things back up and running...



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## Get Your Business Back on Track

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By outsourcing your IT management and support to an MSP, you can get the comprehensive IT support your business needs, while reducing your technology-related expenses dramatically. IT services providers excel in keeping downtime to a minimum by constantly monitoring and actively managing all supported technology to ensure that problems are mitigated and downtime is left to a minimum. Additionally, MSPs provide around-the-clock IT support for all of your staff through our help desk.

When looking to cut costs, maintain support, and still get the IT support your business demands, choosing the right MSP will go a long way toward keeping your IT working for your staff and not the other way around.

### Migrate to the Cloud

Another service model that can reduce

upfront costs is to migrate internal IT over to the cloud. This goes double for companies that were looking to spend this year's IT budget on a new hardware refresh. Since committing to large investment is not a prudent strategy right now, utilizing the cloud for new operational strategies might be just what you need to stem the tide until your company can afford that new server.

Think about it: consider that a hardware replacement could come with a five-to-six figure price tag (depending on the size of your company), paying for the computing that your company uses in the cloud can be a great short-term sacrifice that will allow you to get through lean times with more of your business' technology intact.

### Committing to Security

With so many businesses using hosted solutions, there is a concern that it will

make information systems less secure. It's for this reason that prioritizing your physical, network, and cybersecurity strategies has to be a priority.

- **Physical security** - Your business' physical security always has to be a priority, and in recessionary times, that priority is heightened. Digital camera systems, access control, and secure authentication systems are important when you need to monitor, control, and protect your business' assets.
- **Network security** - Ensuring that you have the protections needed to detect intrusion and eliminate threats will go a long way toward ensuring your internal IT continues functioning proficiently...



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## Hackers are Going Phishing for Your Money



When people talk about cybersecurity nowadays, there certainly seems to be a lot of emphasis put on phishing attacks and ransomware. This is for good reason. Not only can either of these attack vectors create significant difficulties for a business, they are often used in tandem. Let's discuss why these threats are so potent, and why they so often show up together.

First, it will help to briefly review how each attack works.

### How Ransomware Works

Imagine for a second the surprise you would have if you tried to log into your computer and you were presented with a message telling you that your files have been encrypted and that you need to pay in Bitcoin before the clock runs out or you will lose those files forever.

Then you noticed the clock clicking down. Would you panic? You probably would. That is ransomware, a particularly ugly malware that could cost you everything.

### How Phishing Works

Do you ever get emails that seem to come in randomly from the government, your bank, or your insurance company? Do they want you to take action now and provide links or attachments to make that possible? The truth is most professional organizations that you depend on will never want you using email to do anything other than verify your identity. That means that the emails you get that say you have to act now to avoid going to jail for owing money are as fraudulent as they seem.

These are phishing messages. They can come in through email, social media, or via SMS or phone call. Unfortunately for the modern user, they are constant, often sophisticated, and can be especially problematic if handled improperly.

### Phishing + Ransomware = Major Trouble

Since today's hackers can't just hack their way into an account, they use social engineering tactics to do so. If they are able to expose their fraudulent message to someone that is less than vigilant, they may gain access to a computer (or worse yet a computing network), and then deploy their ransomware payload. Not a good situation for any individual; and, a major problem for any business. This is why it is essential that your staff understands phishing tactics and can spot fraudulent emails and messages when they come in. Let's take a look at some telltale signs that you are dealing with a phishing message.

### Identifying Phishing

Phishing tactics are a lot more sophisticated than they were even a few short years ago, but they can't do anything...



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## Why Businesses Should Select a Hosted Email Solution



Email is easily one of the most commonly (and most often)

used business tools there are, but as with any tool, some options are better than others. This week, we're giving you some tips on how to best use email in your business by using hosted email.

As you might imagine, your criteria for a business email should differ from what the average private email user may consider.

A personal email account, or one that a private user would likely make use of, has a few standard qualities:

- Free to use
- Limited storage space and features
- Generic Domain, like gmail-dot-com or outlook-dot-com

This is all just fine for a private user, but for a business' purposes, these options fall short. Limited storage space alone would make email far less convenient for the business in question, the lack of features could complicate business processes, and the generic URL renders your communications

unrecognizable at first glance. While "free" can be hard to argue with, the costs that you're trading for that price tag make this option a non-starter.

Instead, a business will need more control over its email platform, which has led to many hosting their own Exchange servers. While this option works, it is not without its assorted challenges, such as:

- A need for greater technical skill and experience
- A larger time investment for set up and maintenance
- An increased chance of significant downtime
- Spam filtering will cost extra in time and finances
- All responsibility belongs to the business for upkeep and updates

Any one of these issues would be extremely costly on its own, never mind combined. Fortunately, there is another option, one that pairs the benefits of a local email server with the advantages of cloud email.



### Hosted Email

Businesses now have enterprise-level hosted email solutions available to them that are commonly included in productivity suites. For example, both Google's G Suite and Microsoft Office 365 have an enterprise-level email paired with each account. Utilizing these platforms can provide a plethora of benefits for your business, such as:

- No added infrastructure costs
- Scalable number of accounts
- No more email infrastructure management
- Unified billing
- Built-in productivity suites
- Built-in management and security
- No software licensing or maintenance
- Scalable storage
- Provided email backup
- Access from anywhere, at any time

Need a solid set of productivity solutions for a more business-friendly expense? Give our IT professionals a call at 603-889-0800 to discuss what White Mountain IT Services can do for you.



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Stuck in a relationship with a service provider that just isn't working for you? We are experts at providing discreet and confidential advice on how to protect your business and avoid problems and disruptions when replacing your IT support provider.

If you feel that you are caught in a never ending cycle of problems and frustrations give us a call for a private consultation and let us help you make things right.

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