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TECHNOLOGY INSIDER



Your monthly newsletter, written for humans not geeks

Modern Networks acquires Wave9 and expands into the Education sector


Modern Networks Ltd, a leading provider of IT and telecoms to the UK's commercial property market, has acquired Wave9, a Stafford-based provider of secure, filtered internet and telecommunications services to schools. The acquisition is Modern Networks' first investment in the education sector and will form the basis of a newly formed Education Division.

The increasing importance of IT to all aspects of the school day alongside a renewed focus on infrastructure capacity, resilience and security standards by the Department for Education is expected to show high growth in the education sector in the coming years. Wave9 has established a well-earned reputation for delivering high-quality, excellent value services which is something Modern Networks are looking to continue to develop.

The acquisition sees Modern Networks grow to more than 170 employees operating from Hitchin, Cambridge, Guildford, Exeter and Stafford. Modern Networks is backed by leading private equity firm Horizon Capital which acquired a majority stake in April 2021.

Modern Networks founder and CEO, Matt Reeve said, "Technology in education has undoubtedly had a profound impact on the classroom. From 1 to 1 computing environments to online consultation with parents, tech is now used in all aspects of education. We feel that there is still a great deal more opportunity for technology to help in education and this is a journey that we all want to go on."

A key factor in the decision was selecting a partner to build a better business with and it is extremely important that the partner not only shares the same vision but also the same, values and beliefs in the organisation's overall purpose. Wave9 felt that in Modern Networks, they found an organisation that was like-minded and would be true to their goals of delivering better technology to people working in education.

Andy McFarlane, Education Divisional Director said, "The success of the business to date has been down to the quality and dedication of the whole Wave9 team to serving our customers. We are delighted that the value of the Wave9 brand, our market specialism and the quality of our team has been recognised and we are very excited about our future as part of the Modern Networks group." 

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The close alignment of culture and values between Modern Networks and Wave9 has already fostered a strong relationship. The dedicated team at Wave9 is passionate about their work and consistently delivers outstanding service to their customers. The increased scale and depth of the organisation will present additional capabilities to enhance our offering, maintain competitiveness and ultimately provide even better service to its customers.

Put these 7 things in your 2024 IT strategy

As we enter 2024, it's the perfect time to set the stage for an AMAZING year. And one crucial part of this is reviewing your IT strategy.

You don't have one?? A great time to pull one together then.

Think of it as your business's tech roadmap – a clear plan that shows how you'll use technology to drive growth, efficiency, and innovation.

We believe your strategy should cover these 7 areas:

1. Business goals alignment: Your IT strategy should align seamlessly with your business goals. It's not only about your technology, it's about how that tech can help you achieve your bigger objectives.

2. Security first: Cyber security is no joke, and your IT strategy should make it a priority. Protect your data, your customers' trust, and your reputation.

3. Budget and resources: Outline your budget for tech investments and ensure you have the right resources in place to execute your strategy effectively.

4. Technology stack: What tools and technologies will drive your business forward? Make sure your IT strategy identifies the right solutions to meet your specific needs.

5. Scalability: Think about next week, next month, next year, not just today. Your IT strategy should be flexible enough to grow with your business.

6. User experience: Don't forget about your team. Consider how your tech choices impact your employees' daily work – a happy team is a productive team.

7. Data management: How will you collect, store, and use your data to make informed decisions?

An effective IT strategy isn't just about following the latest tech trends blindly. It's about harnessing the right technology to drive your business forward, all while keeping an eye on security and your bottom line.

Creating or refining your IT strategy can feel like you're diving right in at the deep end, but you don't have to do it alone. We can help you create the right strategy for your business.

Get in touch.



Christmas jumper charity fund-raising

On 7 December, Modern Networks celebrated Christmas Jumper Day and the team wore an amazing array of festive knitwear. The team also raised £257 for the Save The Children charity.



What are the top tech trends for 2024?

In 2023, generative AI emerged, allowing us to create with minimal human input. What can we expect from technology in 2024? Let's explore some trends.

Ethical AI Practices: AI raises ethical and social concerns. We need fair, transparent, accountable systems that safeguard rights and privacy. Ethical AI practices will develop in 2024. Businesses must adopt frameworks to certify AI models and address potential harms and biases.

Sustainability in Tech: In 2024, technology innovation will prioritize sustainability to tackle the climate crisis. IoT, blockchain, analytics, and smart manufacturing will cut the environmental impact of industries. AI and machine learning will enhance quality, and reduce emissions and waste.

Cyber Resilience: As our world becomes more digital and connected, cyber risks and threats increase. To cope with this, we need to develop and adopt cyber-resilient strategies. We must prevent, detect, respond and recover effectively from cyber incidents. This requires a holistic and proactive approach, involving people, processes and technology.

These are just some of the tech trends that will shape 2024. They present both opportunities and challenges for businesses and society. To navigate the tech landscape successfully, we will need to be aware, adaptable and agile.

Contact Modern Networks to learn more about how technology can streamline and safeguard your business.

Smart Strategies for Facilities Managers: Tackling Budgets, Energy, and Compliance

Let's delve into how technology can empower Facilities Managers (FMs) in the world of commercial property. As FMs grapple with multifaceted challenges, innovative solutions can be their trusty allies. So, grab a cup of tea (or coffee, if you prefer), and let's explore how technology can revolutionise the facilities management landscape.

1. Navigating Budget Constraints: A Tech-Driven Approach

Challenge: Budget constraints often cast a shadow over capital expenditure (CAPEX) plans. FMs must find ways to optimise resources without compromising operational efficiency.

Solution: Integrated Facilities Management (IFM)

Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) emerges as a beacon of hope. Imagine a comprehensive approach that seamlessly integrates people, processes, and technology. With a focus on data-driven decision-making, FMs can analyse historical trends, occupancy rates, and maintenance costs. This enables them to identify areas where CAPEX can be optimised without sacrificing quality.

2. Championing Energy Efficiency and Waste Reduction

Challenge: Striving for energy efficiency while minimising waste is no small feat. FMs must balance occupant comfort, sustainability, and operational costs.

Solution: Smart FM Solutions

Smart FM Solutions harness cutting-edge technologies:

- Connected Building Automation: IoT-enabled sensors monitor energy consumption, HVAC systems, and lighting. Real-time insights empower FMs to optimise energy usage. Imagine adjusting heating or cooling based on occupancy patterns, reducing waste without compromising comfort.

- Advanced Analytics: AI-driven analytics identify energy-saving opportunities. Predictive maintenance prevents equipment breakdowns, minimising downtime and reducing waste.



celebrate each metric ton of CO2e avoided on behalf of clients.

- Employee Experience: A sustainable workplace isn't just about energy-efficient systems. It's also about creating a positive experience for occupants. Technology-enabled services enhance workplace engagement, attracting and retaining talent.

In summary, technology isn't merely a tool; it's a game-changer. From achieving net zero emissions to enhancing workplace experiences, FMs can harness data, automation, and partnerships to overcome challenges. So, FMs must embrace the digital era—it's your secret weapon in the quest for efficient, sustainable, and compliant facilities management.

To learn more about how technology can help meet the challenges of facilities managers working on commercial property, [contact Modern Networks.](#)



3. Navigating the ESG Landscape

Challenge: Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives are no longer optional. FMs must align with sustainability goals, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance workplace well-being.

Solution: Sustainability Solutions

- Carbon Abatement: Strategically action ESG goals. Implement energy-efficient lighting, renewable energy sources, and water conservation measures. Track progress and





Meet Copilot, Microsoft's Revolutionary New AI Assistant

You may have heard of Copilot, the new AI assistant from Microsoft. But do you know what it can do for you and your business? In this blog, we introduce you to Microsoft Copilot and briefly explain some of its business benefits. Copilot itself wrote the first draft of this text, although it required some human editing.

Copilot is not just another AI chatbot, although it was formerly known as Bing Chat. It's a revolutionary productivity tool that can help you with almost anything. Whether you need to find information, change a setting on your device, or create a picture for a PowerPoint presentation, Copilot can do it for you in seconds.

How does it work?

Copilot is built into the Microsoft Edge browser and integrated with Windows 11. This means it can access more features and functions than any other AI assistant. It can also communicate with other Microsoft apps and services, such as Office 365, Teams, and Outlook.

No more searching through menus or tabs. No more switching between apps or windows. Just ask Copilot, and it will do the rest.

Copilot is also smart. It understands context and can answer follow-up questions without repeating keywords. It's like talking to a real person who knows everything.

And Copilot can help you with any webpage on Microsoft Edge. Just ask it to summarise the page, and it will scan the content and give you the main points. Or ask it to extract specific information, such as dates, prices, or names, and it will highlight them for you.

Sounds amazing, right? Well, there's more. Copilot is still in preview mode, and Microsoft is working hard to improve it and add more capabilities. The final product will be even better and more powerful.

Copilot is not just a chatbot. It's a game-changer for your productivity and efficiency.

Don't believe us? Here are three different ways in which Microsoft Copilot can be used for business purposes:

1. Market research: Extract critical information from the internet and a user's recent emails, meetings, conversations, and files. Simplify market research by producing a list of sources so the user can fact-check the credibility of the information if pulled from the web. For instance, a marketer at a chain of home improvement stores can undergo market research on square footage and proximity of competitors in seconds.

2. Content creation: Create entirely new blog posts or projects by having the relevant files inputted as part of the prompt. Ask Copilot to choose the five most prominent aspects to fill into the body of the post. Copilot will process it in seconds, including with context intros and outros.

3. Data visualisation: Find insights, analyse trends, and create data visualisations in Excel. Generate real-time summaries and create actionable tasks during and after Teams meetings. This can help businesses to streamline tasks, enhance productivity, and transform data management.

These are just some of the ways Copilot can help you. There are many more possibilities. [NEXT](#)

NEW TO MICROSOFT 365

Let Copilot organise your tabs for you

Is there no end to Copilot's ability to keep you more organised and productive? Apparently not.

Now, you can ask your AI assistant to organise your tabs in Microsoft Edge. It will group together tabs that are similar and use colours and labels to help you tell the groups apart. Simply open Copilot and ask it to "organise my tabs".





Get started with Copilot

It's all in the prompt

Copilot prompts are instructions or questions that you use to tell Copilot what you want it to do. Prompts can include four parts: the goal, context, expectations, and source.

Writing good prompts is key to getting better outcomes with Copilot. By providing clear and specific instructions, you can help Copilot understand your needs and deliver more accurate and relevant results. This can help you save time, streamline tasks, and enhance productivity.

↓ [Download our handy guide to 'The Art and Science of Prompting'.](#)

Microsoft Copilot for Microsoft 365: A Free Training Course

Learn how to use Copilot for Microsoft 365. This free training course consists of three modules, each with interactive exercises and knowledge checks. You can complete the course at your own pace and earn a certificate of completion.

To get started, [visit this link](#) and sign up for the course. You will need a Microsoft account and a Microsoft 365 subscription to access the course. You will also need to install Microsoft Copilot for Microsoft 365 on your device.

By the end of this course, you will be able to use Copilot effectively to communicate and create content more efficiently. You will also receive a certificate of completion to showcase your new skills.

Enrol in the course today and discover how Microsoft Copilot for Microsoft 365 can transform the way you work.

If you want to learn more about Microsoft Copilot, or any other productivity tools, feel free to [contact Modern Networks](#).

Is your business part of the 21%?

Have you ever heard the saying that every company is now a technology company?

It's a phrase that's been buzzing around the business world, and it makes you wonder... is it really true?

Here's the surprising reality: Stats reveal only 21% of companies are truly incorporating technology into their strategic thinking in a meaningful way.

But don't worry if you're not in that 21% just yet. Here are five ways you can be inspired.

First, learn from success stories. Look at other businesses that have embraced technology effectively. What did they do? How did it benefit them? Use these examples as a source of inspiration.

Second, find yourself a tech partner. You need someone who can navigate this complex tech world alongside you. Look for a tech expert who can help you understand the potential of technology (we can certainly help with that).

Third, get a grasp of the impact technology can have on your business. Ask your tech partner to give you ideas of how technology can give your business a boost.

Fourth, dip your toes into low-code or no-code solutions. You don't need to have a computer science degree to leverage technology. Start with user-friendly tools and see how they can streamline your operations.

Lastly, participate in workshops. It's not just about learning, it's about envisioning a different future for your company. Get involved in sessions that encourage you to think creatively about how technology can shape your business.

Remember, you don't have to do this alone. We're here to support you every step of the way – [get in touch](#).



Q: Should I be ditching passwords for Passkeys?

A: In short, yes. Passkeys are more secure and easier to use. They're not available to use everywhere yet, but they're rolling out.

Q: My team use their phones for working. Should I give them company-issued phones?

A: If they're accessing company data on personal phones, you need to be aware of the security risks. Supplying company devices means you have more control over the security measures used, like encryption and remote wiping.

Q: Some of my team are using AI to help them with their role. Should I monitor this?

A: You should keep an eye on what tools your people are using, and what data they're sharing with them. Consider AI training for everyone, to make sure you don't have any security issues.

This is how you can get in touch with us:

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