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TECHNOLOGY INSIDER

Your monthly newsletter, written for humans not geeks

Five Technologies That Will Make Your Work Life Better in 2024

Technology is constantly evolving and improving, and it can have a huge impact on how we work and live. Whether it's saving time, energy, money, or the environment, technology can help us achieve our goals and make our work more enjoyable and fulfilling. In this article, we'll explore five technologies that we believe will make your work life easier, more efficient, greener, or more productive soon. Let's dive in!

1. Energy-Efficient Coding

With the growing popularity of the Cloud, there is a surge in the number of data and applications that are being hosted on it. However, this rise in demand is resulting in an increased need for computing power, leading to higher energy consumption. This increase in energy consumption can adversely affect the environment, as well as have a negative impact on the performance and costs of Cloud services.

To mitigate these issues, energy-efficient coding is becoming more important for software developers and vendors. Energy-efficient coding refers to the practice of developing software that uses fewer resources and consumes less computing energy,

while still providing the same functionality and quality. By optimizing the code, reducing the number of instructions, and selecting the right algorithms and data structures, developers can create software that runs faster, consumes less power, and reduces the carbon footprint of the Cloud.

According to Forbes, energy-efficient coding is one of the ways that technology can help protect the environment. As such, software vendors need to be responsible tenants of the Cloud infrastructure and write energy-efficient software to help reduce the negative impact on the environment.

2. Smart Tech

Smart tech is a broad term that refers to any technology that uses artificial intelligence, machine learning, or data analytics to enhance its functionality and performance. Smart tech can help us automate tasks, improve decision-making, personalise experiences, and increase productivity and efficiency. Some examples of smart tech are voice assistants, chatbots, smart devices, wearable gadgets, and self-driving cars. Smart tech can also help us rehumanise work, by freeing us from mundane and repetitive tasks, and allowing us to focus on more creative and meaningful work.

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Harvard Business Review argues that smart tech can make work more human, by enabling us to collaborate better, learn faster, and communicate more effectively. Smart tech can also help us balance our work and personal lives, by giving us more flexibility and control over our schedules and preferences.

3. Virtual Reality

Virtual reality (VR) is a technology that can create immersive and realistic simulations of environments and experiences. It involves devices such as headsets, controllers, and sensors. VR has various applications ranging from entertainment, education, training, therapy, tourism, and work-life improvement. By enabling remote work, collaboration with colleagues from different parts of the world, learning new skills, and exploring new possibilities, VR can help us improve our work life. It can also reduce our environmental impact by limiting travel, transportation, and physical resources. Furthermore, VR can enhance our well-being by providing us with fun and engaging activities, relieving stress, and boosting creativity and imagination.

In the commercial property industry, virtual tours have become a popular marketing tool. They offer potential buyers and tenants the chance to view properties from the comfort of their own homes, saving time and money. Virtual tours also give buyers and tenants a better sense of the property's layout and features than traditional photos and videos.

4. Blockchain

Blockchain is a technology that allows secure and transparent transactions and data sharing without the need for intermediaries or central authorities. It has various applications such as digital currencies, smart contracts, supply chain management, identity verification and voting systems. Blockchain can also help us achieve sustainability and social impact goals by enabling more trust, accountability, and efficiency in various domains. For instance, it can help us track and verify the origin and quality of products, reduce fraud and corruption, improve access and inclusion, and support environmental and humanitarian causes.

Blockchain technology is listed by the Green Journal as one of the ways technology is revolutionising sustainability and explains how it can help us navigate a greener and more ethical future. It is also expected to play a vital role in the commercial real estate industry, particularly in the areas of property ownership and transactions. The technology will be used to create a digital record of property ownership, making it easier to track and transfer ownership, and also be used for real estate transactions, speeding up the process and reducing the need for intermediaries.

5. Green Hydrogen

Green hydrogen is a form of clean energy that is produced by splitting water molecules using renewable electricity, such as solar or wind power. Unlike fossil fuels, green hydrogen does not emit any greenhouse gases or pollutants when used, making it a great option for reducing carbon emissions and fighting climate change. Green hydrogen can be used for various purposes, such as powering vehicles, heating buildings, or generating electricity. It can also be stored and transported easily, unlike some other renewable energy sources. According to Forbes, green hydrogen is a hot topic and is quickly becoming a major component of the world's clean energy mix. Advances in electrolyser and fuel cell technology are making it more affordable and safer to produce, transport, and use green hydrogen in various applications. Green hydrogen could be a game-changer for many industries and sectors, such as transportation, manufacturing, or agriculture, that rely heavily on fossil fuels.

These are just some of the technologies that we believe will make your work life better in 2024 and beyond. Of course, many more technologies are emerging and evolving, and we can't wait to see what the future holds. Technology can be a powerful tool for improving our work and our world, but it also depends on how we use it and what we value. We hope that you found this article interesting and informative and that you are excited and curious about the potential of technology to make your work life easier, more efficient, greener, or more productive. Thank you for reading!

Meet Our Escalations Team

Claire Perkins

Corinne Baker

Hi, I'm Claire Perkins - I have been working for Modern Networks for the past 1.5 years as an SDM (Service Delivery Manager). I have worked within a Service desk and IT environment for 20 years. My main aim is to be the voice of the customer regarding any service issues that they may have.

Hello, I'm Corinne. I started off my journey at Modern Networks on our 1st line support desk in May 2021. Working on the support desk has given me a first-hand understanding of how our customers rely on our services to operate efficiently and reliably whilst maintaining a smooth customer journey.

We take pride in putting the customer at the forefront of everything we do. However, on the rare occasion that you are unsatisfied with our service i.e., a missed SLA, poor service, lack of progress or an urgent request such as removing a leaver's credentials, please get in touch.

Please call or email us at:
Phone: +44(0) 1462 425540
Email: escalations@modern-networks.co.uk

Embracing the Digital Wave in Facilities Management

How Technology is Transforming Facilities Management in Commercial Real Estate.

Facilities management is a crucial aspect of commercial property. It involves the maintenance and upkeep of buildings, equipment, and other assets to ensure that they are in good working condition. With the advent of technology, facilities managers (FMs) are now able to do their jobs better, more efficiently, and with less impact on the environment. In this article, we will explore how technology is helping FMs in commercial real estate (CRE).

Unveiling the Power of IoT
Smart Sensors for Smarter Buildings

The Internet of Things (IoT) stands out as a beacon of technological advancement in facilities management. Imagine sensors spread across a building, monitoring temperature, humidity, air quality, and energy consumption. FMs leverage this data to understand building dynamics and tweaking settings for optimal energy usage. However, with great strides come cybersecurity risks that must be addressed to keep buildings secure.

Safeguarding Against Cyber Threats
Protecting Our Smart Spaces

The surge in IoT devices brings along significant cybersecurity challenges. With potential vulnerabilities like weak passwords and insecure interfaces, hackers could breach a building's systems. To tackle this, FMs need to develop a solid understanding of IoT cybersecurity, executing strategies to mitigate risks and fortify building security.

BIM: A Digital Blueprint for Success
Navigating Building Information Modelling (BIM)

Another game-changer is Building Information Modelling (BIM) software, offering a digital replica of a building. FMs use BIM to comprehend a building's design, construction, and operation, facilitating precise modifications. FMs turn to BIM to diagnose issues and draft effective rectification plans if a building is underperforming. ⏩ NEXT

Smart Buildings: Automation for Efficiency
Streamlining Operations with Smart Technology

Smart building technology is helping FMs to do their jobs more efficiently. Smart buildings are equipped with sensors and other devices that can be used to automate various tasks. For example, smart buildings can automatically adjust lighting and temperature settings based on occupancy levels. They can also be used to monitor equipment and alert FMs when maintenance is required. By automating these tasks, FMs can focus on more important tasks, such as improving the overall performance of a building.

Nurturing Sustainability with Technology
Reducing the Carbon Footprint

Technology empowers FMs to champion sustainability. Energy management systems enable the monitoring and control of energy consumption, while renewable energy sources like solar panels and wind turbines contribute to greener electricity. By reducing energy consumption, FMs play a pivotal role in minimizing the carbon footprint of commercial buildings.

Outsourcing IT: A Strategic Move
Maximising Efficiency and Minimizing Risks

Outsourcing IT and telecoms to a Managed Services Provider (MSP) like Modern Networks emerges as a strategic move for FMs in commercial real estate. It not only reduces costs but also enhances efficiency, allowing FMs to focus on core competencies. Moreover, outsourcing keeps FMs abreast of the latest technology trends, minimizing risks through expert cybersecurity solutions.

Embrace the Tech Evolution
The Future of Facilities Management

As technology continues to evolve, the role of FMs in commercial property will only become more dynamic. The current tools like IoT, BIM, and smart building technology are just the beginning. By embracing these innovations and outsourcing non-core functions, FMs can truly excel in enhancing the overall performance of commercial buildings. As we look ahead, more groundbreaking solutions are on the horizon, promising a brighter future for facilities management.

How to Protect Yourself from Malicious PDF Files

PDF files are a popular way of sharing documents online, but they can also pose a serious security risk. In a recent statement, Google warned that Russian state-sponsored hackers are sending encrypted PDFs to trick victims into running a decryption tool that's malware. In this article, we will explain how hackers use PDF files to spread malware and what you can do to avoid falling victim to their tricks.

Why are PDF files dangerous?

Many people think that PDF files are safer than Word documents because they are harder to modify and don't have macro viruses. However, this is not true. PDF files can contain embedded links, images, scripts, and other malicious elements that can execute when you open the file. These elements can redirect you to harmful websites, download malware to your computer, or exploit vulnerabilities in your system.

Hackers can create malicious PDF files using toolkits that are easily available on the internet. Some of these toolkits are even used by white hat hackers for testing purposes, but they can also be abused by cybercriminals. Some of the malicious PDF files have signatures that antivirus software can detect and block, but others are more sophisticated and can evade detection.

How do hackers trick you into opening malicious PDF files?

Hackers use various social engineering techniques to lure you into opening their malicious PDF files. They may send you an email that looks like it comes from a legitimate source, such as a bank, a government agency, or a colleague. The email may contain a PDF file as an attachment or a link to download it. The PDF file may have a convincing name, such as an invoice, a report, or a receipt.

Alternatively, hackers may use encrypted PDF files as bait. They may send you an encrypted PDF file that you cannot open and then follow up with another email that contains a link to a supposed decryption tool. The decryption tool is actually malware that infects your computer when you run it. ⊗ NEXT

How can you prevent malicious PDF files from harming you?

The best way to protect yourself from malicious PDF files is to be cautious and vigilant. Here are some tips to follow:

1. Do not open PDF files from unknown or suspicious sources. If you receive an unexpected or unsolicited email with a PDF file attached or linked, delete it or mark it as spam.
2. Do not open encrypted PDF files unless you are sure of their origin and authenticity. If someone sends you an encrypted PDF file and then asks you to download a decryption tool, do not do it. It is likely a scam.
3. Use reputable antivirus software and keep it updated. Antivirus software can help you detect and remove malware from your computer. However, antivirus software is not foolproof and may not catch all malicious PDF files. Therefore, you should also use common sense and follow the other tips.
4. Use a secure PDF reader and disable unnecessary features. Some PDF readers have features that can make them vulnerable to attacks, such as JavaScript, plugins, or automatic updates. You should disable these features or use a PDF reader that does not have them. You should also update your PDF reader regularly to fix any security issues.
5. Scan any PDF file before opening it. You can use online tools or your antivirus software to scan any PDF file for malware before opening it. This can help you identify potential threats and avoid them.

By following these tips, you can reduce the risk of falling victim to malicious PDF files and keep your data and devices safe. If you are concerned about the continually evolving cyber threats to your business, contact Modern Networks today to discuss how we can help improve your security posture. **Call 01462 426500 or email us at info@modern-networks.co.uk.**

Encryption: Your security must-have

Keeping sensitive business data safe is a top priority. When you're managing a team of employees who 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 practices, 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: 01462 426500 I info@modern-networks.co.uk.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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 4 years. If you'd like an audit of your devices, we can help.

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To get in touch with us:
Call 01462 426500
Email info@modern-networks.co.uk
Web www.modern-networks.co.uk