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TECHNOLOGY INSIDER



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 revolutionized 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.

TechFacts

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.

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



TEAM SPOTLIGHT

BRENT

What is your role at the company, and what are your key responsibilities?

Windows Systems Administrator – Service Team responsibilities, On-Site Tech



How long have you been working in your current position?

I am approaching my 4th year at Kerkhoff Technologies.

Can you describe a typical day in your job?

About half the week, I spend half the day at one of our clients, otherwise I am at a desk (home or office) and remoting into computers/servers/routers trying to solve problems.



What do you enjoy most about your work at Kerkhoff Technologies?

I enjoy meeting with our clients, solving their problems and I get to hang around with great people while I do so.

How do you collaborate with other team members to achieve your goals?

Collaborations start with the morning huddle, then quick Teams calls or Teams messages in the channels.



What are some recent developments or innovations in your field that you find exciting?

AI is both exciting and worrying. I use it as a starting point to a researched destination.

What's your number 1 tech tip (that you personally use) to our audience?

Don't look for the 'Silver bullet' solution. We tend to approach a problem as if there was one solution that will fix it. I have seen problems that had 3 different real causes.

What's your favorite way to unwind after a long day at work?

Always like heading out to Bellingham to catch a supper and/or sunset.

Are there any books, movies, or TV shows you've been enjoying lately?

Some fiction, just finished a book about dragon battles called the Fourth Wing. We saw Boys in the Boat at the Pickford Theatre in Bellingham a week ago.

[READ MORE](#)

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

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.

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 unauthorized 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...

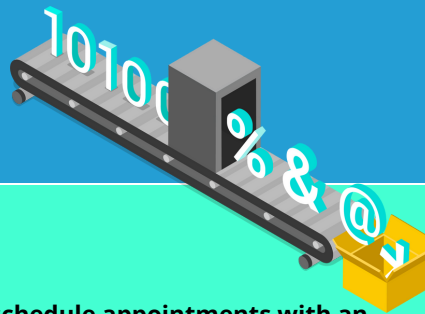
- Lots of industries have strict regulations regarding data security and privacy (think HIPAA). Encryption helps you stay compliant, avoiding expensive fines and legal troubles.
- When clients or customers know that you take their data security seriously, it builds trust. People are more likely to do 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.



Business app of the month

Microsoft Bookings

Discover the easiest way for your clients to schedule appointments with an online booking system included in your Microsoft suite.

Microsoft Bookings simplifies appointment scheduling, saving time for businesses and clients. Customize details and service providers, integrate with Microsoft 365 calendars, and host virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams. With flexible options and self-service features for clients, it streamlines the booking process and ensures efficient scheduling.

[Book a demo](#) | [Watch the video](#)



NEW TO

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.

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