



“Useful Technology News and Ideas for Your Business”

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Top COVID-19 Cybersecurity Tips - Working from Home and More

[COVID-19 is disrupting cybersecurity as well as the supply chain](#), but following the tips below will help you protect your network against the many cyber attacks happening as you read this. [Hackers have been ramping up their efforts](#) to breach all the unsuspecting, newly working from home potential victims, unaware they are at increased risk. [Users inexperienced with telecommuting can be extra susceptible to crafty cyber scams](#), but taking the right steps to harden your endpoints will decrease your attack surface and make you much less vulnerable.



Here are the top five COVID-19 cybersecurity tips to follow when working from home:

Accept that Telecommuting Brings New Cyber Risk

Having to work remotely can seem like just another overwhelming aspect of [the already overwhelming situation caused by coronavirus](#), but before you do anything else, you must acknowledge the cyber risk of telecommuting. You, your coworkers or your employees are all going to be logging into network separately from a bunch of relatively unmonitored machines, with only individual discretion being the first line of defense. What everyone in your business [does or does not do](#) will have an impact on the size of your attack surface.

This is another factor in the new normal, yet not addressing it first only heightens your risk. It is not always extra work to secure your remote workspace, [but it does require a different way of thinking than you may be used to](#). Start [by acclimating yourself with the basic best practices](#) and building upon that foundation.

Beware the Phishing Domains, Spoofed Emails, and Ransomware

[Phishing has been a part of life for a long time](#), but many hackers cannot miss an opportunity for what seems like an easier conquest. Despite any proclamations of sympathy, [cybercriminal gangs are deploying tools from malicious domains to spoofed emails en masse](#), laden with ransomware and other types of malware to infect unsuspecting victims. [Familiarizing yourself with the signs of a cyber scam are more important than ever](#), and you should be extra careful with every electronic communication you send and website URL you visit.

Segment Personal Devices When Working from Home

Are you using your personal laptop to read this through this right now, with your email and video apps still running alongside YouTube in the background? Every time someone uses their own devices to access a company network, they run the risk of connecting business applications to third party software that could be malicious. With how poorly [even popular verified vendors handle user cybersecurity](#), the risk that you could accidentally leak sensitive data like payroll information is too great to ignore - monitor how you use everything and [keep your work login credentials as segmented as possible](#).

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What our clients are saying: Torrent Pharma, Inc.

“SWK has been very easy to reach out to and their services are very fast. I usually lose drive access since I work from different places, but SWK has always helped me map the drive promptly, in less than 10 minutes.”

Nishita Desai
Torrent Pharma, Inc.



Two ways to WIN a gift card!

It only takes a minute and YOU could be our next winner!

**Last Month's
Contest Winner:
Lori Lynch
Foundation Title, LLC**

Please complete our brief survey in order to be placed in the running to win this month's gift card prize!

1. What do you like most about our services?
2. Tell us about a specific experience with us that you were happy with.
3. What are the biggest benefits you've received or experienced since hiring us?
4. What can we improve?

Email Jon Stiles (jonathan.stiles@swktech.com) with your responses
OR

Fill out our online form:
<http://bit.ly/nwsnews-survey>
before **June 1st** to get your name in the hat.

**You could win a
\$25 Gift Card!**



Top COVID-19 Cybersecurity Tips - Working from Home and More

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Secure Cloud Connections and Remote Desktop Protocols

There are different security concerns inherent to using either [cloud-hosted software](#) or Remote Desktop Protocols (EDP) with a traditional on-premise system, but both still require vigilance to use safely. [Someone needs to keep an eye on those connections as much as possible](#), as unpatched vulnerabilities transform user access into exploitable backdoor gateways. Either yourself or your IT support needs to carefully monitor your login activities, and as always keep your credentials secure.

If You Need Help, Consider Outsourcing IT and Cybersecurity

The reality is that [cybersecurity can be incredibly stressful for the average employee](#), who has to take so many steps to protect themselves, and that's when there actually is a company best practice. Many businesses are unsure of what to do, adding further uncertainty for those forced to work from home during COVID-19. In either case, [people are the first and last line of for any network](#), and your data will always be at risk if you don't keep a clear mind on your cyber defense.

If you're not already engaging SWK or another managed service provider, then review [some of our guidance on outsourcing your IT](#) to better determine [the cost-benefit ratio for your business](#). Contracting an outside network resource is an investment, but one that can help you secure all the gaps your business has grown too big to ignore. If SWK is your MSP, then look into [some of our training services](#), [new standalone cybersecurity solutions](#) or consider [our cybersecurity cloud hosting service](#) with around the clock network security monitoring.

Talk to SWK About More Cybersecurity Tips for COVID-19

Having an extra helping hand can be critical in these uncertain times, which is why SWK is here to support your IT needs. We can provide guidance and network assurance to help shore up your vulnerabilities, and steer your employees to best practices for working remotely.

[Contact SWK](#) to learn more cybersecurity tips and other solutions for protecting your network.

Do States and SMBs Need Cybersecurity Funding?

Several IT and technology groups have separately brought up an interesting question - do states and SMBs need cybersecurity funding to survive? [The issue was first brought up in April](#) by network service provider association IT Nation, [quickly followed by calls from similar organizations](#) and [even groups of lawmakers](#) for the matter to be brought before Congress. This included line items for the upcoming stimulus bill being put together by House Democrats, however, security funding language [has since been removed from the current version of the \\$3 trillion package](#), as of this writing.

Assistance and Loans for Small Business Cybersecurity

IT Nation, a peer community made up of managed IT service providers, value-added resellers, and other technology firms, has been at the forefront of the SMB stimulus proposal. Several executives from ITN's founder, ConnectWise, have been very vocal about the importance cybersecurity infrastructure plays and [called on ITN members to help raise awareness](#). The problem lies in how many small businesses may be strapped for cash and unable - or unwilling - to invest in their network security during difficult times.



ConnectWise, Cisco and many other technology companies [have established several programs for financially assisting SMBs and partners suffering from COVID-19 disruptions](#). As ConnectWise's VP of Consulting, Brad Schow, explains on IT Nation's forum, the lack of cybersecurity spending combined with the massive shift to working from home can put American business at increased risk as a whole. "These cost cutting moves will lead to a weakening of the overall security position of the United States business environment and will impact the ability for employees to successfully return to work in the future."

Big Tech Groups Want IT Spending to be Included in Stimulus

IT service providers are not alone in worrying about the effect coronavirus will have on the US's security posture. Several technology coalitions, representing big names like Amazon, Google and Microsoft, [called on Congress to approve spending for modernizing IT infrastructure for state and local governments](#). Elected officials joined the chorus and also requested that the upcoming stimulus bill include funding for their districts.

Though cybersecurity was a key point of these proposals, it was only part of a greater call to action around improving the quality and reach of local government's network technology. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of Internet connectivity, but many communities lack the infrastructure to host a high-speed Wi-Fi network that reaches every resident. It has also forced many government employees to work from home, and those without any secure devices may end up exposing municipal databases and servers to cyber attack.

Funding Cybersecurity for States, Cities and SMBs

Cybersecurity funding for state and local governments is not a new concept - in fact, it was one of two key proposals in a NY bill put forward earlier in 2020, [the other being banning ransomware payments](#). In addition to several other local initiatives in the same period, both the House and Senate saw bipartisan support for [multiple federal versions of similar legislation](#) from 2019 into the new year. The massive shift to a remote work environment has accelerated the momentum for these types of recommendations and [many proponents hope the realities of the COVID-19 shutdown lead to an overhaul of the USA's cyber infrastructure](#).

The topic of cybersecurity funding specifically for small businesses has not had as much noise, [though it is being picked by voices besides IT Nation's](#). This may change if the new normal persists and the interconnectivity of so many networks exposes the growing remote workforce to greater cyber risk. However, until it becomes a greater focus of the conversation, for now SMBs can seek alternative means to secure assistance through other programs available, in addition to [the Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#).

Ask SWK About Cost-Effective Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is a necessity, but can also be a significant investment for small business. [SWK offers a variety of cybersecurity solutions](#) and can help you find one that will fit your budget in these uncertain times.

[Contact SWK now](#) to help you find a cybersecurity solution that fits your budget in these uncertain times.

Shiny gadget of the month: AiT Smart One - The GameChanger Smart Desk



The world is changing and adjusting to a new way of doing things due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses have deployed remote work forces and many are planning on keeping remote work as part of their plan going forward. In doing so people are looking for new things to incorporate into their home offices. This month we take a look at a state-of-the-art desk. This is no normal desk, it is a smart desk. Yes, the concept of a smart desk has arrived! AiT Smart One is a smart desk with customization, style, and functionality all wrapped up into one cool gadget.

The AiT Smart One is app-controlled along with some buttons included on the desk top. It has adjustable height, a fully customizable design, and tons of built-in features to meet all your needs and then some. The desk itself can monitor your time spent sitting and indicate to you when it is time to get up and work from a standing position. They have even built in personalized fitness and stress relief exercises to help you stay fit and relaxed while at work. It even can go as far as to inform you of air quality in the room and tell you to open a window. All in all depending on the model and customizations you choose you can have adjustable height, fitness and health module, integrated cable management, air quality sensor, CO sensor, security drawer, ambient LED lighting, Bluetooth sound system, monitor arm for extended displays, ergonomic footrest, wireless charger (built right into the desktop), under desk PC holder (for your tower), aromatherapy, mobile app, and either touch screen or physical buttons for operating functions. Yes, there is a mountain of features to choose from and they all seem pretty interesting and certainly unique for a desk. However, features are not the only thing you can customize, the desk has a wide variety of colors and materials to choose from. Many of the options allow for the desktop to act as a dry erase board as well.

Right now the smart desk is past the design and testing phase and in the funding phase on Indiegogo. Production is estimated to begin as soon as June of this year and shipping in August. So by fall you could potentially have one of these for your office set up.

While AiT Smart One is state of the art, it had a range of prices to choose from too. The current "models" they have to offer with "early bird pricing" are the Smart One with basic functions that is available for \$449, the Smart One Extended Functions for \$789, the Smart One Full Pack for \$988, or the top of the line model Phantom 1 for \$1,149. The price tag might seem steep, but if you were to compare to other adjustable standing desks with a fraction of the features it really is not too bad. Check it out for yourself [here](#). Would you spend the extra for one of these?

Cloud Hosted Software Use Surges During COVID-19



COVID-19 has made many companies turn to hosting their software environments in the cloud to leverage web-based productivity and collaboration tools. This has only been enabled by a widespread investment in digital technology infrastructure, including the growth of high-speed wireless Internet (Wi-Fi). However, this raises a question - will the Web be able to handle this sudden huge surge in traffic, or will the bandwidth of cloud-based systems be stretched to the limit?

The New Normal of Working from Home

Even before the pandemic, a growing number of organizations were turning to online platforms to streamline operations and allow for collaboration between distributed teams. The digital transformation of many industries has seen quite a few businesses switch to a partial or wholly remote workforce, powered by software and IT infrastructures

hosted through the cloud as SaaS, IaaS, PaaS or a hybrid environment.

Whatever the many, many conflicting projections say, many people will either be forced or, more importantly, choose to work from home for at least a while longer. More likely, several companies will start providing expanded options for remote employees, and if safety becomes a concern again (through a second coronavirus, etc.) will even probably encourage workers to telecommute if possible. In either case, traffic loads will remain exceptionally high and some have worried this could seriously overload the Internet.

Is Cloud Hosted Traffic Going to Break the Internet?

The Internet's performance depends on many things, including network infrastructure, how things are wired up, and points of presence. But will the internet collapse? Unlikely - in fact, the Internet is built to survive such surges in activity.

But will it affect the quality of service? It can, but it depends on the network infrastructure, the level of demand, and the ability of providers to scale up rapidly. In areas with inadequate or weak infrastructure but with many users, you may expect a slower Internet experience with longer response times. But for those whose infrastructure allows them to make use of multiple paths or partition resource loads, they can continue business as usual.

Teleworking solutions can cope with the increase in demand, depending on how capable they are of scaling horizontally. If they can distribute the load to different parts of their network, it makes it easier to handle that traffic without overloading the entire system. For cloud-based providers, that should not be difficult.

Will the increased demand mean that businesses with their data in the cloud will have a harder time retrieving their data? Businesses that use a private cloud to store their data (often for cybersecurity reasons) will not be affected because they have their own dedicated connections. But those who use the public cloud to store their data may be affected.

Business Readiness for Telecommuting and Remote Work

Companies that are already using the cloud extensively are the most ready for this new normal of working from home. Having a cloud-hosted infrastructure makes them even more nimble to adjust to the increase in demand. Industries and businesses that saw a lot of investment - both financially AND operationally - into establishing a foundation for web-based platforms displayed the most flexibility when COVID-19 hit, and some of the best levels of readiness.

Cloud-based services are elastic, meaning they are quick to scale up or down and much more modular, with customers able to negotiate down to the resource level with their cloud service provider (CSP). But the speed in which companies are able to scale up will depend on their network architecture and the kinds of services they offer. Providers can vary in terms of load delivery, support, and traffic and cybersecurity monitoring.

Some SaaS providers are using a data-driven approach to manage their infrastructure and Internet traffic. They incorporate real-time data to determine where to route their traffic so as to decongest their system and ensure consistent and reliable performance overall. This how services like Netflix have been able to keep their content delivery running efficiently while bandwidth speeds have had to be throttled in some areas.

The challenge is for providers to look for new and innovative ways to manage their traffic and resources. They should also look for ways to deploy new infrastructure to areas with slower, unpredictable internet service.

Learn the Advantages of Hosting in the Cloud

Neither the cloud nor working from home are going to go away anytime soon - this new normal will persist for some time, empowered by digitally-hosted networks with readily available IT resources. Discover how your business can take advantage of real-time data and reliable network infrastructure by talking to the experts at SWK about Secure Cloud Hosting.

[Contact SWK today](#) to find out how you can migrate to the cloud with no upfront costs and limited time-free hosting.

Gift Card Trivia! This month's question is:

Is using a personal device to connect to your work network a security threat?(Hint: The answer is in this newsletter.)

- Yes
- No
- It doesn't matter what device is used
- Only mobile devices

Please email Jon Stiles (jonathan.stiles@swktech.com) with your answer by **June 1st**, in order to be placed in the running for this month's gift card prize!

We can help you with:

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- Hosted email
- Web content filtering
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Best Practice for Working from Home with Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is a powerful, robust collaboration tool that allows your distributed team to [work from home in the midst of COVID-19 without losing access to communications and file sharing](#). With recent upgrades for functionality and expanded features, it has never been easier to leverage Teams to keep your remote workforce cooperating seamlessly.

What is Microsoft Teams?

Microsoft Teams combines workplace chat, video conferencing, and file storage and collaboration. It also has extensions that integrate with third-party apps, even those not made by Microsoft. As a unified communication and collaboration platform, Teams combines the functionality of other programs like Slack, Zoom and Google Drives into a single central app. Additionally, it is connected to your Microsoft Office 365 database and integrated with [Outlook Calendar](#), [OneDrive](#) and [SharePoint](#), giving you [immediate access to shared files](#) and internal contacts.

How to Install and Access Teams

[If you have an Office 365 license, then you can readily access Microsoft Teams](#). But that's not the only way to access and take advantage of the platform.

Individual users can use their work or school email address to sign up [through this link](#). You will automatically receive a license valid until January 2021. This license lets you take advantage of chat, screen sharing and recording, video meetings with up to 250 participants, and Live Events for up to 10,000 participants.

If you have a Gmail or [Outlook email address](#), you can sign up for the freemium version by [clicking on this link](#). This version supports chat as well as group and one-on-one audio or video calling. It also gives you 10 GB of team file storage and 2 GB of personal file storage.

The previous freemium version used to have various limits on users, but Microsoft opted to lift these restrictions on March 10. Another notable change is the inclusion of meetings requests, which Microsoft has committed to include in the freemium version in the future.

Microsoft also provides assistance to [IT professionals](#) looking to roll out Teams for their company. Certain users qualify for a Microsoft offer for a free Office 365 E1 license for six months. All you have to do is to contact your Microsoft partner or sales representative.

If you work in the education sector, Microsoft recommends getting Office 365 A1, a free version specially created for educational institutions. This version is available for students, teachers, and administrative staff.

Microsoft Teams Still Performs Optimally During COVID-19

The sudden increase in remote workers is sure to put a lot of pressure on many platforms, but Microsoft Teams is more than prepared to handle the load. As a cloud application, Teams was built to handle traffic fluctuations and changes in network speeds. In particular, it is designed to anticipate problems on three core aspects:

- **Systems** during a sudden surge in usage
- **Location** during an area-specific event, such as a hurricane
- **People** during an event that affects users, such as COVID-19

To address problems in these aspects, Microsoft implements what is called an **Active/Active Design**. This means that the system uses multiple instances in response to user request or input. These instances run in different datacenters, which means that an event that affects one cannot affect the others. This enables the system to isolate problems and resolve them without affecting performance.

Let SWK Technologies Manage Your Microsoft Installation

Microsoft Teams offers a great opportunity for companies to remain productive in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaboration and communication are the keys to keeping your remote workforce in contact and performing at full capacity during these uncertain times.

[Contact SWK](#) if you would like to learn more about Microsoft Teams or are ready to start adopting this software for your working from home environment.

