

The IT Mill

Like Newsletters Should Be.

Introduction

Welcome To The First Edition Of The IT Mill: Like Newsletters Should Be.

Welcome to our inaugural newsletter! After many years of saying to ourselves "We should really have a newsletter", we've finally made it happen.

Other than being a play on words relating to the company tagline, The IT Mill's tagline of "Like a newsletter should be." is meant to convey that our goal is to not simply provide a cookie-cutter done-for-us newsletter. There are lots of services that are more than willing to send out newsletters on our behalf using stock templates full of fluff information. This is not one of those newsletters.

Our goal is to provide relevant, meaningful information to business principals that isn't a bunch of techno babble. Inspired by the nine dots of our logo, we're planning to deliver articles in nine sections of each issue:

Most of these sections are self-explanatory; but some of you may be wondering what in the world is "Kahn's Korner"? Well, to be honest, this section is going to be unrelated to business or IT. We figured that our company mascot, Kahn (our office cat), deserves a section. Kahn is our honorary Chairman of the Board and is always the most popular member of our team with visitors. Rather than triggering the ire of the Chairman if he wasn't included; we thought it best to give him his very own section.

One last thing: If there is a topic relevant to one of the sections listed above that you would like us to discuss, let us know by sending an email to newsletter@birmingham.ca

"Our goal is to provide relevant, meaningful information to business principals that isn't a bunch of techno babble."

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Security Discussion

Don't Let Passwords Walk Out The Door.

By Jesse Ross, Technology Associate

The results of a recent lawsuit shine a light on the danger of not immediately disabling user logins when an employee leaves a company.

Ticketmaster was told by the courts it must pay competitor CrowdSurge 10 million dollars after it hired a former CrowdSurge employee and pressured them to use their still-working login to expose company secrets. Ticketmaster was so bold as to demonstrate how CrowdSurge systems work using this login at a company summit!

This may seem like an extreme example, but it's important to consider what kind of information any employee can access with their logins. Financial information, proposals, quotes, employee personal information, technical drawings, systems used for the day-to-day company operations, all these and more can be found in employee mailboxes, file shares, and other resources.

This isn't the only threat of still-active accounts. Disgruntled former employees deleting or altering data, or using a company email to harm the reputation of their former employer, is unfortunately common.

Even without malicious intent, these orphaned logins pose a security threat by their very existence. Forgotten accounts provide an avenue of attack for hackers to enter the system unnoticed. If no one is monitoring these old accounts, a hacker can do a lot of damage before anyone notices what happened.

The way to deal with this risk is simple. If an employee leaves unexpectedly, notify IT (or Birmingham Consulting), and have their accounts disabled immediately. Any information or resources can easily be transferred to other users. If an employee's end date is known, let your IT know to schedule an account lock out immediately upon the departure of the employee.

One last thing: Avoid sharing passwords completely. Shared passwords are frequently overlooked when old accounts are disabled.

Follow these steps and rest easy that your passwords aren't walking out the door.



Shameless Self-Promotion

The Nine Dots

By Scott Birmingham, Principal Consultant

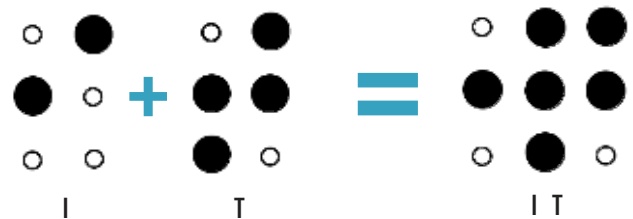
I've received many positive comments over the years about both our logo and tagline; and I often get asked if there is any significance to the 9 dots. The answer is yes, there is!

When Christina and I decided that it was time for me to leave my job and pursue this business full-time back in 2009, I engaged a graphics designer to create a logo. He went one step further; not only creating a logo but also convincing me to name the company Birmingham Consulting. (Up to this point, I had loosely been referring to the company as "Sabbec Systems". "Sabbec" is an acronym comprised of the initials of both Christina's and my names.)

With the company name decided, he could create a logo and focused on "Birmingham" as inspiration. This led him to researching Birmingham, England. I remember sitting in the William's Café on the Hamilton Waterfront as he said to me "There's not much interesting in Birmingham. But I did find this cool mall covered in circles."

He showed me a picture of the Bullring Mall in Birmingham. My inside voice was screaming "What does this have to do with IT?"

He smiled patiently and continued "All those circles made me think of Braille – specifically the symbols for I and T." He proceeded to show me the characters, and then he truly had my interest. At this point, he said "If you overlap the symbols, you get this:"



He had me. I was sold. With a little stylizing, our logo was born.

"Confidence, Professionalism, Expertise"



Simply put, Birmingham Consulting gives us confidence in our IT systems. We have the peace of mind to work on our business and rely on their professionalism and expertise for streamlining our systems to increase our uptime. We know they take our work and the welfare of our business seriously.

- Linda Moffatt, Triple M Demolition

Easy Habits You Should Start Doing Today To Protect Your Investments

❌ Don't email confidential information unless it's password protected

WHY? Sending confidential or private information via unencrypted email can expose that information to the wrong people.

❌ "Fwd: Spam" Stop forwarding or replying to spam & suspicious emails - just delete!

WHY? You would be a hero to your suppliers, customers, co-workers, friends, and your IT team because you protected them from the spread of the virus or malware in the email.

❌ Keep Passwords Different

WHY? If you used the same password for your social media, e-commerce sites etc, and ONE of those accounts gets that password to access every other account you have with that password.

❌ Stay off Your personal Social Media when using a work device

WHY? Over 600,000 Social Media accounts are hacked every day. If you're using a company device to access a compromised account, you're opening up a door to a hacker who may then get into your company's network.

❌ Stop Using Public Wi-Fi Without Using a VPN (Virtual Private Network)

WHY? It's not uncommon for hackers to set up fake versions of public WiFi to try and get you to connect to THEIR WiFi instead of the legitimate public one being made available to you. Then, they know everything you do and every password you type. Use a VPN (Virtual Private Network) to stay protected when using public WiFi.

✅ Marie-Kondo your tech: De-clutter your device or computer with apps, plugins and programs you don't use

WHY? The more apps, plugins and programs that are on your device or computer, the less space it has and the slower it can run. De-cluttering can help your device run quicker because it'll clear unused memory.

✅ Detox your Inbox: Unsubscribe from emails you don't read

WHY? Not only would it feel amazing to not have to delete all the emails with special deals, offers etc. from places that you used to look at, it would also make it easier to spot spam and fake emails that could potentially harm your computer.

✅ Restart your computer every day (Macs, too!)

WHY? Overall, restarting your computer every day can speed up its performance! It also flushes the memory of different programs or processes that are running in the background (which can slow your computer down), corrects software glitches and can solve internet connection issues.

✅ Smart Connection: Use a network cable instead of Wi-Fi

WHY? A wired connection is more secure than WiFi but more importantly, it's much more stable. Also, the slowest wired connection is just plain faster than WiFi – there's no getting around that fact!

✅ Think before you click on email or web links

WHY? Often these dangerous e-mails look 100% legitimate and show up in the form of a PDF (scanned document) or a UPS or FedEx tracking number, bank letter, Facebook alert, bank notification, etc.

✅ Turn on 2-Factor Authentication everywhere possible

WHY? With "2FA" as an extra layer of security, instead of gaining access immediately, a hacker will be required to verify who they are in a different way than just with their username and password. So, even if your password is stolen or your phone is lost, the chances of someone else having your second-factor information is highly unlikely.

Interactive Infotainment

What is the best reason get in the habit of using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) while using public WiFi?



Submit your answer online at [BIRMINGHAM.CA/QUIZ](https://www.birmingham.ca/quiz) by June 30, 2021 for a chance to win a Tim Hortons gift card!

TV shows and movies are rife with scenes of bad guys compromising wireless devices like cell phones, tablets and laptops. It's very easy to dismiss these scenes, "it's just a movie"; but the reality is that it doesn't take a lot of technical knowledge to compromise someone's device if they are using public WiFi.

A. Better internet speed

B. Keep your data private

C. Extends battery life

D. It's the right thing to do.

Client Spotlight



Moffatt Scrap Iron & Metal

moffattscrapiron.ca

Located in Campbellville, Ontario, Moffatt Scrap Iron & Metal was founded almost 50 years ago by Steve Moffatt with a single pickup truck.

Since acquiring their current location in 1984, Moffatt has become one of the largest scrap metal recyclers in the area, serving both local and international customers. Services continue to expand and include auto recycling, bin services, mobile scrap services, certified destruction services, electronics recycling and full-scale automobile shredding.

The foundation of the business is Honesty and Integrity. Steve lives by these words and they are reflected both in how Moffatt does business and serves their community. Moffatt has regular "scrap drives" for charity, food drives, and supports front-line workers and first-responders through volunteering and opening their facility for use in training – it's always an interesting day when a convoy of fire trucks rolls in to use scrap vehicles for rescue training.

So, if you have metal or electronics to be recycled, Moffatt is the place; though don't expect to see Steve. He'll most likely be somewhere out in the yard doing what he loves: operating a crane, feeding the shredder, or simply breaking up large pieces of scrap metal – It's not work when you love what you do.



Community



Birmingham Consulting is a member of the Waterdown Business Improvement Area (BIA), a designated business area within the village of Waterdown, a rapidly growing community nestled at heart of the Golden Horseshoe between Hamilton to the west and Burlington and the GTA to the east. The BIA is committed to

maintaining the quaintness and charm of the village while working to bring in visitors so that local businesses can thrive. They are committed to local beautification and preservation of our heritage buildings, and are exploring other initiatives to maintain the quaint village ambience to help draw visitors. Learn more at www.waterdownbia.ca.

Partner Spotlight

Introduction

To Our Like IT Should Be® Toolbox

Every IT company has a full toolbox used to deliver their service as well as protect and add value for their clients. As with anything, there is a direct correlation between the cost of these tools and the value they provide.

Rather than focusing on cost, our philosophy is to select best-of-breed tools. In other words, what is best for our clients. For us, the right way trumps the cheap way every time. What we use for clients are the same ones we use in-house – no double standards.

As we constantly evaluate our toolbox, if we feel that a better solution exists over what we are currently using, we make the change. For clients on our LITSB Standard and LITSB Select service plans, we make these improvements automatically – just Like IT Should Be®.

Example: last year, we upgraded system monitoring and added a multi-user client-controlled password manager. This year, we supplemented security tools with enhanced online security and added Power Printing™.

In most cases, non-IT companies have no idea what goes on behind the scenes, why these tools are valuable to them as the client, or even why they are needed. Stay tuned as we hope to lift the veil of mystery in a way that will be both educational and interesting.

Kahn's Korner



Fun fact: You may think that our company mascot is named after a famous Star Trek character. He is not. We are nerds, not geeks. We chose to name him in honour of Robert Kahn, co-inventor of the networking protocol that runs the Internet.