IT Support Services

» *Onsite Support*
» *Monthly Maintenance*
» *Network Management & Monitoring*
» *Disaster Recovery Plan*

Struggling with Email Overload?

Email has allowed us to send and receive messages more easily than ever before. While this is a good thing, it can lead to problems. You may receive dozens or even hundreds of emails in a day. At this point, it feels like you're wasting your entire day dealing with those incoming messages. Even worse, it makes it difficult to find important messages in your inbox. You can quickly become overloaded with emails.

So how can we deal with this overload? The first step is to reduce the number of emails you receive overall and there are a few ways to do this.

Restrict who you give your email address to.

It's important to think carefully about who you give your email to. For example, if you enter a lot of contests, this often automatically subscribes you to several email campaigns. If you type your email into every popup box asking for it, these add up. Reduce who you give your email to.

Unsubscribe

Go through your inbox and unsubscribe to newsletters that you never read. If you haven't opened one of their emails in months, chances that you'll start to later are low. Turn off notifications from social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. If you like emails from these networks, then at least adjust the settings so they email you highlights once a week or month rather than allowing them to spam your inbox several times per day.

Do you need that notification?

If you receive emails that contain information you can find elsewhere, switch those notifications off. For instance, you might run an e-commerce site that sends an email for every sale. If your website already has a record of this, you don't need it in two places. Make sure not to use your email as a to-do list. When you need to remember to do something, put that on a list elsewhere to clear up your inbox. If this is a hard habit to break, at least make a folder for things you need to do and move emails there and out of your general inbox.

Change your email habits

Change your own email sending habits. If a topic is complex and will require a lot of back and forth conversation, consider discussing it in person or over the phone. Sending fewer emails will reduce how many you receive in return. Remember that you don't need to respond to every email you receive. A response indicates a willingness to continue to conversation.

Resist the urge to send messages with a single word like "Thanks!" or "Ok" and you'll notice others will stop sending you similar, unnecessary messages.

When sending group emails, you can also remind others not to use "reply all" unless it's information relevant to the entire group.

Start clearing out

Now you can start emptying out your inbox and getting rid of any old emails you don't need to keep. Delete old calendar invites, advertisements, or any emails where the problem has already been resolved. Respond to any messages that can be answered within only a few minutes. File everything that is left until you have a completely empty inbox. Archive messages where you don't need to take an action, but you think might be useful. You can search and find these later if necessary. Put other emails into folders based off of the type of email and the priority level.

From now on, all of this can be automated. You can have receipts automatically go into a receipt folder, calendar invites go into another, etc. A cluttered inbox leads to your mind feeling just as cluttered. Free up your inbox to free up your mind and create more time in your day-to-day life. Let email overload become something of the past.

If you need help with your emails, give us a call on (229)446-9641

Is Your Business Ready for Business-Grade Wi-Fi?

In today's business world, having great Wi-Fi isn't a luxury -it's a necessity. Businesses, with their varying needs, have personal requirements for what constitutes great Wi-Fi. For some small businesses, consumer-grade Wi-Fi may be sufficient, but many find that business-grade Wi-Fi is more appropriate. As companies grow, there becomes a tipping point where business-grade is necessary. So how do you know if your business is ready for business-grade Wi-Fi? Ask yourself the following questions to find out.

How many devices use your Wi-Fi?

It used to be that only desktop computers connected to your Wi-Fi, but that is no longer the case. With the rise of portable devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops, each person may be using your Wi-Fi from several devices. Consumer-grade hardware is designed for just a few people (like the amount that live in a single household) but can't manage larger amounts of users and all of their devices. This is especially true for sustained usage. Remember that your employees aren't the only people who expect to be able to connect to your Wi-Fi. One of the first things visitors typically do is look for a Wi-Fi network to connect their smartphones to.

What is the size and shape of your workspace?

The number of access points you will need for your Wi-Fi is dependent on the amount of physical space that needs to be covered, the shape of the area, wall material, and the number of users/devices. In smaller spaces, consumer-grade Wi-Fi is good enough.

Larger, oddly shaped spaces benefit from business-grade. If your building's walls are made of brick, cinder blocks, or cement, you likely need more access points than buildings made of other materials. Make sure you have a strong connection from all locations. It's annoying to only be connected to Wi-Fi in certain areas of a building and find yourself in a dead zone a few steps later.

Access points for business-grade Wi-Fi tend to be more powerful and flexible. For example, some business Wi-Fi systems can transfer Wi-Fi devices from a crowded access point to one that is less busy. By doing this, everybody's fast speed remains. If you foresee your range needing to increase, such as renting out more space, it's easier to add more access points to business-grade Wi-Fi than consumer-grade. Businesses that anticipate scaling up soon are better off with business-grade Wi-Fi.

Do you want guests to have the same quality Wi-Fi as workers?

In households, where consumer-grade Wi-Fi is prevalent, all users share the Wi-Fi equally. In a home environment, if children are slowing down the internet with Netflix or video games, it's not a big problem. However, a choked business Wi-Fi can cause a lot of problems. Business-grade Wi-Fi allows you network management. You can assign a designated amount of bandwidth to different users so they're unable to clog the entire connection. You can allow visitors internet access without giving them unlimited access to the network.

How much does the internet affect your employees' productivity?

For some companies, workers only use Wi-Fi for a few quick tasks. With these types of businesses, if the internet is slow, it won't have a big impact on how much work your employees get done. Consumer-grade Wi-Fi might be a good choice. For other companies, there isn't much people can accomplish if the Wi-Fi isn't working well. The slower your employees work, the less money you make. Wi-Fi troubles can also lead to frustrated, unhappy workers. If fast internet is essential for people to complete their daily tasks, business-grade Wi-Fi is important.

Strong Wi-Fi is a necessity for all businesses. This is especially true for larger businesses that connect a lot of devices (from both employees and visitors) and have a big work area. Also for those where employee productivity depends on a strong connection. The goal is to keep your business-critical technology running smoothly. Consider carefully whether consumer-grade Wi-Fi or business-grade Wi-Fi is the best choice for your business. When you ask yourself the questions above, the answer should become clear.

Is your business's Wi-Fi struggling? Give us a call at (229) 446-9641 to discuss a solution.
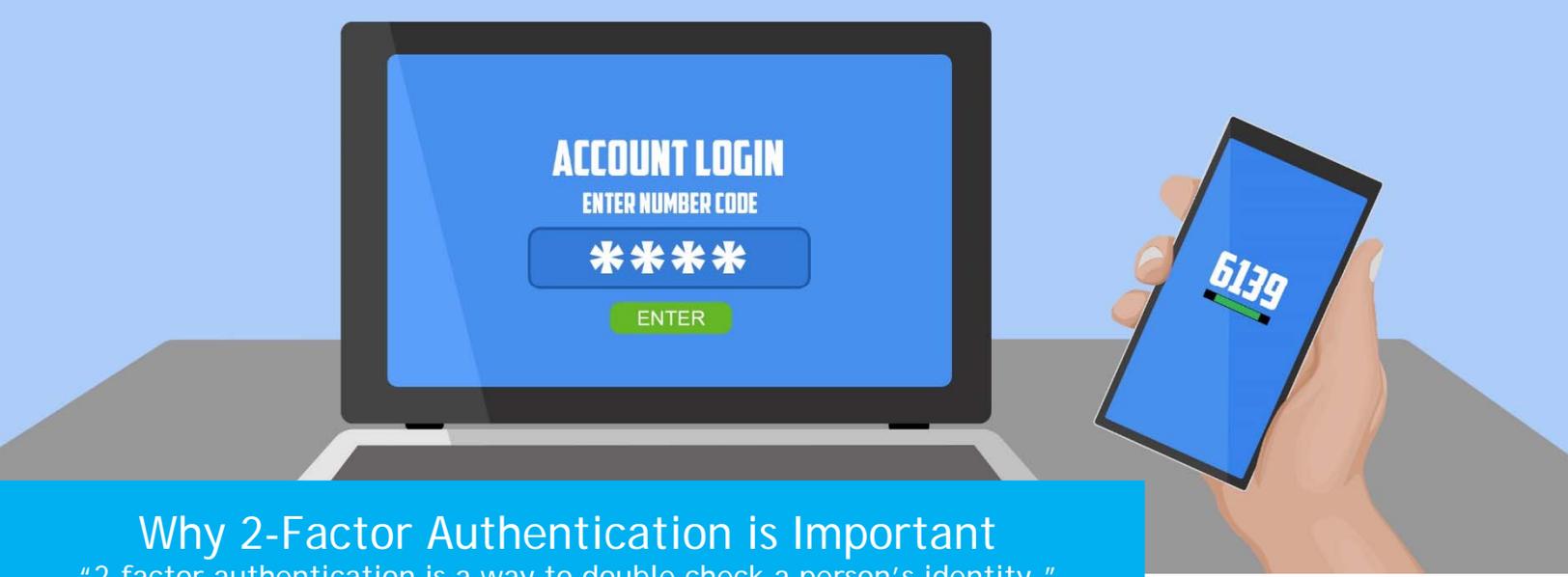
Why 2-Factor Authentication is Important
"2-factor authentication is a way to double check a person's identity."

You hear about hacks all the time. The news covers major websites who have had data leaks containing your email and password. Computers get infected and capture your login details for bank accounts and credit cards. In the worst cases, identity theft occurs because it is an easy crime to commit with a high reward.

In 2018, the passwords you used to trust to keep the bad guys out of your accounts are not enough anymore. Cyber attackers now use methods such as phishing, pharming, and keylogging to steal your password. Some have the power to test billions of password combinations.

If you're like the majority of people, you use the same password for several websites. That means anybody who has figured out that password has access to everything you've logged into with it. In a time when it is extremely easy to look up what a person named their first pet or high school mascot, security questions aren't much help.

Consider how a jewelry store operates. They don't simply keep their valuables locked away with one key. There are alarms ready to be triggered, motion detectors, and sometimes even bars on the windows. Your data is valuable, just like jewelry. You need more than one line of defense to protect it.

In the computer world, your second line of defense (after your username and password combination) is called "2-factor authentication." Sometimes referred to as multiple-step or multi-factor verification, 2-factor authentication is a way to double check a person's identity. This can be enabled every time a person logs in or just under certain circumstances. For example, signing in from a new device or different country might trigger 2-factor authentication.

Many of the services you may already use, such as Facebook, Gmail, Xero Accounting, and more, have 2-factor authentication options. If your bank has ever sent you a special code through text or email to enter before logging in, you've already used a type of 2-factor authentication. They can also be in the form of a smartphone app or a physical electronic dongle.

2-factor authentication is absolutely crucial for online banking, email, and online shopping such as Amazon or PayPal. It's also a must-have for cloud storage accounts (like Dropbox or Sync), password managers, communications apps, and productivity apps. This is especially true if you frequently use the same passwords for different websites and apps.

Some may consider 2-factor authentication unnecessary for social networks, but these are actually very important to keep safe. For ease, a lot of websites and apps allow you to sign up through your Facebook or Twitter account. You need to keep these networks safe so that somebody with your password can't suddenly get into every account you have linked.

The point of using 2-factor authentication is to make hackers' lives harder and prevent them from getting into your accounts. If they have captured your login username and password, they still need a second device to get in, especially when the computer or phone they are using has never logged into your account before. This makes it significantly more difficult for anybody to breach your account.

Plus, if you receive a notification with a special code to enter for logging in, and you weren't trying to log into that account, you have a good signal that somebody else was trying to get in. That means it's time to change that password and be grateful you had 2-factor authentication.

It's unfortunate that there is currently an abundance of skilled hackers ready to take advantage of those unprepared. Luckily, you can still stop them -even if they have your login information at hand. 2-factor authentication is one of the easiest methods to keep your accounts safe.

Give us a call at (229) 446-9641 to help secure your business and accounts.

Is A Slow Network Getting In The Way Of Your Business?

Very few things in life are as intensely frustrating as slow network speeds. Whether accessing a shared database, sharing files between computers, or sending a file to print; waiting for transfers can seem to take an eternity. Worse still, these business breaks can keep both clients and staff waiting and get in the way of the productive business day.

Every time you save or retrieve files from another computer or network storage device, file transfers have to be made over the network. Depending on your IT setup files can pour over the network with the ferocity of a fire hose, or trickle between machines as if dripping through a drinking straw. Poor network speeds are often a critical bottleneck that slows down the entire IT system. If a slow, frustrating, and unreliable network sounds like your office setup then there are many available solutions we can use to help. Often, offices maintain networking hardware that is as old as the premises they are in or the businesses themselves. Components can be left in place long after their suggested expiration date. If it isn't broken, don't fix it commonly rules as long as some working connection, however slow, still remains.

Yet, outdated hardware in key areas can often slow the entire system down. Even when the rest of the network is capable of ultra-high speeds, a single bad component can bring the entire network to a crawl. Sometimes if it isn't broke, it still might not be working to its full potential. Even peripheral devices throughout the network can cause traffic to slow. A badly installed device may become lost from the network or send out an overwhelming number of messages that spoils network traffic. Defense against errors and vulnerabilities is simpler than most may think. Often just one or two small upgrades is all that is needed to unlock the full speed potential of the network.

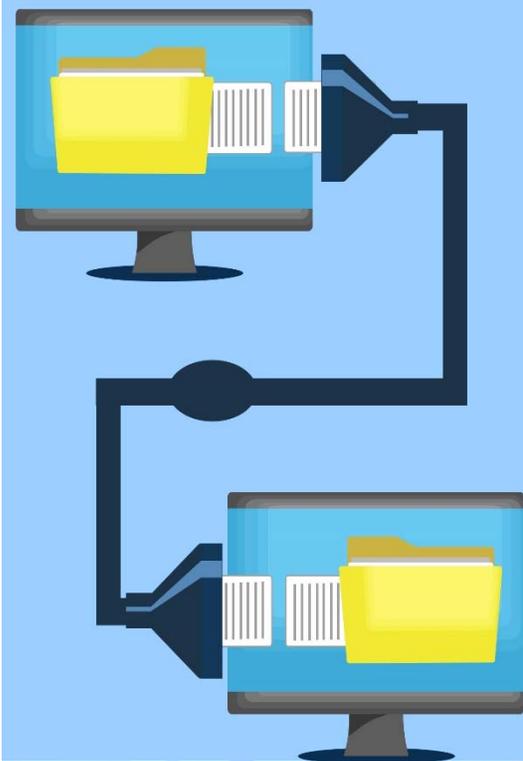For some businesses adding a dedicated server is an ideal solution that can balance the IT workload. Access to centrally shared resources often benefits the entire organization by eliminating redundancy. A network server is built with efficiency and reliability in mind to keep your business running at full capacity. By pooling resources for everyone to use, work is evenly shared and centrally available to prevent bottlenecks in the system. Reduced network loads, improved efficiency, and faster transfer speeds mean that higher productivity becomes the new normal.

Moving resources outside of the office can work for many businesses too. Where high speed, low-cost internet services are available, moving your work into the cloud can be a highly cost-effective solution. Software packages such as QuickBooks offer finance and accounting packages for operating in the cloud. Similar Suites such as Microsoft Office offers services for creating and sharing documents with cloud resources. Both packages eliminate the need for many of the network operations that we use every day.

For many applications such as QuickBooks huge databases sometimes gigabytes in size are required. It is these types of applications where the advantage of the cloud becomes clear. To use this locally, huge database transfers keep the application up-to-date daily. These transfers across a local network are time-consuming and clog up vital resources for the firm. Yet, the same application in the cloud requires only a simple web page for each user. Instantly, looking up finances and editing documents becomes as simple as checking your email. With services moved to the cloud purchase cost and maintenance of expensive network hardware are reduced too.

A complete network solution that works to make the most out of all the available resources is unique to every business. Only a tailored solution to address your network needs will increase your productivity.

If your IT is starting to get in the way of your business and your network is running too slow, give us call at 229-446-9641 and we'll see what we can do.