

Dewpoint – Your Partner During the COVID-19 Crisis



Just like Dewpoint is here to help clients and the business community during normal times, we are here to assist you during this time of crisis. Below are a few tips on how to deal with the new norm of “working from home” to keep your corporate data secure and your staff connected.

If your company has additional questions, please have your IT department reach out to Dewpoint at technical.inquiries@dewpoint.com and our team will respond ASAP.

REDUCE SECURITY RISK

YOUR COMPANY

Unfortunately, hackers are taking advantage of many people who are working from home for the first time in their careers. The following tips are suggested security practices to avoid exposure of company data and personnel information.

- **Invoke a strong password policy** – At minimum, passwords should have a combination of eight characters, numbers and symbols. Require changes every 30 days.
- **Update virus definitions regularly** – If you don’t have enterprise Antivirus/Anti Malware software, procure and install ASAP. Be sure the software is regularly updated for the best protection.
- **Use VPN Connectivity** – Establish a Virtual private Network (VPN) connection for a secure network connection between your company’s network and the remote worker’s computer reducing risk.
- **Use VDI, Citrix or Remote Desktops** – In place of consumer PC’s for remote workers

YOUR REMOTE WORKERS

- **Use strong passwords** – Make sure your password at minimum meets your company’s standards and if possible, use a password manager service.
- **Lock your system / screen** - When you move away from your computer. If it is a work computer, it should be used for work purposes only and not left open for non-employees to access.
- **Update virus definitions regularly** - If your system is protected by Antivirus/ Anti Malware software and your work permits you to run the update process, run this on a daily basis to ensure your system has the most up to date definition files for protection.
- **Use VPN Connectivity** - If your work provides connectivity back to the business systems via a Virtual private Network (VPN) connection, use this capability to establish a secure network connection between your computer and your company’s network.
- **Use Multi factor Authentication** - If your work has provided this capability, use it to ensure that you are authenticated prior to accessing systems.

- **Log out of your PC** - If you are leaving your computer for an extended period of time, log out so it is not accessible by unauthorized people.
- **Patch your computer regularly** -If your company permits you to run the patch update process, run this on a regular basis to ensure your system has the most current patches installed.
- **Secure your home WIFI** - If you use a WiFi network at home, ensure that it has been configured securely and that default passwords have been changed so it is not easy to gain access to the administrative console. Also, use a strong password to gain access to your WiFi.

HOW TO MAINTAIN A TEAM CULTURE WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

We all require social interaction by varying degrees and need to stay in regular contact with our peers. The greatest challenges for remote workers is feeling connected and the need to collaborate to get the work done.

STAY CONNECTED

- Encourage employees to “chat” during the day using the available tools to share stories and pictures just like they would if working in the office.
- To foster trust and develop strong individual relationships between employees and managers, continue to have one-on-one conversations with employees on a regular basis.
- Continue to discuss employee goals and objectives providing them with information on online classes and seminars to enhance their career opportunities.
- Continue to emphasize your company culture by posting to a shared site or mailing a note or small item to each employee to remind them they are part of the company.

ENABLE COLLABORATION

- A majority of companies already have email with availability through pc’s and cell phones. Most employees feel there are an overwhelming number of emails to sort through on a daily basis. While this is an important channel of communication, it does not suffice for feeling connected. Instead, consider holding a live event where all employees can join to hear from leadership periodically or a social event to hear what is happening with each employee. There are numerous collaboration tools available such as:
 - Microsoft Teams – most large organizations already have this tool set as part of Office 365
 - Zoom
 - Slack
- Collaboration tools are also a great way for employee announcements and can be tailored for private or specific groups within your company or externally (with the right security) to conduct meetings and share information. All project teams should have access to an online collaboration tool to avoid rework and keep abreast of project changes.

- Consider using other networking and communication mechanisms for large company meetings such as Facebook Live or YouTube. This could be a significant cost savings tool and result in a better experience for participants.
- Use chat, voice and video more than email. While email is more convenient, it is easier to misinterpret, especially when directing individual activities. A conversation where people can hear tone and read facial expressions is much harder to misconstrue.
- When using conferencing tools like Zoom or Skype encourage staff to turn the video screen on. Some people may feel uncomfortable showing their home or apartment in the background or the casual way they're dressed, but more than anything seeing a colleague's face helps create a connection and seeing company leadership or a client in their home setting helps humanize them to the rest of the team.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

1. Test Your Network Speed

If your network is running slow, conduct a network speed test to see what the actual upload and download speeds are. If they are less than you expect, stop streaming services that may have been running and then re-run the speed test to see if you are getting higher speeds when less devices are using your ISP connection.

Although there are a lot of network speed test applications available, the one from Microsoft is very easy to run. Just click on the URL below to install:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/p/network-speed-test/9wzdncrfhx52?activetab=pivot:overviewtab>

2. Use Online Collaboration Tools

Online collaboration tools provide voice, data (screen sharing) and video. Although your end-user experience will vary depending upon your bandwidth, Microsoft Teams just released improvements to voice quality and the ability to work on less stable internet connections. Larger urban areas have a variety of options for internet service and the various bandwidth options ranging from as low as 18 mbs up to fiber giga bit connections for residential customers. All of these speeds will support traffic needed for online collaboration.

3. Don't Skimp on Security

If your workplace has VPN service, enable this to establish a secure tunnel between your home device and your workplace. Any internet traffic will receive the same protection services that you would if you were in the office.

4. Turn off Streaming Services

Optimize your home network for the best experience. You likely have family members home using video streaming services such as Netflix or Amazon. Depending on your bandwidth, you may need to limit other home users when online meetings occur. If your online conference is slow or pauses intermittently you may want to:

- Turn off your video

- Ask family members to limit streaming movies and TV
- Increasing your bandwidth by contacting your internet provider

5. Create a Daily Routine

Create a workday environment for yourself. If you normally eat breakfast, grab coffee and read the news before you leave for work, continue to keep your routine. This includes dressing for work and working normal business hours.

6. Continue to Interact with Colleagues

Rather through email or instant messaging tools, chat daily with your colleagues just like if you were in the office. Continue to develop working relationships not only within your company but with groups outside of your company.

7. Designate a Home Office Space

Preferably this is a separate room or at least a designated working area with limited distractions. Separating business and personal space can also help put you in a better mindset for getting work done. Use wired connections to directly plug your work PC into your router or modem. This is more secure and will perform better than most home wireless networks. Also, set your home network to give priority to your wired connections to ensure your work traffic will not be slowed down or interfered with by other home network activity.

8. Take Regular Breaks

Just like working in an office, get up and take a short walk or stretch for a few minutes to avoid becoming too sedentary. If needed, set a timer for every hour or so to get up.

9. Communicate with Your Manager

Be sure both you and your manager have clear expectations on your daily work and agreed upon progress. Hold regular meetings with your manager. These can be a short email at the end of the day or a regularly scheduled meeting to discuss accomplishments.

10. Ensure Your Technology Supports You

Your PC, wireless network, modem, cell phone and collaboration tools are all key components for seamlessly working from home. If your company does not offer a help desk to ensure you are using the best technology to support remote work, there are articles on the internet and YouTube videos to assist through technical issues. In addition, do not use your work PC for personal email or entertainment purposes to ensure your PC stays operational and protected. If your PC goes down, you might not be able to work.

11. Buy a Surge Protector

Use a surge protector for any work equipment, including laptops, screens and printers.