



SIMformation



Happy Holidays from SIM2K

From all of us at SIM2K, we would like to wish you the best of the Season. Technology continues to march forward at a rapid pace, incorporating new and intriguing lures like Bitcoin and Blockchain while still finding ways to fend off the “bad guys” and malware attacks. As 2019 arrives, the Internet of Things continues to bring more connectivity into our offices, homes and our vehicles. We see Cloud-based subscription services competing against packaged software, tablets compete with PCs and new innovations to protect your privacy and personal information. SIM2K continues to add to our product lines in Wi-Fi, security cameras, VOIP Phones as well as our long-time world class support as our team masters the latest in technology. As we say every year, we do appreciate the loyalty of our clients and strive to continue to be your IT provider. We look forward to serving you in the year ahead!

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Hello, Windows Hello

Windows Hello is a biometrics-based technology that enables Windows 10 users to authenticate secure access to devices, apps, online services and networks with just a fingerprint, iris scan or facial recognition. This is an alternative to passwords, and is considered to be more user friendly, secure and reliable way to access devices compared to traditional logins and passwords. When faced with the need for more complex passwords, users tend to re-use the same password on multiple sites/devices, so using biometrics is harder to break.

Windows Hello is exclusive to Windows 10 users with the right hardware to support it (webcams, fingerprint scanners, etc.) but is similar to other products such as Apple Face ID now featured on iPhone X and the latest iPad Pro tablets. In fact, Microsoft believes that Apple’s venture into biometrics will only boost use of Windows Hello as people become more comfortable with this type of technology.

According to Microsoft, more than 37 million people are using Windows Hello and 200 companies have installed Windows Hello for Business. This is still a small amount compared to the installed base of Windows 10 users, and Microsoft hopes it can convert more people to move to Windows Hello and get away from using traditional



passwords to secure their devices.

The company is also working with other app vendors to incorporate this technology into their products. For example, Dropbox now supports Windows Hello, as well as other Microsoft products such as One Drive.

The enterprise is where Microsoft would like to make a greater impact. As a spokesman for the company said, “Businesses need to stop complaining about security and do something about it. The technology is there, they just need to start adopting it. Multi-factor biometric authentication is readily available and tested, so the time is now to implement it.”

However, there are still some issues with the technology that stymie users. For instance, users can’t wear glasses for Windows Hello facial recognition (but Apple Face ID can - ed.) And, the face recognition does not work well in very bright light, whereas the fingerprint scanner works in any light or even in the dark, so users may wish to consider multiple access techniques.

In any event, security experts do feel that passwords, and even passphrases, are not the best security measures and biometrics does offer a better platform to protect against unauthorized access. Now if we can just shake off the image of all those spy movies where somebody’s body part is lopped off to let the bad guy in the vault...

What Will You Get for Xmas?

For many people, Christmas this year will bring them some form of wearable technology, like Apple Watches or Fitbits. “Smart” jewelry has appeal, but it can come with risks to security and privacy.

Potential buyers would be wise to consider one, significant detail before they make up their minds: data. Mainly, what happens with the data they freely allow their wearables to monitor, collect, analyze, and store. Could these be accessed, retrieved, transported, or used by anyone who has the skills? Could data leak? These are some questions that need to be answered in this age of breaches.

Not only that, the data collected about a person’s health and well-being should be under the protection of a statute like HIPAA – but isn’t. It’s no wonder that lawmakers and those working in the cybersecurity and privacy sectors have expressed concern regarding the evident lack of security of not just wearable technology, but the Internet of Things as a whole.

Wearable technology is usually capable of low-processing data and usually requires an app to be paired with it so it can do what it’s designed to do. Nowadays, wearables are becoming more than just a pretty fitness tracker. Some already function as an extension of the smartphone, providing notifications on incoming calls and new text messages and e-mails. Others can be used for sleep or sleep apnea monitoring, voice recording, hands-free sharing and communication, unlocking doors, or paying for purchases.

But are wearables getting more secure? Is it protecting privacy? Unfortunately, the strong, resounding answer to both is “no.” Because of the processor’s size – a necessity to make wearables lightweight, relatively inexpensive, and fit for mass production – manufacturers are already limited from adding any security measure into it. This is an inherent problem in a majority of wearable devices.

Security faults with wearables include things like little or lacking authentication. A majority of wearables have no way of authenticating or verifying that the person accessing or using them are who they claim they are. If one’s location can be determined with pinpoint accuracy, it’s possible that hackers can pick up personally identifiable information (PII) and other data just as easily. Information leakage also leads to other security attacks, such as phishing. There is a definite lack of encryption. Some wearables are known to send and receive data to or from the app in plain text. And, the makers hardly mention what they do to the more personal data they receive from wearables and app.

So, should you bite the bullet and splurge on some smart trinket? If you’re seriously intent on getting one, remember there are security measures you can do to minimize those risks. Regularly updating the app and the firmware, taking advantage of additional authentication modes if available, using strong passwords, never sharing your PIN, and turning the Bluetooth off when not needed are just some suggestions.



Secret Sister/Santa Scam

The holiday season is here, but it’s a Facebook Secret Sister (not Santa) you have to steer clear of. Secret Sister has been a mainstay of Yuletide scams since at least 2015, and has come back around once more.

You probably have done “Secret Santa” in the past – you draw names from a hat, and you secretly buy the named person a gift. It’s all pretty straightforward, and a great source of unwanted candy and novelty kitchenware. Secret Sister isn’t quite as nice, and could drop you in a great deal of trouble. You probably won’t even get your hands on the chocolate.

Usually, chain letters of the Secret Sister variety are jammed through your front door. In this case, the chain letter lands in your digital mailbox as opposed your real one. You could in theory

receive one of these anywhere, and people have reported receiving them on everywhere from Reddit and Facebook to various social portals and forums. For whatever reason, Facebook seems to be the scammer’s favorite place to start the scam. The possibility of being able to send it ping-pong around large social connection chains is too good to resist.

The messages can vary wildly, but one of the most popular ones going back a year or so reads as follows:

Anyone interested in a Holiday Gift exchange? I don’t care where you live – you are welcome to join. I need 6 (or more) ladies of any age to participate in a secret sister gift exchange. You only have to buy ONE gift valued at \$10 or more and send it to one secret sister and you will receive 6-36 in return!

Let me know if you are interested and I will send you the information! Please don’t ask to participate if you are not willing to spend the \$10.

TIS THE SEASON! and its getting closer. COMMENT if You’re IN and I will send you a private message. Please don’t comment if you are not interested and aren’t willing to send the gift!

This is essentially a pyramid scheme. If you’re there from the get-go, your chances of making a good return increase somewhat. For everyone else, you’re probably going to lose out. Where this becomes complicated is in the US you could easily end up breaking the law as the Postal Code bans these schemes. There’s also the risk of identity theft to consider. Mail fraud scammers typically ask for various pieces of personal information. This could be all an enterprising criminal needs to do some additional damage, especially if they persist in branching out from your profile to those of your friends.

So, no matter how appealing the prospect of easy free gifts sounds, don’t fall for it. These types of antics have been around for a long time, and moving into the digital realm doesn’t make them any safer. While you may feel you are being Scrooge, remember he didn’t start giving money away until he really knew the recipients. If Tiny Tim isn’t on the list, then stay away!

Not to Ignore Apple ...

While not as big a player in the business field as the traditional WinTel products, Apple continues to have an impact on technology and helps push the IT market in certain directions. The 2019 “crystal ball” gives an inkling of what is in the pipeline for Apple next year.



Generally, it is expected that Apple will introduce some take on its long-awaited AirPower product and it's an easy next step to suspect we might see some move toward true wireless energy supply, given its recent activity in that space. A new Apple Watch is predictable, as should be an updated Apple TV. At least one Apple analyst predicts an all-new iPad Mini. Plus,

iOS, macOS, watchOS and tvOS will also see improvements.

Apple resisted the urge to share any more information concerning its promised Mac Pro upgrade in the Fall, but indications are it will have larger addressable memory space, high performance and a focus on modularity. Apple has previously claimed it is taking a “modular approach” to the design but has not provided details.

Apple is also testing its new Maps in California and will roll this out in 2019. The new Maps provides more detail about vegetation, building shapes, beaches and swimming pools. The company wants to build a complete set of mapping data of its own from scratch and has dispatched people with monitoring equipment around the country to capture data. Apple has previously suggested it will implement these improved Maps across the U.S. over the next year. International plans have not been announced, but it is logical to expect them to arrive in key territories in the next year. It will be interesting to see how tightly woven Maps will be in other future Apple products and services.

Apple has spent millions of dollars assembling a crack team of high-quality content specialists to put together its push at original movies and shows for its much-anticipated Netflix-style TV service. The company is expected to introduce this new service in some form in 2019, most likely in fall. Things may become even more interesting if there is any truth in claims the company intends offering a low-cost Apple TV “stick” as Apple TV is second only to Amazon in providing a streaming service “box.” Apple evidently has a vested interest in widening its audience for TV shows, as it will also hope to sell music subscriptions, apps and hardware to new customers who like what it offers.

The first 5G smartphones will ship in late 2019. They won't deliver on their hype as the rollout of 5G networks is slow (Indianapolis is a trial market for Verizon). Apple is working on 5G, and while we should not expect it to introduce 5G support in 2019's iPhones, it is slightly possible we'll hear a little more about how it plans to support the technology on a software basis.

Industry experts believe that Apple will make more of a push into the enterprise market with these new, more powerful Macs and iPads, so 2019 will be an interesting year for the company.

“Random Tid-Bytes”

Mariott Data Breach Huge

In one of the largest cybersecurity breaches in history, Marriott International said Friday that information on up to about 500 million of its customers worldwide was exposed in a breach of its Starwood guest reservation database dating as far back as 2014. The world's largest hotel chain said it learned of the breach on Sept. 8. The company said the Marriott hotel network was not affected. For 327 million of the affected guests, the compromised data includes “some combination of name, mailing address, phone number, email address, passport number, Starwood Preferred Guest (SPG) account information, date of birth, gender, arrival and departure information, reservation date, and communication preferences,” the company said. For some customers, the information “also includes payment card numbers and payment card expiration dates, but the payment card numbers were encrypted,” Marriott added. But the company said it could not rule out the possibility that the hackers were able to decrypt those details. Starwood brands include W Hotels, St. Regis, Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, Westin Hotels & Resorts, Four Points by Sheraton and Starwood-branded timeshare properties. The Marriott hack is “one of the most significant data breaches in history given the size ... and the sensitivity of the personal information that was stolen,” said an analyst with CreditCards.com. Given the sensitive personal information involved, security experts urge that people who may be exposed to this breach freeze their credit by contacting credit agencies Experian, Equifax and TransUnion.

Pay Up in Bitcoin

Ohio has begun accepting bitcoin as a form of tax payment from businesses, making it the first U.S. state to do so. The Ohio Treasurer's office said it is working to help make the state a national leader in blockchain, the underlying platform for bitcoin. “We're doing this to provide Ohioans more options and ease in paying their taxes and also to project Ohio's leadership in embracing blockchain technology,” said Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel. The state treasurer's office uses the Atlanta-based bitcoin payment service provider, BitPay, to process the bitcoin payments. Payments move over BitPay's blockchain electronic ledger, which offers real-time tracking; the payments are processed on one to three days. A “minimal fee” is charged to confirm the transactions and anyone can view all transactions on the blockchain network. The Ohio Treasurer's Office said the state and taxpayers are protected against market volatility as BitPay sets the exchange rate for a 15-minute allotted time window for each transaction once a business taxpayer begins to make their payment at OhioCrypto.com. BitPay then assumes the risk of any market fluctuations during the allotted time window.

New Wi-Fi Access Technology from EnGenius

EnGenius Technologies launched the industry's first 802.11ax (Wi-Fi 6) 2x2 access point. 11ax technology enables more efficient channel use, reduces latency between access points and client devices, and provides other groundbreaking features. As an EnGenius Partner, contact SIM2K for more information on advanced wireless connectivity for your business.

Outlook 2016 Tips

The pundits will have you believe e-mail is being supplanted by texting, social media, chat apps and direct communications software such as Skype. Don't believe them.

E-mail is still the mainstay of workplace communications as well as a popular way for people to keep in touch with friends and families. And for many people, e-mail means Outlook. Although Microsoft has announced the release of Outlook 2019, most businesses are using Outlook 2016 which will stay in service until 2023. Although you may have been using Outlook 2016 for some time, you might be missing out on some of its worthwhile features. Here are some important features introduced in Outlook 2016 for Windows.

The **Ribbon** interface used in Microsoft Office products hasn't changed much in Outlook 2016. The Ribbon in Outlook 2016 has a flattened look that's cleaner and less cluttered than in Outlook 2010 and 2013. The 2016 Ribbon is smaller than it was in Outlook, the title bar now is now blue rather than the previous white, and the text for the Ribbon tabs (File, Home, Send/Receive and so on) is now a mix of upper- and lowercase rather than all caps. But it still works in the same way, and you'll find most of the commands in the same locations as in Outlook 2010 and 2013. As in previous versions of Outlook, if you want the Ribbon commands to go away, press Ctrl-F1. (The tabs above the Ribbon stay visible.) To make them appear again, press Ctrl-F1.

You've got other options for displaying the Ribbon as well. To get to them, click the Ribbon Display Options icon at the top right of the screen, just to the left of the icons for minimizing and maximizing Outlook. From the drop-down menu, you can choose Auto-hide Ribbon (hide the entire Ribbon, both the tabs and commands underneath them), Show Tabs (show the tabs but hide the commands underneath them, as when you press Ctrl-F1), or Show Tabs and Commands (show the whole Ribbon).

Outlook is so full of features it can be tough to remember where to find commands you haven't used in a while. So Outlook 2016 has made it easier with a new feature called **Tell Me**, which puts even buried tools you rarely use in easy reach. To use it, click the "Tell me what you want to do" text to the right of the Help tab on the Ribbon. (Those who prefer keyboard shortcuts can instead press Alt-Q.) Then type in a task you want to do, and you'll get a menu showing potential matches for the task.

For example, if you want to filter your mail to see only messages with attachments, type in "filter email." In this instance, the top result is a Filter E-mail listing with an arrow to its right, indicating that it has many options. Hover your mouse over it and you get multiple options for filtering your mail, including Unread, Has Attachments, This Week and others. Choose the option you want to use, and the task will be performed instantly.

The new **Smart Lookup** feature lets you do research from right within Outlook while you're creating an e-mail, so you won't have to fire up your browser, search the web, and then copy the information or pictures to your message. To use Smart Lookup, right-click a word or group of words in an e-mail – it can be a new draft, a message you've received, or one you've already sent – and select Smart Lookup from the menu that appears. Outlook

then uses Bing to do a web search on the word or words, displaying definitions, related Wikipedia entries, pictures and other results from the web in the Smart Lookup pane that appears on the right. If you just want a definition of the word, click the Define tab in the pane.

Outlook has long offered e-mail archiving – the ability to move a message out of Outlook into a separate PST file. There's a new option in Outlook 2016: You can move specific pieces of mail out of your Inbox or other folders and into the **Archive** folder. That way, when looking for a message, you can browse or search the Archive folder and find the message more quickly. Using the Archive folder doesn't reduce the size of your mailbox; it simply helps tidy up your inbox while keeping older messages instantly accessible. Microsoft recommends that you use the Archive folder to store messages that you've already responded to or acted on. If you already have a system of folders and subfolders in Outlook, you might not need the Archive folder, but it can be a boon for those who tend to leave everything in the inbox. To move messages to the Archive folder, first select one or more that you want to archive. (Select multiple messages by holding down the Control key and clicking each one you want to select.) With the message or messages selected, go to the Ribbon's Home tab and click Archive in the Delete group, right-click the message or group of messages and select Archive, or simply drag the selected message(s) to the Archive folder.

If you're like the rest of the world, you suffer from e-mail overload. Your most important messages are mixed in with the dross of everyday email life – retailing come-ons, pointless newsletters and more. **Focused Inbox** helps solve the problem. Using artificial intelligence, it determines which messages are most important to you and puts them into a Focused tab, while putting everything else into an Other tab. That way you can spend most of your time handling important messages in the Focused tab, only occasionally checking the Other tab. To turn on Focused Inbox, select the View tab from the Ribbon, then click the "Show Focused Inbox" icon. From now on, you'll have two tabs in your Inbox, Focused and Other. The Focused tab should have the most important messages, and the Other tab should have less important messages.

Outlook 2016 solves the "finding an attachment" problem neatly. When you click the **Attach File** icon, a list of the twelve most recent files you've been using pops up. The list includes all the files you've been using on any device, as long as you're signed in to your Office 365 or Microsoft account. Click the file you want to attach. If you choose a file that's stored on your local hard drive, a copy of it will be attached to the e-mail in the usual way.



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