

COVID-19

Coronavirus and Impact on I.T.



The global circumstances around the Novel Coronavirus outbreak continues to evolve each day as new cases are being reported around the world and across the United States.

While we do not wish to raise alarm or cause unnecessary panic over the situation, we do believe that businesses should remain vigilant throughout this epidemic and prepare ahead of time to minimize risk.

Our team here at Computer Dimensions is closely monitoring the situation and has already taken steps and put in place contingency plans at Computer Dimensions to mitigate the risks so that we are able to continue servicing our clients.

We've also put together some considerations, from a **technology perspective**, for your business to help you implement plans to minimize the business impact and risks posed in the event that there is a more **widespread Coronavirus outbreak**.

POTENTIAL RISK SCENARIOS THAT BUSINESSES SHOULD CONSIDER



- ✓ Protecting staff members from infection through transmission in the office
- ✓ Need for employees to work from home to prevent the spread in the event they are ill
- ✓ Quarantine restrictions imposed by authorities
- ✓ Quarantine for employees traveling from regions of risk
- ✓ Quarantine for employees who have household members who may be ill
- ✓ School closures that force employees to stay home for child care
- ✓ Employees unwilling to take the risk of coming in to the office



ELEVATED RISK FROM PHISHING ATTACKS AND OTHER SCAMS

- ✓ As with any world news, there are already **Coronavirus phishing messages** and scams that are making the rounds.
- ✓ Remind your staff to be extra careful about **clicking on links** or opening attachments in emails about coronavirus (even if they appear to come from inside the company).



SHARED DEVICES AND WORKSPACES

- Reduce the use of **shared computers** and workspaces: Keyboards, mice and touchscreens are great surfaces for viruses, especially if you provide public-facing IT services.
- Use dedicated laptops/desktops for staff members or dedicated mobile devices such as tablets and phones so that devices are not shared.
- Keypads for doors and other shared office equipment (printers, fax machines, scanners, photocopiers, etc.) provide other hiding places for the virus.
- Ensure shared workspaces are cleaned more regularly with **anti-bacterial** products.
- Ensure **hand sanitizer** is available by all shared equipment.
- Talk to the janitorial staff about more frequent cleaning, especially surfaces that are touched.
- Keyboards and Mice can be cleaned with NON BLEACH Clorox or Lysol wipes. We recommend leaving wipes and hand sanitizer in your boardrooms and close shared equipment

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- Please review your **business continuity plan**, and make any updates that are needed.
- We'd recommend having a discussion with your staff now to make sure that your plans are complete.
- The scenario you should be planning for is a 2+ week closure of the office, which hopefully is a worst case scenario.
- Make sure that your **contact list** of cell phone numbers and home phone numbers is up to date in case you're unable to reach people via email and need to urgently communicate something.

WORKING FROM HOME

- Now is a good time to review the list of people who have the ability to work remotely.
- There are a number of scenarios where the **ability to work remotely** will become a necessity during the different phases of this outbreak
- If your office needs to be closed for 2+ weeks, make sure that everyone who needs remote access has it.
- Ensure that critical business functions can be **performed remotely** in the event that key employees are unable to access the office.
- If your employees occasionally work remotely, have them test their remote connectivity sometime in the next few days.
- If your employees don't have laptops but may be expected to work from home, now is the time to consider getting them **company-issued laptops**.
- Be careful not to compromise security by letting employees use personal computers that bypass all of your cybersecurity measures.

PHONE SYSTEM ACCESS FROM HOME

- Ensure that if your Business Continuity Plan calls for forwarding phones to cellular phones that this has been tested and your employees know how to set this up.
- If you have a VoIP system, you should be able to allow access to phones on your employees' laptop computers, make sure this has been setup and tested ahead of time
- Provide or ensure that your employees have access to headsets to access the VoIP phone systems on their laptop computers

COLLABORATION AND REMOTE MEETINGS

- Make sure that any web conferencing tools that you use have a subscription large enough to handle your whole team, if needed, our clients.
- Since many of you are already using Microsoft Office 365, you can leverage Microsoft Teams as a platform for collaboration and communication.

SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS WITH ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

- With supply lines with China disrupted, we are already starting to see shortages on technology items including laptops, monitors, and desktop computers. If you're planning any critical technology purchases in 2020, consider expediting them.
- If your employees don't have laptops but may be expected to work from home, now is the time to consider getting them company-issued laptops.

OTHER VALUABLE INFORMATION

There are many articles and news sites to stay up-to-date on measures to protect the health and safety of employees and family members.

McKinsey & Company has a great article on COVID-19 Implications for Business:

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/risk/our-insights/covid-19-implications-for-business>

The US Government Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have also provided guidance for businesses about the coronavirus COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>

CDC RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES:



1. Encourage sick employees to stay home.
2. Separate and send home employees that become sick at work.
3. Ensure respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene are used by employees.
4. Perform routine environmental cleaning.
5. Approach travel more cautiously.