

TechTips Newsletter



Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably



Hurricane 2020: How to prepare your electronic devices and your data

As Florida residents, many of us are familiar with the steps to prepare our homes and the supplies needed for our hurricane kits. However, many forget the importance of securing electronic devices and digital information for the hurricane season.

Think about the electronic devices you use at home and in the office: These may include a phone, tablet, laptop, desktop computer, television or security system. These technologies help us receive the latest news, speak to our loved ones and call for help. The data inside these devices is used to operate businesses, monitor properties and store important records. Without question, it's much more difficult to return to a normal home and work life after a storm has passed if these technologies have failed and if critical documents have been lost.

Don't leave your data and devices to chance. The following tips can help you secure your electronic devices and digital information for hurricane season:

Schedule your personal and workplace data and devices to be backed up regularly

Hurricane season should not be your cue to prepare data and devices for a disaster, as anything could happen to your home or office throughout the year.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Nina Tran, Cyber Security Manager, Tech Hero

Our Mission: To build a community of successful minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.

Scan important paperwork and documents into a digital format

This can be done using a scanner or a handheld camera.

Take before and after photos and videos of your home, business, furniture and valuables

These will be invaluable if an insurance claim needs to be made.

Once your key information is saved digitally, back up your data and files to an external hard drive or USB flash drive

When updated frequently, these backup drives become a portable copy of the data in your computer or device. When the call is made to evacuate, don't forget to take your backup drives with you.

Back up your data and files to a cloud-based server

Uploading your information to the "cloud" provides an added layer of protection in case something happens to your phone, computer or backup drives. With cloud-based protection, your information is secured online and can be easily restored to the original device or to a replacement device.

After everything is backed up digitally, it's wise to store all important paperwork and documents and keepsakes in a fire-safe, waterproof container that's easily portable

This could involve such important items as birth certificates and passports, or irreplaceable keepsakes like family photo albums.

If your area is prone to flooding, place electronic devices in high and dry locations away from windows

Water is an obvious enemy of electronic technology. Even the smallest amount of water can ruin your device.

Make sure electronic devices are unplugged during a storm

Power outages and lightning strikes can occur and cause major damage to devices, including computers, servers and televisions. Charge portable battery packs before the storm so you can avoid having to plug in any devices.

Limit the use of electronics until the storm has passed and power is stabilized

It will be tempting to turn on your phone or computer to check for internet access and any news on the storm's path. Don't give in. It's important to turn off and unplug devices to prevent power surge damage and battery drain. You may need to make an emergency call during or after the storm, so you need to conserve your battery life.

You may be thinking, "If I can't use my device, how will I get the news?"

Your hurricane kit should contain a battery-powered radio with plenty of extra batteries. This will allow you to tune in to radio broadcasts for storm tracking and important safety updates from your county's Emergency Management office and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio.

Author: Sarah Vitale is a senior planner with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council.



How to stay resilient amidst COVID-19 and the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season

The upcoming 2020 Atlantic hurricane season will be different this year. Whether businesses or state and local governments are prepared or not, this year's season is quickly approaching and forecasted to be significantly more active than usual by meteorologists from The Weather Channel, an IBM business.

Already grappling with the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic, this added element will provide additional challenges for businesses and governments preparing for and recovering from an incident. In a worst-case scenario, many of these organizations are likely to face an unprecedented dilemma – to 'shelter in place' or evacuate. As the COVID-19 curve hopefully begins to flatten while hurricane season kicks into high gear, leveraging the power of technology and good planning will help everyone weather the storm and emerge more prepared than ever for what comes next. The following are tips from Pat Corcoran who is the Global Strategy Executive for IBM Business Resiliency Services.

Look at your business continuity plans now

I recently gave a webinar about achieving or maintaining business resiliency during a crisis, and the number one piece of advice I shared was to review and assess your business continuity plan (BCP) *now*. One thing I have consistently seen in my 43 years with IBM is that every crisis triggers a domino effect of other crises – or a chain reaction. As the COVID-19 crisis grew, its devastating domino effect knocked down economies, societies, businesses, and personal lives. It has impacted things as diverse as manufacturing, aviation, tourism, and travel, as well as retail, healthcare, and supply chain. It is critical to understand and address the chain reaction from a crisis in a BCP, especially now that the upcoming hurricane season will force businesses to make decisions they never thought about or had to plan for before.

Some things that leaders must consider and improve in their BCPs are the impacts on people, infrastructure, supply chains, and insurance. During disasters and other unplanned events, businesses need a plan to support the people that keep the business operational, as well as the technology that supports them. Whether working to mitigate displacement from COVID-19 or evacuations due to a hurricane, the physical safety and mental wellbeing of people is the most important factor in maintaining business continuity. Availability and/or stability for infrastructure, whether buildings or transportation

routes is also critical to address in your BCP. In support of your infrastructure, don't forget to understand and include your local government's crisis plans. Another key element of your BCP is understanding, prioritizing and ensuring the availability of your supply chain. This is the first event that I've seen that is truly global, and where the supply chains for everyone have been impacted. From an insurance standpoint, organizations need to understand what coverage they have, based on different scenarios, and determine what they need to share with insurance companies to get the appropriate support, guidance and coverage.

Early notification fuels data-driven decision making

A major concern of local governments, first responders, non-profits, and other businesses in hurricane impacted zones is how to track when the next incident will occur and where. Early notification about a storm pattern allows businesses to proactively communicate with their customers ahead of a natural disaster and discuss the currency of their BCP to prevent or minimize data loss. In addition, you also need to ensure your BCP is properly addressing the fastest growing risk – which are cyber threats. From managing the increased risk of cyber attacks during a crisis to data replication and protection, whether in the cloud or in a physical data center / centre, organizations must ensure that all of this information is properly addressed in the BCP; enabling businesses to take the appropriate actions to prevent or minimize the impacts from a crisis event.

IBM uniquely specializes in this type of scenario planning, helping organizations around the world, especially in hurricane-prone areas, identify emerging and unknown risks and increase their resiliency to those situations. Using real-time weather forecasts from The Weather Channel, geolocation data of hospitals, airports and other distribution points, as well as news alerts showing on-the-ground conditions, IBM developed the Operations Risk Insight (ORI) tool to harness this information and share insights with governments, businesses and disaster relief organizations, up to a week ahead of when a crisis, like a natural disaster or weather event is supposed to take place. This tool flagged a potential COVID-19 outbreak in early January by picking up on social media discussions around a 'mysterious pneumonia' in China. By March, IBM was working with state and local governments, as well as healthcare agencies from California, New York, Georgia, Texas and more to put critical data and information into the hands of their citizens around COVID-19.

Don't forget cyber security

Our experience shows that instances of cyber attacks tend to rise during natural disasters and global emergencies. It is easy for businesses to make mistakes and not follow standard protocol while trying to manage other critical business operations during a crisis. Businesses need to remember to protect their data and the systems on which it is created and managed, to make sure it can be recovered securely and quickly. Also, it is important for businesses to notify their customers, and for everyone to be aware of the likely possibility of an increase in malware and phishing attacks. Whether due to a natural disaster or COVID-19, many of us are working from home and are not in our usual workplace. We may be using home computers or networks which may not have the same security protections as we would normally have when working in the office so the need to focus on security best practices is more important than ever. During this challenging moment, everyone is experiencing many different emotions. Fear, anger, frustration, and sadness are an outward representation of the uncertainty in the world and feelings of our lives being out of control. Tapping into these emotions to ask important questions like "what do we fear?" and "what can we learn from this?" leads to growth and allows for a better understanding of what is and is not working and how we can emerge from any crisis stronger and better.



Office 365 is now Microsoft 365: Everything you need to know

Microsoft has rebranded various Office 365 product lineups as Microsoft 365. The company also announced a new set of personal and family subscriptions for individuals under the new Microsoft 365 name. Microsoft 365 personal and family subscriptions are the company's very first consumer offerings. According to Microsoft, all Office 365 subscriptions for small and medium-sized businesses and the Office 365 ProPlus will use the new Microsoft 365 branding.

Why the change? According to Jared Spataro, corporate vice president for Microsoft 365, this rebranding represents Microsoft's vision for the future of productivity tools. The new service will cost the same but is going to pack some new features and services. Microsoft intends to provide solutions not just for enterprises but also for individuals to help us in everyday lives. And this rebranding aligns Microsoft's vision to "help people and businesses throughout the world realize their full potential," Spataro says.

New product names

Here is the detailed list of products that are now rebranded as Microsoft 365. The company has made it clear that the change is confined to the name only and there is no change in price and feature as of now. However, as mentioned above, Microsoft has plans to introduce a bunch of new features to Microsoft 365's lineup soon.

Office 365 Business Essentials is now Microsoft 365 Business Basic and the Office 365 Business Premium has been rebranded as Microsoft 365 Business Standard. Microsoft 365 Business is now called Microsoft 365 Business Premium. And finally, both Office 365 Business and Office 365 ProPlus are now Microsoft 365 Apps.

Microsoft also announced that it will continue to follow the same naming conventions to differentiate its products based on the target audience. For instance, they will continue to use "for business" or "for enterprise" labels wherever necessary to distinguish between the two.

Microsoft 365 personal and family subscriptions

Now that so many people have started to adapt to working remotely due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Microsoft believes that staying connected is more important than ever. Microsoft announced a whole set of features, products, services, and tools for every individual to help them connect, learn, and achieve more at home.

Microsoft 365 Family and Personal subscriptions are priced at \$6.99 monthly or \$69 annually for a single user. However, it is just \$9.99 monthly or \$99 annually for a family subscription of up to six people. This subscription includes all the Microsoft Office apps including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and more along with all the upcoming new features and apps.

It also offers 1TB of cloud storage space per person or 6TB of storage for a family plan, with each user limited to 1TB. It also includes Microsoft's two new consumer apps called Microsoft Family Safety and Microsoft Teams for consumers. While both these apps are already available in some Microsoft subscriptions, they are now loaded with new features. More information about this new subscription package can be seen [here](#).

Microsoft Family Safety

This app allows users to share their location with family members for safety. This location can be live tracked by family members or can be set to trigger when they arrive at a predetermined location. It also provides parental controls across various Microsoft products and services including Windows 10, Xbox, and Android.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams for consumers is a stripped-down version of the enterprise Microsoft Teams, which brings the enterprise communication tool home for family and friends. It comes with group chat feature along with group video calling. It also allows sharing media, making and sharing schedules, events, and more. All these features make it an ideal tool for family events, get-togethers, and sporting events.

More about Microsoft 365

Microsoft 365 is an integrated set of apps and services that uses powerful and advanced AI along with other latest technologies to work for consumers. Microsoft 365 has various editions, making it ideal for individuals and households, small and medium-sized businesses, and enterprises. The company also announced that it is working on rolling out various new features along with better security.

At the virtual event, Microsoft announced its new and updated **Microsoft Editor**, which is now available in over 20 languages. For the uninitiated, Microsoft Editor is an AI-powered word editor that can perform grammar checks, suggest advanced grammar styles, and more.

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