

NewsLetter

Stay Secure - Power of Collaboration - *Stickler-Be Alert* - Can't See Your Pics!!

1882 Christmas Lights - Monday Blues



Wrapping up the Year, Finishing Strong and Staying Secure

As the year draws to a close, once again, like squirls, we scurry around picking up lose ends, trying to handle those all-too-important tasks we said we'd get to – not last week but maybe two months ago. Things that couldn't wait a day, have somehow waited two, three, or even more. This last month tends to fly by the fastest. This is crunch time, the final play that gets you into the endzone before the clock runs out.

But as everyone pushes to wrap up projects, share files, and send off that last batch of emails, it's easy to let your guard down. This is when Phishing attempts and scams surge, because the bad guy knows it this too. Messages that look like they are from a coworker, a partner agency, or even Jane, may be from someone on the other side of the world. Before you click, PAUSE, don't click on links, verify senders, and stay alert. A few extra seconds can prevent a serious data breach, stolen identity, or even worse.

Now for some Holiday Online Shopping Safety

As the holiday shopping season begins, remember that cyber criminals love deals as much as anyone, just for different reasons.

- Shop only trusted, reputable websites and be sure to look for the HTTPS:// in front of the URL. The URL should begin with https:// rather than http://. The "s" indicates that the site uses an SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) certificate to encrypt all data transmitted between your browser and the website's server, helps prevent hackers from intercepting sensitive information.
- Look for the padlock symbol in the address bar of your browser. Clicking this icon will provide more information about the site's security certificate, including who issued it and its expiration date.
- Legitimate and secure websites usually have a professional design, correct spelling and grammar, and working contact information (e.g., "Contact Us" or "About Us" pages). Scammers often use poor design, typos, and stock images.
- Avoid clicking on links from emails or social media ads that seem "too good to be true".
- Never use Public WIFI for online purchases.
- Don't store payment details on public or shared devices.



- **Did you know ?** Did you know that over 90% of successful cyberattacks start with a Phishing email? That one click can give attackers access to an entire network. Your awareness is the first and strongest defense. Thank you for helping keep our systems secure!

Please don't forget to change your passwords.

The Quiet Power of Collaboration:



A quality that is increasingly rare in today's flaming, fast-paced world: genuine collaboration.

My grandfather used to say:

"Hold people accountable, but always give them the benefit of the doubt."

That balance — accountability paired with generosity — is the heart of healthy teamwork.

Today, many interactions happen through low-bandwidth channels. Emails, chats, and texts strip away tone, empathy, and shared humanity. As psychologist Albert Mehrabian famously noted, "*Communication is only 7% words and 93% tone and body language.*" No wonder people say things online they would never say in person.

Humans are wired for collaboration.

Research from Stanford University found that people who simply *perceive* themselves as working together persist 48% longer, show more intrinsic motivation, and feel less fatigue. Cooperation literally changes brain chemistry and behavior.

Harvard's Teresa Amabile, one of the leading researchers on creativity, put it simply:

"People are most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself."

And what creates that internal motivation?

Feeling valued. Feeling seen. Feeling like your work matters.

This is why collaboration is not soft — it's strength.

A team that communicates openly and trusts one another is measurably more productive. Google's massive multi-year study, Project Aristotle, concluded that the #1 predictor of a successful team was psychological safety — the freedom to take risks without fear of blame or humiliation.

And nothing builds psychological safety faster than these simple, human practices:

- Giving credit
- Saying "thank you"
- Owning mistakes
- Asking for help
- Recognizing effort
- Offering the benefit of the doubt

A team aligned in purpose is more than a collection of workers. It becomes a collective intelligence, a system stronger than any one person inside it.

As we move into the holidays, commit to building workplaces — and relationships — where people feel valued. Where collaboration isn't just an act of generosity, but an act of productivity. Where giving credit isn't weakness, but wisdom.

Because the world works better — *and humans work better* — when we work together.

says the Stickler

Be alert. The world needs all the alerts it can get.

Lifelong learning is the continuous pursuit of knowledge and skills throughout one's life. This practice is crucial for several reasons, impacting personal growth, professional development, and societal progress.

Personal Growth

Lifelong learning fosters personal growth by keeping the mind active and engaged. It helps individuals stay curious and open-minded, which can lead to a more fulfilling and enriched life. Engaging in new learning experiences can also boost cognitive function and delay the onset of age-related cognitive decline. For example, learning a new language or musical instrument can enhance brain plasticity and improve memory.

Professional Development

In the professional realm, lifelong learning is essential for staying relevant in a rapidly changing job market. As technology and industries evolve, new skills and knowledge are required to remain competitive. Continuous learning enables individuals to adapt to these changes, enhancing their employability and career prospects. For instance, professionals who regularly update their skills through courses, workshops, or certifications are more likely to advance in their careers and seize new opportunities.

Adaptability and Resilience

Being a lifelong learner also cultivates adaptability and resilience. In a world where change is constant, the ability to learn and adapt is invaluable. Lifelong learners are better equipped to handle unexpected challenges and transitions, whether in their personal lives or careers. This adaptability can lead to greater confidence and a proactive approach to problem-solving.

Social and Community Engagement

Lifelong learning can also enhance social and community engagement. By participating in educational activities, individuals can connect with others who share similar interests, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Additionally, lifelong learners often contribute to society by sharing their knowledge and skills, mentoring others, and participating in civic activities.

Innovation and Progress

On a broader scale, lifelong learning drives innovation and societal progress. A culture that values continuous learning encourages creativity and the development of new ideas. This can lead to advancements in various fields, from science and technology to the arts and humanities. Societies that prioritize education and lifelong learning are better positioned to address complex global challenges and drive sustainable development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, being a lifelong learner is important for personal growth, professional development, adaptability, social engagement, and societal progress. By embracing continuous learning, individuals can lead more fulfilling lives, stay competitive in their careers, and contribute positively to their communities and the world at large.



Sending Photos and Videos from iPhones that Everyone Can View

Have you ever sent a photo or video from your iPhone, only to hear that the other person can't open it? Maybe it appeared as a blank icon or wouldn't play on their computer or Android phone.

This happens because Apple devices use special file types: HEIC for photos and HEVC for videos. These formats save space and keep great image quality, but they don't always work on non-Apple devices without extra software.

Fortunately, there are simple ways to make your iPhone or iPad share photos and videos in common formats that work everywhere.

Option 1: Change Your Camera Settings

If you regularly send photos or videos to people who don't use Apple devices, you can change one setting so everything you capture is already compatible.

1. Open Settings on your iPhone or iPad.
2. Scroll down and tap Camera → Formats.
3. Select Most Compatible instead of "High Efficiency."

From now on:

- Photos will save as .JPG
- Videos will save as .MP4

These formats are supported by nearly every device. Files will take up a little more space, but they'll open everywhere without conversion or special apps.

Option 2: Let Your iPhone Convert Automatically

If you prefer to keep "High Efficiency" on to save space, your iPhone can automatically convert files when transferring or sharing.

1. Open Settings → Photos.
2. Scroll to the bottom and find Transfer to Mac or PC.
3. Choose Automatic.

This tells your iPhone to send photos as JPG and videos as MP4 when they're copied, emailed, or AirDropped to another device.

When sharing through Mail, Messages, or AirDrop, if you see an option to "Send as JPEG" or "Keep Original," choose JPEG for the best compatibility.

Check Before You Send

Before sending or attaching media:

- Make sure the file name ends in .JPG or .MP4.
- Avoid sending .HEIC or .MOV (HEVC) files to non-Apple devices.

Need Help?

If you are unsure about your settings or need help converting older photos, contact the IT Help Desk.

We can assist with setup or batch conversions to ensure your files open correctly on all devices.

By sharing photos and videos in standard formats, you make communication smoother and prevent file errors—helping everyone stay connected and productive.

(continued)

Optional Information-Not part of the Newsletter This month for length reasons

Best Practices for Viewing or Converting HEIC and HEVC Files

If you already have photos or videos saved in Apple's HEIC or HEVC formats, there are several secure and approved ways to open or convert them into more compatible formats.

Viewing or Converting HEIC Photos

- On Windows 10 or 11: Install Microsoft's HEIF Image Extensions (free in the Microsoft Store). This allows HEIC images to open directly in the Photos app or File Explorer.
- Once opened, use “Save As” → JPEG (.JPG) within the Photos app to create a standard version that works on any device.
- On Apple devices (Mac, iPhone, iPad): Open the photo in the Photos app and select Share → Save as JPEG or Export → JPEG before sending.
- With Licensed software: Applications such as Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Lightroom can also open HEIC files and export them as JPEGs. These are approved for use on authorized systems with licensed Adobe products.

Viewing or Converting HEVC Videos

- On Windows: Playback requires Microsoft's HEVC Video Extensions, available from the Microsoft Store for a small one-time fee (\$0.99). Once installed, you can open the video in the Photos or Movies & TV app and use “Save As” or “Export” to create an MP4 (H.264) version.
- On Apple devices: Use the Photos or QuickTime app and choose Export → H.264 to convert the video to a standard format.
- With Licensed software: Licensed applications such as Adobe Premiere Pro or Adobe Media Encoder can import HEVC videos and export them as MP4 (H.264) for cross-platform compatibility.

About Open Source/Third-Party Tools

There are many Open Source/ third-party applications available online that can convert HEIC and HEVC files. However, these are not authorized for corporate use unless approved by the IT Department. They may not meet organizational security, privacy, or compliance standards. For safety and data integrity, only use Microsoft, Apple, or licensed Adobe products for file conversion on work devices.

With that said here are some free open-source options that can be used to convert the files you already have and are unable to view.

HEVC

- VLC media player is a free open source and cross-platform application for playing multimedia files, such as videos and music.
- You can use VLC media player to open an HEVC file and then Convert/Save the file to the MP4 (H.264) format.

HEIC

- GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program) is a free open source and cross-platform application for viewing and editing image files
- You can use GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program) to open an HEIC image file and then Convert/Save to a .JPG



Did You Know?



The first strand of Christmas lights was invented in 1882 by a man named Edward H. Johnson, who happened to be a business associate of Thomas Edison. Johnson hand-wired 80 red, white, and blue light bulbs around his Christmas tree, which sat on a revolving pedestal—a much safer alternative to the candles people used at the time!

🌟 It's the Most Wonderful (and Busiest) Time of the Year!

December brings joyful music, family gatherings, and festive cheer—but also a bit of chaos and stress. You might realize at the last minute that you forgot that one special gift, so you hop online to order it.

Soon after, you get an email saying “*Your order has shipped!*”—followed by another that looks just like it. Without thinking, you open it... and suddenly, your personal information has been compromised.

Friendly reminder: the holiday season is prime time for phishing attempts. Take a moment before clicking links or opening attachments, even if an email looks legitimate. Keep your information safe this holiday season!

🎀 The Nitty-Gritty: Germs!

Cold and flu season is here, which means germs are everywhere—especially on shared surfaces like keyboards and mice. These items are touched countless times throughout the day, often by multiple people.

To help keep yourself and others healthy, wipe down your workspace before and after use. A few seconds of cleaning can prevent days of feeling miserable!

Stay safe, stay healthy, and enjoy the holidays! 🎁

Help For The Monday Blues



Spending a few hours on Friday to **plan for Monday** can significantly improve how you start the week. Organizing tasks in advance reduces stress and provides clarity on priorities. This preparation helps you begin with confidence, knowing you have a clear roadmap. Still, it's important to stay adaptable—unexpected changes or heavier workloads may arise. Maintaining flexibility ensures you can adjust your schedule and stay on track, even when surprises occur.

Knowing what needs to be done on Monday can make your morning far less stressful. Instead of scrambling to remember tasks, plan ahead. The “Monday blues” often hit hard as we shift from weekend mode back to work, but a few simple strategies can help. Schedule something enjoyable for Monday—like a favorite breakfast or an activity after work—to give yourself something to look forward to. Organize your tasks for the week in advance so you start with confidence and clear priorities. Take short breaks throughout the day to refresh your mind and maintain energy. Finally, connect with friends or coworkers, even briefly, to lighten your mood. With these tips, you can turn Monday into a more positive and productive experience.



‘Twas the Night Before Christmas,
originally came out in 1823 under the title “A Visit From St. Nicholas.” It quickly gained popularity and cemented the image of the jolly St. Nick and his eight reindeer that we think of today.



‘Twas the night before Christmas, when all
through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with
care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds;
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their
heads;

And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's
nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.

 Away to the window I flew like a flash,
 Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the creass of the new-fallen snow,
 Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,

 With a little old driver so lively and quick,
 I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them
 by name:

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now Prancer and
 Vixen!

On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the
sky;

So up to the house-top the coursers they flew
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a
bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his
foot,

And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes
and soot;

A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his
pack.

His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how
merry!

His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a
cherry!

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,

And the beard on his chin was as white as the
snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a
wreath;

He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of
jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his
work,

And filled all the stockings; then turned with a
jerk,

And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a
whistle,

And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of

sight,

“Happy Christmas to all....

....And to all a good night

Next Months Newsletter

Possible Future Topics: New in 2026, **Remembering DOS**, Saturday Nights, **More from the Stickler**, Forget Al, ..try again@PC Games, I Bought a Small Monitor, and much much more..

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