



# Connection

## February 2024

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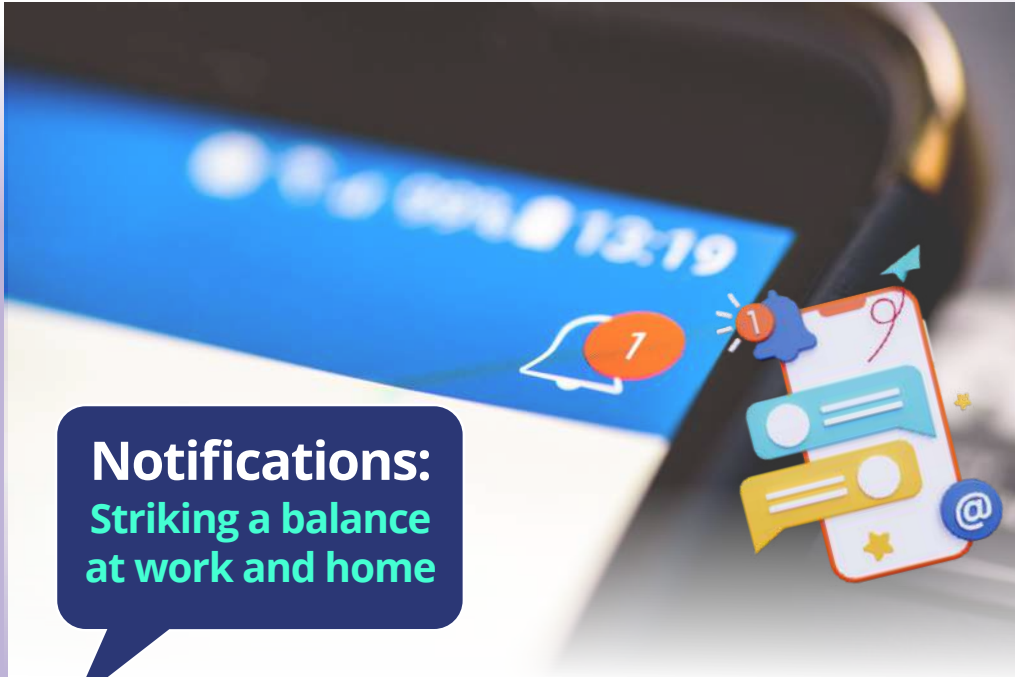
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### Notifications: Striking a balance at work and home

**Notifications have become a part of our daily lives. Whether it's the ping of a new email, a message from a colleague on Teams, or a meeting reminder on your calendar, these little nudges constantly battle for our attention.**

But are we reaching a tipping point with notifications?

According to recent research, the answer might be a big "YES". The study revealed that the ping, ping, ping of notifications from collaboration tools is not only a distraction at work but is also taking a toll on our precious work-life balance.

So, why are notifications becoming a nuisance, and what can we do about it?

We're living in the era of collaboration tools. From video conferencing to project management platforms, we rely on these tools to stay connected and productive.

But... the more tools we use, the more notifications flood our screens.

During the traditional 9-5, the constant barrage of notifications can derail focus and productivity. But what's annoying is when notifications creep into our downtime. One

in three workers report that notifications outside of working hours have spiked over the past year.

As a society, we've created a situation where notifications disrupt our relaxation and family time. A third of young workers aged 21-34 struggle to fully enjoy time with loved ones due to work notifications. And that may put you at risk of losing your best people.

**Here's our three step take on tackling the notifications dilemma:**

1. **Set clear boundaries:** Make it understood that messages should be replied to within working hours. Practice what you preach by not sending messages outside of your own working hours (schedule send where possible).
2. **Reduce tool overload:** Evaluate the collaboration tools you use. Streamline where possible.
3. **Empower your employees:** Teach them to use do not disturb, and how to mute non-urgent notifications.

While technology has revolutionized the way we work, it shouldn't come at the cost of our wellbeing.

**If we can help you and your team strike a better balance, get in touch.**

# Encryption: Your security must-have

**Keeping sensitive business data safe is a top priority. When you're managing a team of employees that use PCs, phones, and tablets, the importance of encryption can't be stressed enough.**

Encryption is a secret code for your digital information. It scrambles your data into an unreadable format, and only someone with the right "key" can unscramble and access it. Think of it as a lock and key system for your digital assets, ensuring that even if someone gains unauthorized access to your devices or data, they can't make head nor tail of it without the key.

Your business likely stores tons of sensitive information, from financial records to customer data. Encryption ensures that even if a device is lost or stolen, your data remains safe and confidential.

**And there are loads of other benefits too...**

- Lots of industries have strict regulations regarding data security and privacy (think HIPAA). Encryption helps you stay compliant, avoiding expensive fines and legal troubles.
- When clients or customers know that you take their data security seriously, it builds trust. People are more likely to do business with a company that safeguards their information
- With the rise of remote work, your employees might be accessing company data from various locations. Encryption ensures that sensitive information is secure no matter where they are.

- Encrypting your emails and messages keeps your communication confidential, protecting sensitive business discussions and strategies.

When you're setting up encryption for the first time you need to think about both device encryption and data encryption. You also need to consider encryption both while data is at rest (where it's stored) and when it's in transit (being sent from person to person).

You may also consider training your people on encryption best practice, to make sure there are no weak links in your team. After all, it only takes one false move to leave your data vulnerable. Helping everyone understand the importance of encryption and how to use it effectively is a strong protective measure.

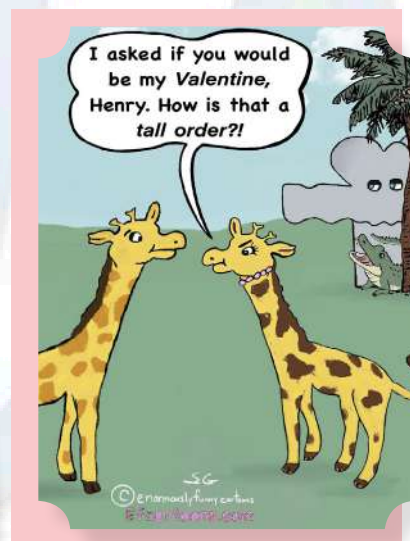
## February's Fun Tech Quiz!

WHO WILL BE THE QUIZ VALENTINE?

1. Which AI company is considering making its own AI chip?
2. How old will Google turn later this year?
3. Which social media platform wants to go ad-free?
4. In which year did the first virtual event take place?
5. What was the first mobile phone with internet connectivity?

**The answers are below.**

1. Open AI
2. 26
3. X (Twitter)
4. 1993 (it was a virtual trade show)
5. The Nokia 9000 Communicator, back in 1996







## Safeguarding Your Gaming Experience: Tips for Gamers



Here are some essential tips to enhance your cybersecurity game:

### Strengthen Your Passwords

**Avoid** using easily guessable passwords. Incorporate a mix of letters, numbers, and special characters. Regularly **updating your passwords** adds an extra layer of security.

### Enable Multi-factor Authentication (MFA)

Multi-factor Authentication is a powerful tool that adds significantly to security. MFA users **verify their identity** through a secondary method such as a code sent to their mobile device. Enabling 2FA greatly reduces the **risk of unauthorized access** even if a hacker has compromised your password.

### Stay Informed and Vigilant

Be aware of the **latest cybersecurity threats** targeting the gaming community. Stay informed about potential risks as well as new hacking techniques and security best practices. Additionally, be vigilant when clicking on **links or downloading files**. Keep your guard up when interacting with **unknown users** within gaming platforms.

### Keep Software and Antivirus Programs Updated

Regularly **update** your gaming platform, antivirus software, and operating system. This will patch vulnerabilities and protect against known exploits. Cybersecurity is an **ongoing process**. Staying up to date is crucial in thwarting potential attacks.

### Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN)

Consider using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to encrypt your internet connection. This enhances your privacy. It also adds an **extra layer of protection** against potential DDoS attacks as well as other malicious activities.

**“Security isn’t something you buy, it’s something you do.”**

## Facebook Security Tip!

Hackers are constantly trying to break into and take control of Facebook accounts in order to scam as many of Facebook's 2+ billion users as possible. They want to see your photos, your friends, when you are on vacation, where you have been and even what you like to eat!

One tip to help keep the hackers at bay and out of your Facebook account is to enable **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)**. Many find 2FA to be a hassle, myself included, but enabling 2F is so much better than letting a criminal into your account to learn information to try to scam you or your friends.

Once you enable 2FA on your account, a hacker would need to have access to your mobile phone in order to gain access to your account, even if he knows your password.

Nothing is fool-proof in the tech world, and 2FA is no exception. However, it's for sure the single most effective tool you have at your disposal for protecting your accounts against hacking attempts.

**It's very easy to enable Two-Factor Authentication on your Facebook account.**

Here are the steps to follow:

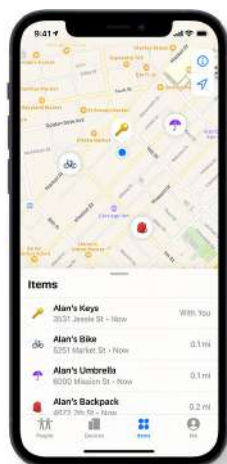
**1 – Click (or tap) the link below and sign into your Facebook account (if prompted to do so):**

**[https://accountscenter.facebook.com/password\\_and\\_security](https://accountscenter.facebook.com/password_and_security)**

**2 – Click (or tap) Two-factor authentication and follow the prompts from there.**

## Gadget of the Month:

*“Lose your knack for losing things.”*



**AirTag is a supereasy way to keep track of your stuff.** Misplacing something like your wallet doesn't have to be a big deal when it has AirTag attached. You can **play a sound** on the built-in speaker and find it! Your AirTag sends out a **secure Bluetooth signal** that can be detected by nearby devices. These devices send the location of your AirTag to iCloud — then you can go to the Find My app and **see it on a map.**



## Apple AirTag



**Learn more and get yours today at [www.apple.com/airtag](http://www.apple.com/airtag)**

## How to Back Up and Restore Your **Chrome** Bookmarks



If you use Google's popular Chrome browser you probably have a long list of bookmarks that facilitate fast one-click access to your favorite websites and online services.

Have you ever considered what might happen if you were to lose those bookmarks to a hard drive crash, a lost or stolen PC, or some other unfortunate incident?

You could always spend an hour or two re-creating those bookmarks from scratch, but if you take a few moments to back up your bookmarks now you'll be able to quickly restore them if they ever get lost or corrupted.

Backing up your Chrome bookmarks is easy. Just follow these steps:

- 1. Connect a USB flash drive to your computer to receive the exported bookmarks.**
- 2. Open Chrome and click the three vertical dots in the top-right corner of the window.**
- 3. Select Bookmarks and Lists > Bookmark manager from the menu.**
- 4. Now click the three vertical dots in the top-right corner of this window, then select Export bookmarks.**
- 5. Navigate to the USB flash drive you inserted in step 1, then click the Save button.**

That's all there is to it. You should now have a file containing your exported Chrome bookmarks on the USB flash drive. We recommend that you store that drive in a safe place in case you ever need to restore your bookmarks.

If you ever need to restore the bookmarks, simply repeat the steps above and select "Import bookmarks" when you get to step 4.



# What's NEW at CSU?!



*Observing as  
Melvin does  
his finest work  
of building a  
computer for a  
client*

## Meet one of our newest interns!

CSU is partnering with Westfield High School to allow students the opportunity to participate in a "Workplace Readiness" program.

The students chose their field of interest and now each week they get to come in on-site, observe the daily grind, ask lots of questions, and gain hands-on experience!

**CELEBRATING ANOTHER  
TRIP AROUND THE SUN...  
OUR DEAR BONNIE!**

**Happy Birthday!**

The CSU office wouldn't be the same without Bonnie's spunk and expertise! We love and appreciate you so much!





# Winter Adventure

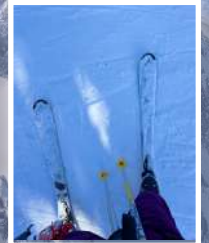
Instead of Christmas gifts this past December, the Sherman family decided to give each other **the gift of time**. With three grown children, living very busy lives, it is difficult to schedule time when everyone can be together.

*Enter Chuck's wallet and a family trip to Snowshoe West Virginia for some time on the slopes!*

Now, we've all been skiing before (**Does fifteen years ago count?**)



It did take a bit of time to get our "ski legs" back under us, as we have grown up a little. **The hardest part is getting off the darn lift chair!**



Aaron, our oldest, is the most experienced. He has his own snowboard and all of the equipment. He has a group of friends that have ventured out to Tahoe, Denver and Canada on skiing adventures. **He served as ski patrol on this trip and helped his mom back up every time she fell!**



It was beautiful up in the mountains. It snowed **eight inches** when we were there and was snowing as we left. We would like to plan another short weekend ski trip before the winter is officially over, but the warmer weather is closing many of the slopes here in Virginia.



*Anybody have any other ideas for a short weekend trip with kids in their twenties and thirties? Drop me a line, I'd appreciate your input! ~Michelle*





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# Connection

February 2024



You take care of running your business, we'll take care of your technology.

**“Darkness cannot drive out  
darkness; only light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate; only  
love can do that.”**

**-Martin Luther King, Jr.**

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*New interns, more trips around the  
sun, 2024 Sherman Ski Adventure*