



# The Tech chronicle

## What's New in iOS 14?

Apple officially announced the iOS 14 update on Monday June 22nd. We have highlighted some of the changes below.

**Updates to Group Chats**—This new update allows you have the option to pin the most important conversations to the top of the list of messages and mention others in group chats. Users will also be able to set a group photo using an image or emoji. Plus, Apple's avatars, called Memoji, have more hairstyles, age options and face masks.

**Digital Car Keys**—Digital Car Keys is a new tool that will allow people to use an iPhone or Apple Watch to unlock and start their car. Initially, it will only be available with the new 2021 BMW 5 series. Digital car keys can also be shared with other people, such as family members, using messages. The next generation of the technology will let users unlock cars without taking their iPhone out of their pocket. It is expected to be available next year.

**Air Pods**—Air Pods are getting an update, too. Apple's popular wireless earbuds will more seamlessly switch between devices and audio. For example, users can finish an audiobook and then pick up their iPad to watch a TV show. When someone calls, the audio will automatically switch to the call.

**Translation App**- The new Translate app can translate text and audio in 11 different languages.

## July 2020



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### Did You Know?

Some of the longest bulk freight carriers in the world operate on the Great Lakes. Ore carriers 1,000 feet long sail Michigan's inland seas.



## How To Avoid Getting Hacked By Cybercriminals And Protect Everything You've Worked So Hard To Achieve

Cybercriminals are always looking for new ways to steal data and make a buck at the expense of someone they've never met. They don't care if they ruin someone's life or destroy a business in the process. This is why it's so important to stay up-to-date with the latest technology.

Cyber security threats are constantly evolving. If you let your software or hardware - or both - fall behind the times, then you put your business at serious risk. Five years ago, your malware protection might have been the best on the market. If you haven't updated since then, you need to change that. Here's what you can do right now to protect everything you've worked so hard to achieve.

Stay updated. After a while,

developers and manufacturers stop supporting their old hardware and software. Many of them simply don't have the resources to keep updating older products. They need to make sure their current products are supported and secure. After five years, they may stop sending out security patches for their software. Or they might not offer help-desk support for a seven-year-old router.

If you run into this situation, you may need to invest in new equipment or software. It can be a tough pill to swallow, but it doesn't compare to the cost of dealing with a hack or data loss. Data loss can be devastating for a business. Some never recover and have to close their doors because the cost is so high - and customers don't

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want to give their money to a business that isn't going to keep their data secure.

At the same time, you need to update your existing equipment and software. Make sure everything has the latest security patches. Most hardware and software come with an option for automatic updates. If you're concerned that you'll miss an update, then keep this option on. It is a good idea, however, to check everything periodically to make sure the updates are being applied, just in case.

Say yes to proactive monitoring. Proactive network monitoring can be your best friend in the fight against cyber-attacks. Many IT security firms now offer proactive services. Basically, they watch your network 24/7. If a threat is found, they can stop it before it does any damage. They act *immediately* to stop those threats.

You can sign up for real-time reports or just get updates once a week to stay informed so you know what's going on with your network. Proactive monitoring can also make sure your systems are up-to-date (coming back to our first point). If they detect a vulnerability, then they can work to patch it. This means you have so much less to worry about so you can focus on what really matters: growing your business and taking care of customers!

Back up everything. If you don't have data backups for

**"If a piece of hardware fails or a hacker gets into your data, you may have to dig deep into your pocket to recover it or you may just lose it all."**



your business, it's time to change that. Setting up a data backup system – whether it's local or cloud-based – can sound like a lot of work. You might have a ton of data, especially if you've been in operation for long. But not having a backup system can tear your business apart.

If a piece of hardware fails or a hacker gets into your data, you may have to dig deep into your pocket to recover it or you may just lose it all. There are a lot of scenarios where data can be lost.

Investing in a backup system, like a secure cloud backup, solves this. You can set up a secure system that backs up data daily (or nightly), weekly or whenever you need it. It's good to keep backups off-site just in case anything happens on-site (electrical surges, flood, fire, theft, etc.). If data is lost or your network falls victim to ransomware, then you can restore your data and continue operations!

These tips can seem like a lot, but when you partner with a dedicated IT services company, you can overcome a lot of hurdles. Working with IT specialists is how to keep your business safe in a world where cybercriminals are actively trying to break in. You want someone with the expertise to secure your network watching over your shoulders.

## Get your Free Dark Web Scan Now!!

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## The 5 Best Ways to Improve Employee Productivity

How can leaders improve employee productivity while still saving time? Here are the top 5 things you can do to increase employee efficiency at the office

### 1. Don't be Afraid to Delegate

While this tip might seem the most obvious, it is often the most difficult to put into practice. Checking over every small detail yourself rather than delegating can waste everyone's valuable time. Instead, give responsibilities to qualified employees, and trust that they will perform the tasks well. This gives your employees the opportunity to gain skills and leadership experience that will ultimately benefit your company.

### 2. Match Tasks to Skills

Knowing your employees' skills and behavioral styles is essential for maximizing efficiency. Asking your employees to be great at everything just isn't efficient—instead, before giving an employee an assignment, ask yourself: is this the person best suited to perform this task? If not, find someone else whose skills and styles match your needs.

### 3. Keep Goals Clear & Focused

You can't expect employees to be efficient if they don't have a focused goal to aim for. If a goal is not clearly defined and actually achievable, employees will be less productive. So, try to make sure employees' assignments are as clear and narrow as possible.

### 4. Train and Develop Employees

Reducing training, or cutting it all together, might seem like a good way to save company time and money (learning on the job is said to be an effective way to train, after all). However, this could ultimately backfire.

### 5. Embrace Telecommuting

Allowing your employees to work from home might seem inefficient but studies show that people who work from home are 13% more productive than office employees. Letting your employees telecommute will allow them to save time that would otherwise be wasted completely. For example, forcing your employee to miss an entire day of work if they have to wait for that 2-4 hour period to get their refrigerator fixed, simply isn't efficient. Instead, allow your employee to work from home so they can maximize what time they do have available.

# Do You Have A 'Ninja' Executive Assistant?

One of the best-kept secrets in business is the importance of having skilled executive assistants on your team. The role of an EA is often the first point of contact that a prospective client or colleague has with your company. Talk about brand impact! You might talk with this person more than anybody on your team. Poor performers make your customers angry, your team frustrated and your family lose touch with you. Great performers amplify your positive impact on the world as a leader, make the cash register ring and help you have more time with your family.

How can I hire a ninja EA?

All great EAs are organized administrators, but beyond just organization, what "extras" do you value for this position? The ability to support your business development efforts by managing a pipeline of client opportunities? Great writing or editing skills if you write a lot? Social media and public relations skills if you are on a marketing push? Human resources or legal skills related to contracts or training seminars? Event management? Find an EA who can offer you what your company needs.

Select the right candidate by doing the same in-depth *Who* interview you would do for any other key role. Talk through all of their jobs, what they were hired to do, accomplishments, low points, what feedback they received from bosses and peers about their strengths and development areas and why they left their jobs. Do at least three reference check calls to verify what you heard.

But beware! Merely hiring a great EA does not mean your working relationship will achieve ninja status. The rest is up to how you work with a ninja EA.



How should I work with a ninja EA?

When your new EA asks you questions, take a moment to provide context, review the bigger picture goals and ask what they would recommend you do. This onboarding exercise gives your EA a sense of your operating style and how you strategize and make decisions – whether you make risk-averse decisions, swift decisions or well-researched decisions.

Once your EA has been successfully "recommending" actions for a month that fit your preferences, consider moving your working relationship to the ninja level.

What is my EA doing at the ninja level?

At the ninja level, your EA is *anticipating* your needs, conducting *proactive* research, *generating* opportunities, *deciding* (where appropriate) which opportunities to accept and which ones to decline, *solving* problems rather than coming to you with problems and concisely *summarizing* what you need to know.

If you support your EA and express gratitude about the great job they are doing, then they will stay loyal and perform at the ninja level for years and years, and you will enjoy more success in



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### 3 Ways To Improve Productivity In Your Business

**Are you located in the right spot?** Sometimes good businesses go under because they're in the wrong spot. They can't keep or even hire the right employees because those people don't want to live or work in the area the business operates. It's just not ideal for their career or interests. If you find yourself in this position, then it may pay to figure out a more optimal location or determine how you can entice the ideal people to come to you.

**Are you as organized as you should be?**

Are you relying on memory to track down the location of paper files? These days, there are exceptional software solutions that keep businesses organized and able to work from virtually everywhere in the world. Boost your productivity with digital, cloud-based filing. In fact, a copy of everything should be on the cloud.

**Are you using automated systems?**

If you or your employees find themselves having to do the same tasks every day or every week, then look into automating those repetitive tasks. DocuSign is a good example. It allows you to automate the signing process so you don't have to gather the relevant people in one room to take care of it. *Smallbiz Technology, Nov. 26, 2019*

### Use This Proven Leadership Trait To Instantly Strengthen Your Team

**How can you be a better leader for your team?** A lot of it comes down to how you manage relationships. But in managing your professional relationships, there is one thing you need to excel at: being empathetic.

Research shows that those who are empathetic can better recognize the emotions of those around them. In a workplace setting, this can be invaluable.

Something might be wrong, but it might not be communicated.

Practicing empathy and understanding others' emotions can help you identify when something needs to be addressed. Addressing it can be as simple as asking, "How are you feeling?"

Leaders who show they are empathetic can also build more resilient teams. Empathy shows you care, and people respond to that. Care builds trust, and trust builds stronger, more cohesive teams. *Inc., April 29, 2020*

### 3 Ways To Effectively Use Data In Your Business

1. Take inventory of the data you collect. Data is useless if you don't know what data you're collecting and why. Collect data with intention, review it, categorize it and make sure you understand it.

2. Focus on data that makes the most sense. In theory, you can track everything. The more you track, the more overwhelming it becomes. What data is most relevant to your business goals? What data can you really act on?

3. Share the data with your team. As data comes in and is analyzed, share it with your team. They should also have an understanding of the data you collect and why. If you need to, then have some training to read that data. This way, you can discuss the data together, bounce ideas around and collaborate on how to get the most out of that data. *Small Business Trends, April 17, 2020*

