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In this issue...

Should your business use Facebook Live?

8 computer tricks everyone should know

The solution to e-waste? Cash.

Technology: The business requirement you can master

Feeling overwhelmed? Here's how to cope.

Should your business use Facebook Live?

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If you're a serial Facebooker, then you might have noticed this new feature on your feed called Facebook Live, and if you're like most people, then you probably didn't think much of it… If it's anything like all the others, you might use it once or twice and never bother with it again, right?

Not this time.

Facebook Live has enormous potential, especially when it comes to business professionals, entrepreneurs, and public figures. It's not connected to a partner application, and it doesn't force you to log into another website. Facebook Live is built directly into Facebook – which means significantly more people will use this feature on a regular basis.

In essence, Facebook Live is a live stream of whatever it is you or someone else is doing – which sounds quite a bit like Periscope; however, they have their differences. With Facebook Live, anyone watching an ongoing stream can interact with the presenter – ask questions, like the video in real-time, and experience an event from the eyes of the presenter.

Celebrities like Stephen Spielberg and Kevin Hart have already taken a stab at Facebook Live and received excellent results – a huge audience with impressive levels of engagement. But this addition to Facebook isn't just for celebrities. Public figures and entrepreneurs – like astronauts, fitness instructors, and innovative startups – have also experienced success with Facebook Live.

For now, streamers are limited to 90 minutes – but as Facebook's Chief Product Officer, Chris Cox, explained during his live stream, this will most likely increase in the near future. If you want to present something from your business page, all you have to do is tap on 'More', then click 'Livestream'. You'll need a webcam to get going, but if that's not a possibility, you can stream directly from your phone. As an individual, you can also go live after accessing the "Go Live" icon that can be found in the status section.

Going live is exciting for all parties involved – the presenter and the audience. As Cox describes it, Facebook Live is raw and unproduced and can reach many people in different ways. But how can you, as a small to medium-sized business, benefit from Facebook Live?

Get streaming!

If you're not used to being onscreen, it's a good idea to watch a few live streams before you start one for yourself. You can view any ongoing live streams here, but if you're looking for more business-friendly streams, befriend a few larger companies or public figures. You're bound to come across a live stream (as a helpful tip: live streams can be made accessible after the stream or they can only be made viewable during the stream – so you can sometimes see previous "live streams" from people or businesses you follow).

You can adjust the privacy settings just as you would with any other post on Facebook, which means you can send a stream directly to a group of people or one individual, or you can post it on your feed for all of your followers to view. Use this as an opportunity to take your clients behind the scenes, to meet the team, or to explain a new product. Answer questions, openly ask your viewers to like your stream and tell everyone when and where your next stream will be.

The key is to get on this ship now before it sets sail. In other words, don't wait to use Facebook Live until more businesses adopt the feature. If you wait, you will drown in the sea of stream-frantic businesses. Build your audience now before it's too late.
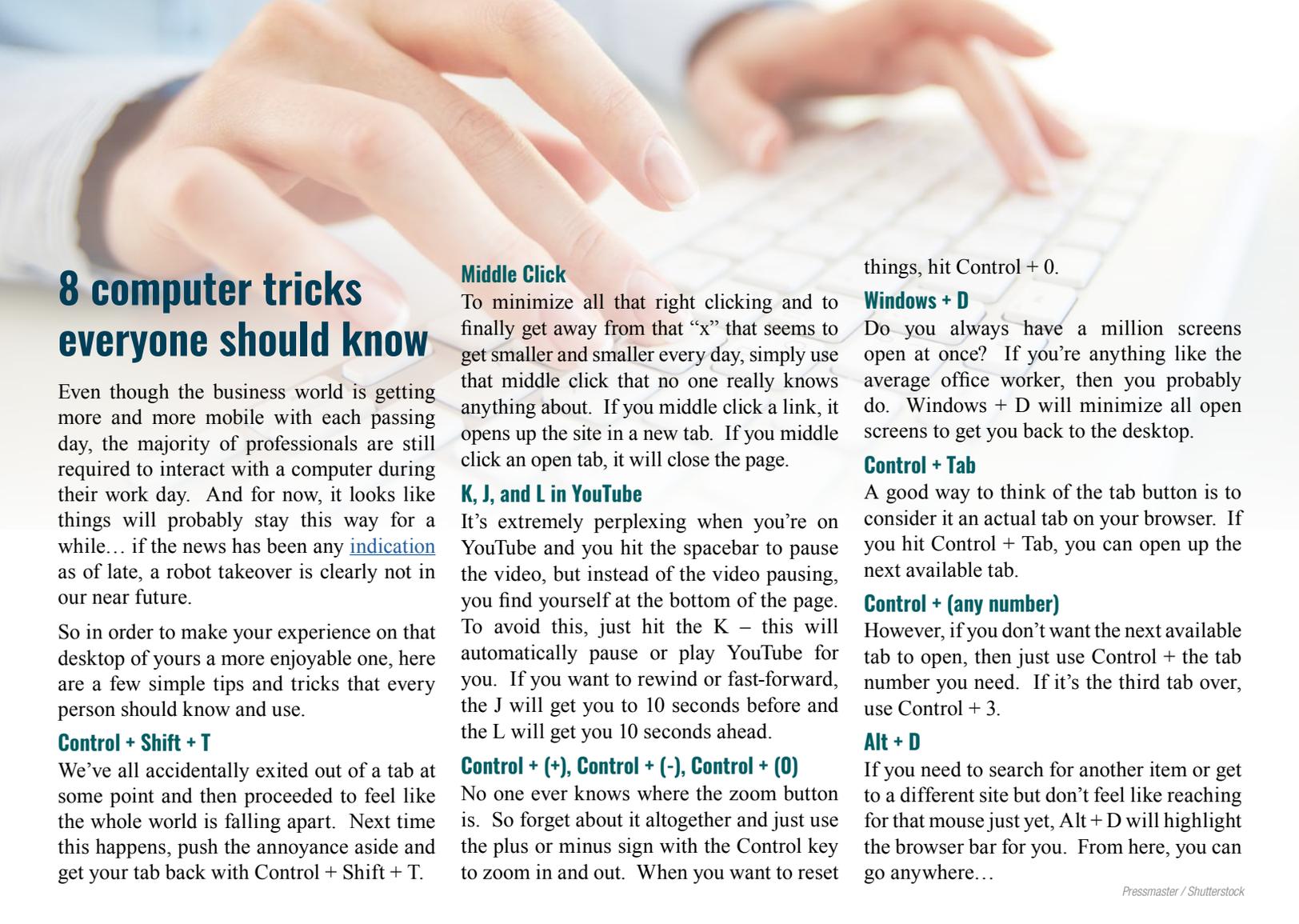
8 computer tricks everyone should know

Even though the business world is getting more and more mobile with each passing day, the majority of professionals are still required to interact with a computer during their work day. And for now, it looks like things will probably stay this way for a while… if the news has been any indication as of late, a robot takeover is clearly not in our near future.

So in order to make your experience on that desktop of yours a more enjoyable one, here are a few simple tips and tricks that every person should know and use.

Control + Shift + T
We've all accidentally exited out of a tab at some point and then proceeded to feel like the whole world is falling apart. Next time this happens, push the annoyance aside and get your tab back with Control + Shift + T.

Middle Click
To minimize all that right clicking and to finally get away from that "x" that seems to get smaller and smaller every day, simply use that middle click that no one really knows anything about. If you middle click a link, it opens up the site in a new tab. If you middle click an open tab, it will close the page.

K, J, and L in YouTube
It's extremely perplexing when you're on YouTube and you hit the spacebar to pause the video, but instead of the video pausing, you find yourself at the bottom of the page. To avoid this, just hit the K – this will automatically pause or play YouTube for you. If you want to rewind or fast-forward, the J will get you to 10 seconds before and the L will get you 10 seconds ahead.

Control + (+), Control + (-), Control + (0)
No one ever knows where the zoom button is. So forget about it altogether and just use the plus or minus sign with the Control key to zoom in and out. When you want to reset things, hit Control + 0.

Windows + D
Do you always have a million screens open at once? If you're anything like the average office worker, then you probably do. Windows + D will minimize all open screens to get you back to the desktop.

Control + Tab
A good way to think of the tab button is to consider it an actual tab on your browser. If you hit Control + Tab, you can open up the next available tab.

Control + (any number)
However, if you don't want the next available tab to open, then just use Control + the tab number you need. If it's the third tab over, use Control + 3.

Alt + D
If you need to search for another item or get to a different site but don't feel like reaching for that mouse just yet, Alt + D will highlight the browser bar for you. From here, you can go anywhere…

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The solution to e-waste? Cash.

It's purported that well over 20 million tons of electronics are thrown out each year. In some instances, this number gets as high as 50 million. However, according to dosomething.org, most e-waste is in prime condition and "readily marketable for reuse or can be recycled for materials recovery."

If this is the case, then why are the majority of consumers still tossing unwanted electronics?

Well, if statistics on the traditional notion of recycling are any indication of society's e-waste habits, then these numbers should make total sense. While 87% of Americans have easy access to recycling services, only 35% of households actually recycle on a regular basis. In other words, it's not a shocker that we don't recycle used electronics.

However, many organizations and IT Providers strive to change these numbers by offering simple recycling services for consumers. For instance, you can take your used computers, smartphones, and printers to Best Buy, and they'll dispose of them properly and free of charge. This must not be simple enough, though, because many people still aren't participating in free recycling services.

Is it easier to drive all that old stuff to a recycling center or is it easier to toss it in the trashcan out back? We all know the answer to that question.

So how do we solve this little problem? Because it's not just overflowing landfills that we have to worry about; it's lost data. If you fail to dispose of your old smartphones and computers properly, there's a significant potential for data loss there – one that can result in identity theft and financial damage.

To Gone, the solution to e-waste is a simple one – and it's called money. This innovative smartphone app and startup company wants to sell your old electronics for you.

Just cashed in on a free smartphone upgrade but your previous phone is still good-to-go? Before you toss it, check in with Gone. This app takes care of it all, and in some cities, Gone Messengers will even come to your home and pick up your items for you to eliminate the hassles of shipping.

Download the App, take a picture of your item, answer a few questions, and let Gone take care of the rest. Skip the finagling on Craigslist and forget about the trashcan. Gone representatives will find the best market value price for your items to offer you a hard-to-resist exchange – a wad of cash and a Gone shipping box for that old clunker of yours.

Doesn't get any simpler than that.

So before you head for that nearest dumpster, check in with Gone. They'll free up your trashcan for more important things, like plastic, cardboard, and glass.

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Technology: The business requirement you can master

Understanding the intricacies of technology and staying up-to-date with the latest tech trends isn't a job for the faint of heart. It's hard work and takes a lot of time. But unfortunately, for many business owners, executives, and upper-level managers, knowing how to speak 'tech' is a requirement for any successful business – no matter what industry you belong to.

Technology impacts your employees, customer service levels, and professional reputation. How you use it, what you do with it, and how much you decide to innovate it can shape your overall business to determine how exclusive your company is, how superior your products are, and how brilliant your staff can be.

If you're willing to put in the work and the time that it requires to remain informed about technology and then to subsequently integrate this knowledge into your daily operations, your business will be far better off as a result. Here are a few useful sources you can turn to if you're looking to speak tech.

Online Media

One of the simplest ways to stay informed about technology is to read about it, and to simplify this even further, you can use an app – like Feedly or Flipboard – that combines multiple publications into one easy-to-read format.

It's important to round out your content and to get as much bang for your buck as possible. In other words, don't pull six sites dedicated to gadgets and one dedicated to online security. You'll find yourself reading a lot of the same things and missing out on important information. Here are a few sites to consider:

- Infosecurity – relevant security concerns and tips
- Lifehacker – apps and valuable how-tos
- TechCrunch – gadgets, software, and reviews
- OnlineTechTips – tips and tricks for Windows, Mac, Google, and Software
- NetworkWorld – big data, cloud computing, and new technology

Podcasts

Podcasts are great because hearing someone's voice is always going to be different than reading someone's thoughts, and usually, the hosts are completely dedicated to and inspired by the topic at hand – which means you are more likely to be inspired by it, too.

Find a podcast or two that you enjoy, and consider asking your fellow executives or staff members to listen to it with you. The more ears you have listening, the more of an opportunity there is for something great to come of it. Here are a few podcasts that speak a little bit of business and a little bit of tech.

- Analog(ue) – understand how new technologies change lives
- Clockwise – hear current technology issues and how they affect you
- Back to Work – learn about productive business technologies and workflows
- Mac Power Users – discover more about the Apple technology you use every day

Feeling overwhelmed? Here's how to cope.

Everyone experiences it at some point – the feeling that everything is coming down on you at once and nothing is going to get done when or how it should. In other words, you're stuck on "overwhelm", and moving away from this channel will require a new set of batteries.

When you're a busy professional, feeling this way is certainly not foreign by any means. In fact, at times it may seem as though being overwhelmed is simply how things are, and depending on your workload, industry, and personal life, this may be an inescapable reality for you.

However, there are simple ways to manage the overwhelming nature of modern-day working and living. For instance, you could rely on technology to streamline your activities or pick up a few time-management tricks and breathing exercises to maintain your focus. Whatever it is you decide to do, though, it's extremely important to uncover your own way of controlling your list of to-dos before they transform into something unmanageable.

How you think through this special accumulation of stress can also have a significant impact on how long you feel this way and how much of an effect it has on you. Here are a few helpful suggestions to help you battle your way to a better state of mind.

Accept it.

The first step to feeling like you're the one in control is to openly admit that you aren't. Set everything aside, and say, *"I am overwhelmed because of this, this, and this, and if things continue this way, I will not have the opportunity to do what needs to be done."* Doing this will give you the chance to come to terms with what you have on your plate and to realistically decide what you can and cannot do. From here, you should create a plan to work through everything, and it's highly recommended to get this plan out of your head and onto paper.

Stay positive.

Thinking negatively about your workload or responsibilities will only make the situation worse, and your workload or responsibilities feel more burdensome. Think positive thoughts and tell yourself, *"I got this. I can do whatever it is I need to do."* Surprisingly, a little positivity might be the only thing you need in order to stop feeling overwhelmed.

Let it out.

There's nothing that says you can't vent to others or explain how and why you feel overwhelmed. Doing this will not make you look weak, and usually, people are more than willing to listen. Letting out your frustrations is a great way to release tension, and after all is said and done, you might even realize that things aren't as bad as your mind made them out to be.