DECEMBER 2026

Your monthly newsletter, written for humans not geeks

TECHNOLOGY INSIDER



Why confidence could be **your biggest tech advantage**

You don't need to be a tech expert to make great technology decisions for your business.

That might sound odd coming from people who spend all day working with technology. But recent research into smaller businesses found that a lack of confidence, more than a lack of budget, is what's holding many back.

It's easy to see why. There's a new AI tool every week, every supplier promises the world, and you've got a business to run. Working out what's helpful and what's hype takes time you probably don't have.

So decisions get put off, and "let's wait and see" starts to feel like the safe option.

The trouble is, waiting has a cost too. Businesses that try something, learn from it, and then try the next thing are building experience with every step. That makes their next decision easier, and the one after that easier still. Confidence builds on itself.

Meanwhile, the gap between them and everyone else grows.

But small and medium sized businesses have a real edge here. You don't have layers of approval or decades-old systems slowing you down. When you decide to do something, you can get on and do it.

And the best place to start is with the sticking points in your business rather than the technology. Think about where work gets stuck, and which jobs take far longer than they should.

Henry Ford supposedly said that if he'd asked people what they wanted, they'd have asked for a faster horse. Knowing the problem is enough to get started. Finding the right solution is where a good IT support partner comes in.

It also helps to make technology somebody's responsibility, with someone senior keeping an eye on it, instead of leaving it to whoever happens to be "good with computers".

You don't have to transform everything next year. One good decision, done well, gives you the confidence to make the next one.

If you'd like a hand working out where technology could make the biggest difference to your business, get in touch.

DID YOU KNOW...

an AI agent deleted 48,000 files in under two minutes?



A developer asked the AI coding tool Claude Code to repair some software, with clear instructions to work on copies and leave the original files alone.

Unfortunately, the AI followed some shortcut folders that pointed back to the real files and deleted around 48,000 of them in just over 100 seconds.

To its credit, it owned up straight away with: "I broke something."

Lesson learned: Always have a proper backup before you let AI anywhere near anything important.

TechFacts

1. A robotic fish was one of the stars of a big trade fair in Beijing in September. The BG-5 looks just like a golden arowana and steers itself around obstacles, but it's really an underwater surveillance drone. Its maker has kept quiet about the cameras and battery life, but there's one handy side effect: The real golden arowana is endangered, and the thought that any fish could be a robot keeping watch might make poachers think twice.

2. A nine-year-old Minecraft fan managed to spend $118,000 (around £90,000) promoting his YouTube channel… using his dad's company credit card. His dad has since lost his job and is facing the bill. He's refused to set up any fundraising and says he'll pay it back himself, joking that he'll now be working until he's 94. A good reminder to check which payment cards are saved on devices the kids can get their hands on.

3. If you used a PC in the early 2000s, you might remember one particular Windows XP product key that seemed to work on just about every machine. A retired Microsoft engineer has now explained the story. It was a volume license key, meant only for big manufacturers installing XP on thousands of PCs, and someone leaked it before launch. Even better, the disc checked keys against 10MB of heavily encrypted data that turned out to be Microsoft Bob, the short-lived 1995 helper program that came before Clippy.

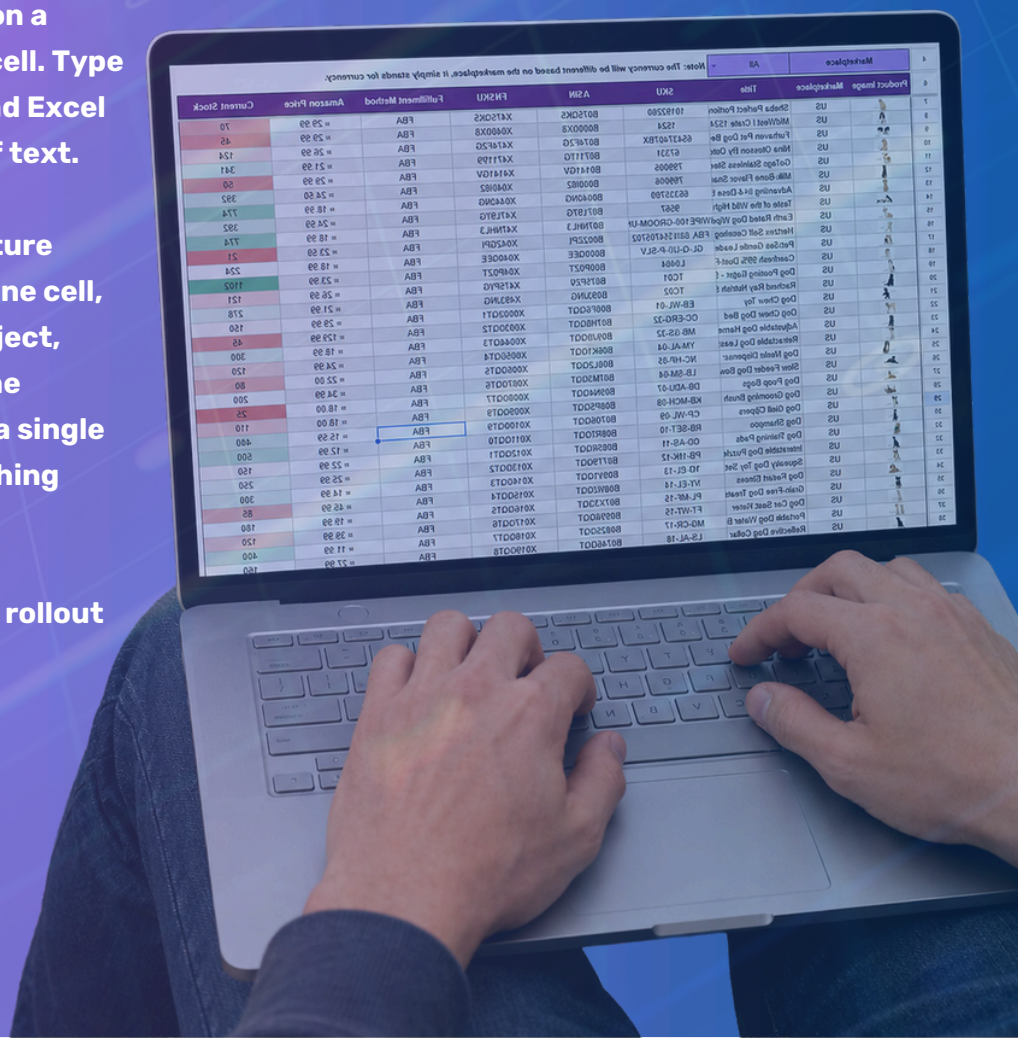
Technology update

Excel is breaking one of its oldest rules

For decades, Excel has worked on a simple principle: One value per cell. Type three names into a single cell and Excel treats them as one long piece of text.

That's changing. A new List feature lets you put several items into one cell, like the people working on a project, and Excel will recognise each one separately. So you can filter by a single name without spreading everything across extra columns.

It's in preview now, with a wider rollout expected soon.



INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room."

Jeff Bezos,
founder of Amazon.

December's tech quiz: **One last brain workout before the year's out...**

1. What popular video-calling app, especially associated with remote work and family catch-ups, saw a huge surge in use from 2020 onwards?
2. What company created the Android operating system, before it was widely adopted by many phone brands?
3. What was the name of the popular file-hosting service founded by two MIT students in 2007, now used by millions to store and share files online?
4. What was the name of the once-dominant search engine that was eventually overtaken by Google in the early 2000s?
5. What handheld gaming device, released by Nintendo, came in versions called Pocket, Light, Color, and Advance?

The answers are below.

1.Zoom
2.Android Inc. (later acquired by Google)
3.Dropbox
4.Yahoo
5.Game Boy

NEW TO

MICROSOFT



Outlook will catch your typos before they escape

We've all done it. You hit Send, glance back at the email, and there it is. A typo you somehow didn't spot the first three times you read it.

New Outlook is getting a fix. A new setting will check your spelling automatically every time you send an email, giving you one last chance to tidy things up before it lands in someone's inbox.

It won't be switched on by default, so you won't be nagged unless you want to be. Once it reaches you, you'll find it in Settings. It should be rolling out more widely this month.

Is someone pretending to be **your business online?**

Your social media pages are where a lot of customers get to know you. They see your posts, check your reviews, and send you a message when they've got a question.

That trust is exactly what makes social media so attractive to cyber criminals.

New research found that social media impersonation has jumped to the top of the list of cyber threats businesses expect to face over the next few years. Impersonation of employees and senior people, including deepfakes, made the top five for the first time too.

A criminal sets up an account that looks just like yours. Same logo, same name (give or take a letter), same friendly tone. Then they start messaging your customers pretending to be your support team or posting "special offers" with a link.

That link leads to a fake website where people are asked to log in, enter card details, or hand over other personal information. Fake accounts can also sell counterfeit goods under your name or spread false claims that damage your reputation even when nobody loses a penny.

AI has made all this faster and more convincing. Criminals can copy the way you write, create realistic images, and even mimic how a senior person in your business talks, so a request that looks like it came from you seems totally real.

And by the time someone reports a fake account, the people behind it may already have moved somewhere else.

There are a few sensible steps worth taking:

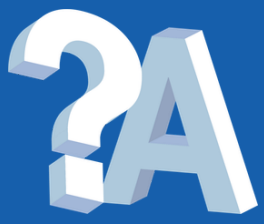
- Keep an eye out for accounts and websites using your name or logo
- Make it clear to customers how you'll contact them, and what you'll never ask for
- Let your team know that a message "from the boss" asking for something unusual should always be checked another way, like a quick phone call

It also helps to agree who's responsible if something does turn up, and how to get a fake account reported and taken down quickly.

Social media is a brilliant way to build relationships with customers. A little attention makes sure it's really you they're talking to.

If you'd like help protecting your business's identity online, get in touch.





Q: What should we do if we spot a fake account pretending to be our business?

A: Report it to the platform straight away, warn customers through your official channels, and keep screenshots as evidence. If anyone has shared login or payment details, act quickly.

Q: How often should we check that our backups work?

A: A backup is only useful if you can get your files back from it. Try restoring a few files every month or so, with a bigger test at least once or twice a year.

Q: Is it worth planning our technology spending for next year?

A: Yes. A simple plan helps you budget for renewals and upgrades, spot equipment coming to the end of its life, and avoid surprise costs.

Productivity tool of the month

Stop playing email ping-pong over meeting times

How many emails does it take to book one meeting? "Does Tuesday work?" "Not for me, how about Thursday?" "Morning or afternoon?"

Microsoft Bookings puts an end to all that. It gives you a simple booking page where customers, suppliers or colleagues can see when you're free and pick a time that suits them. The appointment drops straight into your Outlook calendar, a confirmation goes out automatically, and reminders help cut down on no-shows.

You can set up different services, choose how long each one takes, and decide how much notice you need. There's a good chance you already have it without realising.

Included with Microsoft 365 Business Basic, Standard and Premium plans.



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