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Strategic Office Technology Trends For

2020

+ Top Trends That Can Benefit Small & Medium Businesses in Canada

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INTRODUCTION

All businesses want to spend money more wisely, improve their efficiencies, minimize downtime and drive profits. The implementation of new technologies can ensure your organization stays competitive.

In fact, improving your company's internal processes is essential if you are to stand out from your competitors. Implementing seamless and efficient technologies is the key to make that happen.

In 2020, companies are recognizing just how essential investment into technology is. In Spiceworks' annual report into IT budgets and technology trends – titled 'The 2020 State of IT' – it was found that IT budgets are on the rise as businesses replace outdated technology.

Around 44 percent of businesses plan to increase tech spend in 2020 (up from 38 percent in 2019), with only 8 percent of companies expecting IT budgets to decline in 2020.

Staying ahead of the curve, however, is a completely different challenge entirely. With so many new technologies released each year, how do you know which ones are the right choice to drive your business into the future?

To help give your company an idea of which technologies you might want to consider investing in over the next year, OT Group has created a list of the five top business technology trends you can expect to see in 2020.

1
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLOUD TECHNOLOGY

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HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF CLOUD COMPUTING? IF NOT, YOUR BUSINESS IS MISSING OUT MASSIVELY.

Cloud computing offers cost–benefits, business efficiencies, easy scalability and many other competitive advantages that can transform your organization's internal processes. Yet many businesses are still continuing to operate without it.

According to a report from Dell, companies that invest in big data, cloud technology, mobility and security can realize up to 53 percent faster revenue growth than their competitors.

An increasing number of businesses are realizing just how important cloud technology is if they are to compete. A Gartner study claims that 28 percent of spending in key IT segments will shift to the cloud by 2022.

Cloud technology can help your company run more efficiently, improve the customer experience (CX) and increase your profits.

WHAT IS CLOUD TECHNOLOGY AND HOW CAN IT BENEFIT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Cloud computing is a term used to describe the use of computing services – including servers, storage, databases, networking, software analytics, remote services and much more – that are delivered through an internet network.

In its simplest definition, cloud computing is computing that is accessed through the internet as opposed to physical hardware or locally installed software.

Data collected and stored in cloud computing is processed and stored by remote servers, meaning your organization's physical devices do not need to work so hard. As a result, this allows for more efficient and reliable business processes.

BENEFITS OF CLOUD COMPUTING INCLUDE:

1. Cost-effective as you don't need to purchase, and maintain expensive hardware.
2. Seamless scalability for business growth and new employees.
3. Faster performance since cloud service providers provide you with access to high-performance servers.
4. Access to cloud providers valuable security measures.
5. Perfect for use with a remote workforce that works outside of your office.
6. Minimized loss data since your files aren't tied to one piece of physical hardware.

HYBRID AND DISTRIBUTED CLOUD COMPUTING WILL BE PARTICULARLY POPULAR IN 2020

Cloud computing will go one step further in 2020, with an increase in the popularity of distributed cloud computing.

Distributed cloud refers to cloud computing technologies that are shared across multiple systems and in different locations. Just like cloud computing, the cloud provider is still responsible for all aspects of cloud service architecture, delivery, operations and updates.

However, the cloud services are distributed outside the cloud provider's physical data centers.

Distributed cloud allows data centers to be located anywhere, meaning technical issues such as latency and regulatory challenges such as data sovereignty are solved. This is certainly a technology you should keep your eyes on throughout 2020.

2
THE USE OF AI SECURITY

As a small to medium-sized business owner, you are probably told on a frequent basis that it's important to backup your company's data as part of your IT strategy. Some companies do it, others don't.

However, has your organization ever thought about the consequences that cybercrime could have on your business?

What is ransomware?

While ransomware technology is anything but simple.
The concept of ransomware is actually very straightforward.
Ransomware is simply a well-known form of malicious
software in which a criminal locks and encrypts a victim's
computer and then demands a ransom to restore access.

In most cases, the victim is given a time limit in which they
must pay the ransom. If they don't, the data is lost forever.
If they do pay the ransom, then they are given a decryption
key that allows them to decrypt and access the files.

However, since it's criminals you're dealing with, there's no
guarantee that you'll ever get the data back even if you do pay.

According to research from Cybersecurity Ventures,
cybercrime will cost the world in excess of $6 trillion
annually by 2021, up from $3 trillion in 2015. Meanwhile, data
collated by Wikipedia, estimates that the average cost of one
single data breach will be over $150 million by 2020.

It is also estimated that in the first half of 2018 alone, about
4.5 billion records were exposed as a result of data breaches.

Backing up your data is a crucial aspect of protecting your data from the impact of cybercrimes, such as ransomware. However next year will see a huge rise in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) security.

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What is AI security?

Artificial intelligence has already displayed limitless potential in a wide range of appliances and industries. Over the past year and going into 2020, we will begin to see just how important it is when it comes to protecting your business from cyber crime.

Deploying AI for cybersecurity solutions will help protect your business from existing cyber threats as well as help identify newer threats.

Cybersecurity firms have created AI systems that are able to successfully detect malware, viruses and ransomware through algorithms and codes. Using these algorithms, AI security software can perform pattern recognition to identify viruses in your company's software.

Through this recognition of malicious files, AI security is able to isolate these files from your hardware and software. This will prevent your business from experiencing downtime or data loss – allowing you to focus on what matters, your core competencies.

OT Group uses AI security such as DarkTrace, Cisco Umbrella and SentinelOne to help its clients improve their security measures.
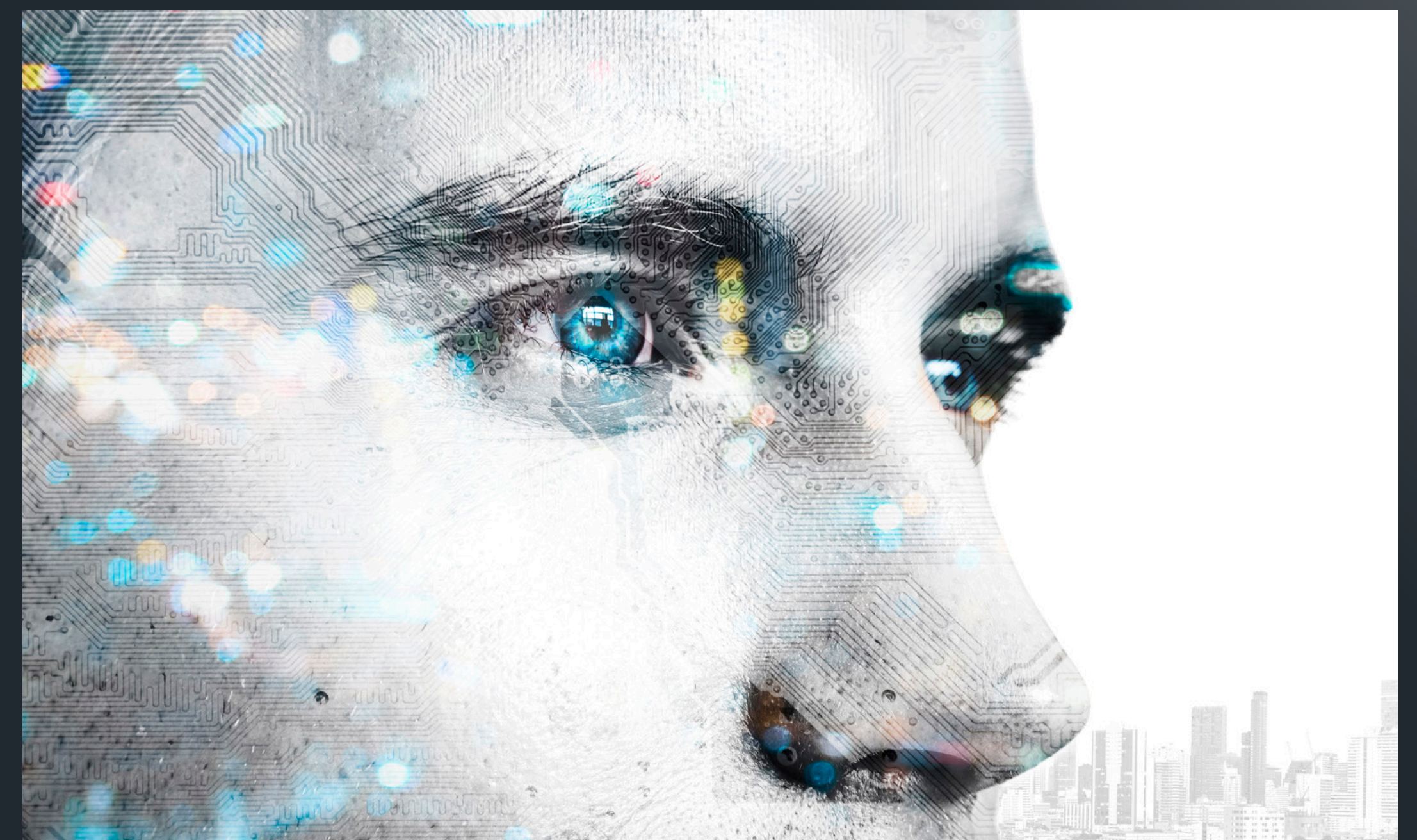
3
# BUSINESSES THAT USE MICROSOFT MUST UPGRADE TO WINDOWS 10

Does your business use Microsoft?

Then it's likely that you're still using an old version of the Windows operating system.

In fact, according to a recent SpiceWorks' Future of Network and Endpoint Security report, 32 percent of organizations still have at least one Windows XP device connected to their network – despite extended support for XP ending all the way back in 2014.

" Microsoft will no longer support Windows 7 after January 14, 2020."
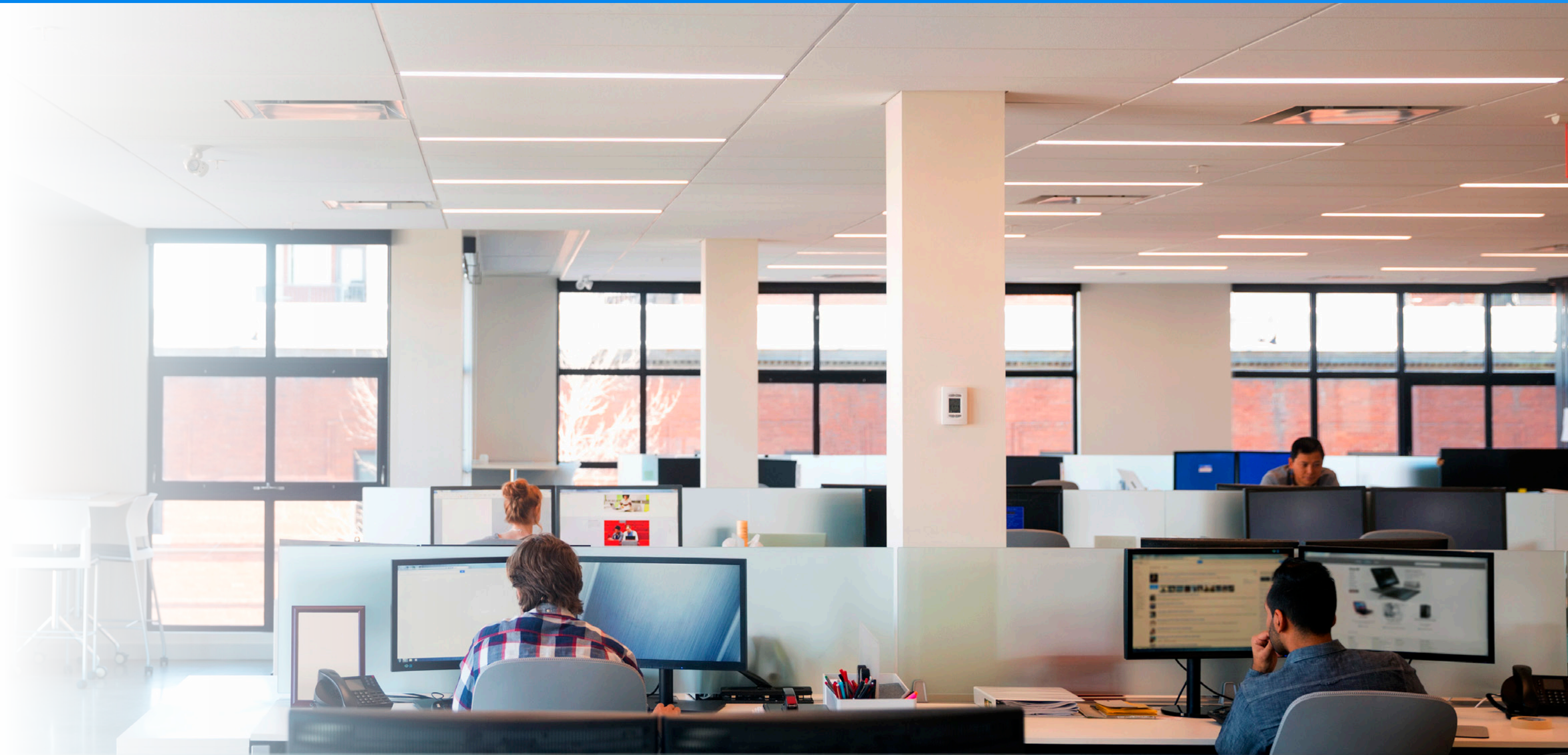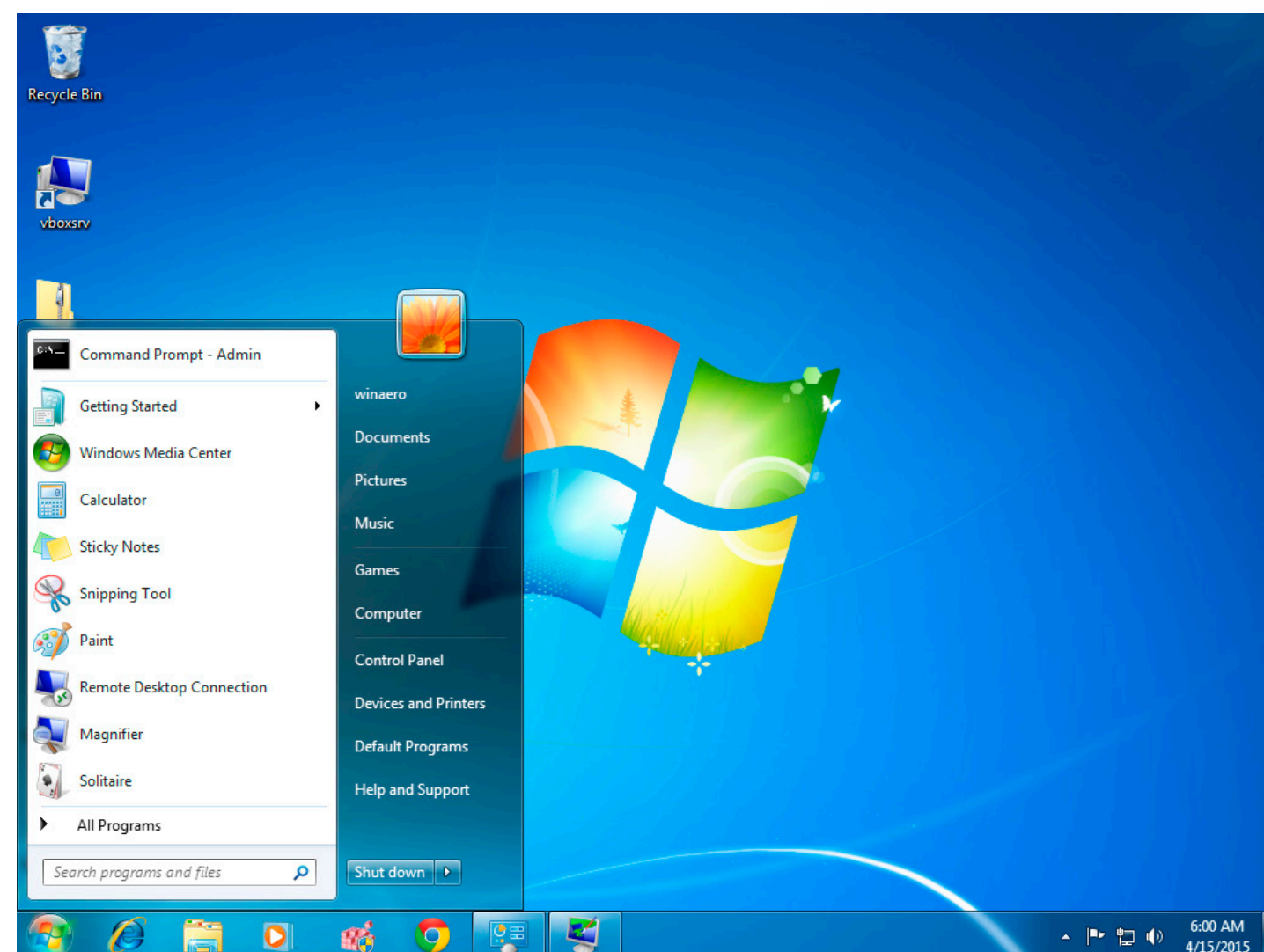
Why an upgrade is crucial after the end of free support for Windows

Earlier this year, a Gartner market forecast predicted that only 75 percent of professional PCs will be on Windows 10 by 2021. That means 25 percent of business computers will be remaining on an unsupported operating system.

While Windows 7 won't suddenly break down or stop working after 14 January 2020, it won't receive any further security patches. This will leave your business open to a wide range of security threats.

Over time, Windows 7 will become an insecure operating system. Microsoft won't fix any security holes within the software and your organization will be vulnerable to an ever-growing list of viruses, malware and ransomware.

Not only that, but the major software and hardware that you use internally to keep your business running efficiently will stop supporting Windows 7. We've already seen this with some newly released pieces of software.

How to upgrade to Windows 10?

Computers that are fairly new will be able to upgrade directly to Windows 10. However, older computers that have been used since Windows 7 first came out are likely too old to use Windows 10.

You can check the Windows 10 system requirements page to find out if the operating system will work with your company's computers.

4
CREATIVE FUNDING MODELS WILL BECOME MORE POPULAR

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Long gone are the days where your business pays an upfront and one-off fee for hardware and software. Many providers now use creative funding models in which you pay a subscription service fee.

If you are moving towards a cloud-based business model in 2020, then there are a few creative funding models that you should be aware of – all of which are set to become more popular in 2020.

- **IaaS:** Infrastructure-as-a-service is an instant computing infrastructure, including storage, networking and virtualization, that is provided and managed over the internet.

- **DaaS:** Desktop-as-a-service is a cloud computing service that enables business to deliver cloud-hosted virtual desktops to any device and from any location.

- **SaaS:** Software-as-a-Service is a licensing and distribution model used to deliver software applications over the internet.

5
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE UPTAKE WILL INCREASE

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The business intelligence (BI) industry is a rapidly evolving sector which has gone from strength to strength in recent years, but we believe 2020 is the year in which most businesses will realize just how it will apply to, and benefit, their organization.

In today's marketplace, every business deals with big data. That's the term used to describe the large volume of data that inundates your organization on a daily basis. Using that data well is the key to your company's future success.

By analysing data for insights and patterns, your organization can make better decisions and strategic business moves that ensure you stay competitive.

However, the data that comes into your organization is so large, fast and complex that it's pretty much impossible to process using traditional methods. That's where business intelligence comes in.

What is business intelligence?

Business intelligence is an umbrella term that refers to a series of tech tools that make it possible to collect, store, manage and understand insights and patterns from big data. By using business intelligence tools, your organization can transform big data into valuable business decisions.

Through the use of these tools, you'll be able to get a comprehensive view of your entire business. The result? You'll be able to make more informed, actionable decisions that improve the direction of your company.

How can business intelligence benefit your company?

There are a variety of ways that business intelligence will benefit your organization – from identifying areas you can increase profit, improving your back-end processes, optimizing company operations, identifying market trends, uncovering issues within your business, tracking company performance and much more.

Simply put, business intelligence gives the people in your organization the historical, current and predictive data they need to make better, and more strategic, decisions.
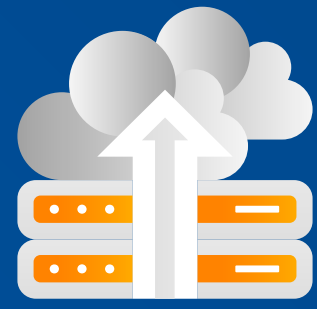
CONCLUSION

Every business is started by a fantastic idea. Whether it's targeting a gap in the market, the creation of a brand new product or the launch of a new service, to succeed in this highly competitive world your organization must have a unique selling point that makes you stand out over others within your industry.

That alone, however, isn't enough. Every great idea must be backed up by technology that allows you to deliver it. The use of advanced technology will align your internal objectives, help your company to meet the expectations of customers and allow you to plan for the future.

Investing in the right technology to make this happen is essential.

The right technology will save your business money, improve your internal processes and, ultimately, make your organization more profitable.

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Founded in 1988, OT Group is a leading provider of integrated business solutions. Whether you want to communicate between offices, update your infrastructure, take advantage of the cloud or update your disaster plan, OT Group offers complete IT solutions from design and installation to training and support.

The company is now one of the largest independently-owned office technology suppliers in Canada. This growth is directly attributable to OT Group's laser-sharp focus on providing exceptional customer service, industry-leading technology products, and substantial financial value.