

TECHNOLOGY TIMES



Insider Tips To Help You Run Your Business **Better, Faster, Easier** And More **Profitably**

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WHAT'S NEW?



We are super excited to announce that for the fifth year in a row, Avenir IT has been recognized as one of Canada's Top 50 Best Managed IT Companies!

Although there wasn't a banquet to attend again this year, our 2021 win felt more special than ever. 2021 was such a big year with many changes for Avenir IT. Despite the changes and challenges we faced, we are bigger and better than ever before!

Thank to our awesome team and super awesome clients for making this possible!



ONWARD & UPWARD

February was one heck of a crazy month for us at Avenir IT. It seems like so much is happening so fast that writing my monthly article has almost become therapeutic as I stop all disruptions and set aside some time to shut down and focus on this one thing. Sure, it's not quite 5AM yet – but for some reason, it seems that my body has decided that my days now start between 3:30 and 4:00AM and I love it!

The amount of quality time I get between then and the official start of the day has been phenomenal. It's as though I can fit in 8 hours of work plus my morning exercises in the 4 hours before real life begins! It's also been a great time to stop, think and plan out our next steps as a business as we explore new horizons in this exciting game of life.

As you may know, February saw a lot of changes – from our rebuilt Cybersecurity offering

(<https://avenirit.com/advanced-security/>), the official launch of Avenir IT Co-Managed services (<https://avenirit.com/co-managed-it-services/>) and the incredible



If you are looking to replace your current IT firm or if you are personally looking to remove that from your own plate, Avenir IT is a great place to start. They live up to their mantra of "No Jerks Allowed". The team they have assembled are great to work with and are patient with all levels of customer computer proficiencies!

Stephen Foord
Director of Engineering,
Novid Inc.

success of the first phase of launching our custom built centralized customer portal: Mission Control.

February also saw some great recognition as Canada's top 50 best managed IT companies, and a huge thanks to the Winnipeg Free Press that did a great piece on our team and recent successes titled "St. Boniface cyberwarriors on the leading edge".

(<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/business/542-or-36-1-st-boniface-cyberwarriors-on-the-leading-edge-576224832.html>)

Behind the scenes, our COO, Melissa Ross has been hard at work revamping our staff

benefits, introducing a new RRSP matching program, among other great investments towards the most important element of Avenir IT – our people. It's hard to believe that in this same month, we welcomed a new Operations Manager, Derek Rocan, and hired our 23rd staff member! Did I mention that we're also hard at work at finding a new space so that we can finally bring everybody back together in a safe environment?

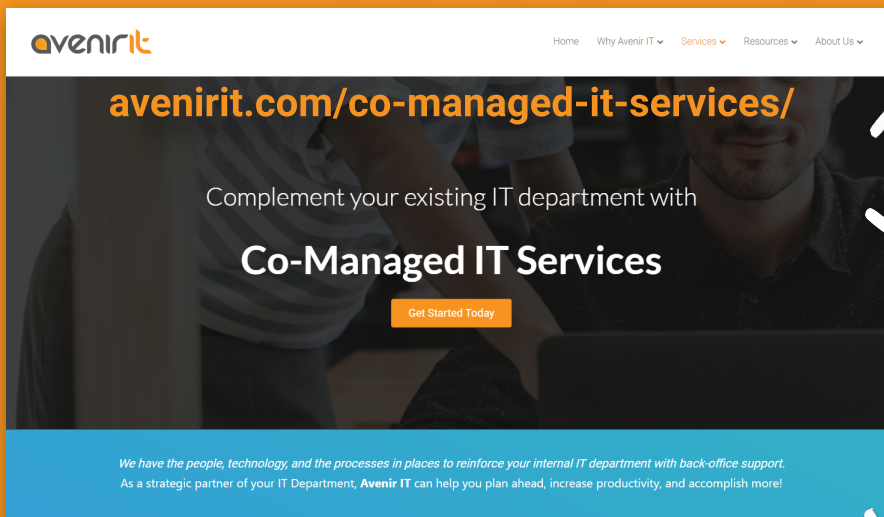
It's strange really sitting here and writing this post while thinking back to where we were 5 years ago, in 2017, celebrating our 9 years in business with a team of four technicians, and trying to figure out where we would be in five years' time. Although our

goal to be the most loved IT company in Canada and the best place to work has never changed, I feel that we are now in a better place than ever to get there and closing in on our target. I mean, what better recognition can you have as a business leader than being considered the best place to work?

Yes, this has been a crazy month. A crazy great month! I hope we get more Februaries (can you pluralize a month?), and I look forward to looking back in five years to what we were today, in 2022 and all that we have learned and adapted to during that time.



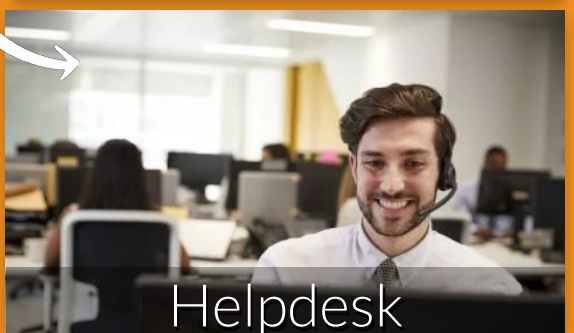
INTRODUCING:



The screenshot shows the Avenir IT website. At the top, the Avenir IT logo is on the left, and navigation links for Home, Why Avenir IT, Services, Resources, and About Us are on the right. The main heading is [avenirit.com/co-managed-it-services/](https://www.avenirit.com/co-managed-it-services/). Below this, the text reads "Complement your existing IT department with Co-Managed IT Services" with a "Get Started Today" button. At the bottom, a blue banner contains the text: "We have the people, technology, and the processes in places to reinforce your internal IT department with back-office support. As a strategic partner of your IT Department, Avenir IT can help you plan ahead, increase productivity, and accomplish more!"

Odds are your IT department is overworked and struggling to keep up with all your daily operational needs and Cybersecurity requirements. As your technology needs grow, so does the need for specialized IT reinforcement. With our co-managed IT services, we can assist & support your IT department with technical expertise, strategic planning, tools, personnel, and other resources. Together, we can create efficiencies with your in-house IT team by streamlining your IT functions and cybersecurity.

@ <https://avenirit.com/co-managed-it-services/>





HOOP HACKS & ATTACKS

There's a March Madness of a different kind that happens each year during this time of tournaments: the onslaught of phishing emails that users fall for over and over again.

With pools that take place in our offices, among friends, or to the individual who wants to join a group online, hackers are handed a very easy way to get us to click as we look to participate and enter our bracket choices. They don't even have to work hard to socially engineer or disguise their sites, because we rarely verify these sites for safety or authenticity. We just trust that we are safely clicking and inputting our choices and personal information. Take it a step further and input any payment information and we've given them a bonus.

This year especially, with so much remote interaction, we're expecting to learn about a lot of cyber crime that took advantage of the March American college basketball games as an opportunity to deploy ransomware and breach networks.

Humans are the link in the cybersecurity chain where access is usually weakest, trust is established – or overlooked – easily. Especially when our excitement is high, and we don't view what we are doing as anything other than "some harmless fun" with little or no value to hackers. *What would they need with my basketball picks?*

They don't care about THOSE but they do care about your login credentials that may be used on another account or gaining your trust and assuming your guard is down as you click on malicious links.

Take heed before you think an old friend has reached out to connect via a fun tournament site. Don't click on links without doing some verification that it is legit and not disguised with text that misrepresents where the actual link takes you to. Hover, examine and ensure that you are headed to a valid location. Do the same with email addresses. Look for misspellings and names that are merely a disguise for a fake account. Those extra s's or other letters aren't easily seen with a quick glance. Marchmadness.com – did your eye catch that extra N right away? Also, don't open attachments or offer up financial input without doubling down on your efforts to verify.

A few minutes to verify will increase your odds of advancing through the tournament of cyber safety to be the last man or woman standing on the court after the madness has subsided.

THE FEMALE History of IT

In honour of International Women's Day on March 8th, we wanted to share the untold female origins of programming!

The IT industry has been male dominated for as long as most of us can remember; however, you may be unaware that the history of programming began with women at the helm.

The IT industry had its start thanks to a female mathematician named Ada Lovelace. She is known for her work on the first mechanical computer, The Babbage Difference Engine, designed by Charles Babbage in 1822. She was the one to recognize that his machine could be used for purposes beyond pure calculation. Because of her discovery, she is often regarded as the very first computer programmer.

Later, in the 1930's, Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper became the first person to create an English based coding language by converting English terms into machine code with a program linker or "compiler" that she designed.

These women are just two of the countless who have made huge contribution to world of technology. As more women join STEM fields, we will continue to see an increase in female tech innovators. We cannot wait to celebrate their success stories as they emerge!

<https://womeninstem.ingeniumcanada.org/timeline/>

3 Things The Smartest Leaders Will Be Doing This Year

Planning for 2022, many leaders have had to consider employee retention to a degree like never before. What once was enough to keep employees happy simply won't cut it anymore. Amid the biggest talent shift in recent memory, these three strategies could make the difference in your organization's bid to retain its talent.

1. Put a Premium on the Act of Listening

There's no 'one size fits all' solution when it comes to employee retention. Everyone wants something different out of their job, and as a leader, you must respect and understand that. No two employees are the same, by listening to employees' feedback, leaders will be much better informed as to how to keep employees happy. Often times, employees don't want rewards as much as you would think -- they want to be heard and valued.

2. Give Employees Avenues for Feedback

Going a step further from committing to listening to your employees, you must provide them with a way to conveniently share their feedback. Employees want to feel valued and heard, and one of the best ways to make this happen is with regular surveys. Sending your team quick and convenient surveys allows you to monitor satisfaction and capture feedback so they can address problems before they fester.

3. Lean on Tech to Minimize Burnout

The pandemic forced many companies to invest in new tools and solutions to maintain workflow, minimize burnout, and keep employees connected. Ideally, these investments should maintain their use and outlive the pandemic. Leaders should be focusing on how to lean on tools and technology that are available to allow employees to work smarter, not harder. Automating as much of the tedious, administrative part of the job allows for employees to focus on what matters in their respective roles.

4 Tips To Spot Fraud Schemes Before Falling Victim

March is fraud awareness month, and in March of 2022 the need for this awareness is greater than ever, as fraudsters continue to come up with creative new ways to get you. Every year, Canadians and Canadian businesses alike lose millions of dollars to the activities of scammers who bombard us with online, mail, door-to-door and telephone scams.

Learning to spot 'phishy' behaviour and situations can go a long way towards protecting yourself and your organization from falling victim to these crimes. Here are 4 common themes to look out for:

1. Promising Payout

Scammers incentivize their victims to send money by promising a prize. They will sometimes continue to ask for additional payments until the victim recognizes the scam for what it is.

2. Creating a Sense of Urgency

Fraudsters will work quickly and will often use social engineering tactics to take advantage of people. They will play on people's emotions and generosity, sometimes threatening their victims.

3. Demanding Privacy

Once the fraudsters have you hooked, they will emphasize the need for privacy and confidentiality to keep others around the victim from recognizing their scam.

4. Unexpected Links

Sending phishing emails and messages is a common tactic fraudsters use. Watch out for any unexpected links. These links will commonly contain minor spelling error that can tip you off to suspicious activity.

Adapted from "Want to Become a Great Leader? The Smartest Ones Will Be Doing These 3 Things This Year" by Marcel Schwantes



Avenir IT Voice

Enterprise-grade, HD VoIP
solution to strengthen your
business communications.

avenirit.com/voice