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Superfast
Business Wales

INCLUDES
GUIDE TO THE
INTERNET OF
THINGS TO MAKE
YOUR BUSINESS
SMARTER

SUPERFAST BUSINESS WALES

SOFTWARE

ESSENTIALS

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🖱 businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales

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Welsh Government

**Cronfa Datblygu
Rhanbarthol Ewrop
European Regional
Development Fund**

Who are Superfast Business Wales?

We are a free advisory and training service that helps businesses make the most of the latest online technology.

Backed by the Welsh Government and European Regional Development Fund, we've put on 800 workshops and events, and delivered over 20,000 hours of help for businesses in Wales.

We've worked with over 5,000 businesses to help them reduce costs, reach more customers and simplify work processes. We plan to help many more.

Register online today to embrace digital transformation, discover new tools and get tailored 1:1 support (including a website review). Together, we can keep your business growing.

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Running a successful business, small or large, is much easier if you choose the right tools. These can help you to improve efficiency, streamline operations, boost security and often reduce costs.

This directory will help you find software and services you can rely on. Our product lists are presented for information and research only, and any recommendations are not designed to be comprehensive or act as a specific endorsement from Superfast Business Wales.

■ CHOOSING THE RIGHT PRODUCT

It's important to get the right product for your business, so take time to carefully research the

> **"**
> # THIS DIRECTORY WILL HELP YOU FIND BUSINESS SOFTWARE YOU CAN RELY ON...
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shortlisted products. Take recommendations from contacts and business partners to find out which services they use. Online reviews and trade magazines can also be useful resources for product reviews and information.

For more complicated installations, contact a vendor and organise a face-to-face meeting to talk through your requirements; take advantage of free trials; and look at services/software that can integrate with your existing systems.

■ MOVING TO THE CLOUD

Many of today's powerful software tools are now subscription-based cloud services running over the internet. Using such services takes away the management burden and opens up accessibility, making critical systems available from everywhere. If you have staff that work flexibly, or from multiple locations, the cloud is a perfect fit. It's easier to grow (or shrink) too, as you can add and remove user licenses, helping you to control spend.

■ DEALING WITH COST

With any business tool, it's important to calculate the total cost of ownership. This means considering any hardware costs and internal management costs, particularly when comparing traditional software to the cloud. Without these, cloud costs may seem prohibitively expensive.

■ PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

If you're replacing a legacy system, the roll-out of a new one must be carefully managed. Assign someone the job of migrating data, so that you can start using the new software with all the business information that you'll need. Plan to run the old and new systems in parallel for a time, so that you can iron out bugs and kinks, and time your transition carefully: busy times of the year won't be a good choice if something goes wrong.

■ FURTHER GUIDANCE

For more free information, guides and tips on becoming a super fast business, visit the Superfast Business Wales website.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Getting tasks completed on time, on budget, and with the most efficient use of available resources is key to running a successful business. Project management and practice management software are the tools that can lighten the load.

Project management products differ across sectors, so it's important to choose the software that works best for your type of business. Key things to look for include the right level of reporting for your organisation, plus features to help you plan your resource allocation and usage (human or otherwise), plus provide the flexibility to keep up with planned/unplanned business changes.

To ensure that your teams can communicate effectively, take time to examine the collaboration aspects of any software you choose. Also, consider the interaction with other digital tools you might use, from spreadsheets to corporate instant messaging. Will everything work together?

Practice management software tends to be more specialised, but the project management advice above still holds true. Look out for a product specifically designed for your type of business, whether you're a lawyer, accountant or a doctor.

For both types of software, it's important to examine the total cost of any solution. This should include per-user costs, plus any fees for converting data from old sources and any setup charges you might incur. By fully pricing out a potential software choice, you can make an accurate long-term prediction about the overall cost of ownership, enabling you to more accurately compare competing products against your current systems.

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LEARN MORE. DO MORE

Since the IT roll-out we have increased overall productivity by 50% and completely eradicated the delays that used to occur while our teams waited for information gained from site visits. *EvaBuild, Newtown*

Improve how you do business by attending our free workshop: Let's Get Digital. We'll help you assess whether your business is making the best use of today's online technology and take you through some live demonstrations of online tools tailored to your needs.

For other Superfast Business Wales events near you, visit our Events page, call us on 03332 408329 or email us.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management software is a tool to help you plan, allocate resources and manage scheduling for projects. By helping to plan scope and organise resources, you can gain greater control over costs and timings, all while improving collaboration. Properly implemented, project management software lets you achieve more and improve results, lowering costs and increasing transparency.

1 ASANA

Website: www.asana.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: With a flexible, visual interface, Asana is a powerful collaborative tool. It combines tasks, sub-tasks, timelines and a calendar view to help you track projects, while integrations with services that range from Slack to Dropbox help you work smarter.

2 BASECAMP

Website: www.basecamp.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac OS, iOS and Android clients

Description: A project management tool that aids collaboration, providing messaging, real-time chat, to-do lists, schedules, file storage and documents in one. A simple interface makes it easy to track and report on projects.

3 LIQUIDPLANNER

Website: www.liquidplanner.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses (5 person minimum)

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A project management solution that provides scheduling for multiple projects, organisation, team and predictive planning/coordination, project collaboration, workload intelligence, dashboards, time tracking and approval, analysis and reporting.

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4 MICROSOFT PROJECT

Website: products.office.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access and Windows client software

Description: Delivered through Office 365, Project is available in several tiers. Features include timelines, roadmaps, demand management, resource management, time and task management/collaboration and reporting and business intelligence.

5 TRELLO

Website: www.trello.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A highly-visual Kanban-style tool, Trello makes keeping track of simple tasks and projects very easy with its drag-and-drop interface. More complicated projects may find it too simple, but for simple and collaborative project management jobs, it's a great tool.

6 ZAPIER

Website: www.zapier.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A task automation service, which can interact with other cloud-based services, e.g. auto-updating a Google Sheets document when a task is completed in Basecamp. Pulls together disparate systems, saving time without interrupting workflows.

7 ZOHO PROJECTS

Website: www.zoho.com/projects

Target Audience: Freelancers, small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Packed with features, Zoho Projects gives you task lists, time-tracking, milestone reporting, a Kanban-style view of your to-dos, and includes real-time chat and forums. Integrations with third-party services like Google Drive help pull everything together.

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Practice management software helps you to run professional, client-facing offices and consequently there are specific tools aimed at law practices, medical practices, accountants, dental practices, veterinarian surgeries, architectural companies, opticians and many more. Typically, software products in this area can help manage records, billing, scheduling and appointments.

1 BTCSOFTWARE

Website: www.btcsoftware.co.uk

Target Audience: Accountants, small to medium-sized with numerous practitioners

Platform: On-premises PCs, servers and cloud

Description: Provides software solutions for practice managers, self-assessment, accounts production, corporation tax and more. Allows the production of an unlimited number of individual, partnership and company returns.

2 E-CLINIC

Website: www.e-clinic.co.uk

Target Audience: Individual practitioners, healthcare chains with multiple locations

Platform: PC and Mac, servers, secure cloud hosting

Description: At the core of e-clinic is appointment booking, billing, critical data and reporting. Large practices with multiple sites can use website integration, outbound call management and clinical cases. Offers Standard, Pro and Enterprise plans with monthly contracts.

3 GLIDE

Website: www.whatsglide.com

Target Audience: Accountants, small to medium-sized with numerous practitioners

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Starting life as a specialist workflow engine, Glide offers powerful workflow management that lets you standardise procedures and automate targets. Optional modules include Time & Fees for billing and Scheduler for managing employee time.

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4 IRIS

Website: www.iris.co.uk

Target Audience: Accountants, GPs, medical professionals, small businesses

Platform: On-premises, cloud, PCs and servers via browser access

Description: IRIS develops software for accountants, payroll and finance professionals, but also for GPs, practice managers, medical professionals and small business owners. The software is built around annual licences with upgrades based on number of clients.

5 LINETIME LEGAL PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Website: www.linetime.co.uk

Target Audience: Law societies, solicitors, PLCs and government

Platform: PCs, servers, cloud

Description: Provides full financial management, aids compliance and full financial accounting, time recording, nominal ledger, reporting and legal aid. Fully compliant with all SRA accounting rules. Variable pricing based on modules required.

6 PRACTICEPAL

Website: www.practicepal.co.uk

Target Audience: Medical practitioners including mixed clinics and dentistry

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS, Android and Windows clients

Description: PracticePal's contact databases incorporate patient demographics, diary appointments and scheduling, clinic notes, online booking and full financial management for practice income and expenditure. Variable length contracts; monthly charging.

7 XERO PRACTICE MANAGER

Website: www.xero.com

Target Audience: Small businesses, accountants, bookkeepers

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Xero fully integrates with a client company, providing seamless connectivity to the clients' bank and ledger, avoiding data entry. Xero operates in the cloud, providing data anytime/anywhere when required. Starter, Standard and Premium pricing levels available.

HR & FINANCE

Profit and loss are the two most important words for any business, so accurately being able to manage staff and report expenditure/income are crucial functions. When choosing accounting software, make sure that your choice has the features that you need now, or can be expanded at a later date. For example, you may need to account for VAT or foreign currency transactions, which not all packages do.

Payroll software, meanwhile, makes it easier to account for any staff payments, including submitting PAYE information to HMRC accurately and automatically. While you can buy standalone payroll packages, you may be better off buying this as a bundle with your financial reporting software. If you have specific requirements, including staff paid by the hour, additional overtime or

bonuses, pensions and expense payments, make sure that your chosen software can handle these aspects. And, you need software that can handle statutory pay, too, including sick pay and maternity leave.

In April 2019, Making Tax Digital for VAT came into force and this requires registered businesses with a taxable turnover above £85,000 to keep records in digital form and file their VAT Returns using software.

HR software completes the trio of business tools in this section and is essential when your business has a sizeable number of staff. Look out for software that can store and manage employee data – e.g. current pay, holiday entitlement and appraisals – while giving self-service options to staff, such as the ability to request time off.

HUMAN RESOURCES

From maintaining and tracking personal information (including: pay, skills, training and achievements), to providing self-service options for leave of absence requests, the software we've listed on these pages covers all the features you need to effectively manage your workforce and keep staff happy. Dedicated HR software can also reduce the burden on HR staff, letting them focus on the people they're serving.

1 BAMBOOHR

Website: www.bamboohr.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Fully GDPR compliant with EU servers, the BambooHR Essentials package provides everything from managing employee leave to dealing with benefit packages. The Avantage option adds applicant tracking, onboarding, offboarding and training tracking.

2 BRIGHTHR

Website: www.brighthr.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Includes holiday, shift and rota planning, sickness and lateness tracking, plus approved leave and payroll reports. Available in Core, Complete (adds employment legal advice) and Complete Care+ (adds employee support) versions.

3 CASCADEGO

Website: www.octopus-hr.co.uk

Target Audience: Small to medium businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Formerly Octopus HR, CascadeGo is aimed at companies with between 10 and 100+ employees. The standard software manages holidays, sickness, salary and other HR functions. Additional modules can add payroll, timesheets, recruitment and training.

4 CHARLIE HR

Website: www.charliehr.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses (1 to 499 employees)

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Includes absence management, employee records, performance reviews, engagement surveys, onboarding and offboarding, notifications and reporting. May not suit faster-growing and larger companies who might need something more powerful.

5 CITRUSHR

Website: www.citrushr.com

Target Audience: Small businesses and charities

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Designed for small business, CitrusHR manages employee holidays and absences, provides easier payroll, online timesheets, and manages appraisals, qualifications and training. For urgent communication you can even send an SMS to all employees.

6 SAGE BUSINESS CLOUD PEOPLE

Website: www.sagepeople.com

Target Audience: Large, medium-sized and small, fast-growing businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A suite of tools, Sage Business Cloud People can manage an entire HR strategy, from employee maintenance and absence leave, to finding and recruiting new talent. It also integrates with most major payroll software for easier management.

7 ZOHO PEOPLE

Website: www.zoho.com/people/

Target Audience: Micro, small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Basic features here include simple HR tools for salary and leave management. But pay a little more and you can add attendance tracking, shift scheduling, performance, and 360 feedback. There's a free plan for companies with up to five users too.

ACCOUNTING

This type of software gives you a single area to control your finances, from generating invoices, reconciling expenses and managing suppliers to bookkeeping. The best accounting software, such as these, can also crunch the data to generate reports to show ongoing profit and loss, while exporting records that an accountant will find easier to audit. All software here works with the government's 'Making Tax Digital' initiative for VAT.

1 FREEAGENT

Website: www.freeagent.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, sole traders, partnerships, LLP and limited companies

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Handles expenses, time-tracking, estimates and invoices with overviews of cash flow and project profitability. Business expenses can be tracked and linked to company bank accounts and it supports self-assessed income tax, VAT and corporation tax.

2 KASHFLOW

Website: www.kashflow.com

Target Audience: Small businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Able to manage invoices, reconcile payments and expenses against bank accounts, produce quotes/estimates and track mileage. Options exist for sole traders (up to 25 bank transactions per month) and business accounts (for multiple users/unlimited transactions).

3 QUICKBOOKS ONLINE

Website: quickbooks.intuit.com/uk/

Target Audience: Sole traders, small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access, and Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: This online software can invoice, manage payments and reconcile bank statements. Tiers deliver different features: Self-Employed helps with HMRC self assessment and mileage deductions, while Essentials adds VAT and CIS deductions.

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4 QUICKFILE

Website: www.quickfile.co.uk

Target Audience: Sole traders, small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: An accounting system for the non-accountant, QuickFile provides a sales and purchases ledger, invoicing, VAT reporting and multi-currency facilities. Annual subscription applicable above 1,000 ledger entries with charges for automated bank feeds.

5 SAGE BUSINESS CLOUD ACCOUNTING

Website: uk.sageone.com

Target Audience: Start-ups, small businesses, freelancers and sole traders

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access, and Windows, iOS and Android clients

Description: Accounting Start for small businesses and sole traders lets you invoice, download bank feeds, report VAT and track profit and loss. The full Accounting option adds purchase invoices, cashflow forecasts, multi-currency invoicing, delivery notes and more.

6 XERO

Website: www.xero.com/uk/

Target Audience: Sole traders and small businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A Starter option for sole traders lets you send five invoices, five bills and reconcile 20 bank transactions per month, with VAT and automatic bank feeds. The Standard option removes those limits, while Premium adds multiple currency support.

7 ZOHO BOOKS

Website: www.zoho.eu/uk/books

Target Audience: Micro, small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A Basic version offers bank reconciliation, custom invoices, expense tracking, VAT reporting, time tracking and more, limited to 50 contacts. Standard increases the contacts to 500, adding credit notes, multi-currencies and bills, while Professional is the unlimited option.

PAYROLL

Running your own payroll requires you to run software that can report directly to HMRC. A good package, therefore, will help you record employee details correctly, work out pay, calculate deductions and easily report payroll information. All of the software and services listed on these pages can transmit real-time information (RTI) to HMRC. For more details, see www.gov.uk/payroll-software.

1 HMRC BASIC PAYE TOOL

Website: www.gov.uk/basic-paye-tools

Target Audience: Small businesses

Platform: Windows, Mac and Ubuntu Linux

Description: This is the government's official tool for small companies (up to 10 employees). It can be used to check an employee's National Insurance number, send an Employer Payment Summary and send an Earlier Year Update. It can't produce payslips though.

2 KASHFLOW PAYROLL

Website: www.kashflow.com

Target Audience: All businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Integrating with the KashFlow accountancy software, KashFlow Payroll can enter pay details into your books, automate payroll approval and staff payments, provide employee self-service for payslips and send RTI submissions to HMRC.

3 PAYROO

Website: www.payroo.com

Target Audience: All businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access and an Android client

Description: This cloud based payroll system is fully comprehensive and suitable for any size of company, from one with only one employee to one with thousands. RTI eReturns and eReceipts are provided as part of the system. Visit the website for a demo.

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4 PRIMOPAYROLL

Website: www.primopayroll.co.uk

Target Audience: Small to large businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: A free version supports up to 10 employees, including HMRC RTI submissions, payslips via email and gross to net calculators. Paid-for versions add more features, including P60s and P45s by email and employee self-service.

5 QUICKBOOKS PAYROLL

Website: quickbooks.intuit.com/uk/

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access, Windows, Mac; iOS and Android clients

Description: Integrating with Quickbooks Online, this Payroll module can automatically add transactions into your books to make for easier reporting. HMRC RTI submissions, email payslips and statutory pay are among some of the key features.

6 SAGE BUSINESS CLOUD PAYROLL

Website: uk.sageone.com

Target Audience: Small businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: A simple, online payroll solution that calculates payments and deductions, such as tax and NI , and integrates with Sage One Accounts. It's ideal for small businesses that want to manage payroll up to 15 employees with no payroll experience.

7 XERO PAYROLL

Website: www.xero.com/uk

Target Audience: Sole traders and small businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Linking to the Xero accounting package, Xero Payroll integrates employee payments into your books. Payroll includes flexible payment dates, statutory payment calculations, e-payslips with employee self-service, HMRC RTI submissions, expenses and more.

SALES

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Choosing the right software to manage all aspects of the sales process is the key to increasing profit and maintaining good client relations. The good news is that there are only four areas you need to consider.

The first is Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM systems are key to driving a good sales team, as they will let them track, manage and chase leads, while building a centralised database of clients. Look for a solution that gives you the flexibility you need, including connections to other systems you might run, such as financial reporting and communication.

For stores, EPOS (Electronic Point of Sale) systems will be indispensable. Consider a system that enables you to track your stock and offer discounts, but one that also provides detailed reports on your sales and allows you to take multiple forms of customer payments.

Speaking of payments, modern payment systems allow businesses to take money directly from clients in the most flexible way possible. Again, look for a system that matches your needs, whether that's online payments, credit card readers or credit card payments that are made directly to your business using a reader attached to a mobile device (such as a tablet or phone).

Finally, if you're running a business that makes money through bookings, then a booking solutions system will be one of the best purchases you'll ever make. Choose one that gives you the flexibility for your business, whether that's selling tickets to events, renting rooms or scheduling customer appointments.

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Treorchy-based gift shop, Wonder Stuff, has seen a boost in sales by 33% and a 20% reduction in stock management time thanks to a new EPOS system. As the shop can now pinpoint the stock it requires, it buys more regularly but in smaller quantities. *Wonder Stuff, Treorchy*

Improve how you do business by attending our free workshop: CRM. We'll help you to discover how to protect your business data and target new customers to grow your business.

For other Superfast Business Wales events near you, visit our Events page, call us on 03332 408329 or email us.

CRM

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software will help you build up a picture of your customers: what they like, what they've bought before, how they like to be communicated with, and the interest they've shown in your products and services. By tracking the entire sales process and showing which customers are most valuable, you can help your company grow.

1 GOLDMINE CRM

Website: www.goldmine.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A leading provider of mobile relationship management solutions for small businesses. Strong customisation features, dynamic reports, dashboard and multiple controls for tasks and projects. Now also integrates with Quickbooks.

2 HUBSPOT CRM

Website: www.hubspot.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Hubspot is a simple and free CRM system that gives you a simple dashboard for keeping tabs on your sales funnel, and can track customer interactions, automatically synchronising with Gmail or Outlook. Integrates with HubSpot's sales software.

3 MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365

Website: dynamics.microsoft.com/en-gb/

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Integrates with Office 365 to automate sales, customer service and marketing. Offers mobile CRM apps and platforms, plus tools that integrate data and reporting from social media into the CRM application. It can also be deployed on premises.

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4 SAGE CRM

Website: www.sagecrm.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Provides the ability to use point-and-click reports to get access to data for immediate analysis and decision-making, track leads from first contact to final closure and manage new and existing customer relationships with business performance information.

5 SALESFORCE SALES CLOUD

Website: www.salesforce.com/uk

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Provides details of your leads, contacts, accounts and critical business information, operating in real time and automatically handling tasks like updating project statuses and optimising account profiles. Focuses on customisation and collaboration.

6 SUGAR PROFESSIONAL

Website: www.sugarcrm.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Includes 360-degree customer activity history, the ability to track key selling opportunities across social sites and respond directly, real-time pipeline management and sales analytics. Integrates with Google Docs, Microsoft Word and Excel and email clients.

7 ZOHO CRM

Website: www.zoho.com/crm

Target Audience: Micro, small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A self-managed CRM system that allows you to track all sales opportunities, import opportunities from third parties, automate tasks and capture leads from your website. Includes dynamic reports and a dashboard with real-time reporting.

EPOS

Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) systems are more than just fancy tills. They are essential for helping you to manage stock, automatically accounting for sales and making it easier to track/optimise pricing. Crucially, they can give you the ability to deploy advanced sales features such as discounts, special offers and loyalty schemes. No retail store should be without one.

1 EPOS SYSTEMS

Website: www.epossystemsltd.co.uk

Target Audience: Colleges, hotels, nightclubs, retirement villages, hospitality businesses, health and beauty businesses

Platform: PCs, smart devices, scanners, tills

Description: Provides retail solutions tailored to point of sale and supporting management systems to integrate the software solutions into specific business needs.

2 EPOSNOW

Website: www.eposnow.com

Target Audience: Retail and hospitality businesses

Platform: iPad, Android, Mac and PC, scanners and printers

Description: Epos Now is designed to work with almost all POS hardware, including PCs, Macs, iPads or Android tablets. It provides complete reporting, stock inventory, customer loyalty programmes and security, giving staff different levels of control either by PIN or swipe cards.

3 INTELLIGENT RETAIL

Website: www.intelligentretail.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, retail, single and multiple stores

Platform: PCs, scanners, printers

Description: A retail solution designed around the needs of multi-channel independent retailers. It encompasses in-store, POS, eCommerce, mail order and online marketplaces. Price on application – free consultation to gauge size of system required.

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4 LIGHTSPEED

Website: www.lightspeedhq.co.uk

Target Audience: Retail, store management, restaurants, bars, cafes

Platform: Cloud-based EPOS, iOS, barcode scanner, printers (mobile, portable receipt)

Description: Lightspeed is a combined retail, store management, inventory management, sales processing and employee management system. It allows the management of single or multiple locations and the seamless integration of online and in-store channels.

5 POINTONE

Website: www.pointone-epos.co.uk

Target Audience: Restaurants, bars, cafes, pubs, theatres, nightclubs

Platform: Smartphones, online, touchscreen tills

Description: PointOne offers everything the hospitality sector requires, including stock control, online ordering, Chip & PIN payments and kitchen management. As well as more traditional EPOS tills, PointOne has an Android Tablet EPOS system for table-side ordering.

6 UNIWARE

Website: www.uniware.co.uk

Target Audience: Retail and hospitality businesses

Platform: PCs, POS terminals, scanners, mobile POS, cashless, auto-vending, web

Description: Uniware provides software solutions within the retail and hospitality sectors using the latest technologies for smarter EPOS, seamless and creative payments, intuitive loyalty, promotions, eProcurement and stock control. Price based on services selected.

7 VEND

Website: www.vendhq.com/uk

Target Audience: Retail

Platform: Web-based (PC, iPad, Mac), printers, scanners

Description: Vend's cloud-based POS system lets you work from anywhere, storing your vital information safely online. As it's cloud-based, you can mange multiple environments online, but the system will work offline if your internet ever goes down.

PAYMENTS

Payment systems let you take money directly from your customers in the most flexible ways possible. Online payment systems allow you to monetise your website; credit card systems empower your business with in-store card readers; while the latest mobile payment systems allow you to quickly and easily take card payments anywhere using a mobile reader and a tablet or smartphone.

1 IZETTLE

Website: www.izettle.com/gb

Target Audience: Micro, small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: iOS, iPad and Android devices

Description: iZettle turns your mobile device into a payment station, letting you take credit card payments with the optional Bluetooth card reader. There's no monthly fee for the app, but iZettle charges a small card transaction fee for each sale you make.

2 PAYPAL

Website: www.paypal.com

Target Audience: Companies of all sizes

Platform: Online, smart devices (via an app), mobile card reader

Description: PayPal offers a range of payment solutions. It can be used on your website using checkout buttons; in person using Chip and Pin and contactless payments; with a card reader or mobile app; while PayPal Invoicing can take care of billing.

3 SAGE PAY

Website: www.sagepay.co.uk

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Online, card readers and phone

Description: Sage Pay offers a range of card payment solutions that make it easy for customers to pay, whether it's via a stand-alone card terminal or a more sophisticated solution that integrates with your EPOS system. Free 24/7 support is included.

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4 STRIPE

Website: www.stripe.com/gb

Target Audience: Companies of all sizes

Platform: Online

Description: Stripe enables you to build beautiful-looking and elegant payment forms for your website and to accept payments using all major credit cards. Requires developer integration into a website and PAYG model incurs a percentage fee per transaction.

5 SUMUP

Website: www.sumup.co.uk

Target Audience: Micro, small and mid-sized businesses

Platform: iOS, iPad and Android devices

Description: SumUp is a mobile payments system that uses a Bluetooth reader with a mobile device to take payments anywhere. There's no monthly fee, but SumUp charges a transaction fee of 1.69% on any payment made through its system.

6 VALITOR

Website: www.valitor.com

Target Audience: Organisations of all sizes for short term hire

Platform: Card machines (mobile, counter-top, contactless), online

Description: Provides businesses with everything they need to start accepting credit and debit card payments, including credit card terminals and card processing. Available for short term hire and for long term corporate solutions.

7 WORLD PAY

Website: www.worldpay.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Online, card readers (desktop, portable, mobile)

Description: Whether you are at the till, shop floor, visiting customers, or need an online payments solution, World Pay offers simplified pricing plans for card machines that will suit your business needs. Supports pay-as-you-go, monthly and standard options.

BOOKING SOLUTIONS

Booking solutions such as Smoothbook and BookingLive enable you to automatically sell and make available limited resources, such as hotel rooms, tickets and appointments. Such systems can typically integrate with websites and secure payment systems, giving customers a handy, self-service way of buying your services and booking appointments at times that suit them.

1 BOOKINGLIVE

Website: www.bookinglive.com

Target Audience: Events, classes, courses, education and healthcare, venues

Platform: Cloud-based for PC and Mac, iOS, Android, Windows

Description: BookingLive can encompass everything from organised parties to events at conference centres and supports commission-free bookings, integrated CRM, a free CMS to build your own booking pages, plus three accessible pricing tiers.

2 JRNI

Website: www.jrni.com

Target Audience: Banks, retailers and governments

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: JRNI enables organisations to build complicated scheduling journeys based on internal processes. The software can boost customer engagement, while embedded CRM helps track customers (although you can use third-party CRM tools too).

3 LITTLE HOTELIER

Website: www.littlehotelier.com

Target Audience: B&Bs, guest houses and small hotels

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Little Hotelier is an all-in-one reservation and accommodation management system. It comes with a channel manager, a commission-free booking engine for in-house websites, plus a front desk system to manage daily operations.

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4 SHEDUL

Website: www.shedul.com

Target Audience: Salons and spas

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: This free booking tool lets you schedule appointments with support for online booking, payments and mobile apps. Automated reminders and custom messages can be sent to clients, while a dashboard keeps overall track of scheduling.

5 SIMPLYBOOK.ME

Website: www.simplybook.me/en/

Target Audience: Salons, service industry, fitness classes, medical clinics, teachers

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: SimplyBook.me provides you with a customisable booking website, so that clients can schedule appointments with your business. It supports set service duration and buffer times, while adjustable pricing is based on tasks and the number of clients you have.

6 SMOOTHBOOK

Website: www.smoothbook.co

Target Audience: Events, classes, small businesses, medical

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Seamlessly integrating with PayPal, Smoothbook handles discounts for bulk bookings, discount coupons and gift certificates. It also provides integrated social media, is quick to use out of the box, and comes with three pricing levels: Free, Ad free, Pro.

7 SUPERCONTROL

Website: www.supercontrol.co.uk

Target Audience: Self-catering businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: SuperControl helps to sell and market self-catering accommodation. It features options for different levels of self-catering, from single properties to holiday letting agencies, handling payments, website integration, marketing and data security.

PRODUCTIVITY

———

Efficiency lies at the heart of every successful company and choosing the best software can help drive savings and improve productivity. With the right tools, employees can work smarter and faster, often boosting collaboration and reducing costs.

When it comes to office productivity, it's important to provide a suite that meets the demands of the job, whether you need complicated spreadsheets or in-depth text documents. If you don't choose market-leading products due to price, then ensure your chosen software can open files from the best-known office apps like Microsoft Word and Excel. Look at collaboration options, too, particularly if many people need to work on one document.

Speaking of collaboration, file sharing software has become increasingly important to modern businesses, providing a fast and easy way to share documents, photos and videos. Look for integration with your existing office suite and demand advanced controls, so you can control access.

If your company processes a lot of documents every day, you may need document management software to sort, organise and add structure to the flow of digital data. With GDPR now in effect, the right document management software can also help you meet legal obligations.

Lastly, time management software can help boost productivity, keeping track of the work put into projects and showing who's free, when. Being able to see how staff allocate their time helps to alleviate bottlenecks and can make employees more dynamic and flexible.

LEARN MORE. DO MORE

Feakes and Co. solicitors uses an online case management system that stores clients' details, manages their data and automates documents and Office 365 for content creation, storage and communication. The time saved on managing files, searching for information or creating printed documents is focused on providing legal advice.
Feakes and Co, Chepstow

Improve how you do business by attending our free workshop: Office 365. We'll help you make the most of the Office 365 suite, so you can create customer surveys, automate business processes, and generate business intelligence reports!

For other Superfast Business Wales events near you, visit our Events page, call us on 03332 408329 or email us.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Acting as a centralised storage mechanism, document management software takes all the unstructured information that a business gathers and adds shape and control to it. This software can also help standardise communication, providing templated business correspondence and, with GDPR now in force, document management can help secure documents and maintain data protection compliance.

1 ALFRESCO DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Website: www.alfresco.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Open source and open standard document management system, which integrates Enterprise Content Management (ECM) with Business Process Management (BPM) to connect all forms of documentation processes.

2 M-FILES

Website: www.m-files.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises or cloud-based

Description: Working with network folders, SharePoint, CRM and ERP systems, M-Files connects to all existing repositories without requiring any restructuring. The software adds file checkouts, duplication avoidance, version control and powerful search.

3 MASTERCONTROL

Website: www.mastercontrol.com/uk/

Target Audience: SMBs, large enterprises (specifically in regulatory environments)

Platform: On-premises or cloud-based

Description: Companies and organisations that deal in regulatory work often have complex regulations and standards to adhere to. So, this software automates routing, delivery, escalation and document approval; manages revisions; improves auditing and collaboration.

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4 NETDOCUMENTS

Website: www.netdocuments.co.uk

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: SaaS document management solution with focus on collaboration. Users can create workspaces and allow clients to upload, edit and access documents and email any time from any device. Full integration with Microsoft Office and Salesforce CRM.

5 OFFICEGEMINI DOKMEE

Website: www.dokmee.com

Target Audience: Small and large enterprises

Platform: On premises for Windows, cloud, iOS and Android clients

Description: A secure and easy-to-use system that enables document capture and storage, search and retrieval, plus seamless file sharing. Desktop, Professional and Enterprise versions are available.

6 TEMPLAFY

Website: www.templafy.com

Target Audience: Banking and finance, insurance, legal and government, SMBs

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Manages the entire document management and creation process from office documents to presentations and emails. Creates company standards for communication, presenting a clear and brand-specific way of connecting with customers.

7 V1 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Website: www.wearev1.com

Target Audience: Finance, HR and payroll functions for SMBs and large enterprises

Platform: On premises for Windows, cloud hosting service

Description: Scalable document management solution enabling electronic storage, retrieval, management, delivery and authorisation of business documents. It offers integration with many of the major accounting, ERP and HR systems.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management software typically records the time spent on tasks by each employee. It can help users better organise their time and show which staff are tied up with certain jobs, all while enabling project managers to account for the resources used by a project. Time management software can also be used to bill clients for time spent on a specific task, client or project.

1 ACTITIME

Website: www.actitime.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients, on-premises

Description: ActiTIME's key features include online timesheets, task estimates and deadline reminders to manage project costs. The software can be rented as a cloud service or purchased outright and hosted on on-premises servers.

2 BILLQUICK

Website: www.billquick.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses (professional services firms)

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients, on-premises

Description: A flexible time-billing and project management, accounting and business intelligence software solution for a variety of industries. These include: construction, architecture, engineering and design. Integrates with QuickBooks and other accounting software.

3 MITREFINCH

Website: www.mitrefinch.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients, on-premises

Description: The Mitrefinch product range features time and attendance tracking, absence management, rostering, HR, payroll and access control software. Time and attendance software can be rented for a monthly fee.

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4 TEMPORA

Website: www.temporasoftware.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Features timesheets, staff utilisation reports, cost and profit analysis and a facility for requesting and approving leave, tracking sickness and employee absence. Price is based on number of users and features selected.

5 TIMEWARE

Website: www.timeware.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-site server and/or cloud-based

Description: Timeware covers personnel, absence management, employee attendance, access control, job costing and cost centre analysis. Boosted by a web-based management portal and bespoke development facilities, costs are based on specific requirements.

6 TOGGL

Website: www.toggl.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, teams and agencies

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Just tap a button to start a timer and Toggl records the rest. Powerful reporting then lets managers see how their staff have been working. The free version supports up to five users, with two paid-for tiers that add reminders, billable rates and time estimates.

7 TRELLO

Website: www.trello.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Trello's Kanban-style layout is ideal for project management, but it can also be used to track employee time on tasks. Several third party add-ins to this free tool can give you an overview of how long each staff member has been working on tasks.

OFFICE PRODUCTIVITY

Microsoft Office 365 remains the best-known and best-supported office suite in the world, giving users a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation package and email suite in one handy bundle. It's also an online product, baking in collaboration and file sharing as standard. But it's not the only option. Other good office suites are available. Just make sure your choice is Office-compatible.

1 APACHE OPENOFFICE

Website: www.openoffice.org/

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, developers, hobbyists

Platform: On premises for PC, Linux, Mac

Description: The Apache version of OpenOffice includes Writer (word processor), Calc (spreadsheet), Impress (presentation), plus maths, database and diagramming software. Compatible with Microsoft Office, it also offers an older Welsh language version.

2 GOOGLE DOCS

Website: www.google.co.uk/docs/about/

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, global enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A cloud-based office/file sharing suite that runs inside a web browser, including Docs (word processor), Sheets (spreadsheet) and Slides (presentation). Upgrade to a G Suite account to control employee access and boost security.

3 IWORK

Website: www.apple.com/uk/iwork/

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, global enterprises

Platform: Cloud and on premises for Mac; iPhone and iPad

Description: Pages (word processor), Numbers (spreadsheet), Keynote (presentation), iPhoto (photo editing), iMovie (video editing), GarageBand (music). Compatible with Microsoft Office for work sharing and with iCloud for online editing and collaboration.

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4 LIBREOFFICE

Website: www.libreoffice.org/

Target Audience: Small businesses, developers, hobbyists

Platform: On premises for PC, Linux, Mac

Description: An improved, better supported version of OpenOffice, LibreOffice features identically-named functions (Writer, Calc, Impress, etc.), has Welsh language support, and will work with files from major office suites including Microsoft Office.

5 MICROSOFT OFFICE 365

Website: products.office.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, global enterprises

Platform: On premises for PC, Mac, and cloud

Description: Word, Excel and PowerPoint sit alongside Outlook (email and calendar), Access (database), Visio (diagrams), Publisher (publishing) and OneNote (note taking) apps. A Welsh language version of this comprehensive software is available.

6 ZOHO DOCS FOR BUSINESS

Website: www.zoho.com/docs/

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Online document, spreadsheet and presentation software. Documents can be stored in one location, synced across devices and shared with multiple users and accounts from anywhere. Full user management and administration controls included.

FILE SHARING

Providing centralised storage and synchronisation, file sharing software can act as a file backup system, version control software, and as a way of securely distributing content to groups. Boosting collaboration, online services like Dropbox and Microsoft OneDrive use built-in synchronisation to help users keep important files up-to-date automatically across all devices.

1 BOX

Website: www.box.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, global enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Secure storage and backup of personal files, can share individual files and individual folders with other users, synchronise files between computers and between mobile devices. Starter, Business, Business Plus and Enterprise options.

2 CITRIX SHAREFILE

Website: www.sharefile.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, global enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac and iOS clients

Description: Sharefile from Citrix provides all of the standard document sharing features you've seen on this page, but adds in dedicated portals for sharing files with clients, encrypted email, secure file sending and Office 365 integration.

3 DROPBOX

Website: www.dropbox.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, global enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Store a file in Dropbox and it's automatically accessible to any other device you use the software on. Shared files and folders synchronise whenever files change so you always have the latest version of a document to hand. Free, Pro and Business options available.

4 GOOGLE DRIVE

Website: drive.google.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, global enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Store your documents in Google's online 'drive' or work online using its Docs, Sheets and Slides web apps from anywhere. The basic drive is free, but for more storage options and better security, upgrade to a paid-for G Suite account.

5 ICLOUD

Website: www.apple.com

Target Audience: Individuals and small businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac and iOS clients

Description: The default cloud storage system for iPhones, iPads and Macs. With the introduction of iCloud Drive, users can now back up and share files online, and collaborate on iWork documents with multiple users. Includes 5GB of free storage.

6 MICROSOFT ONEDRIVE

Website: onedrive.live.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: This is essentially Microsoft's answer to Google Drive, incorporating secure online storage, file sharing and synchronisation. Individual and business plans are available, including options bundled with Microsoft Office 365.

7 WORKSHARE

Website: www.workshare.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Provides a document comparison solution across any format, a document collaboration system to store and keep track of revisions, and metadata cleaning to avoid data leakage. Comparison, Sharing and Integration editions.

COMMUNICATIONS

A company's ability to effectively communicate both internally and externally can be the difference between success and failure. With the rise of instant messaging, Voice over IP telephony and video conferencing, business communication is changing dramatically.

Increasingly, our email is moving to the cloud, reducing the management burden on internal IT staff and improving access for employees. Of the options listed here, the best email services will give you access to your messages via a desktop client, mobile device and over the web.

Then there's instant messaging (IM) to consider. It isn't a replacement for email, but it does allow employees to collaborate and communicate in channels and across departments more effectively. In fact, it often opens up communication in a company far better than email can. Again, look for a service that provides flexibility of access (web, mobile and client), while you might be able to save money by investing in a system that provides email and IM in one.

Voice over IP (VoIP) services aim to replace your phone system with a digital equivalent, giving you standard telephony at lower cost. Flexibility is important too, and you can embrace flexible working with a VoIP system that lets a user answer their desk phone from anywhere.

Finally, video conferencing is now cheaper and more accessible than ever. Basic one-to-one calling is standard, so look for a system that features group calling or supports meeting rooms for wider company-to-company calls.

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LEARN MORE. DO MORE

Charity Area 43 has adopted a digital infrastructure to enable it to run its drop-in centre and counselling services for the 1,800 vulnerable youngsters it helps every year. The new technology means they are better able than ever to reach those in need in rural Ceredigion. *Area 43, Cardigan*

Improve how you do business by attending our free workshop: Online Tools. Join us to learn how online tools and cloud services can reduce stress by connecting key areas of your business.

For other Superfast Business Wales events near you, visit our Events page, call us on 03332 408329 or email us.

businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales

VIDEO CONFERENCING

Face-to-face communication is often more powerful than an email or phone call and video conferencing software can help you connect with employees and customers alike. The right software can also help reduce travel budgets and enable flexible working. While, with a dedicated video conferencing room, you can effectively and professionally communicate with remote groups.

1 CISCO WEBEX MEETING

Website: www.webex.co.uk

Target Audience: Freelancers, sole traders, micro, small, medium and large businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: A video conferencing, sharing and collaboration tool, offering a free tier that allows three people per meeting with one host. The Premium paid plans let you have a meeting with a maximum of eight, 25 or 100 people.

2 FACETIME

Website: www.apple.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with iPhone, iPad and Mac

Description: FaceTime is the calling service built into Apple devices (mobile and Mac), providing free video and audio calls over the internet. As of iOS 12, the service now supports video calls with up to 32 people. There's no support outside of Apple devices.

3 GOOGLE HANGOUTS

Website: hangouts.google.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Google Hangouts is a free video conferencing and chat tool, which operates in a browser or using the dedicated mobile apps. Hangout organisers need to have a Google account, but they can invite anyone else to the call by providing a web address via email.

4 GOTO MEETING

Website: www.gotomeeting.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Over and above the video interface, whiteboards and sharing features, it offers the ability to share your screen with other participants or let them take control of your system. Dial-in conference lines are supported too.

5 LIFESIZE

Website: www.lifesize.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Beyond video chat, Lifesize features screen sharing, calendar integration, chat and audio calling options, plus full account security for data storage and meeting documentation. Can integrate with Skype for Business, Slack and more.

6 POWWOWNOW

Website: www.powwownow.co.uk

Target Audience: Freelancers, sole traders, micro and small businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: From a desktop computer, PowWowNow enables you to share documents, record meetings, chat and use a whiteboard. Two versions are available: Standard and Pro. Pro increases number of participants and adds a local rate dial-in number.

7 SKYPE

Website: www.skype.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, sole traders, micro, small, medium and large businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS and Android clients

Description: Skype gives you free video conferencing for up to 25 people. You can also add Skype numbers and make traditional calls over VoIP. Skype for Business increases participation to 250 users, adding meeting recording and online storage.

VOIP

Rather than using traditional telephone lines, Voice over IP (VoIP) telephony routes calls over the internet. Cheaper calling rates and no line rental are two of the clearest benefits here, but VoIP can also aid flexibility. For example, hot-desking employees can just log into any VoIP desk phone to receive their calls, plus with mobile and laptop clients, calls can be taken anywhere.

1 BT CLOUD PHONE

Website: business.bt.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, sole traders, micro businesses

Platform: Cloud-based, PC, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: For up to nine users, BT Cloud Phone gives you call forwarding, routing, transfers, screening, caller ID and voicemail. Calls made across the system are free, so employees can talk without spending. There's a choice of regional phone numbers too.

2 GRADWELL SME

Website: www.gradwell.com

Target Audience: Micro, small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based, supports third-party PC, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Features free internal and VoIP-to-VoIP calls, voicemail, call forwarding to any number (including mobiles), a contacts directory and customised CLI (Caller Line Identity). Single, Multi and Business options are all available.

3 RINGCENTRAL

Website: www.ringcentral.co.uk

Target Audience: Freelancers, sole traders, micro, small, medium and large businesses

Platform: Cloud-based, PC, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Key features include bundled UK minutes, voicemail to email, auto receptionist and call logs. More expensive packages get call monitoring and call recording, video and audio conferencing, and historical reporting too.

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4 SIPGATE

Website: www.sipgate.co.uk

Target Audience: Sole traders, small businesses

Platform: Cloud-based, supports third-party PC, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: A complete business telephone system including call management, web fax, SMS, voicemail, multi-user administration, call queues and an events log. Management is handled entirely through the cloud. Monthly charges depend on features and users.

5 SKYPE

Website: www.skype.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, sole traders, micro, small, medium and large businesses

Platform: Cloud-based, PC, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: One of the original VoIP services, Skype supports free calls to other Skype users. However, you can also add a traditional phone number to your account and call external landlines and mobiles. Skype for Business increases user numbers.

6 SOHO66

Website: www.soho66.com

Target Audience: Sole traders, small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based, supports third-party PC, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Provides a single telephone number in the UK area code of your choice and the ability to connect a VoIP phone for each employee. Features time of day routing, 3-way calling, call forwarding and recording, and a virtual receptionist.

7 VONAGE

Website: www.vonage.co.uk

Target Audience: Freelancers, sole traders, micro, small, medium and large businesses

Platform: Cloud-based, PC, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Vonage's Select package has call forwarding and call transfer. Professional adds call monitoring, queues, a virtual receptionist and recording. While Ultimate adds company-wide recording and integrates with Salesforce, G Suite, SugarCRM and Office 365.

EMAIL/IM

Email remains the business communication tool of choice, ideal for longer messages and for sending official communications, such as customer invoices and order confirmations. Instant messaging (IM) is an effective complement to office email, enabling anyone in your company to collaborate and communicate instantaneously. It's ideal for shorter, snappier conversations.

1 EJABBERD

Website: www.ejabberd.im

Target Audience: Small businesses

Platform: On-premises (Windows and Linux) with third-party client access

Description: An open source XMPP server (previously known as Jabber), ejabberd lets you run your own business IM server on-site. Provides one-to-one messaging, controlled and run by your business. Requires third-party clients, such as the popular Pidgin software.

2 GOOGLE G SUITE

Website: gsuite.google.co.uk

Target Audience: Businesses of all sizes

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: This is the paid-for version of Gmail, giving users a service they're familiar with but with email addresses that match your company's domain name. Sophisticated and reliable, basic users get 30GB of space, while Business/Enterprise users can enjoy unlimited storage.

3 MICROSOFT OFFICE 365

Website: products.office.com

Target Audience: Businesses of all sizes

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Office 365 is a hosted cloud service, giving you email access through Microsoft Outlook on a range of devices and via the web. Business Essentials includes email, OneDrive and Microsoft Teams; Business Premium includes Office applications.

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4 MICROSOFT TEAMS

Website: products.office.com

Target Audience: Businesses of all sizes

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Teams is a Slack competitor, providing instant messaging across your company. It comes bundled with all Office 365 accounts that include email. You can have one-to-one chats or create channels for group collaboration.

5 SLACK

Website: www.slack.com

Target Audience: Businesses of all sizes

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Slack is the biggest name in business IM. It lets you have one-to-one chats, create channels (public and private) for group conversations, share files and more. Slack also integrates with many other services, such as Google Docs.

6 TELEGRAM

Website: www.telegram.org

Target Audience: Sole traders, small businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Telegram is a free service to rival WhatsApp. Accounts are tied to telephone numbers, but users can hide this behind an alias. Messages are all encrypted and can be synchronised between multiple devices.

7 ZOHO MAIL

Website: www.zoho.eu

Target Audience: Freelancers, small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Integrating with Zoho's other products, including Projects and CRM, Zoho Mail promises secure cloud-based email, with 99.9% uptime guaranteed. Powerful search, filters and scheduling round off the feature list. Zoho Cliq optionally adds business IM.

WEB

You can't run a successful business without a web presence – a 24/7, 365 days a year, globally-accessible shop front that can be as simple as some contact details or as complex as an online store. For a professionally presented and mobile optimised website, hiring a web designer is always a better choice than trying to do it yourself. Depending on your ambitions, there are some key tools you might need to support your build.

E-commerce software, for example, enables you to automatically sell your goods and services online. Examine the options here and decide if you should sell directly to your customers via your own website, or whether hosting a shop on a retailer, such as eBay or Amazon, might give you a wider reach with less management overheads.

If you've got a website, how will potential customers find it? What do people think of it, you and your brand? Today's social media management software can help track mentions of your business online. This can help you find happy customers that will recommend you, as well as help you connect and help those customers or clients that have had problems.

Web analytics, meanwhile, is an increasingly important tool in the business arsenal. In short, it enables you to discover what's driving traffic to your website and what the most popular pages are. By identifying the latter, you can work to optimise your pages and content, while using the data to refine your services to deliver more revenue.

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LEARN MORE. DO MORE

Using online advertising tools has helped farming couple on Anglesey to diversify into glamping. They started Wonderfully Wild in 2014 and now they are attracting families from across Wales, Cheshire and Greater Manchester. _Wonderfully Wild, Beaumaris_

Improve how you do business by attending our free workshop: Social Media. This session will help you raise your profile online and attract new business with a winning social media strategy.

For other Superfast Business Wales events near you, visit our Events page, call us on 03332 408329 or email us.

E-COMMERCE

Online sales are a huge part of the UK economy and continue to grow year-on-year. On these pages, we have collated a selection of key e-commerce tools to help you sell your goods and/or services online. They range from software that enables you to create your own shop fronts to platforms that help you sell products via a larger, established site, such as Amazon or eBay.

1 AMAZON MARKETPLACE

Website: services.amazon.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud

Description: Sell your products via the Amazon Marketplace, receiving email notifications when orders have been placed. Amazon can also take care of fulfilment, earning you the 'Prime' badge. One account gets you listed on all European Amazon Marketplaces.

2 BIG COMMERCE

Website: www.bigcommerce.co.uk

Target Audience: Sole traders, micro, small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based for PC and Mac, iOS, Android, Windows

Description: Provides templated store design, SEO, mobile commerce, marketing and inventory – plus integration with eBay listings. In addition there are wizards to create trackable coupons and discounts. Standard, Plus, Pro and Enterprise plans available.

3 EBAY SHOPS

Website: www.ebay.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud

Description: eBay Shops is a way to bundle products together on the eBay site. Items listed appear in search, but your username gets an icon next to it, allowing shoppers to see what else you have for sale. Easy to manage with fees based on what you've sold.

4 MAGENTO

Website: www.magento.com

Target Audience: Medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud

Description: Scalable e-commerce platform with an open source and cloud-based digital architecture. Can integrate with CRM and ERP systems, send automated emails and track inventory across multiple warehouse locations.

5 SHOPIFY

Website: www.shopify.co.uk

Target Audience: Micro, small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud

Description: Includes built-in mobile commerce incorporating an iOS app, mobile storefront, marketing tools for SEO and analytics to analyse your online store's performance. Integrates with Google Analytics too.

6 SHOPWIRED

Website: www.shopwired.co.uk

Target Audience: Medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud

Description: Featuring simple templates and hugely customisable shop fronts, ShopWired handles everything through to checkout and payments. Optional extras including linking your shop to your Facebook, eBay and Amazon accounts.

7 WOOCOMMERCE

Website: www.woocommerce.com

Target Audience: Medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud

Description: The WooCommerce plugin for WordPress powers 30% of online shops, enabling you to sell everything from physical products to tickets. Extensions let you add other features from gift wrapping options to integration with shipping companies.

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Social media has had a dramatic impact on modern business, with many customers preferring to interact with companies (and support their favourite brands) via Facebook and Twitter. Social media management tools like Hootsuite and Buffer allow you to control 'how' and 'when' you share information on your preferred channels, as well as tracking what's being said about your company online.

1 BUFFER

Website: www.buffer.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises, agencies

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Buffer integrates with Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, allowing you to schedule posts, analyse responses and reschedule popular posts. A free plan works with three social accounts and limits posting queues to 10 items.

2 HOOTSUITE

Website: www.hootsuite.com

Target Audience: Sole traders, micro, small and medium-sized businesses, agencies

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Manage your social networks from a single, secure, web-based dashboard and track how long it takes your team to respond to messages. You can also launch marketing campaigns, identify your audiences and distribute targeted messages.

3 HUBSPOT

Website: www.hubspot.com

Target Audience: Medium to large companies

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: HubSpot's social media management comes as part of its full marketing suite. But this all-one-package might suit larger companies, enabling you to post content to LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter while building marketing campaigns.

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4 KHOROS

Website: www.khoros.com

Target Audience: Businesses of all sizes

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Complete management platform for all of your social needs. Khoros Marketing helps engage customers with meaningful compaigns as well as nuture customer relationships. It also helps with peer-created content to inspire trust.

5 SOCIALOOMPH

Website: www.socialoomph.com

Target Audience: Businesses of all sizes

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: A suite of tools to improve social marketing productivity, including scheduling updates, finding quality people to follow and monitoring social media activity. Supports Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Plurk and business blogs.

6 SPROUT SOCIAL

Website: www.sproutsocial.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises, agencies

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Allows you to manage all of your social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest. Schedule and optimise post time to multiple networks, and manage post analytics on Premium, Corporate or Enterprise plans.

7 TWEETDECK

Website: tweetdeck.twitter.com

Target Audience: Sole traders, micro, small and medium-sized businesses, agencies

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Get an overview of multiple Twitter accounts in one interface. Manage multiple accounts, schedule Tweets for future posting, customise and build timelines. Plus, you can add multiple columns for different searches and hashtags you're tracking.

WEB ANALYTICS

Web analytics is a vital tool that enables you to identify who has looked at your website, how they got there and where they came from. By examining this valuable data, you can see how customers find and interact with your products/services and what they click on. In the right hands, web analytics can reveal what's working well on your website and what needs improvement.

1 CLICKY

Website: www.clicky.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; Windows, Mac, iOS and Android clients

Description: Clicky gives you real-time monitoring of your website, including detailed reports on traffic. It can filter out bot and spam traffic, giving you a true picture of visitors. Features include heat maps and uptime monitoring with downtime notifications.

2 GECKOBOARD

Website: www.geckoboard.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Create your own custom dashboard that handles web analytics but also, through an array of available widgets, other components of your business – CRM, email, infrastructure, project management, sales and finance and social media.

3 GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Website: www.google.co.uk/analytics/

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Google's free analytics package tracks visitors in real-time, deep dives into what content was viewed when, and examines the customer journey. Statistics from Google Analytics can help you work out where you need to improve your website too.

BACK TO CONTENTS

4 MOZ PRO

Website: www.moz.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Complete SEO suite that helps you deliver more traffic to your site. Helps you track your rankings in search engines, find which keywords are bringing in users and identify new linking opportunities. Plus, it can scan and help optimise your website.

5 NEW RELIC

Website: www.newrelic.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A set of software analytics packages. Browser monitors front-end performance, errors and user tracking, APM allows you to track web applications, while Mobile helps you monitor Android and iOS app performance.

6 OPEN WEB ANALYTICS

Website: www.openwebanalytics.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Open source analytics software to track and analyse how visitors use your websites and applications. Provides an easy way to add web analytics using simple JavaScript, PHP, or REST-based APIs. Supports WordPress, Joomla and Drupal.

7 WOOPRA

Website: www.woopra.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: Journey reports help you understand how users move through your pages; the Trends option helps you monitor changes in product usage; while Retention reports help you to see if customers come back. Free, Pro and Enterprise options available.

INFRASTRUCTURE

All business functions run on the network infrastructure that your company provides. Being able to manage and control this infrastructure can improve effectiveness while reducing cost. There are two main considerations in this area.

The first is virtualisation. This is an excellent tool for maximising computer usage. Instead of using one physical machine as a client computer or a server, virtualisation lets you run multiple virtual computers on the same hardware. Doing so can increase utilisation, while reducing hardware costs.

For servers, virtualisation is an effective way to maximise your hardware investment, while maintaining a high level of security. For client computers, using virtualisation means that users can access their 'computer' from any available workstation, regardless of their physical location.

In all cases, virtualisation provides an easier way to back up data and, in the event of a hardware failure, you can get up and running again faster. Look for virtualisation software that supports the operating systems that you already use.

The second is the provision of fast and accessible Wi-Fi, giving people the freedom to access services from inside your building without any expensive physical cabling. However, it can be a security risk, so Wi-Fi Network Control software is a must. Look for a system that gives you oversight of your wireless access points and that can manage who can access the network (both for regular employees and guests).

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Award-winning IT consultancy DevOpsGuys has said that the superfast connection speeds from its Cardiff HQ have been integral to its success. A totally digital business, providing Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), the company has targeted a 1900% growth in revenue by 2023.
DevOpsGuys, Cardiff

Improve how you do business by attending our free workshop: Let's Get Digital. We'll help you assess whether your business is making the best use of today's online technology and take you through some live demonstrations of online tools tailored to your needs.

For other Superfast Business Wales events near you, visit our Events page, call us on 03332 408329 or email us.

VIRTUALISATION

Virtualisation separates function from hardware, allowing one physical machine to run multiple virtual computers. This increases utilisation and reduces waste through idle capacity. Virtualisation solutions like those listed here also improve your network's ability to increase resources and enables far simpler backup and recovery options, ultimately improving reliability and uptime.

1 CITRIX

Website: www.citrix.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based options for PCs and servers

Description: Citrix provides a complete virtual app and desktop solution via a single, easy-to-deploy platform. It allows employees the freedom to work from anywhere while cutting IT costs. Supports Windows, Linux, web, and SaaS apps plus full virtual desktops.

2 MICROSOFT WINDOWS SERVER

Website: www.microsoft.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Windows Server 2016, Windows 10

Description: The Hyper-V function on Windows Server lets you create a virtualised server computing environment, so you can run multiple operating systems on one physical computer. It can improve computing efficiency and free up your hardware resources.

3 ORACLE VM SERVER

Website: www.oracle.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Virtual operating systems, including Windows, Linux and Ubuntu

Description: Oracle VM Server is a zero licence cost product and can be downloaded from Oracle's website. It has wide operating system support including Windows and several versions of Linux. Paid-for support packages are available.

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4 RED HAT VIRTUALISATION

Website: www.redhat.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Red Hat Linux

Description: Controls and manages multiple server operating systems, including Red Hat Linux and Windows Server machines. Designed to be easy to set up, manage and configure, the virtualisation software is available on a single subscription.

5 VIRTUALBOX

Website: www.virtualbox.org

Target Audience: Small businesses, developers

Platform: Windows 10, macOS, Linux

Description: VirtualBox lets you run multiple operating systems on a single PC, allowing you to test different systems securely. Virtual machines can be duplicated easily, rolled back to previous versions, even used to run legacy software.

6 VMWARE VSPHERE

Website: www.vmware.com/uk/

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises, cloud or hybrid cloud options for PCs or server

Description: VMware vSphere combines the hypervisor with a management platform, allowing you to run multiple virtual machines on a physical computer. Enterprise Plus option provides load balancing and uses predictive analytics to detect upcoming faults.

7 VMWARE WORKSTATION PRO

Website: www.vmware.com/uk/

Target Audience: Small businesses, developers

Platform: Windows 10

Description: Lets you run multiple operating systems on a single Windows PC. This makes the software an ideal test bed for different systems, in a secure way, with duplication letting you create new machines quickly, and snapshots allowing you to roll back changes.

WI-FI NETWORK CONTROL

Who's connected to your wireless network? How do you know? Wi-Fi Network Control systems give you this valuable oversight of your business network. Through constant monitoring, you can receive notifications of problems and improve maintenance, while security controls let you lock the network down and restrict access to employees and selected guests.

1 CISCO

Website: www.cisco.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud, on-premises hardware

Description: Cisco's Wireless LAN Controllers let you control your network centrally, improving security and managing settings. Cloud managed access points are built for faster deployment. Pricing depends on products and features.

2 INFRASYS

Website: www.infrasys.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud, hybrid and managed hosting, PCs, servers, in-house infrastructure

Description: Infrasys partners with several networking providers to provide network roll-outs. It can provide access points and software to completely manage your home network, including guest networks, securing BYOD, and monitoring performance and reliability.

3 NETGEAR INSIGHT

Website: www.netgear.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access; iOS and Android clients

Description: A management portal that can give you automated device discovery, check Wi-Fi activity, produce downtime notifications, reboot devices and upgrade firmware. It's free for up to two devices, but charged per device after that.

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4 SIMPLI-FI

Website: www.simpli-fi.co.uk

Target Audience: Education, schools, leisure - providing Wi-Fi hotspot deployments

Platform: On-premises servers, PCs, smartphones

Description: Simpli-Fi specialises in providing temporary and permanent professional event Wi-Fi and network solutions, supporting events organisers as they deal with the challenges of connectivity, security, communications and monitoring.

5 SOLARWINDS

Website: www.solarwinds.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises servers, infrastructure, web server, web browser

Description: SolarWinds' products include a network performance monitor, bandwidth analyser, server and application monitor, plus a web performance and storage resource monitor. Their online quote tool can be used to build a price for your system.

6 TITANHQ

Website: www.titanhq.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, universities, banks, government

Platform: Cloud for Wi-Fi, web security gateway, on-premises IT infrastructure

Description: TitanHQ's WebTitan Cloud for Wi-Fi product gives you hotspot protection and BYOD security. Other products include SpamTitan and ArcTitan. Pricing depends on products chosen, number of users and deployment options.

7 UBIQUITY UNIFI

Website: www.ubnt.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud, on-premises hardware, web browser, iOS and Android clients

Description: Ubiquiti UniFi is a combination of hardware and software. You can buy a selection of UniFi access points and then, with the UniFi Controller software, get access to real-time status, RF mapping (to improve coverage) and hotspot setup.

SECURITY

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Government figures* show that 32% of UK businesses reported having a cyber security breach or attack in the 12 months leading up to 1st July 2019. The average financial cost of these attacks was a hefty £9,260, with some costing significantly more.

   Protecting your company against phishing, malware and viruses can reduce commercial damage and reputational harm. It starts with good anti-virus and anti-malware protection. Available for client machines, mobile devices, email systems and servers, the software will filter out and block any harmful code before it can cause an issue. Make sure that you buy a system that supports the operating systems and servers you use.

   Data loss can also be damaging to a business, regardless of whether the cause was malicious or not. Data backup

software should be next on your shopping list, a solution that can store files as they're created and create larger, entire system backups. Between these two options, you can recover new files or restore entire systems quickly. Data backup can also protect against ransomware, where hackers take control of computers and demand payment to unlock them.

   Many of us now work on phones and tablets, but this freedom comes at a cost should a device be lost, stolen or hacked. Device management software is the answer. Look for a solution that locks down and controls which apps a user can install. Remote tracking is also a must, so you can find lost devices and even remotely wipe hardware to ensure data doesn't fall into the wrong hands.

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By upgrading its systems, Celtest a company that provides compliance-testing services for materials has increased its efficiency in all areas. This also includes changes to its website which means they are receiving more business enquiries.
Celtest, Bangor

Improve how you do business by attending our free workshop: Online Tools. Join us to learn how online tools and cloud services can reduce stress by connecting key areas of your business.

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ANTI-MALWARE/ANTI-VIRUS

Viruses, malware and ransomware are all designed to make money for cybercriminals and can cause serious disruption for a business. From locking files to stealing personal information and providing remote control, malware is big business. This constantly updated software will find and block the threats. All of the products listed here has been verified through independent tests.

1 FORCEPOINT EMAIL SECURITY CLOUD

Website: www.forcepoint.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud

Description: Forcepoint Email Security Cloud is a cloud-based protection system that can stop malware, phishing and spam in its tracks. It can be programmed to stop data loss too, even if information is leaked in small amounts.

2 KASPERSKY ENDPOINT SECURITY CLOUD

Website: www.kaspersky.co.uk

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Windows, macOS, iOS and Android

Description: Kaspersky Endpoint Security Cloud takes management of your anti-malware into a single cloud portal. You can protect, monitor and control mobile devices, as well as file servers and desktop computers, remotely.

3 MIMECAST SECURE EMAIL GATEWAY

Website: www.mimecast.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud

Description: Mimecast Secure Email Gateway is a cloud-based email gateway that offers multi-layered protection. It is designed to protect against malware, spam, phishing and targeted attacks before they hit users' inboxes.

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4 PANDA ENDPOINT PROTECTION

Website: www.pandasecurity.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Windows, macOS, Linux, leading virtualisation systems and Android

Description: Provides centralised protection for your desktop and laptops, servers, virtualised infrastructure and Android devices. Centralised management is provided in the cloud, so no additional hardware is needed and the system can be managed via the web.

5 SOPHOS INTERCEPT X ENDPOINT

Website: www.sophos.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Windows, macOS

Description: Sophos Intercept X Endpoint provides complete protection for your desktop computers and laptops, blocking malware and other attacks. Controlled by the cloud-based Sophos Central, you can manage everything centrally with no additional software.

6 SYMANTEC ENDPOINT PROTECTION CLOUD

Website: www.symantec.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Windows, macOS, iOS and Android

Description: Symantec Endpoint Protection Cloud has you well covered, protecting the majority of your devices and computers from virus and malware attacks. Cloud-based management and deployment makes installation and management simple.

7 TREND SMART PROTECTION FOR ENDPOINTS

Website: www.trendmicro.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Windows, macOS, Windows Server, iOS and Android

Description: This complete suite offers protection for all of your desktop, server and mobile devices. Central Management can be deployed in the cloud and on-premises, giving you control and a security overview wherever you are.

DATA BACKUP

Most file sharing services give you some form of file backup, but they don't catch everything and they aren't powerful enough to back up an entire system. Dedicated data backup software fulfils this security need, designed to capture everything on both client and server hardware, providing an easy method of restoring data in the event of catastrophic failure or a virus attack.

1 ACRONIS CYBER BACKUP

Website: www.acronis.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based for PC and Mac, servers, virtual machines

Description: Protect any data in any environment, whether you're a small business or a large organisation. Windows, macOS, Windows Server, Linux and Office 365 backup options are supported and backups can be stored locally or in the cloud.

2 AMAZON GLACIER

Website: aws.amazon.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud backup facility, web browser-based with optional server appliance

Description: Designed as a low-cost cloud storage system, Amazon Glacier is built for data archiving and long-term backup. Amazon promises huge reliability and offers selected data retrieval from 3-to-5 minutes to between 5 and 12 hours.

3 CARBONITE

Website: www.carbonite.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud backup facility for PC and Mac, servers

Description: With Carbonite, files and data are securely transferred to the cloud or your own secure data centre, with options for scheduled, continuous, database and email backups. Provides a remote wipe function for lost or stolen devices.

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4 LIVEDRIVE

Website: www.livedrive.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small to medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud backup facility for PC and Mac, servers, Android and iOS apps

Description: Secure cloud storage lets you backup entire PCs, Macs and servers, accessing files via iOS and Android apps. Livedrive Briefcase provides file syncing across multiple devices and gives you the option to share large files over the internet too.

5 TIME MACHINE

Website: www.apple.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses

Platform: Mac only

Description: Apple's built-in Time Machine backup takes complete and incremental backups of macOS devices. Backup targets can be a network share or locally-attached storage. Apple's iCloud can also provide file-based cloud backup.

6 VEEAM AGENT FOR MICROSOFT WINDOWS

Website: www.veeam.com

Target Audience: Individuals, small businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Windows

Description: Takes an image-based backup of any computer and then incremental backups thereafter. Backups can be made to a NAS (Network Attached Storage), server or local storage, with recovery via a USB key. Paid version adds centralised management.

7 VERITAS BACKUP EXEC

Website: www.veritas.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based for PC and Mac, servers, virtual machines

Description: Restores virtual machines, servers, applications, databases, files and folders or granular objects in seconds. Intelligent dashboards and intuitive wizards provide the visibility you need to quickly track, monitor and manage every backup and recovery job.

DEVICE MANAGEMENT

Device management software enables you to add some much needed control to any mobile device that connects to your company's business systems. From providing restrictions on the apps that can be installed to remote tracking and wiping, device management software like those shortlisted here can help reduce the risk of data loss should a mobile device be lost or stolen.

1 AIRWATCH

Website: www.air-watch.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Android, Chrome OS, iOS, macOS, Windows 10

Description: Provides visibility on all enrolled corporate-owned, employee-owned and shared devices, regardless of platform or device type. Profiles allow you to define enterprise settings, policies and restrictions without requiring user interaction.

2 CITRIX ENDPOINT MANAGEMENT

Website: www.citrix.com

Target Audience: Freelancers, small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Android, iOS and Windows

Description: Citrix Endpoint Management provides complete control for all of your mobile devices. Features include content and data management, controlled access to apps, plus the ability to remote wipe devices and encrypt sensitive data.

3 G SUITE MOBILE MANAGEMENT

Website: gsuite.google.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Android and iOS

Description: Part of G Suite and available at no extra cost, Mobile Management adds additional features for controlling phones, including requiring screen locks and strong passwords, plus remote wiping. You can host internal-only Android apps too.

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4 MICROSOFT INTUNE

Website: www.microsoft.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Android, iOS, macOS and Windows

Description: For those running a Microsoft-centric network, InTune will fit in perfectly. Policies control where, when and how company data is accessed, and you can apply stricter controls for Microsoft Office mobile apps.

5 SOTI MOBICONTROL

Website: www.soti.net

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Android, iOS

Description: Enables businesses to centrally manage, support, secure and track corporate-liable and employee-liable mobile devices, regardless of device type, mobile platform and location. Can monitor the status, security and condition of all mobile assets.

6 MOBILE DEVICE MANAGER PLUS

Website: www.manageengine.co.uk/mobile-device-management.html

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Android, iOS and Windows

Description: Permits the self-enrolment of mobile devices for use within the business in order to minimise setup time and reduce support costs. Automatically configures devices, deploys apps, and, if necessary, wipes data based on employee's status.

7 MOBILEIRON

Website: www.mobileiron.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Android, iOS and Windows

Description: Manages and configures devices from a central web-based console, sets policies for encryption and lockdown, enforces passwords and remotely locks and wipes devices. Platform also supports app inventory management and protection from rogue apps.

CONTROL

Being able to accurately manage and control your company's assets and resources can help boost efficiency and reduce cost.

It's why asset management software can be an important investment. Physical asset management software can track the equipment that your company owns, monitoring where it's located and how it's used. While IT asset management functionality can track software licenses and device usage to optimise costs.

Inventory and stock control systems can also be vital. They help you plan what you're selling and what you hold in stock. By seeing an overview of your top sellers, under-performing products and what you have in reserve, you can base buying decisions on data rather than gut instinct.

If your business involves shipping products, then logistics management software can help you plan where and when things need to be. And for manufacturers, Material Requirements Planning (MRP) tools can help you more effectively manage key elements in your production processes.

For large companies, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software provides a single place to track a wide variety of business-critical systems, from product development to marketing.

For all products in this category, it's important to choose the ones that support your core business processes and integrate into existing systems. The ability to produce the financial and management reports you need should also be considered.

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LEARN MORE. DO MORE

Terry's Patisserie, which specialises in supplying high-end patisserie products to caterers, has transformed from a "home-made operation to a serious manufacturer." Adding an 800sq ft site to its operations, the company is introducing an ERP system to streamline invoices, sales, traceability, stock and cost.
Terry's Patisserie, Aberbargoed

Improve how you do business by attending our free workshop: Online Tools. We'll help you assess whether your business is making the best use of today's online technology and take you through some live demonstrations of online tools tailored to your needs.

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ASSET MANAGEMENT

Asset Management software gives you oversight and control over physical and business IT equipment, including software licenses. With this type of software, you can manage schedules, hold maintenance reports and calculate depreciation value. You can also track usage to spot any pressure points or areas of over-investment. With automatic notifications, you get prompts for repair and replace cycles.

1 ASSET PANDA

Website: www.assetpanda.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based, with iOS and Android apps

Description: This cloud-based asset management tracking software can help you track everything your company owns. Assets can be tagged with photos, assigned locations, even pull in details from Amazon and eBay through barcode scanning.

2 ASSETTRACK

Website: www.amitracks.com

Target Audience: Medium and large-sized businesses

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based options for PCs

Description: Asset registering and auditing. Runs on existing mobile devices (iOS and Android) and supports barcode and RFID scanners for data capture. Data can be imported and exported from other software programs.

3 CHERWELL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Website: www.cherwell.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based for PC and Mac, iOS and Android apps

Description: Integrates all the data related to your hardware and software inventory, including usage, entitlements and purchases. Good at helping to seamlessly track and manage your IT assets from purchase through retirement.

4 IT ASSET MANAGEMENT

Website: www.samanage.com

Target Audience: Small to medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based for PC and Mac, iOS and Android

Description: An integration of service management and asset management. It helps businesses to manage hardware and software, organise and manage licenses and contracts – detects risks and compliance issues and helps implement an IT Service Desk.

5 MMSOFT PULSEWAY PSA

Website: www.pulseway.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based

Description: Pulseway PSA is a complete business management package, but it includes asset management as part of its service desk module. This lets you add, maintain and track hardware and software, and you can create and schedule service calls to manage equipment.

6 MANAGEENGINE ASSETEXPLORER

Website: www.manageengine.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based for PC, Mac and network hardware

Description: Can automatically scan your network, finding hardware and software attached to it, helping you track software license compliance, and manage product lifecycle from purchase through to retirement. Can also track purchase orders and contracts.

7 SHARENET ASSET MANAGER

Website: www.novosolutions.com

Target Audience: Micro, small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based for PC and Mac, iOS and Android

Description: A web and mobile application for tracking and monitoring your corporate assets. Suitable for single site or multiple locations, it lets you store information by location and includes barcode scanning, check-in/check-out procedures and spare parts tracking.

MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS PLANNING (MRP)

Material Requirements Planning (MRP) packages help control the entire manufacturing process. This includes elements such as: production, planning, scheduling and inventory control. If you are a business that operates on a Make To Order (MTO) basis, where you only start to manufacture products after receiving an order, MRP systems can help optimise processes here too.

1 EPICOR

Website: www.epicor.com

Target Audience: Small, medium and large companies

Platform: Cloud, hosted or on-premises IT infrastructure, MS SQL server

Description: Epicor provides MRP software designed around the needs of manufacturing, distribution, retail and service industry customers. It provides real-time access to business intelligence for resource planning and scheduling, plus support for lean manufacturing.

2 EXEL EFACS E/8

Website: www.exel.co.uk

Target Audience: Small, medium and large companies

Platform: Operates on different combinations of server hardware and operating systems

Description: Includes specific facilities for companies that produce components, assemblies or sub-assemblies to order (Make and Engineer to Order). Contracts are for specific applications, software modules, maintenance, training and consultancy.

3 IFS

Website: www.ifsworld.com/uk/

Target Audience: Small, medium and large companies

Platform: On-premises IT infrastructure, SaaS, cloud

Description: IFS provides solutions for Make to Order (MTO), Engineering to Order (ETO) and Configure to Order (CTO) businesses. Its software is used in industries ranging from aerospace and defence to food. Leasing options available.

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4 JOBSCOPE

Website: www.jobscope.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Microsoft SQL manufacturing software platform, cloud, IBM AS/400

Description: Provides an integrated software solution that allows manufacturing companies to collaborate internally and externally. The product features estimating, MTO scheduling, order traceability and reporting. Price on application based on software supplied.

5 MRP SYSTEMS

Website: www.mrpsystems.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large companies

Platform: D3 database supported by Windows or Linux servers

Description: Front to back solutions that cover all business areas from sales quotations through the sales order processing to Make to Order (MTO), invoicing and dispatch. All aspects of manufacturing and distribution are fully integrated and in real-time.

6 SAGE 200CLOUD

Website: www.sage.com/en-gb/

Target Audience: Medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud

Description: A solution that helps you manage an entire company. A manufacturing option helps with planning, order processing, and materials and stock management to standardise and streamline production scheduling and the assembly line.

7 SANDERSON UNITY

Website: www.sanderson.com

Target Audience: Manufacturing, wholesale, third-party fulfilment and logistics

Platform: In-house IT infrastructure, cloud as Software as a Service (SaaS)

Description: MRP system tools to improve internal processes, manage the supply chain and provide a reliable service to customers. Options include: Made-to-Order (MTO) and advanced manufacturing, repetitive manufacturing and a small business product.

ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING (ERP)

For larger and growing companies, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software can be tasked with providing a complete oversight of more complicated processes and products. These complex and powerful platforms can track all aspects of product development, marketing, sales activity, order processing, shipping and payment, providing you with critical insights and intelligence.

1 ACUMATICA

Website: www.acumatica.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Available in modules, Acumatica covers every aspect of ERP including financial management, distribution, customer management, manufacturing, project accounting, construction, field service, commerce and reporting. Prices on application.

2 IFS

Website: www.ifsworld.com/uk/

Target Audience: Small, medium and large companies

Platform: On-premises IT infrastructure, SaaS, cloud

Description: IFS develops and delivers agile software for ERP applications in all manufacturing environments, including those with critical traceability requirements, such as the food and beverage, aerospace and defence industries.

3 MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365

Website: www.microsoft.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based options for PCs and servers

Description: Provides ERP solutions for manufacturing operations, financial management, business intelligence and reporting, supply chain management, sales, service and project management. Offers close integration with other Microsoft products.

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4 NETSUITE

Website: www.netsuite.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Delivers financial management, business intelligence and reporting, supply chain management, sales, service, project management and ERP for manufacturing. A large number of third party add-ons and extensions are available.

5 SAGE ERP

Website: www.sage.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based with browser access

Description: Provides financial management, distribution and supply chain management, business intelligence and reporting, inventory management, project management and job costing, all from one of the biggest names in the business.

6 SAP S/4HANA

Website: www.sap.com/uk/

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based options for PCs and servers, Linux servers

Description: Like many of the products here, SAP S/4HANA provides financial management, business intelligence and reporting, supply chain management, sales, service and project management functions. Offers close integration with other SAP modules.

7 SYSPRO ERP

Website: eu.syspro.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises with remote access options for PCs, servers, cloud, mobile

Description: Sold in modules, the Syspro ERP solution covers every aspect of manufacturing operations, financial management, distribution, planning and automated workflows, with comprehensive reporting capabilities baked in.

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

Logistics and Transport Management (LTM) software is focused on making sure that you can plan what needs to be 'where' and 'when' more efficiently. The best software can manage the most efficient routes and schemes, track carrier rates, manage follow-up operations, as well as measure performance. Usefully, LTM software may be included in some ERP packages.

1 BLUJAY SOLUTIONS

Website: www.blujaysolutions.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based

Description: BluJay provides transport planning and management software. Options include transportation management, fleet tracking, warehouse management, customs management and more. Gives you a complete overview of the supply chain.

2 DIPS

Website: www.dips.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: In-house IT infrastructure, web-based

Description: DiPS Daily Planning Software can help to optimise delivery schedules based on order, depots and vehicles available; Strategic Planning Software helps you model supply chain options; while Trunking & Engineers helps to plan trunking fleets.

3 MANDATA

Website: www.mandata.co.uk

Target Audience: Transport and logistics businesses of all sizes

Platform: On-premises servers and cloud

Description: Provides planning for full loads or multi-drop deliveries, with online updates for incoming jobs, available resources and work in progress. The software incorporates a traffic pad to import data such as driver calendars and maintenance schedules.

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4 MJC2

Website: www.mjc2.com

Target Audience: Transport and logistics businesses of all sizes

Platform: On-premises servers

Description: Strategic, operational and real-time planning functionality for large, complex transport and distribution networks. Modules include transport planning and real-time TMS, trucking software, supply chain logistics management and resource scheduling.

5 OBS LOGISTICS

Website: www.obs-logistics.com

Target Audience: Medium and large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based

Description: The Calidus total logistics software incorporates warehouse management, online ordering, transport management and vehicle management. The software monitors deliveries in real-time, automatically communicating between drivers and a transport office.

6 TRANSPOREON

Website: www.transporeon.com/en/

Target Audience: Transport and logistics businesses of all sizes

Platform: Android, iOS, mobile app for drivers, cloud

Description: Tendering, order assignment, time-slot booking, tracking and tracing can be all be accessed online using Transporeon's software, while its web-based logistics platform seamlessly links industrial and retail enterprises.

7 VIXSOFT

Website: www.vixsoft.co.uk

Target Audience: Transport and logistics businesses of all sizes

Platform: Cloud-based

Description: Vixsoft has developed its software specifically to solve issues with freight forwarding and management, haulage and transport management, warehouse and coldstore management. Plus, it includes an integrated financial and accounting system.

INVENTORY/STOCK CONTROL

Inventory and Stock Control software delivers an at-a-glance view of physical stock levels and where that stock is located. Automated notifications can help you reorder when stock is getting low, while reports can help you see what you're carrying too much of (and what's not selling). Some systems here can tie into CRM, accounts packages and in-store EPOS systems.

1 APACHE OFBIZ

Website: ofbiz.apache.org

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises

Description: Apache OFBiz is an open source and, therefore, completely free business management product. It's tricky to set up, but includes a range of options including full product and catalogue management, warehousing and inventory.

2 ASSETTRAC

Website: www.assettrac.co.uk

Target Audience: Medium and large-sized businesses

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based options for PCs, scanners, mobile

Description: Uses a combination of barcode labels or RFID microchips, along with scanners, asset management software and auditing, to help with managing stock levels, maintenance records and product location status.

3 INVENTREE

Website: www.github.com/inventree

Target Audience: Developers and those that need customisation

Platform: On-premises

Description: An open source project, Inventree is a free Inventory Management System that provides powerful stock control and part tracking. It needs manual installation and customisation, but could suit a developer or anyone that needs a bespoke system.

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4 K-STORE

Website: www.k-store.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based options for PCs and servers

Description: Provides easy stock control, inventory management, order management, order picking and pick by voice (via speech synthesis through headphones). Handily links with SAP, SAGE, Shopify and Amazon.

5 LINNWORKS

Website: www.linnworks.com

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: Cloud-based

Description: Provides stock control, inventory management, order management, shipping management and JIT (Just In Time) automatic ordering functions. Also includes real-time updates of stock movements.

6 ORDERWISE

Website: www.orderwise.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based options for PCs and servers

Description: This advanced, multi-channel stock management software offers stock control, inventory management, order management, financial integration, CRM and ERP integration, not to mention Amazon and eBay store integration.

7 WASP INVENTORY CONTROL

Website: www.waspbarcode.co.uk

Target Audience: Small and medium-sized businesses, large enterprises

Platform: On-premises and cloud-based options for PCs and servers

Description: Provides stock control, inventory management, bar code printing, real-time updates with wireless hand-held scanners and integration with accounts packages. There are four levels of stock control software available to suit all sizes of business.

RESOURCES

Visit the Superfast Business Wales website

For more information, guides and tips on becoming a super fast business **businesswales.gov.wales/superfast-businesswales**

Inside the Information Hub

- Use Cloud and Online Technology to simplify work processes
- Get Sales and Finance advice to boost your conversion rates
- Explore Digital Marketing advice to grow your customer base
- Understand how you can improve company Communications
- Strengthen your Data and Cyber Security systems
- Use Social Media to build and develop your brand online
- Deploy Mobile Technology to improve productivity
- Develop Customer Relationships to attract and retain prospects

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Making business smarter: The IoT revolution

Turning to the Internet of Things (IoT) can make your business smarter and more efficient and it's easier than you might think.

It's a simple fact, but smarter businesses do better. The smartest businesses are more efficient, more targeted, and they rely on data to make the right decisions at the right time. But, how do you get smarter? How do you get the information that you need when you need it most? The answer, in many cases, is through the Internet of Things (IoT).

In the most basic terms, the IoT refers to any device that's connected to the internet. More specifically, when we talk about IoT for businesses, we mean connecting systems to the internet and using additional internet-connected sensors to gather important data.

Take, for example, a manufacturing facility, where the production line reports faults instantly for quicker recovery. Or a farm where a farmer knows the real-time status of soil conditions or the location of animals. As you'll see on the pages that follow, Wales is one of the leaders in rural and whole-city IoT, using specially designed Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) technology.

All of the examples we'll look at here generate what is arguably the most valuable element to any modern business: data. Being able to see what happened when, and track the minute details of how a business or organisation works is the first step to even greater efficiencies.

But IoT isn't just about what you can use to make your business better at the point of operation, it's also a way of re-examining the products and services that you sell. Can you make life better for your customers by making products and services internet enabled? Or are there new products/services you can launch that take advantage of new IoT technologies? Rather than being the domain of large tech companies, IoT opens up possibilities that can benefit small and medium-sized businesses too. You're only limited by your creativity...

> IOT ISN'T JUST ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN USE TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS BETTER AT THE POINT OF OPERATION, IT'S ALSO A WAY OF RE-EXAMINING THE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES YOU SELL

How IoT can help businesses in Wales grow

Internet-connected devices can unlock the full potential of businesses, opening new markets and delivering more efficient ways of working.

In the broadest possible sense, the Internet of Things (IoT) refers to any device that's connected to the internet, from a smartphone to a driverless car. The key aspects of IoT devices are their ability to communicate information and to be controlled remotely. As broad as that definition is, what IoT really means for businesses is much simpler: opportunity.

The impact of IoT and the benefits it brings can be seen in the sheer scale of its growth. According to a forecast from IDC, there will be 41.6 billion connected IoT devices by the year 2025, generating a staggering 79.4 zettabytes (ZB) of data[1].

Far from this being the domain of big businesses, IoT technology is increasingly accessible to companies of all sizes. This accessibility gives businesses across Wales an opportunity to have global reach and better serve their domestic markets with smarter, expanded features.

There are two main ways that businesses can use IoT devices. First, by building internet connectivity into products, Welsh businesses can deliver more features to customers and expand their reach. Internet-connected devices are a growing market, with everything from environmental sensors to smart home devices already communicating over the internet.

The reason that so many devices have an internet connection is that it extends what a product is capable of. Typical benefits of IoT devices include remote control, such as being able to turn on the heating from anywhere in the world; automation, such as turning lights on and off automatically; and communication, warning a user that their alarm is going off.

Cardiff-based Tendertec[2] is a good example of what IoT can deliver. The company is due to launch its home-monitoring system for elderly people soon, which will be able to monitor for falls, unhealthy indoor conditions, unusual indoor conditions and loneliness, communicating to carers via a mobile app. Here, IoT connectivity will let elderly people live their lives while providing peace of mind to carers, no matter where they're located.

IoT isn't just about products that consumers will buy, as the technology applies to industrial challenges as much as it does to the home. Internet-connected devices provide sense and meaning automatically to businesses, giving them access to real-time data and enabling them to make smarter decisions, even to save money.

> **THE IMPACT OF IOT AND THE BENEFITS IT BRINGS CAN BE SEEN IN THE SHEER SCALE OF ITS GROWTH. THERE WILL BE 41.6 BILLION CONNECTED IOT DEVICES BY 2025, GENERATING A STAGGERING 79.4 ZETTABYTES (ZB) OF DATA**
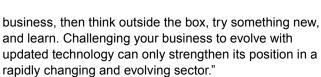
Take a production line, where sensors can automatically feed back issues to a central console. In the event that the production line stops, diagnostics can be accelerated, as the central console tells you where the issue is and what it is. The future points to predictive, rather than reactive maintenance, where sensors monitor the status of factory equipment and artificial intelligence tracks the data to predict faults before they become critical.

Tracking is another big aspect of industrial IoT, using integrated sensors to track the real-time location of assets. Whether it's tools, components for an assembly line, products in a warehouse, or even sheep on a farm, IoT reduces the time people spend searching for things, and even opens the possibility of automated retrieval.

Simply put, IoT takes the pain out of many processes, delivering useful information faster, and making it easier to automate processes. It's a journey that Port Talbot-based Rototherm undertook, when the company, which has

IoT can help you expand your reach.

been making sensors for more than 170 years, decided to embrace IoT and provide connected devices to its customers. With its new tank-level monitoring system, customers can manage fuel tank inventory in minutes, rather than days, with centralised reporting giving a complete status of widely-distributed tanks[3].

Rototherm is another example that shows the power of IoT from both sides. As a product manufacturer, embracing IoT allowed the company to deliver new and smarter products. For customers, they gained access to a product that made a difficult job easier.

This is how IoT should be approached by all companies, looking to see if processes can be simplified with internet-connected technology, or whether products that they make can be enhanced by it.

As Oliver Conger, owner and MD of Rototherm Group explained: "If you really want to reap the benefits of new technologies and the IoT in your Welsh manufacturing business, then think outside the box, try something new, and learn. Challenging your business to evolve with updated technology can only strengthen its position in a rapidly changing and evolving sector."

Components to build IoT products are comparatively cheap, and there's a growth in the number of IoT-enabled products for industry, putting this exciting technology within the bounds of companies big and small. The key thing is to take the time to understand the technology and to build on what it can deliver.

Conger said that his company's project was a two-year challenge and companies "need to invest the time to understand what new technologies and the IoT can do for their businesses." So, start thinking. How can internet-connected devices revolutionise what you do?

[1] https://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prUS45213219
[2] https://tendertec.co.uk/
[3] https://businessnewswales.com/embracing-the-iot-in-welsh-manufacturing/

Technology is transforming farming in rural Wales

As a concept, the 'Internet of Things' (IoT) been around since the 1980s. The basic idea is that you have devices that can communicate and transfer data between one another. This data can then be gathered via the internet and used for anything from smart home automation to managing city-wide infrastructures.

However its impact is now being felt in agriculture, especially in Wales where use of IoT technology is being pioneered at Coleg Glynllifon near Caernarfon. Here, recent advances have led to the production of battery-powered LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) sensors that can operate remotely for months, sometimes years at a time. Crucially, they communicate wirelessly, removing the need for cables.

With a series of these remote sensors, it's possible to monitor multiple facets of a typical farm. As well as basic information like temperature, rainfall and humidity, other important metrics can be tracked. These include livestock movement, water or slurry levels, pest infestation, even the location of expensive farm equipment. Armed with this real-time data, farmers can manage their assets more efficiently and predict potential problems.

The Farming Connect initiative – in conjunction with Cymru Digital – is trialling a number of LoRaWAN systems on 'demo farms' right across Wales. Elsewhere, a European Innovation Partnership (EIP Wales) project is working with farmers in Glynllifon, Hen Dy and Erw Fawr to develop IoT solutions to monitor soil conditions, while another EIP project is looking to make use of IoT to improve health and safety on farms.

"We don't really know which models work best yet," says Geraint Hughes, an agri-food consultant working with the Cymru Digital consortium led by non-profit organisation Menter Môn. "This approach is really cutting edge, and I think we're the first to go ahead to set-up a coordinated network of rural IoT gateways in the UK."

Hughes is adamant about the importance of IoT technology and its importance to business, and to Welsh farming in particular. "In terms of agriculture in Wales, we are reliant on commodity markets," he says. "To survive, we need a good brand to add value – Welsh Lamb, for example – or we need to have a lower cost base and more efficient production systems, which is exactly where IoT comes in… Time is of the essence. In five years' time, I would like to see a number of IoT apps being widely used on Welsh farms that have been run and developed by Welsh companies."

IoT heralds a digital revolution. In today's challenging times, farmers arguably need all the help they can get.

■ FURTHER GUIDANCE
Find out more about Farming Connect

Using technology to help improve air quality

Air pollution continues to be a major health hazard, but before the problem can be tackled, it needs to be measured and understood. It's a huge challenge to monitor a single city, but the Think Air project wants to increase awareness of air quality across the whole of Wales. In doing so, it hopes to empower companies and the public to make better decisions that impact the environment.

Think Air itself is a joint venture between established technology provider Vindico, and Professor Paul Lewis, director for the Centre for Health and Environmental Research & Innovation at Swansea University, and an adviser to the Welsh Government on air quality.

"We want to make the latest technology in air quality accessible, affordable and easy to understand," says Jo Polson, co-founder and managing director of Vindico. "Air pollution has both short term and long term effects on health. Pollutants come from sources such as transport, and include fine particulates and nitrogen dioxide. These pollutants, according to data from Public Health Wales, cause around 1,500 early deaths in Wales."

Air quality is currently monitored by the Welsh Government and local authorities. However, due to EU regulations there are only a handful of appropriate air quality monitors in Wales and these are situated in major urban areas such as Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. Much of Wales does not have any air pollution data available to the public.

To alleviate this, Think Air is proposing an air quality sensor network that can provide live local data to the general public. These sensors will measure airborne particulates (such as dust, pollen, soot, smoke and liquid droplets), plus nitrogen oxides, temperature and humidity. Crucially, the design of these sensors focuses on reliability and low power, enabling them to run for long periods of time, either on batteries or using solar power. They can also be produced in large quantities, which makes them low-cost and easy to source.

Network coverage for the whole of Wales could be achieved within five years. "This might sound bold," Polson admits, "and the obvious bottleneck is the level of engagement we can achieve with regional and local authorities. But the sooner we start raising awareness, the quicker we can start influencing behaviour, which in turn will lead to better understanding and new solutions. The real solution to reducing air pollution is behavioural change."

■ FURTHER GUIDANCE
Find out more about Think Air

Remote control and sensing in IoT

Monitoring remotely not only saves time, but it can also give businesses access to valuable data. Here's how IoT is making complex jobs easier.

For many companies and organisations, managing large areas and wide-spread sites, particularly in rural areas across Wales, can involve a lot of manpower. But, as we've seen in the case studies on the previous pages, this is a challenge that IoT is uniquely placed to address. With remote sensing and monitoring comes the potential for improving business efficiency and gaining new insights through the collection of additional data.

Think of a recycling company that has sensors embedded in its recycling bins stored around a city. A collection would only need to be arranged once a bin is full, negating the need to send people around to physically check on the current situation. There are numerous other applications for IoT, from spotting forest fires and detecting chemical leakage in rivers, to intelligent shopping apps and source-to-store supply chain control.

It's not a future technology either. IoT devices are already in action across Wales. The seaside village of Fairbourne in North Wales, for example, faces the threat of being flooded by rising sea levels[4] and it could be the first town in the UK to be directly affected by climate change. While the village might not be saved, IoT has the potential to help monitor coastal erosion and water levels across Wales, using low-power, long-lasting sensor technology.

Elsewhere, Tata Steel[5] in Port Talbot uses sensors to monitor and optimise its slab, hot rolled, cold rolled and galvanised coil production. Aberystwyth-based Agxio[6] uses sensors and artificial intelligence as part of a smart platform to monitor farm crops and predict future yields. While Navmoor[7] in Ebbw Vale, incorporates IoT technology into the wave and data buoys it supplies to the marine industry.

As well as monitoring a wide range of processes and environmental conditions, IoT can provide an exciting new data source for companies, providing insights that are simply impossible to capture by hand. Wales, for example, is at the forefront of a new trial that is designed to track and monitor grazing livestock. These are traditionally hard to manage when grazing on extensive grasslands and are often vulnerable to theft.

However, thanks to new IoT sensors, which will be incorporated into animal collars, some livestock will be tracked automatically. Sensors will provide GPS location data, activity flags (e.g. increased or unusual movement levels that might indicate theft), behaviour indicators (e.g. grazing, low-intensity grazing and lying down), plus data for social interactions.

It's hoped that the data gathered will prevent theft, help spot ill animals and provide better insight into grazing habits that can be used to increase production.[8] It's one example of how using IoT sensors can help improve and drive a business forward, opening up the potential for automatic safety monitoring and the collection of extra data that can provide new insights to drive greater efficiencies, while at the same time reducing costs and improving levels of customer service.

[4] https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/life-north-wales-village-set-17605572
[5] https://www.tatasteeleurope.com/ • [6] https://www.agxio.com/our-platform • [7] https://navmoor.com/
[8] https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/business/european-innovation-partnership-eip-wales-approved-eip-wales-projects/where-have-ewe-moo
[9] https://pinaclsolutions.com/case-studies/newport-city-council-lorawan

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SMARTER NETWORKING: LORAWAN AND 5G

There's a certain amount of irony in the fact that the areas that will typically benefit the most from IoT sensors are those that are more remote or those that cover very large areas, making reliable internet coverage difficult.

Today, there's a good solution to both problems, with the Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) technology. This low-power networking requires a simple gateway device, which provides long-range communication to low-power battery-powered sensors, making it perfect for rural applications. And, thanks to the range, it means that cities can be covered with a relatively small number of gateways. Denbighshire-based Pinacl, for example, has installed a LoRaWAN network in Newport with the capability to provide connectivity to thousands of remote sensors, including air quality management, flood sensors and smart waste management.[9]

With a battery life of between five and 10 years, LoRaWAN is ideal for sensor projects that transmit relatively small amounts of data. Complementing this technology is 5G, which is starting to roll out across the UK. The next-gen mobile technology promises faster data transfer rates, powering the likes of high-data devices, such as video cameras. 5G also promises a more reliable connection than existing mobile networks with a much lower latency. These factors will ensure that sensors can transmit data reliably over a 5G network and that devices can be controlled remotely without any lag.

A combination of 5G and LoRaWAN will deliver the maximum benefit to Welsh businesses, powering a wide range of applications and options.

Providing free Wi-Fi for a whole town

Cardigan, situated near the West coast of Wales, was the first town in the county of Ceredigion to institute Wi-Fi across an entire town centre. Two years in the planning, the network went live in May of 2018, offering free connectivity to both locals and visitors. At launch it was accompanied by the Cardigan Town app, a free download for both Apple and Android smartphones, which not only provides a wealth of information about the town, but also captures valuable data regarding visitor habits and behaviour.

"Response to the system has only been positive," says Clive Davies, an IT expert who has been a town councillor and Mayor of Cardigan, and is currently the county councillor for Ceredigion. "Traders and building owners could immediately see the benefits it would bring to those using it, whether local or visiting, and the information it would provide for the businesses in the town centre."

The rollout started in 2017 and finished in 2018, when Wi-Fi units were placed at strategic points across the town by installers Telemat. The completed network cost £30,000 with money coming from the Welsh Government and Europe, with additional funding from the town council and social enterprise organisation Cymdeithas Cynnal a Cefnogi Cefn Gwlad (4CG).

Davies explains that the idea came from the systems adopted by large superstores in order to measure the most popular areas, levels of footfall and the busiest shopping periods. "We just scaled it up to a market town," he says. "It uses Cisco external Wi-Fi equipment, which also captures analytical information such as dwell time, footfall numbers, and new and returning town visitors."

The data gathered by the system can also track car parking, how long people stay, what time of day is busiest, and which days are busiest. It also reveals the effect that the weather or a local event has had on visitor figures, as well as how often people visit the town.

It's just the start. Davies is keen to expand the town's digital infrastructure. "As 'Digital Champion' for the county, I've started looking at the use of LoRaWAN technology across the region for improving the council services as well supporting initiatives with Dyfed Powys Police for crime, especially rural crime." He is also looking into the use of IoT devices to monitor the lifebuoys dotted along the River Teifi. The application of a small, inexpensive sensor could send an alarm, alerting the authorities that the lifebuoy's cabinet has been opened and requires action.

Not only can the adoption of IoT technology help businesses, it might well save lives too.

■ FURTHER GUIDANCE
Find out more about Cardigan

Protecting homes with remote sensors

Monitoring and sensing technology is proving to be a useful tool for maintaining safety standards in housing. The Newtown-based Mid-Wales Housing Association is leading the way in this area and has become the first organisation in Powys to use intelligent IoT technology to gain real-time information about the condition of its properties.

The project involves using Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) technology to monitor temperature and humidity in homes, with data gathered at 30-minute intervals. A longer-term goal is to expand the number of things that the LoRaWAN network can monitor, feeding in sensor information from boilers, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and water leak detection systems. All of which will help improve occupier safety.

As Ernest Capener, Community Housing Officer at the Mid-Wales Housing Association explains, internet-connected technology enables a move from 'reactive' to 'predictive' maintenance. "Early detection of faults using IoT sensors, such as heating problems or those at risk of condensation or fire, will mean an improved service to our tenants as we can intervene earlier to prevent the problem escalating."

■ FURTHER GUIDANCE
Find out more about Mid-Wales Housing Association

Saving millions with remote monitoring

Monitoring can be applied to almost any problem and Swansea-based Vortex IoT leads the way in Rail Remote Condition Monitoring (RCM). It's big business. Network rail spends over £300 million annually dealing with the impact of tree falls, rockfalls, trespassing, animal intrusion, landslides and subsidence on its lines. Reporting these issues is typically a manual process, discovered by scheduled inspections or reactionary maintenance work.

To automate the process, Vortex IoT's RODIO (Railway Optical Detection of Intrusions and Obstructions) system is a "scalable and cost-efficient RCM solution for detecting obstructions and intrusions for rail infrastructure." Gathering track data using low-powered sensors, it not only helps Network Rail save money, but maintains the highest levels of passenger safety.

The company also develops smart city products, including air quality monitoring and OptiPark, which uses retro-fitted lampposts to monitor vehicle flow and look for vacant parking spaces.

■ FURTHER GUIDANCE
Find out more about Rail Remote Condition Monitoring

IoT Resources

The Business Wales website also has a wide selection of resources for businesses of all sizes. You can find these in the Information Hub. New content is added regularly, so bookmark the page so you can stay up to date with all the latest technologies that are of benefit to businesses in Wales.

Here are some key resources to get you started.

■ WHAT IS THE INTERNET OF THINGS?
Have you ever turned your heating up using your phone? What about your CCTV pinging you an alert when something unusual happens outside your home? Chances are, these services are powered by the Internet of Things.

■ NEW YEAR. NEW DECADE. A NEW WAY OF DOING BUSINESS?
2020 is already setting itself apart from 2019, with the turn of the year bringing some long-awaited clarity and eagerly anticipated opportunities for businesses.

■ THE INTERNET OF THINGS WITH LORAWAN
There are lots of different types of devices that can be used for IoT, and they can be thought of as belonging to different families that can work together. This guide focuses on Long Range Wide Area Network technology.

■ USING 'INTERNET OF THINGS' (IOT) TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE SLURRY
The aim of this project is to better understand what role IoT technology has when trying to improve efficiency of application of slurry.

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