

001-anything-but-idle

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SPEAKERS

Augusto Pinaud, Raymond Sidney-Smith



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:00

Hello personal productivity enthusiasts and community Welcome to anything but idle, the productivity news podcast. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. I'm a good soaking up, and we're your hosts for anything but idle. This is episode one. And we're recording this on May 8 2020. Each week, we cover the productivity news headlines of the week. Then we have our signs of productivity segment. After that, we go into our featured story of the week. And with that, let's get into our headlines, a gusto. So let's start off with our first headline, which is that slack completely revamped its Android app with a new swipe based UI user interface. And so now you're able to go ahead and kind of just swipe back and forth. And instead of clicking on the navigation buttons on the bottom, us, in essence can swipe back and forth between quick selections between the the navigation drawer for the different channels and messages, and then swipe to the right for some options and so on and so forth. So it's a it's an interesting Piece I've not quite gotten my own handle on the swipe functions. But it i think is an easy way to jump back and forth between different items. What's Next up on the headlines?



Augusto Pinaud 01:11

So the harm of productivity and activity monitoring of remote workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a really interesting article from tryg Clavell who, talking about the harms of using the old model to hold a new model that we are all experiencing. So it's a really, really interesting read.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 01:31

Next up, we have the founder of Wunderlist, announced a new productivity application that they are calling super list. And I would imagine that it's going to have a similar feel to wonder list in a way. And the landing page is actually the verge noted, very pretty landing page, as they're quoted saying, and they say that they're going to, quote unquote, enable supercharged productivity for teams of the future. So this is a team focused productivity application called Super list. And I'm looking forward to playing around with it. Of course, this is on the heels of Wunderlist being closed down, and Microsoft, of course, acquired Wunderlist in 2015. And now they have basically baked all of the Wunderlist goodness into Microsoft to do as they continue to integrate it into office and the ecosystem that is Microsoft 365 what's next on the headlines of gussto



Augusto Pinaud 02:29

so Apple on wheels, a 13 inch MacBook with a magic keyboard, double the storage and a faster performance. So basically, it's time to upgrade their MacBook 13 make it you know, change the keyboard the key word, Apple has been getting some fire for the keyboards and the new key the old keyboards now. So the new MacBook 13 inch MacBook Pro will have it has a new magic keyboard that hopefully we'll get Apple out of that you know heat, heat for the fact that given Took a number of defective keyboards.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 03:01

Next up, we have a new application that seems to be on the market. This is iOS only it looks like



Augusto Pinaud 03:08

it is iOS only is for the people who love actually paper books. And it allows you to take a screenshot of the page, highlight it, but then it has the ability to in the exam recognize that you could do that before with other applications like Evernote but but i think is still a really cool app though, where they're coming up. Yeah, I really am going to enjoy playing around with this one. Because you know, I love books, just generally. And so the idea of being able to connect digital and physical in any way is going to be always interesting to me.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 03:45

Next up, we have another update to iOS 13.5. What's that all about at this jail?



Augusto Pinaud 03:50

So the public beta, it's finally coming. What is going on? What is jokingly around as a covered solution, you know, was face ID and the mask and everything else. The system wasn't designed to wear a mask. So it's really slow to not recognize a face and give you the option to put the passcode. So, Apple is coming on 13.5 it's right now testing on the public beta how that's going to come faster when they don't recognize or recognize something similar to covering your face with a mask is going to pop up immediately the passcode so you can enter into your phone.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 04:26

Next up is Microsoft has announced the the new features in iPhone and iPad for Microsoft Outlook on mobile. And the feature is basically what they're calling ignore conversation. Now this is akin to on on Gmail where you have the mute function so you can mute a conversation if you don't know that you can mute a conversation in Gmail. In essence, it turns off notifications and it doesn't show you that a new messages are coming in for a particular conversation thread. And you know this happens all the time. You know, you get CCD on Five different email chains and they're all kinds of you know, topics that are not directly within your purview you don't have anything to do about it. It's just FYI or it becomes a rabbit hole of everybody sharing pictures of their dog and or cats and and you don't want to see that conversation ignore conversation feature will help you select that option. And then you will not see notifications for those reply all rabbit holes that people go down into the feature is already rolled out in the app stores. So you will you will see it in your in your updates. Now. Next up, we have some more slack news. In addition to slacks upgrade to androids app, the Android app for the swipe UI. slack has of course also been working on its own desktop user interface. And so they have brought what they're calling, you know, their biggest redesign to date and So they've started rolling this out to users. In essence, now you're going to see some different navigation bar items. So in the navigation bar, you should be able to now drag and drop and collapse particular items. So you're going to see that you can nest all of the various parts of your conversations, the different channels, the different teams, you can move these things around, so that you're able to better organize your own interface that new sidebar sections feature, by the way, is only for paid slack plans. So if you're in a free plan, or a free version of slack, you're not going to see that the new compose button is bigger, you're going to see some rounding of edges, just a little bit cleaner of a view there. So they're just little minor things that are kind of giving us some better spacing, and some just kind of a less cluttered feel to the whole

interface. And so using slack in very, very limited fashion. I'm a part of a couple of groups and they use slack for being able to communicate They're discussions. I am not particularly there's not much that changed about it. For me that was like, Oh, this is monumental, but it is a nice upgrade, just generally for the system. Okay, so what's next up in the headlines rundown.

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Augusto Pinaud 07:15

So the next is an article from productivity confidential that talks about productivity with a purpose Fast Company article, and we'll link it It talks about how we need to start looking with all these changes aren't the definitions we use on on what is productivity and what it means to be productive? So it's a really, it was a really engaging read. I really enjoy the article a lot



Raymond Sidney-Smith 07:43

yet it also came as an a nine minute audio podcast form. So if you want to you can also listen to it in podcast form. Next up is things and since I am not the Apple Watch user, I'm going to turn this one over to you Cousteau

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Augusto Pinaud 07:57

thing is, you know, one of the Big monsters on Task and Task management on the iOS and the Mac world. And it really came with a new application for the watch trying to make the watch more effective. You know, as they said, It's been five years one of the things now is the watch will now synchronize directly with the cloud. Instead of with the phone before things used to synchronize with the phone and then the phone with the cloud now, it will go directly from the phone to the cloud. Since the iPhone and the watch connect and share the Wi Fi, it should allow to faster synchronization you know the other thing they are trying to do is you can add to today you can remove two today that I think is a really cool thing you know that you can go on the watch and then have now on your watch. That's really shortlist two or three things that you are trying to focus right now on making sure it happened of course as a productivity coach problem with that is, people will start with putting two on before they notice they have eight or nine. So that tend to be a problem there. But our next, our next thing, it's a phone call translator, and is a product that will listen to the call, you can activate into the call and we'll do a live translation of what the call is about. Still a little bit rough. But I think it takes things in the direction where the future is going to go,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 09:29

especially if we as we globalize All right, next up is more news from Microsoft, which is that they are now in essence renaming applications as they start to bake more pieces into the ecosystem. I talked about this in the Wunderlist article, when we talked about Wunderlist founder starting the super list. The idea here is that Microsoft 365 is going to start pulling together parts of the ecosystem including what is currently Microsoft planner and Microsoft to do in essence, that will now become the tasks app and be kicked into Microsoft Teams. So we're gonna see more and more of this consolidation of these parts of the of the Microsoft ecosystem, the Office Suite, in essence bundled into Microsoft Teams, and giving more connectivity between those pieces. This is, you know, going back to, you know, Windows 95. And how Microsoft really tried to have these pieces put together. I don't know if anybody remembers, but Microsoft binder was amazing, and I wish it still existed. We're starting to see the new kind of era of that were, in essence, not bundling together the file formats but bundling together the applications into one cohesive view. So your chat and your meetings and your task collaboration, and your calendar and your email are going to start to be in that same space just like outlook bundles together your email Calendar and add tasks together, they're going to try and do that with the team's interface as well. Alright, a little bit of COVID-19 News here. Okay, so what are they talking about regarding the iPad and COVID-19



Augusto Pinaud 11:13

Forbes has a really interesting article on how the iPad has been has turned his appeal in during this COVID-19 times and how you know that message that Apple has been trying to push in, many of us has been trying to push right you know, wrote co wrote the book in 2013. About make your iPad your main machine. People are starting to notice the power of the machines and as they are all at home and their IT resources for call them in that way. At least their personality resources now are shared between the kids, the people who is at home, I know that people are coming to these iPads and discovering Well, I can really use this to work on forums going into a really interesting article about how all this COVID-19 thing has really accelerate that process for Apple.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 12:07

Normally, this is the time in which we add in the science of productivity segment with Matt Plummer from Nirvana. That will be beginning next week. And so that brings us to the featured story of the week. And this week, we came across a white paper by the global recruiting firm, Robert Walters, it's called a smart workplace for the workforce of the future, what companies can do to bridge the gap between employer and employee

expectations. There are some really interesting insights here that are on on earth or surfaced from the research that they had done. The most notable item here is that research suggests that 48% of businesses at least in the United Kingdom, are just not ready to have workers work from home. This is a little bit shocking since we're in 2020. But, you know, I guess it is also a part of the fact that we weren't expected to be pushed into this form of lockdown so quickly. And and so a lot of I'm presuming employers resting on their laurels, in the sense that they're just letting the status quo be and employees haven't really pushed for policies that allow themselves to have access to this kind of remote work because working from home was only one type of remote work in any distributed workforce. Augusta what other pieces of the white paper stood out for you?

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Augusto Pinaud 13:34

It was really interesting to see how the article bring what what he's been there all the time. You know, some of the statistics 60% fear that the employees may abuse the policy. And that was one of the reasons day to day many corporations have not implemented that that fear now that he's been there. Well, it's it's showing you know how a lot of that a lot of the reason they're so behind in so many of these pieces are not set up for that, you know the truth because statistics are the fear of employees may have used the state, how difficult is going to be to supervise employees and 41% claim that remote working makes difficult to track the performance and productivity and they even go, you know, more statistics into how professionals feels about it. And it is interesting to see the contrast when when at the beginning of the article we talked about 45% feel difficult to supervise their employee but then from the employee perspective, 85% feel that the productivity is enhanced that they feel motivated to work that they feel motivated to the work that the 42% feels that now you know, they they have a better work life balance. So I think what this is bringing for, for everybody on the article make a really, really good job putting in is a lot of the fears that they are going to say We're having to implement this are now put on the front. Unlike y2k, it is going now we are going now to see an accelerated implementation of some of these issues. And I think that's a good thing.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 15:13

Some of the statistics, I think that they found were unfounded from the, from the professionals they surveyed, for example, you know, the note that they fear, they're not able to monitor their employees. That kind of surveillance is, is, as the earlier article that we talked about is just dangerous, to not have a level of trust in your employees. If you change to a performance based outcomes and results based performance tracking, then you don't need to worry about behavior. The, you know, tracking people's behaviors is just not useful. Because outcomes matter, not the way in which they get there necessarily for

the vast majority of work and there's always going to be outlier. So if you're in an industry where say you're highly regulated or you know those kinds of things, I totally get that. But for the vast majority of people, how they spend their time is going to be, is going to be really easy, easier if they are given the latitude to make that stuff happen. And this this fear over, if you're not working for eight hours, then you're not doing, you're not being productive. That's not, that's just not true. If you spend two hours and get your job done, then you're just, you're just capable of getting your job done in two hours. And what you do with your time really doesn't matter and should not matter to the organization in those types of work. You know, this is different than say, working in a factory where you're where you're working on an assembly line, and you working eight hours really means eight hours of you working it that that's not what we're talking about here when it comes to knowledge work. And the other one that I thought was actually quite salient and probably true, which is that this is difficult is it 11% of what employers were concerned about was that that it would be difficult to learn and apply new technologies. And I can't believe it was only 11%. I actually anticipated for it to be actually much more than that, in terms of the fact that the new technologies for people to learn, you know, you have a we have a much older workforce than in decades past. And so what is happening now is that we have an older workforce who is not as used to technology and who are working later in life. And I think that's great, we should want to have high utility for people into later lives if they want to, that doesn't mean they have to, you know, we should have the appropriate both individual and and social safety nets so that people can retire and have, you know, a good you know, latter half of their life doing what they want, if that's what they choose to do. But if people want to work, then we need to be able to facilitate the technology and the the instructional design necessary for more mature audiences to be able to Continue working. And that's really difficult when put a sauna in front of an older person and ask them to just start working in that system, it's going to be a little bit difficult for them, because it's just a completely new environment. It's like putting any individual in a spaceship and telling them to read the dashboard, the cockpit dashboard and fly the ship to Mars, you're not going to know what you're looking at until you get some orientation bearing on that. And that's going to be a real difficulty in larger organizations that might have dozens and dozens of different types of software for people who may not have been using that for the predominant majority, or the majority of their career. Yeah, there were four outcomes that I wanted to note before we closed out from from that particular white paper. They noted basically, that they're kind of these four top tips they called called it to overcome concerns with flexible working arrangements. One was to change from behavior based to outcome based assessment. We've really talked about that. The next was devising innovative alternatives to face to face communication. Another one of the things that was noted in the in the white paper was that people thought that this would increase inequity or inequality in an organization, if only certain people were allowed to have access to flex work or remote work status. And that is possibly true. And so you

really do need to be very thoughtful about how you create face to face communications. One organization I recently heard about, instead of having only part of the organization, go to remote work, even when people come into the office, everyone meets inside of a virtual meeting space, so that even if you're in the building, you're still sitting at your desk meeting with everybody so that everybody who's attending the meeting, whether they're remote or otherwise, has the same view of everybody else in the room. And so you just need to start thinking about these things from creating appropriate culture around what is quality in the hierarchy. And if there is a hierarchy and making sure that you're really getting appropriate face to face communication that works for people in real time meetings. The third item they talked about was creating an open culture flexibility, in essence, you know, in essence not disadvantaging some people versus others. And then finally, working to stem burnout. So that, you know, the reality is, is that once you go to a work from home environment, you blur the lines between your work life balance, and you need to be able to help your employees understand that, hey, you're going to you're going to work and you're going to be potentially working from home sometimes, maybe you're working flexibly at a cafe or a co working space. If you're not coming into the office. You need to learn how to stem the tide of burnout. So really interesting White Paper, we will put a link to this obviously in the show notes for you to look at if you want to deep dive into the report. But it's very interesting to kind of see the tenor of the discussion happening around or working from home from flex work from a distributed workforce and remote working perspective. So with that, we are going to close out this episode. If you want to feel free to follow us on social media, we are at anything but idle, you can leave a review in your favorite podcast app. Let us know if there's a story we missed by using our contact page on anything but idle.com which is where you can also find all of the episodes. You can also tweet or dm us at anything but idle on Twitter. And with that, thanks for joining us here on our first episode of anything but idle, the productivity news podcast until next time, here's to productive life. Take care, everybody.