

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:00

Hello personal productivity enthusiasts and community Welcome to anything but idle, the productivity news podcast. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. I'm Agustina, and we're your hosts for anything but idle. This is Episode 18. And we're recording this on August 13 2020. Each week we cover the productivity news headlines of the week. So you know what's going on in the current research services, products, tools, and more in the world of personal productivity. With that, let's get into our headlines. So we have some COVID-19 News,

Augusto Pinaud 0:31

Facebook decide to continue working from home until at least July 2021. That is our first news. And then Atlassian tell employees that they can work from home forever. So they change their policy and now you can work from home indefinitely. And the third news we have for COVID-19 is not as happy news as Mozilla lays off 250 of their employees do To COVID-19, you know, that's 250 it is a significant percentage of the people who are talking about 25% of the Mozilla employees. So that's the the sad news of of the weeks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:13

Now they're closing their Taiwanese office. And if you all don't know this, Mozilla is doing some really foundational work in terms of data privacy and protecting all of us on the web. So if you can donate to the Mozilla Foundation. So what's our first story in the apple ecosystem?

Augusto Pinaud 1:35

You know, the first story is related to fantastical, fantastical to power calendar application, and they just released their new family subscription. So it used to be that you get the single user subscription for 499 a month and now if you have more than one person families in there, you can now go to the family subscription for 799 a month. I don't know I think we are getting we're getting close to hitting subscription. Fatigue from people, you know, I understand why the model change. And I think for software companies is going to get to start a time where, let me buy the software again, fine, charge me, whatever, you're going to charge me. But let me buy the software, this subscription thing, it's I don't know where How far is going to go.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 2:20

Right. I think the old model was if you pay a particular amount you own it for as long as there wasn't a major upgrade, and then you would pay for the next major upgrade. And for some reason, developers went to this monthly plan because it made them more money. And it was a more stable form of income, which makes sense, but you're right. At some point, people get kind of fatigued, stressed in terms of all of the various subscriptions that have to pay for. So next up, Apple is putting out their first public beta of the Apple Watch iOS seven, and so public beta is beta Users public beta users now have their hands on Watchtower seven. What's what are some of the major updates in the Watchtower seven space. They've got a new sleep tracking feature. What else is coming up?

Augusto Pinaud 3:13

Well they have to wash your hands they really make a lot of changes into what is coming the watch is is limited to series three, four and five. They are Apple has finally decided not to bring that or make it compatible with their Apple Watch Series one and two. But the biggest improvements are on the maps you know the cyclist now can get much better maps they this lip obviously this lip tracking feature at a big deal so it's going to see I I have read good things about the new public better and we need to wait is coming is coming soon and fast. The rumor says that they will be Hear by the end of September. So let's see what happened was that

Raymond Sidney-Smith 4:02

continuing on with our apple news of the week, Apple has just released iOS 13 point 6.1, as well as iPad os 13 point 6.1. And so this continues from their July release of 13.6. And the

release of car key, which was, which is Apple's version of a digital key for supported vehicles to be able to lock on lock and start them. What else has come in 13 point 6.1.

Augusto Pinaud 4:30

It's really this is an update, mostly designed to fix bugs more than introduce anything new. So there is a couple of issues with system data files that don't get deleted and when the storage is low, and there is issues in some of the newer devices where the thermal management, it's causing the screen to look green. So hopefully this fix those two things. There is a couple more minor things but really, those are the two main big issues.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 4:58

I've had a couple of clients with the green tint Situation come up in resolving it just by having Apple roll it back. So I'm glad to see them fixing in 13 point 6.1. All right, so Google Maps has now gotten an upgrade on Apple CarPlay. And on the Apple Watch OS. So on Monday, Google announced that they would be improving the Google Maps. On those two platforms, Google Maps will be available in the CarPlay dashboard, and so they're on the homescreen. You can see you're driving along you'll be able to see calendar appointments and you'll be able to see what music you're playing all alongside the directions. So turn by turn directions will then be available. That is also coming to the Apple Watch. So you'll have turned by turn directions showing up on your Apple Watch. I already currently experience that on my out of my warehouse device. It's really nice to be able to just look at your wrist and be able to see where the next turn is upcoming in the device. And so on and so forth. So glad to see Google bringing that to the watch OS platform. And with that we have reached our halfway point in the headlines. And so that means a word from our sponsor this week. Zavala at serve on a.com.

Matt Plummer 6:15

As a young analyst at a leading strategy and management consulting firm I experienced when ambitious professionals experienced every week, I had a strong desire to get promoted as quickly as I could. And I wanted to take on exciting side projects. And I wanted to do all that while spending less time at work. So my life outside of work wasn't limited to exhaustion and recovery. My observations of my coworkers told me this wasn't possible. But I knew there had to be a way I began to research and experiment and in two to three months, I had reduced the hours I was working by over 15% or placing myself on the path to a faster than average promotion. My success led to the creation of Nirvana, a tool designed to give you the edge at work and in life. It combined diagnostic abbreviated courses and a habit tracker into a single application to enable you to get the most out of your time in just minutes per week, you can start by taking the time finder diagnostic to find out how many of our hundred and 50 time saving behaviors you're currently doing.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 7:17

And we're back. What's our next headline at gousto

Augusto Pinaud 7:21

inside notional global expansion plan, and it's an article from David Pierce, talking about it the expansion plan for notion and as we know, notion is the productivity tools when making real noise. They just get a second funding in April. I'm not sure some of the people I know who use motion will love the fact that the articles placed by calling them finicky adopters, but

Unknown 7:47

it's what it is.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 7:48

This is a very interesting application, as I've frequently said, you know, these applications that are always bandied about as being kind of next, the next great thing you know, we We've said

that about many applications. And we just don't know, you know, this is this is getting notoriety, it is a, it is hopefully going to become a very powerful software. But it is very cloud centric. And as I've seen with other applications that have lacked, you know, strong mobile application and strong desktop application functionality across platforms is struggle, it struggles, you know, it's just going to struggle. So I get what they're doing, it's going to take some time, and I hope they do. Well, I really do. But it's just going to take time before we see the ultimate kind of outcome of whether or not they'll survive in this market. But they've got a lot of venture capital, so they've got a long runway to kind of figure that out. And so we shall see, we will, we will keep you posted. Okay, next up is an application that is kind of a competitor to what we talked about a few episodes back when we talked about camo by a company called rings. debate. And so what camera does is it turns your iOS or iPad iOS device into a webcam by connecting them physically. While this new company neural cam live this new software neural cam live uses machine learning to turn your iPhone into a Smart computer webcam. And in essence, it does all of these back of the house algorithmic work to make you look good on camera. And so you can take an older iPhone and other kinds of things and really help you do a video stream a live stream with pretty high fidelity. I'm curious to see who uses it how it works for people I know that I've been using and an audio filtering software and audio enhancing software for you know on my on my desktop for meetings and it's just better than the built in you know noise cancelling and noise filtering software that are out there. And to see neurochem live Come on, I'm just curious to see how it will work in line with those kinds of other software.

Augusto Pinaud 10:08

The next news is Dropbox finally lounges or password manager file vault and the backup across the Macs. And we mentioned here in the show, when they were into the better testing for this and now it's finally out. So it's a, I think it's a good step for people. Dropbox isn't a lot of computers, it isn't a lot of people and managing passwords and computer backups is something people don't do naturally. So I think given this option to the people, it is going to be interesting for people

Raymond Sidney-Smith 10:45

right and so the the flip side to this just kind of the way in which I view it is pretty much akin to you which I'm glad Dropbox has done this even though a lot of the criticism that has been seen online is do we need another password manager is Dropbox really the right company to be doing, you know, security in that sense, yada yada yada, right? I totally get the criticisms and I think they're valid. But at the same time, there are so many people out there who are using password 123 or they're using the same password for all of their important accounts. And if this just brings some level of notoriety, some level of awareness to folks that they need to be using password managers where they have long passwords that are utilizing not just numbers and letters, so that they can keep those passwords in check, I think is a good thing. So I'm, I'm pleased to see Dropbox doing this even though you know, it'll be a cold day in you know, on the equator when I decide to use Dropbox to be my password manager. But if you're in that ecosystem and you're using it, you know it's better than password 123 now We got to shift ourselves over to some some Google News in the Google verse. First up, we have fossil out with their Gen five wero s smartwatches. And they have added a wellness app, which will allow some really interesting health features. So it will be doing sleep tracking. They'll be doing measuring of cardio type workouts, like if you're going for a run or those kinds of things. You can track your vo to max levels and score your endurance workouts. So that's pretty interesting. The wellness app also gives some other you know minor features. I'm just interested to see how fossil takes these Gen five smartwatches into kind of their next generation of health features especially since they're you know the everyday person type smartwatches if there is an everyday version of of a smartwatch and I have an aging smartwatch oh oh zero s watch I'm in the market for a new one. But I'm really holding out for the Google Pixel watch if it ever comes. And so I'm just looking at all the various options that

are out there and thinking, well, maybe I'm just going to get the battery refreshed on my current watch. And wait,

Augusto Pinaud 13:18

the smartwatch world is really, really interesting because it is a world that is hard to explain. And I have always tell people, people ask, okay, well, you recommend a smartwatch or the Apple Watch. And I always said, Well, the problem is, in my experience, they don't do anything that you say is this is the reason to buy it. It is really a series of really tiny and small things that together make the appearance of the watch really, really interesting in a one. So been adding those wellness to the to the low energy, the entry level of this smartwatches I think is really, really interesting. It may introduce people into tracking some of these health features. You know, I recently begin tracking that I have never done before meditation on mine. I have meditate for many years, but I have never tracked it. So I never knew how long it is or how long it's not. Now I'm tracking it into watch. And it's really make a difference on my practice, because now I can know how many hours have that really happened instead of how many hours I think it happened.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 14:30

So next up, we have Android 11 is adding autofill passwords using g board. So g board is the application that you can install on Android devices as well as on Chrome OS. And it gives you a whole bunch of really great features. And now we are in a state where Google and Android feel strong enough about adding some new features. They're like connecting your autofill functionality. into the G board application. So that's really the major component being added in this particular version, this particular update within Android 11. And we'll see obviously more upgrades and additions to Android 11 as they make their way through the the beta channels and preview channels toward release.

Augusto Pinaud 15:21

Well the next news is really really interested for me. Google turns or Android phones into an earthquake detection network. I don't live in California anymore but I used to live in Los Angeles and yes do get them and you never know when they come you don't know. So having this little thing you know that is going to alert you Hey, phones are surrounding you are experiencing this is coming to you drop cover on and we hold so when it gets I think it is an incredibly clever way of use technology and I hope it's going to turn translate into

Raymond Sidney-Smith 16:01

saving lives all around the world. Fantastic. It's just It's wonderful to see how technology can be utilized in these ways that we didn't first think about. But now that we all have computers with a bunch of sensors built into it in our pockets, there is a, an ongoing data privacy and data protection issue. But there's also this massive ability to take those data points and, as you said, save lives and make people healthier and live better lives. Next up talking about a better life is better sleep. Google is bringing bedtime wellness to the non pixel, they're bringing those to the non pixel world. So if you are already on the pixel line of phones, you had the bedtime mode on your Android device. Now, if you have Android six, which is marshmallow or later, Android is rolling that out to all other Android phones. So that is a really great feature. It basically limits the number of visual notifications. I think it actually Gray's out the screen. So it goes to kind of a grayscale. And it does a bunch of other little features that help you kind of get ready for bedtime. And it's within the Digital well being functions inside of the clock app. So good on Google for finally scaling that out from the exclusive pixel features to the rest of the world. And with that, that brings us to the end of our headlines this week and onward to the science of productivity segment with Matt Palmer from zivana.

Matt Plummer 17:39

The science of productivity segment brings you scientific insights you can trust into how to accomplish your goals faster. In this week's segment, I want to share research that unpacks weather tracking data on yourself will boost your productivity. People began tracking data on themselves using large unwieldy computers as early as the 1970s in hopes of, quote, gaining knowledge through numbers. In the last 15 years though this trend has exploded, popularized, at least in part by the technology magazine wire beginning in 2007. Today, we can track an incredible amount of data on our lives, from health data using devices like the Fitbit or the Apple Watch to how we spend our time using applications like rescue time. While the ability to collect and analyze such data has increased, the question still remains, does it actually make us better and more productive, particularly in the work context? Researchers from Stanford set out to answer this question by placing RFID tracking technology on workers in a garment factory in India. To remove the effect of incentives on performance. The researchers instituted these RFID tags without linking them to any performance based incentives for the workers. You know, basically they just track the data Made it visible to the employees themselves. And just tracking the data in this way, increase the productivity of the workers by over 8%, but only for some workers productivity rose by this margin for workers completing simple tasks. However, for workers completing complex tasks, productivity dropped by 5% or more. quantification works when the task is simple, because we are convinced that the data meaningfully represents the goal we are trying to achieve. However, for complex tasks, the data doesn't represent the true goal, causing the tracking and then displaying of such data to be distracting, and ultimately demotivating. The key takeaway is that if you want to quantify the output of your work, be sure that the work is simple enough that one or a few data points will accurately represent it. Otherwise, it will likely have the opposite effect.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 19:57

And thanks to Matt Plummer from Nirvana, for His science of productivity segment. And now for the new tools of the week gousto. And I come across many personal development time tasks, project management and productivity, collaboration tools and services each week, some we use, and some are really cool. And so in this segment, new tools of the week, we each bring you a tool we think you might like and so first tool the week is a tool called signature email. And what signature email is or signature dot email because that is the TLD, the top level domain dot email, so signature dot email. What it does is it generates email signatures, as its name implies. And so this particular developer started this as kind of a side hustle and his name is Jesse Sutherland out of out of Minneapolis. And he's created this tool that, in essence, is a visual drag and drop editor. It creates your email signatures You can just very, very quickly create nicely branded email signatures. Now if it's just you as an individual, it's free. But the, the real way that he makes money is for teams and organizations who want to manage consistent branding for the organization. I know that, you know, having run a company with many people in it, you know, having to manage email signatures, every time someone comes every time, you know, every time you onboard someone new, every time someone changes, a phone number, or an email address, or, you know, someone's title changes that needs to be done across the board. And that can be very, you know, time consuming. So with a tool like this, you can actually just save all that time by having this built in tool where people can generate email signatures on the fly, update information, and you have consistency across the organization. So very, very cool. To to kind of check out the signature dot email. What is your new tool of the week Cousteau

Augusto Pinaud 22:00

new tool of the week. It's not necessarily new, but it's called it's called set app. And it's a service that you pay a monthly fee that you know you can pay 999 if you go on the monthly 899 if you go in the annual plan, but allows you then to access and download apps for it used to be only Mac OS now is Mac OS. And iOS, you can use App as you leases as to do as my node. I'm on others, okay? And you pay just instead of paying multiple subscriptions, one from my node one from your listeners wants him to do you just pay this 999 and you can basically

go old you can eat on all these apps. They're the reason I'm bringing these up this week is because they just add their iOS to the mixture. So you for the same price you can now get them in the Mac as well as on the iOS. And that makes it really, really interesting. You know, up front For many of these apps, four bucks or five bucks a month, so now if you get two of them to have their list now you can start making it cheaper for us.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 23:10

And our featured story of the week is that Microsoft has released the surface duo foldable phone.

Augusto Pinaud 23:21

Oh, you're going to put me in record that this that I push for, for making this a feature in euros a week. Thank you. This is a it's not a secret that I believe that the surface liner product from Microsoft has been a really well done hard work base. I think the form factor that they did is really interesting. When you open it gets around 7.9 inches studies to the size of an apple on an Apple iPad Mini. So even that this phone is powered by Android that is again something really interesting Microsoft This is the first time at least I'm really aware that They are going to put a different hardware inside of their different software inside of their hardware. So they are going to go with Android for this phone. And it's going to be available on September 10. And it brings Samsung to the game, you know. So if you're going to go high end, on Android, you need to go pixel or you go, or you go Samsung, and I think bringing a new player, Microsoft who has been done a really good job with their hard work on this surface line. It is going to be really interesting for the high end phones in Android.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 24:42

Yeah, so this is a whopping 1399 us D for the surface duo phone. As you said it's Android powered. It has a Snapdragon from Qualcomm, 855 processor, six gigabytes of RAM which is pretty decent, and it's starts at 128 gigabytes for storage, you can go up to a 256 gigabyte model. So almost a quarter, a little more than a quarter terabyte. And, and that's going to come at 1500 dollars. So there are two 5.6 inch OLED screens. And as its name implies, that folds over into, you know, into half the size of the two 5.6 inch screens. So they form together a 1.8 inch screen or 1.8 inch display. And it does have a hinge in the middle. So you're, you know, there's a line down the center, when you're looking at it. It's roughly half a pound. So 250 grams, so that is heavier than most of our phones out there. But you know, it's a it's a pretty solid device. I'm really looking forward to finding someone who has one to play with, because I'm I'm just really curious how this form factor is going to work. You know, when you have a screen on the top and something on the bottom, where you can have a keyboard or have other another application open, where you are interacting and engaging with that application, either top to bottom or side to side, I see myself using this in the sense of having information above and data below so that I'm able to actually input data from some other source. So just like I would, you know, use kind of Task View and split view in an on the desktop, I would use that in the demo environment as well. I'm really curious to see how this will work. I'm, I'm not sure that this device is for me necessarily. But I could see that if I were, again going back to the Z fold when we were talking about that with with Samsung. If I were a road warrior and I was on the road all the time. I wanted a really nice device to be able to, you know, fit in my pocket, but at the same time open up and have a bigger richer screen experience. This is a pretty nice device and where the Z fold is going to be over two grand. This is coming in under 1500. So you're going to save yourself half a grand in that now, as Augusto said it's coming for pre order on on September 10. And it'll be available at the Microsoft Store at least the ones that are left I'm going to guess the Microsoft Store online. at&t in Best Buy, we'll have them and you'll have two options the T Mobile and Verizon networks, versions that will be on the unlocked model.

Augusto Pinaud 27:46

And I think you made a good point in there. You know, I, I'm going to meetings, or when I used to go to meetings before this pandemic thing. My device of choice to these meetings was the iPad Mini for a person who goes into meetings. Often that was just to show this will be the perfect device to bring instead of the computer just bring that thing expanded connected to your presentation, do your thing show what you need to do with a really put it in your pocket and leave. And I think that is going to bring for those people who do that for a living. And there is a lot of people who do that for a living a really, really fantastic device on their pocket.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 28:22

And so with that, that brings us to the close of our episode minus a couple of notes one if we missed a story, please feel free to reach out to us via our contact page at anything but idle comm You can also tweet and or dm us on Twitter at anything but idle. You'll notice in future episodes we're limiting the number of stories in the episode for time. And so we now have a section on the in the show notes called extras in the extras are other stories other headlines that we didn't cover, but we figured you'd want to know about that was news that happened this week. So go check out the extras. Those headlines, they're in the show notes on the episode page, which again is at anything but idle, calm, and you can also on anything but idle calm, find our social media links. If you want to follow us on social media find us there. If you can, please leave a rating or review on Apple podcasts or Stitcher or whatever your favorite podcast app is if it allows for you to give a rating or review. Thank you for for helping us grow that anything but idle, productivity listening audience. And finally, thanks for listening to anything but idle, the productivity news podcast until next time, here's to your productive life.