



Helping You Benefit From Today's Technologies

How to Protect Your Smart Office

1. Know What You Have

You can't protect what you don't know exists. Walk through your office and write down every smart gadget—printers, cameras, speakers, thermostats. Record the model name and who uses it. This list will be your "map" when updating software or checking for problems.

2. Change Default Passwords

Most smart devices ship with easy-to-guess passwords like "admin123." Hackers know this. Change every password as soon as you set up a device. Make it long and unique, and store it in a secure place where your team can find it when needed.

3. Separate Your Networks

Your printer doesn't need to connect to your pay-

roll system. By creating different Wi-Fi networks (or "segments"), you give each device its own lane. If one gadget is hacked, it won't spread across your whole office.

4. Keep Software Updated

Just like your phone, IoT devices need regular updates. These updates often fix security holes. Set reminders to check monthly, turn on auto-updates if possible, and replace devices that no longer get updates from the manufacturer.

5. Watch Device Behavior

Keep an eye on how your devices "talk." If a smart lock suddenly tries connecting to a strange website, that's a red flag. Many low-cost tools can alert you when something unusual happens so you can act fast.



From The Desk of David Snell

Hello Family & Friends!

We made the most of the last month of summer!

Before school started, we had the kids list all the things that we did this summer, and there were so many that we kept adding to the list that we couldn't keep count!



My brother-in-law, Eric, had a family reunion where we all got to meet Mikasi, their new daughter-in-law from Japan. Andrew teaches English in Japan and that's where they met. So, one of the highlights of the summer was "meeting a lady from Japan!"

Pam got a good deal, so we took the kids to Margaritaville, the renovated Cape Codder in Hyannis. Although the kids had never heard of Jimmy Buffet, they knew all the words to several of his most popular songs by the time we left.



While we were on the Cape, we took them to the Wellfleet Drive In! It was spur of the moment, so we weren't prepared like most of the attendees. It was still a fun night with too much junk food and not enough room in the back of the car.



How did our parents do it?

During the last week before school started, the kids decided to have a lemonade stand in front of the office to raise money for the Plymouth South Elementary's school supplies.

The day was overcast and cool so we didn't expect much. We were so wrong!

First, ladies from Wareham's Garden Club stopped by for a cold drink. They had been out beautifying Main Street.

Then, so many people passing by stopped, including a bicyclist who turned around when he saw them, a man and his daughter who were towing a boat, people walking, and so many other kind people who knew that were making Xander's and Sarah's day!

We love Wareham!



Continued from front page

6. Have a Response Plan

Things go wrong sometimes. If a device fails or gets hacked, you don't want to panic. Make a plan: Who do you call? How do you disconnect a suspicious gadget? Do you have a backup option? Having these steps written down saves time and reduces stress when problems pop up.

7. Limit Permissions

Not every device needs full access. Turn off features you don't use, block remote access if it's not needed, and only allow each gadget to do its specific job. Fewer permissions mean fewer ways for hackers to sneak in.

8. Approve New Devices

It's tempting to add a cool new gadget—like a smart coffee machine—but every addition brings new risks. Before connecting anything, ask: Does it need Wi-Fi? Does it store sensitive data? If you can't secure it, don't use it.

9. Encrypt Important Data

If devices send or store sensitive information, make sure that data is encrypted. Encryption is like putting your information in a locked safe—only people with the right key can open it.

10. Re-Check Regularly

Cybersecurity isn't a one-time project. Every six months, review your passwords, networks, and devices. Replace anything outdated and confirm that your setup still meets current security standards.

Why This Matters

Cyberattacks are on the rise, and many target IoT devices because they're often left unprotected. A hacked thermostat or speaker might not sound serious, but it can give criminals a path into your business data.

Securing your smart office isn't about buying fancy equipment. It's about simple steps:

- Using strong passwords
- Updating regularly
- Watching for unusual behavior
- Limiting device access

These small moves add up to big protection.

Final Thoughts

Your office is smart—your security should be too. Hackers don't need much to cause damage, but you don't need to be a cybersecurity expert to stop them. With a little planning, you can enjoy the convenience of IoT without sacrificing safety.

And if this feels overwhelming, that's where a trusted IT partner comes in. The right team can help manage your devices, keep your network safe, and give you peace of mind. That way, you can focus on running your business, not worrying about what's lurking on the Wi-Fi.



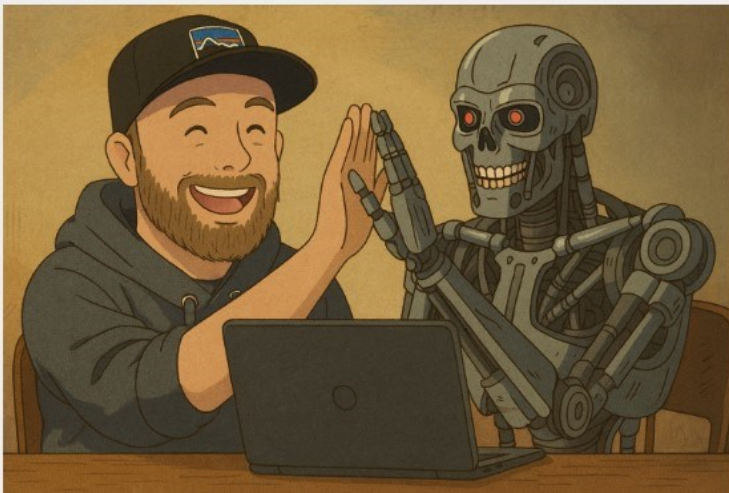
Would you like a simple checklist to help you complete these steps?

Download a free copy here:

<https://actsmartit.com/iot-checklist/>

ChatGPT Agent Mode: Your

As someone who develops websites, mobile apps, and all sorts of digital services at Belknap Mountain Web Services, I am always on the hunt for tools that let me deliver more value to clients. Automation and artificial intelligence are two of my favorite topics because they free us from tedious work and allow us to focus on creativity. This summer, OpenAI introduced a feature that feels like the future of productivity — ChatGPT Agent Mode. In this post I'll explain what Agent Mode is, how it works, what it can do for your business, and why it might be the closest thing to having your own personal intern.



What is ChatGPT Agent Mode?

For years ChatGPT has been an incredible knowledge tool, but it was limited to generating text. The new Agent Mode, released in July 2025, transforms ChatGPT into a doer. OpenAI combined the strengths of its previous Operator tool (which could browse visually and click through websites) and Deep Research (which could read and summarize text quickly) into a single autonomous agent¹.

According to OpenAI's own team, the agent uses a virtual computer with two browsers—a fast text browser and a full visual browser—plus a terminal for running code². This setup allows the agent to click buttons, fill out forms, run Python scripts, generate charts, access public APIs, and even connect to services like Google Drive or GitHub.

The magic comes from the shared state across tools. Just like you switch between Chrome, Excel, and a code editor while working, ChatGPT Agent Mode can jump between browsing, coding, and data manipulation, with all tools sharing the same files. The agent's

designers note that giving ChatGPT this “virtual laptop” makes it possible to handle tasks that would take humans a long time².

How it works and how to get started

Activating Agent Mode is as simple as logging into ChatGPT and selecting “Agent Mode” from the tools menu or typing /agent. However, there are a few prerequisites. As of August 2025, Agent Mode is only available to paid ChatGPT users. Pro subscribers get roughly 400 agent messages per month, while Plus and Team subscribers have about 40 messages, and the feature is still rolling out to Enterprise and Education plans^{3,4}. The agent also isn't available in the European Economic Area or Switzerland yet⁵.

Once enabled, you provide the agent with a clear and detailed prompt describing the outcome you want. For example: “Research my five biggest competitors and summarize pricing, key features, and pros/cons in a spreadsheet,” or “Plan a trip from Boston to San Francisco under \$800 with hotel options and a daily itinerary.” The agent then launches its virtual desktop and starts working. It may ask clarifying questions about dates or preferences², and you'll see a live play-by-play of every action, including which tool it's using and what page it's viewing⁵.

Crucially, Agent Mode always asks for your confirmation before performing actions with real-world consequences, such as making a purchase or sending an email¹. You can pause the process, take over the virtual browser, or stop it entirely. This human-in-the-loop design prevents the AI from running off with your credit card or deleting files by mistake³.

What can it do? Real-world use cases

- **Competitor and market research:** Analyze competitors' pricing, features, and reviews across several websites, then compile a spreadsheet report with tables and comparisons—perfect for preparing proposals or marketing strategies⁵.
- **Trip planning and bookings:** Search travel sites, compare flights and hotels, and assemble itineraries for complex trips. You still approve before booking⁵.
- **Presentation generation:** Gather data, generate charts and images, and build a slide deck—saving time by handling the initial groundwork⁴.

New Personal Research Intern

- **Email and message automation:** Draft personalized emails or messages based on templates, then prompt you for approval before sending⁵.
- **Data processing and spreadsheets:** Clean data, update contact lists, summarize project statuses, and perform simple data analysis tasks⁵. OpenAI says its agent scored 89.9% on data analysis tasks in internal benchmarks, out-performing humans in certain tests³.
- **Web automation:** Search websites, filter products, and check shipping details—though actions remain in the agent's sandbox⁶.

In my web-development world, I see huge potential for tasks like collating plugin comparisons, collecting design inspiration, aggregating SEO keyword performance, or drafting proposal documents — all of which can eat up hours but are easy to delegate.

Strengths – and why it feels like having an intern

Reviewers often compare ChatGPT Agent Mode to a day-one intern. The Verge tested the feature and wrote, "Think of OpenAI's new ChatGPT Agent as a day-one intern who's incredibly slow at every task but will eventually get the job done"⁶. That description might sound negative, but it captures the reality: the agent handles tedious tasks, freeing you to focus on high-value work.

Autonomy and combined tools

Because it can plan, reason, and act, the agent is far more than a text generator. OpenAI's team unified Deep Research and Operator to allow the agent to choose the best tool for each step—from parsing articles to clicking buttons to running code². All tools share a file system, so the agent can switch tasks without losing context².

Multitasking and iteration

Agent Mode is built for multi-turn conversations and long projects. It retains state across sessions, so you can ask for deeper research and follow-up without starting over—much like asking an intern to refine their work after review².

Transparency and safety

Every action occurs in a sandbox that's visible to you. The agent logs each step, and you can take over at any time. High-risk actions are restricted, and confirmation prompts are built in to prevent mistakes¹.

Limitations and caveats

- **Speed:** Tasks can take several minutes or more—acceptable for background work, but not for real-time needs^{6,5}.
- **Glitches and misreports:** Actions in the virtual environment may not reflect in your own accounts⁶.
- **Usage caps and cost:** Each confirmation counts toward your monthly limit⁴.
- **No API integration in the consumer version:** Developers must use the Agents API for embedding in products⁴.
- **Security and privacy:** The agent uses your credentials, so you must manage permissions carefully⁷.
- **Limited regional availability:** Not yet available in all countries⁵.

Best practices for using Agent Mode

- Write detailed prompts with clear outcomes and constraints⁵.
- Use watch mode for sensitive actions¹.
- Limit connectors and log out when done⁷.
- Avoid high-stakes tasks like banking transactions⁶.
- Iterate—treat the agent like a human teammate².

<https://belknapmountainwebservices.com/chatgpt-agent-mode-your-new-personal-research-intern/>



At Belknap Mountain Web Services, we pride ourselves on delivering high-quality digital experiences. Agent Mode can boost productivity through client research, automated testing, content/SEO support, and rapid prototyping—all without replacing human creativity.

BelknapMountainServices.com

Out of Sight = Out of Mind:

Why Email Marketing Keeps You Top of the List

OUT OF SIGHT = OUT OF MIND: WHY EMAIL MARKETING KEEPS YOU TOP OF THE LIST



Your customers are busy. Their inbox is full, their attention is short, and their loyalty can shift with a single click. That's why staying in touch with them through consistent, well-crafted email marketing isn't just a "nice to have" – it's a business essential.

At Southcoast Marketing Group, we've seen firsthand how regular email campaigns keep brands front and center. Whether it's sharing news, special offers, or valuable tips, email marketing lets you speak directly to your audience – without algorithms deciding who sees your message.

Why it matters:

- **Stay memorable** – When they're ready to buy, you'll be the name they remember.
- **Build trust** – Consistent communication shows you're active, reliable, and invested in your customers.
- **Drive action** – Exclusive offers and timely updates can turn readers into buyers.

Measure results – With trackable opens and clicks, you know exactly what's working. The key isn't just sending emails, it's sending the *right* emails, at the *right* time, to the *right* people. That's where we come in.



Todd Philie, Chief Marketing Officer

Southcoast Marketing Group
53 County Rd 2nd Floor, Mattapoissett, MA 02739
[\(774\) 582-0041](tel:7745820041)
SouthcoastMarketingGroup.com/

A for Apostrophes

Of all the punctuation marks in American English, the apostrophe has to be the most misunderstood and misused.

Tiny though it is, it wields a huge power to confuse users and readers.

But there are just 3 basic rules for using an apostrophe, at least in American English:

1. To show one or more letters missing from two words that have been connected, and it always goes right where the letter or letters would be.

Examples

It is = it's because we removed the second "i" and we need to account for it.

there is = there's ... where's = where is ... What's that? = What is that?

BUT: *its'* (with the apostrophe after the three letters) is **NOT** a word, although spellcheck here is not showing us that.

2. To show a **possessive form** of a word, which is sometimes tough for writers.

Example: The **dogs** ears were huge.

This could be "The **dog's** ears were huge" OR it could be "The **dogs'** ears were huge."

The first version is about just one dog; the second includes more than one.

You have to ask yourself: What am I writing about? Ears of the

dog or ears of the **dogs**?

One thing / person / animal ... or more than one?

Basic rules:

For most single nouns, add just add an apostrophe and an s.

For most plural nouns that end in s, add just an apostrophe.

But when a plural noun does NOT end in an s, add **'s**.

Example: The children's toys are all over her room!

For some other rules and ideas: <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/punctuation-capitalization/apostrophe/>

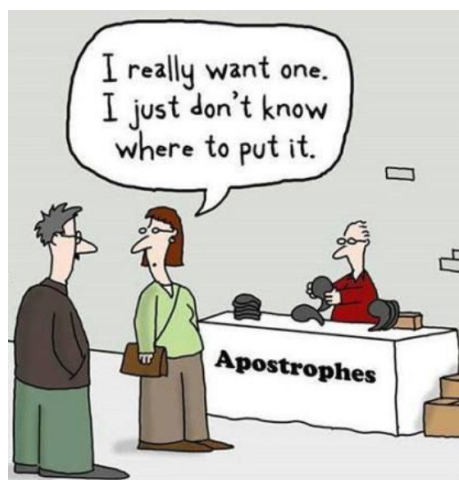
3. When using possessive pronouns, though, we do not use an apostrophe. They're fine as is.

Example: That book is yours (NOT your's or yours'). And as I'm typing this, I'm noticing that the first word (your's) is underlined in red as the spellcheck knows it's WRONG. But the second

one is seen as OK, and it's just plain not.

Probably the second group is the toughest one because there's no difference in how we say those words, whether they're being used in a singular or plural way.

Next month I'll prepare another quiz to see how you're doing with what we've talked about so far!



Grammar Goddess Communication

I will help you look and sound as smart as you are.



Editing / Proofreading of

Annual Reports — Blogs — Business / Nonfiction
Books — Podcast Transcriptions — Websites

Never ask: How smart is that person?
Always ask: How IS that person smart?

September 2025—In This Issue:

- How to Protect Your Smart Office
- ChatGPT Agent Mode: Your New Personal Research Intern
- Out of Sight = Out of Mind: Why Email Marketing Keeps You Top of the List
- A for Apostrophes
- And MORE!

Sign Up For Our

FREE

Monthly Newsletter

ACTSmartIT.com/newsletter

NO SPAM EVER!

This newsletter was thoughtfully edited by Susan Rooks, the Grammar Goddess, so we can look and sound as smart as we are.



Susan Rooks

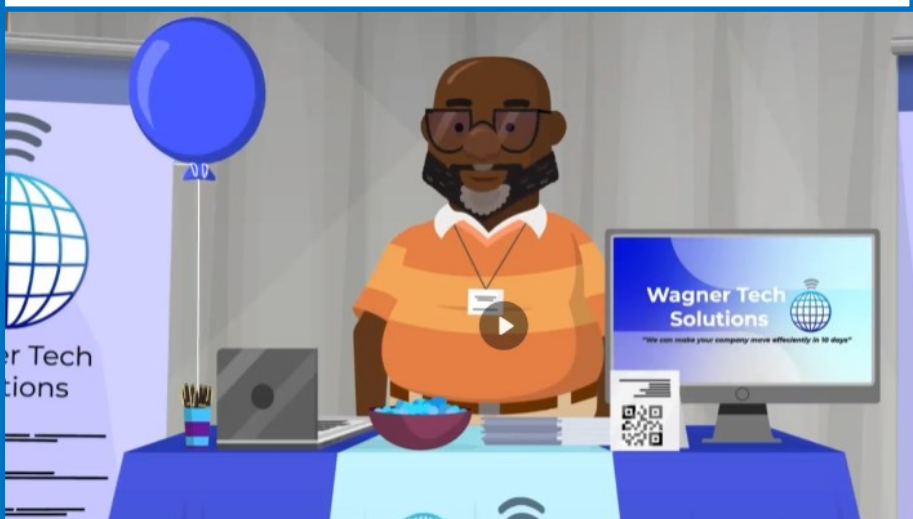
The Grammar Goddess

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/susanrooks-the-grammar-goddess/>

Smishing is a phishing attack that uses text messages (SMS) instead of email. It's designed to catch you off guard and trick you into clicking a malicious link or providing sensitive information. It's called smishing because it's a combination of SMS + phishing.

Even a tech guy like Willie can fall for a Smishing scam because it's designed to catch you off guard and trick you into clicking a malicious link or provide sensitive information.

SMISHING



Why it Matters

Smishing scams are growing in frequency because people are more likely to trust and act on mobile messages. Unlike emails, these messages often go unblocked or unfiltered by providers. Engaging can lead to serious consequences, such as identity theft, data loss, and unauthorized charges.

ACTSmartIT.com/training