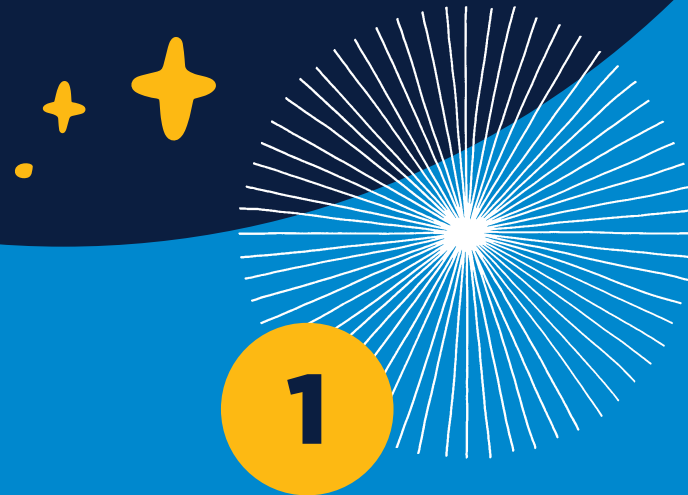


# HOLIDAY IT SURVIVAL TIPS



**IT is always busy, but the end-of-the-year holiday season can be especially challenging.** The pages that follow offer 10 tips that can help mitigate some of the issues and minimize potential business disruptions.



# STAFF FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**Work out schedules so your IT staff gets some much-deserved time off over the holidays.** Have a contingency plan to accommodate unexpected absences and emergencies and to balance workloads.

Make sure that mission-critical information is shared. Have team members “shadow” each other for a day or at least for a few hours.

Good, recently verified documentation is essential. Just in case, have up-to-date contact information and a call tree available for all team members.

# BE RESOURCE-READY

## **Have resources in place to handle website traffic surges and seasonal IT demands.**

With special promotions and “the season of giving” all generating heavier than normal traffic, your site could get bogged down or, worse, go down.

Consider moving less critical workloads to the cloud and take advantage of its scalability, flexibility and built-in security.

At least start exploring cloud options. Look for those built using PCI and HIPAA standards to boost overall security and help meet compliance requirements.



# ENCRYPT YOUR DATA

During the holidays, cybercriminals tend to ramp up their exploits of vulnerabilities in online shopping platforms, take advantage of the risky behaviors of employees, and otherwise seek out IT security gaps.

**It's more important than ever to not leave security of your data to chance.**

Encrypt sensitive data with approved algorithms and long, random keys. Never let your third-party vendors hold or access decryption keys. The data should remain encrypted in transit, at rest, and in use.

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# SEEK OUT VULNERABILITIES

As a complement to Tip #3, use vulnerability scanning to gain critical insights into your IT environments and devices. This will enable you to identify and classify vulnerabilities and prioritize your next steps.

**Choose from internal, external, or agent-based scans. Better yet, use a combination of them for more comprehensive visibility.**

No in-house expertise is required if you go with a managed option. The provider handles all vulnerability scanning tool setup, configuration, implementation, and management.





# BEEF UP SECURITY

**During the holidays, defenses can be down and focus placed elsewhere. Don't let IT security slip through the cracks.** Employ advanced [IT security services](#) to bolster data protection. Opt for the managed variety to free up internal resources and take advantage of the latest technologies.

Consider options like US Signal's [Website and Application Security \(WaAS\)](#) to protect against a wide range of internet-based threats. Among them: volumetric, distributed and multi-vector DDoS attacks, SQL Injection attacks, and content scraping.

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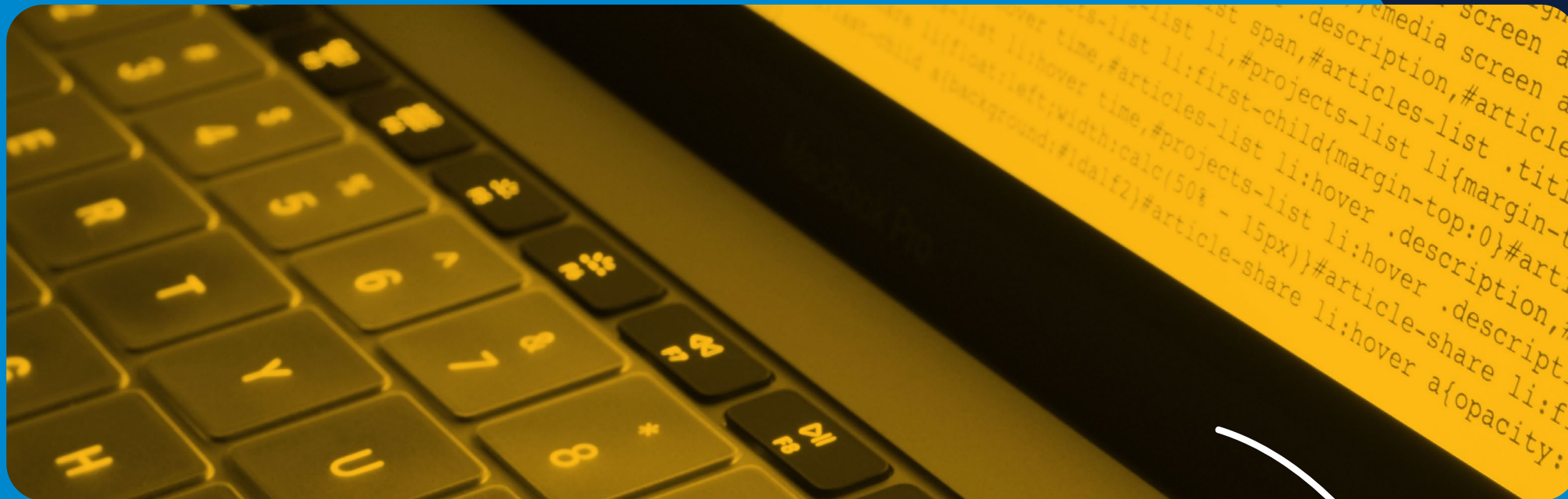
# IMPLEMENT IT MONITORING

From basic system checks to tools that automate repairs, IT monitoring helps keep your IT systems secure, operating at peak availability, and performing optimally during the holidays and all year long.

**Build your own system or use off-the-shelf tools. You can also outsource IT monitoring to free up resources to ensure sure that someone is making your IT systems a priority.**

If issues arise, the service provider can pinpoint the core issues for speedy resolution before they become problems.





# USE THREAT INTELLIGENCE

**Leverage strategic, tactical, technical, and operational threat intelligence to understand the how's and why's of IT threats, including those most likely to arise during the holidays.**

Armed with the data-driven information threat intelligence yields, you can make informed decisions regarding how best to combat threats.

The optimal solutions automate data collection and processing, take in unstructured data from disparate sources, and provide context on the threat indicators and the tactics, techniques, and procedures of threat actors.

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# PREPARE FOR DOWNTIME AND DISRUPTIONS

Tis the season for ransomware attacks, website blowouts, severe weather and other downtime-causing events. Have [backup](#) and [disaster recovery](#) plans in place to minimize downtime and data loss, so you can maintain business operations.

**Make sure your plans are regularly tested and updated to ensure they'll work as expected if and when needed.**

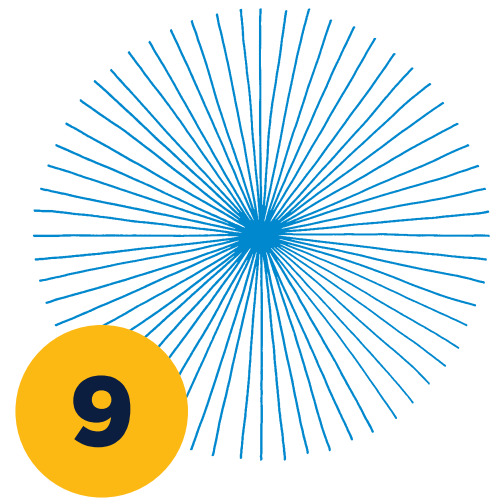
Frequently communicate downtime procedures, roles and responsibilities to staff and stakeholders so they know what to do and expect should a business-disrupting event occur.

# ASSESS VENDOR RISK

Don't forget about your service providers — and not just in terms of season's greetings. Include them in company risk assessments. You can have the Fort Knox of IT infrastructure but still lose valuable data if a vendor experiences a breach.

**Review vendors' data access and revise access rights using the principle of least privilege.**

Determine what effect a hack into each vendor's systems would have on your company. Employ extra scrutiny for any that pose more than a very low risk.





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# TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUTSOURCING

If your IT staff is over-worked and stretched thin, things could get worse over the holidays. **Consider outsourcing some of their day-to-day IT responsibilities and functions to a service provider.**

Doing so will lessen the burden on your staff, and free up their time so they can focus on other priorities.

You can also work with a third-party company to augment your staff. It enables you to cover employees' holiday vacations. Plus, you get access to much-needed knowledge and assistance.



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

There's a certain amount of stress inherent in the holidays. For IT, that stress is exacerbated by numerous issues ranging from increased cybercrime to the greater likelihood of business-disrupting events.

Learn about the many solutions US Signal offers to deal with those issues, as well as meet a wide array of ever-changing business needs — and not just during the holidays.

## **CONTACT US NOW**

Call 866.2.SIGNAL

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