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CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

ACCELERATE

OUR NEWSLETTER FOR GROWING BUSINESSES

IN THIS ISSUE:

Can you take a break from tech? **P2**

Inland Revenue takes a tougher stance on tax debt in 2026 **P2**

The down low on the new digital nomad tax **P3**

Data security and privacy risks you can't ignore **P3**

From SEO to GEO: AI is changing the way customers find your business **P4**

Tax Calendar – February 2026 **P4**

Happy New Year! Did you manage to take a break from your phone over the summer?

Cutting back on screen time is one of the most common New Year's resolutions, and it seems we're all starting to tire of our devices. So, it's fitting that our first article looks at simple ways to take meaningful (if brief) breaks from tech in 2026.

We'll also catch you up on Inland Revenue's crackdown on tax debt, explain the new Digital Nomad Tax change, and offer practical tips to strengthen your data security. And for a deeper dive into doing business in the digital world, we explore why GEO is the new SEO, and what that means for your online visibility.

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Can you take a break from tech?



If you run a small or medium-sized business, your brain is probably always half in your inbox. The trouble is, constant connection quickly drains your focus and energy. A few tiny breaks from tech each day can reset your head, your mood, and the way you show up for your team.

Here are six easy ways to unplug and enjoy the benefits of a brief break from tech:

1. Set one tech-free window each day

It can be as short as 15 minutes; commit to one intentional break from your phone, computer, TV, and tablet — ideally when you're awake!

2. Take a walk

The younger generation calls this a 'silent walk', but most of us just call it... walking. Skip the earbuds, ditch the podcast, and pay attention to the sights, sounds, and smells of the real world.

3. Buy a phone safe

If the pull of your phone is too hard to resist, try a timed phone safe. Pop your phone inside, lock it, and revel in the forced freedom. (Phone 'prisons' can be found online for less than 20 dollars.)

4. Use *Do Not Disturb* mode

You'll still receive urgent calls, but you won't be interrupted by group chats or never-ending notifications.

5. Get a notebook

If you reach for your phone without thinking, keep a notebook nearby. Every time you reach for your phone, jot down why you wanted it and how you were feeling. After a few weeks, you'll start to spot patterns.

6. Put your phone up high

Just like keys on a hook, give your phone a home — somewhere slightly inconvenient — so you can't automatically reach for it.

Inland Revenue takes a tougher stance on tax debt in 2026

Inland Revenue has stepped up its approach to overdue tax with faster follow-ups, closer monitoring, and earlier enforcement for businesses that fall behind.

Part of this shift comes from improved technology and automation, which have allowed them to detect overdue balances sooner and respond more consistently.

Carrying tax debt? Act early.

Inland Revenue is far more willing to work with businesses that make contact before debt snowballs. They encourage businesses to clear overdue balances or set up instalment plans straightaway.

Prevention is better than cure

Now is a great time to consider your cashflow for the year ahead, factoring in seasonal dips, late invoices, and potential expenses. But you don't have to go it alone. If you're dealing with debt — or trying to avoid it — our accountants and financial advisors are here to help





The down low on the new digital nomad tax

In the August 2025 Tax Bill, the Government proposed new rules for digital nomads, paving the way for overseas remote workers to spend longer periods of time in New Zealand.

Once in place, this bill will allow eligible visitors who work solely for an overseas employer or overseas clients to be treated as non-residents for tax purposes for a longer period when in New Zealand without becoming liable for New Zealand income tax.

To qualify, digital nomads must:

- not provide services to New Zealand customers and,
- stay fewer than 275 days in any rolling 18-month period.

Encouraging longer stays means more visitor spending on tourism, hospitality, retail, and local services, all of which will boost our wider economy – and depending on your industry, your business, too.

Data security and privacy risks you can't ignore

Cyber incidents are becoming more common and more sophisticated. Even a single breach can lead to financial loss and reputational damage, and it often starts with something as simple as a weak password or a convincing email.

This year, keep an eye out for:

Email-based scams

Phishing is still the top digital threat, with scammers now using AI to create more realistic messages, invoices, and impersonations, so train your staff to spot red flags and run scam-simulation tests.

Ransomware and malware

Outdated software, old devices, and unsecured WiFi networks are all easy entry points for attackers. Turn on automatic updates, do a quick monthly check for anything that needs manual attention, and replace devices that can no longer protect you from malware.

Password protection

After thieves stole precious jewels from the Louvre last year, there was a rumour circulating that the museum's security password was 'Louvre'. Whether or not it's true, it's a good reminder to use multi-factor authentication and choose long, complex passwords. Hard to remember = hard to guess.

Third-party tools

Online apps for payroll, scheduling, marketing, or sales can be helpful, but if those tools aren't secure, neither is your data. Always choose reputable platforms with strong security measures.

AI and privacy

AI can help with productivity, but there are big question marks around what it can do with your data. Avoid sharing sensitive information (especially customer details, financial information, and intellectual property) on public AI tools.

Small steps make a big difference. If you'd like help reviewing the security of your financial systems, we can help point you in the right direction.

From SEO to GEO: AI is changing the way customers find your business

For over a decade, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) has been a major part of a business's digital presence. Techniques like keyword research, metadata, and backlinks have helped websites appear on the first page of Google for relevant searches.

You've probably either dabbled in SEO yourself or hired someone to help push your website up the rankings. But, like so many things, artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the game.

Introducing GEO: Generative Engine Optimisation

Instead of Googling, people are increasingly turning to AI platforms like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Copilot to find products, services, and local businesses.

AI doesn't just 'rank pages' the way Google does. It gathers information from across the internet and summarises it into answers. If your content is inconsistent, unclear, or rarely updated, AI tools are less likely to include your business in their responses.

What does this mean for SMEs?

After years of building websites that offer a great user experience, you now need to think about the robot experience too.

Here are four GEO tips to help your business stay visible in an AI-led search world:

1. Accuracy

Make sure your business name, services, pricing, location, and expertise are up to date everywhere you appear online: your website, Google Business profile, social media, and any directories you're listed in.

2. Readability

AI prefers content that is clear and easy to read. Keep using personality, humour, and your own unique style; just make sure the language is unambiguous so it's easy for AI to understand what you do, where you are, and who you serve.

3. Reputation

Reviews matter more than ever. AI increasingly relies on ratings and customer feedback to decide which businesses to recommend, so encourage clients to leave honest reviews on Google and Facebook.

4. Structure

Help AI interpret your website by structuring your content clearly. Direct headings, well-labelled services or product descriptions, and a logical flow to your FAQs make it easier for AI to find, trust, and recommend your business.

If you want support with the money side of your business while you navigate the AI shift, get in touch today.

Tax Calendar – February 2026

DATE	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
5 February	PAYE	Large employers' payment due. File employment information within two working days after payday.
20 February	RWT	RWT return and payment due for deductions from dividends and deductions of \$500 or more from interest paid during January.
20 February	NRWT / Approved Issuer Levy	Payment and return due.
20 February	PAYE	Small and large employers' payment due. File employment information within two working days after payday.
2 March	GST	Payment and return for January as 28 February falls on a weekend.

Note: The above dates apply for clients for whom we prepare tax returns. Clients who do their own tax may have different due dates. Ask us if you're not sure.

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