

## Review Your Digital Contracts and Cyber Security



After summer vacation, it's typical for families to consider new tech devices for back-to-school and back-to-work requirements. As a result, it is an opportune time to review all the subscriptions, apps and user terms you've agreed to during the past year. Consider whether they remain beneficial, and question whether they are truly necessary. Just as it's wise to review the status of any service fees and monthly debits once a year, it's also appropriate to review renewable download agreements. Also, if you have younger tech users, it's wise to remind them about employing antivirus programs and practising personal security habits to protect their privacy, especially when using social media.

## Condo Inspections Can Be Revealing

Although some might consider a condo inspection an unnecessary formality, it can be very helpful to a prospective buyer, or an owner who wants a thorough status report before selling or renovating. To determine the value of an inspection in your situation, you should understand the allowable scope of the inspection based on the laws and regulations in place. For example, civic bylaws and/or condo agreements may determine whether an inspector can examine beyond the unit's appliances and utility services, in order to assess the condition of a building's common areas, exterior weatherproofing, and internal HVAC and plumbing systems. Regardless of whether or not you consider



an inspection, an assessment of the condo corporation's financial health is critical. Such an evaluation requires an expert opinion from an objective third-party professional who can advise you on the condo's financial health, reserves and planned capital projects, before you decide to move forward with a significant investment or renovation.

## Would You Buy a Mattress Online?

One might think a mattress is the last thing you would consider buying online, but new materials and consumer insights have spawned the growth of a number of online companies in recent years. For example, newer, lighter and compactable memory-foam mattresses help reduce the cost of warehousing and shipping, making deliveries typically free. The same can be said for returns, which are often covered under a no-cost, no-hassle policy that gives consumers a generous at-home trial period. Such policies also help allay concerns about buying a mattress "sight unseen", and put these upstart companies on a competitive footing with old-style retailers. After all, these companies realize it makes more sense to test a mattress under normal, home conditions, than



to feel you need to make an on-the-spot decision by trying out a showroom mattress while dressed in street clothes.

## Joint Ownership is Trending

With the cost of living rising in many urban centres, there is growing frustration amongst an entire generation of potential buyers who can no longer afford to purchase their own homes. As a result, more and more are considering joint ownership between unattached singles, and even unrelated families. Before leveraging such an arrangement, buyers need to pay close attention to the ramifications of specific terminology in their purchase agreements. For example, "Joint Tenants" and "Tenants in Common" have distinctly different legal definitions which could impact the intended arrangement, including the percentages of ownership, the responsibility for mortgage payments, and the upkeep of maintenance. Furthermore, to avoid unnecessary conflict in the event of a dissolving partnership, the rights of individual participants must be clearly defined up front. What are the partners' rights in the event of a sale or buyout? What happens if a partner dies and bequeaths ownership to a third party – or a living partner decides to rent out part or all of the premises? Obviously, joint purchasers need legal



guidance. Still, the trend of such ownership is undeniable, as it makes homes affordable to more buyers. It could even affect how sellers market their properties, especially if a property has the potential for two separate and distinct living arrangements under one roof.