Central Texas Technology Solutions
Your Business Partner

Technology Monthly Newsletter
July 2018

Refer-A-Friend and Win!

We've decided to hold a special "refer a friend" event during the month of July. Refer us to the CEO/Owner of a small to midsize business in Central Texas with 10 or more computers who could use some assistance with their technology needs.

They'll receive a FREE computer network assessment (a $397 value). Once we've completed our initial appointment with your referral, we'll give you a Mesquite Creek Outfitters hat and a beer on us!

Located on the square in downtown Georgetown, Mesquite Creek Outfitters is definitly worth checking out. Recently voted "Best Business in all of Texas" by the Texas Downtown Association in 2017, this happening spot combines retail, outdoor apparel, and a bar with beer and wine.

Send us your referral in one of three ways:

1. Online at http://bit.ly/CTTS-Referral
2. Call (512) 388-5559
3. Email Josh.Wilmoth@CTTSonline.com

This monthly publication provided courtesy of CTTS, Inc.

The Top 4 Ways Hackers Will Attack Your Network

And They Are Targeting You RIGHT NOW

Most small and midsize business (SMB) owners exist in a bubble of blissful ignorance. They focus on the day-to-day operations of their organization, driving growth, facilitating hiring and guiding marketing, without a single thought given to the security of the computer networks these processes depend on. After all, they're just the little guy – why would hackers go to the trouble of penetrating their systems for the minuscule amount of data they store?

And eventually, often after years of smooth sailing through calm seas, they get hacked, fork out thousands of dollars to malicious hackers and collapse beneath the weight of their own shortsightedness.

The facts don't lie. According to Verizon's annual Data Breach Investigations Report, a full 71% of cyber-attacks are aimed squarely at SMBs. And while it's unclear exactly how many of these attacks are actually successful, with the sad state of most small businesses' security protocols, it's a safe bet that a good chunk of the attacks make it through.

But why? As Tina Manzer writes for Educational Dealer, "Size becomes less of an issue than the security network … While larger enterprises typically have more data to steal, small businesses have less secure networks." As a result, hackers can hook up automated strikes to lift data from thousands of small businesses at a time – the hit rate is that high.

Today, trusting the security of your company to your son-in-law, who assures you he "knows about computers," isn't enough. It takes constant vigilance, professional attention and, most of all, knowledge. Start here with the four most common ways hackers infiltrate hapless small businesses.

1 PHISHING E-MAILS

An employee receives an e-mail directly from your company's billing company, urging them to fill out some "required" information before their paycheck can be finalized. Included in the very professional-looking e-mail is a link your employee needs to click to complete the process. But when they click the link, they aren't redirected anywhere. Instead, a host of vicious malware floods their system, spreading to the entirety of your business network within seconds, and locks everyone out of their most precious data. In return, the hackers want thousands of dollars or they'll delete everything.

It's one of the oldest tricks in the hacker toolbox, but today it's easier than ever for an attacker to gather key information and make a phishing e-mail look exactly like every other run-of-the-mill e-mail you receive each day. Train your employees to recognize these sneaky tactics, and put in safeguards in case someone messes up and clicks the malicious link.

> **"...hackers can hook up automated strikes to lift data from thousands of small businesses at a time — the hit rate is that high."**

2 BAD PASSWORDS

According to Inc.com contributing editor John Brandon, "With a $300 graphics card, a hacker can run 420 billion simple, lowercase, eight-character password combinations a minute." What's more, he says, "80% of cyber-attacks involve weak passwords," yet despite this fact, "55% of people use one password for all logins."

As a manager, you should be bothered by these statistics. There's simply no excuse for using an easy-to-crack password, for you or your team. Instead, it's a good idea to make a password out of four random common words, splicing in a few special characters for good measure. To check the strength of your password, type it into HowSecureIsMyPassword.net before you make it official.

3 MALWARE

As described above, malware is often delivered through a shady phishing e-mail, but it's not the only way it can wreak havoc on your system. An infected website (such as those you visit when you misspell sites like Facebook.com, a technique called "typosquatting"), a USB drive loaded with viruses or even an application can bring vicious software into your world without you even realizing it. In the past, an antivirus software was all that you needed. These days, it's likely that you need a combination of software systems to combat these threats. These tools are not typically very expensive to put in place, especially considering the security holes they plug in your network.

4 SOCIAL ENGINEERING

As fallible as computers may be, they've got nothing on people. Sometimes hackers don't need to touch a keyboard at all to break through your defenses: they can simply masquerade as you to a support team in order to get the team to activate a password reset. It's easier than you think, and requires carefully watching what information you put on the Internet – don't put the answers to your security questions out there for all to see.

We've outlined some of the simplest ways to defend yourself against these shady techniques, but honestly, the best way is to bring on a company like CTTS that constantly keeps your system updated with the most cutting-edge security and is ready at a moment's notice to protect you in a crisis. If you would like us to perform a FREE Cybersecurity Assessment, call (512) 388-5559 or email Josh at Josh.Wilmoth@CTTSonline.com

Hackers are going to come for you, but if you've done everything you can to prepare, your business will be safe.

Stay One Step Ahead of Malicious Attacks

Cybercrime is an ever-growing threat for businesses of all shapes and sizes. Unfortunately, not even small businesses are safe, many criminals see SMB's as easy prey.

To keep your data safe and secure and out of the hands of cybercriminals, you'll need to take a multi-layered approach when it comes to your work environment. Your business needs a firewall, next generation antivirus, patch management, and more. Even still, one wrong click from any one of your users can invite the worst the internet has to offer into your network.

As hackers and cyber threats become more sophisticated, so too must our data security tools. That's why ongoing services like Cisco Umbrella are so useful. Instead of waiting for a patch and presenting an opportunity for hackers to exploit outdated security appliances, Cisco Umbrella is in the cloud and always updated. If a new malicious domain is found, Umbrella can blacklist it that instant and prevent their users around the world from accessing it. That's the kind of speed and power data security needs to protect your environment.

With Cisco Umbrella managed by CTTS, your work environment stays ahead of cybercriminals by stopping attacks before they start.

If you would like more information on how your business can have unmatched network visibility and security, call us today at (512) 388-5559.

Leadership Is Lacking

Professor and leadership expert James O'Toole once said that "95% of American managers today say the right thing… 5% actually do it." I'm confident this is more true today than ever before. When I look around at the current business landscape, I see poor leadership destroying companies from the inside out. Disengaged employees, and especially those who abandon an organization altogether, cost companies billions of dollars each year, and as they say, people don't leave companies — they leave bosses. Forty-six percent of employees leave their job because they feel underappreciated, while 75% of employees cite their boss as the most stressful part of their job.

Luckily, the inverse of this is also true: great leaders find that happy employees are 31% more productive, and 56% more effective at sales!

But what makes a great leader? A truly excellent leader makes people believe in themselves, feel good about working for the company, and, most importantly, feel special about being chosen to work there. Ralph Hart, a former CEO for Heublin, a company with thousands of employees, made it a policy to personally greet every new hire. He'd sit down with them during the first month of their employment to have a short chat and let them know just how he and the company felt about them joining on. He would tell them, "The company you are working for is first-class. I want you to know we have first-class products, first-class marketing, first-class advertising and first-class customer service." However, he'd always stress that "to be able to list everything we do as first-class, we have found that we must hire

only first-class people!" He made sure they knew that he was delighted to have them on the team.

In less than two minutes, this CEO made an enormous impact on his new employee. They couldn't believe that the CEO of this huge company even knew their name, much less believed that they were a first-class talent. There's nothing better than making someone feel special – nothing better than telling someone you believe in their abilities.

Ralph Hart knew better than anyone that how you treat your employees is how they will treat your customers and associates. If you want first-class employees, then treat them as such. They'll respond in turn by going out of their way to do more, deliver more, help more, innovate more, and stick around for the long term.

When you think about your employees' needs ahead of your own, the success of your business will take care of itself. If you show them that you are concerned about them advancing in their career, then they will help your company prosper. When you help them to succeed, they will help you succeed. Your relationship will grow and the need to micromanage will never be a concern.

*Robert Stevenson is one of the most widely recognized professional speakers in the world. Author of the books **How To Soar Like An Eagle In A World Full Of Turkeys** and **52 Essential Habits For Success**, he's shared the podium with esteemed figures from across the country, including former President George H.W. Bush, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Anthony Robbins, Tom Peters and Steven Covey. Today, he travels the world, sharing powerful ideas for achieving excellence, both personally and professionally.*

What To Do BEFORE You Go To Starbucks

You're in the car on the way home from Starbucks, basking in the glow of your triple-shot, low-foam, extra-hot pumpkin spice latte when you suddenly realize your laptop has gone missing. You drive back to the store like a caffeinated lunatic, only to discover no one has turned it in. What do you do?

Well, first you should notify your IT department (us!) immediately to tell them your device has gone missing. That way, we can change passwords and lock access to applications and data. We can also remotely wipe your device to make sure no one will be able to gain access — a key reason it's critical to back up your data on a daily basis.

Next, change ALL the passwords to every website you regularly log in to, starting with any sites that contain financial data or company data. If your laptop contained others' medical records, financial information, or other sensitive data (social security numbers, birthdays, etc.), you should contact a qualified attorney to understand what you may be required to do by law to notify the affected individuals.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, so make sure you're engaging us to encrypt/back up your data and put remote monitoring software on all your mobile devices. Put a pin-code lock or password requirement in place to access your devices after 10 minutes of inactivity, and get in the habit of logging out of websites when you're done using them.

6 Surefire Ways To Protect Yourself From Data Leaks, Hacks, And Scandals

1 Reconsider what you put online. This goes beyond social media posts. Even sharing your telephone number with a store associate can come back to bite you later.

2 Use password managers. This way, you can use different, randomized passwords for all your sites without losing track of them.

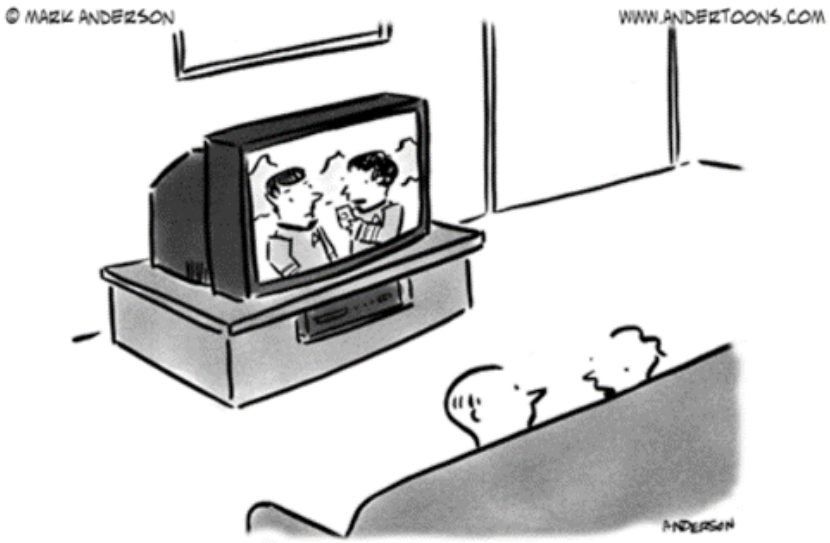
3 Use two-factor authentication. It's a no-brainer.

4 Encrypt the information on your drive. It's easier than it sounds!

5 Read privacy policies, otherwise you may be signing away more than you think.

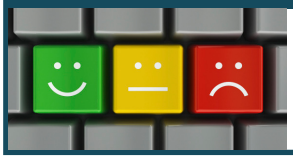
6 Monitor your credit. That way, if someone tries to use your info to make a big purchase, you can stop them in their tracks.

Inc.com, 4/26/18



"If this is the future, how come their phones can't take pictures?"

What is Your Opinion?



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