TECHNOLOGY TIMES

"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably"

What's New

Happy Holidays!

As this holiday season approaches, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued partnership.

It is companies like you who make our jobs a pleasure and keep our company successful. May your holiday season and the new year be filled with much joy, happiness and success. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and hope our business relationship continues for many years to come!

December 2017

This monthly publication provided courtesy of Rick Johnston, President of Information Management Systems

"Enabling People to Provide Great Products and Services - Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere"

Cybercriminals Confess: The Top 5 Tricks, Sneaky Schemes And Gimmicks They Use To Hack Your Computer Network

The contemporary world is rife with digital thieves. They're penetrating the complicated data structures of huge credit-monitoring companies like Equifax, scooping up the personal information of millions of people. They're releasing sensitive customer data to the public from discreet businesses like Ashley Madison. They're watching webcam feeds of our celebrities without them knowing; they're locking down the systems of public utilities like the German railway system; they're even managing to steal thousands of gigabytes of information directly from high-profile government entities like the CIA.

They're also targeting small businesses exactly like your own and extorting them for thousands and thousands of dollars.

When running a company, it's vital to have a dedicated security team, equipped with the most up-to-the-minute security technology, on your side to protect you from these malicious cyber threats. But it's not enough to leave it to somebody else. You also need to be informed. Here are five of the most common ways hackers infiltrate your network:

1 Phishing Scams

You receive an e-mail in your work inbox coming directly from a high-ranking employee with whom you've been working on a project. Inside is a link he needs you to click to access some "vital information,"

but when you click it, it rapidly installs a host of malware on the computer, spreads through the network and locks out everyone in the company. Phishing scams are the oldest trick in a hacker's book – ever received one of those "Nigerian Prince" scams? – but they're still wildly successful. Not only that, but they're becoming increasingly more sophisticated. As Thomas Peters writes for "Newsweek," "The best messages look like they're trying to protect the company. One well-meaning system administrator even offered to post a PDF that could deliver malware on an internal server because it was called, 'How to avoid a phishing attack.' How's that for irony?

2 Social Engineering

Social engineering is a type of "hacking" that uses real, well-intentioned people to carry out its schemes, rather than intricate lines of code.

This is especially effective for gathering sensitive information that can later be used in another type of attack – e-mail passwords used for phishing scams, for example. Maybe your IT guy receives a call from the "secretary" of one of your clients, pretending that they're experiencing problems with your service due to some firewall, a problem that your IT professional is more than happy to help out with. Before you know it, the caller knows the ins and outs of your entire security system, or lack thereof. Social engineers have been known to use phone company customer service departments, Facebook and other services to gather Social Security or credit card numbers, prepare for digital robbery and even change the passwords to your central data network security.

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3 Password Hacking

You may think that your passwords are clever and complicated, filled with exclamation points and random numbers, but it's rarely enough. With information gathered carefully from social engineering or a simple check on your employees' social media accounts, hackers can easily use brute-force to figure out that your password is the name of the family dog, followed by your anniversary (for example). That's if they didn't already manage to steal your password through one of the techniques listed above.

4 Fault Injection

Sophisticated hackers can scan your businesses' network or software source code for weak points. Once they're located, they can surgically attempt to crash the system through snippets of code they splice in expressly for that purpose. Different commands can do different things, whether they want to deliver a devastating virus, redirect links on your website to malicious malware or steal and erase vast swathes of information.

5 USB-based Malware

At the last conference you attended, someone probably handed out free branded USB sticks to keep their business top-of-mind. Hackers will sometimes covertly slip a bunch of infected USB sticks into a company's stash. The instant somebody tries to use one, their computer is taken over by ransomware.

So What Can I Do About It?

It's a scary world out there, with virtually everyone left vulnerable to digital attack. Knowing the strategies hackers deploy is half the battle. But, frankly, these techniques are constantly changing; it's impossible to keep up by yourself.

That's why it's so important to utilize only the most up-to-date security solutions when protecting your business. Hackers move fast. You and your security technology need to stay one step ahead.

If you have any questions about your network contact IMS today at 701-364-2718 or email at info@imsnetworking.com

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

E-mail Signature Rescue

The business world runs on e-mail. According to LifeWire, around 269 billion e-mails are sent around the world each and every day. But for every e-mail sent, millions go unread, and those that do are often found wanting. How, in the midst of all that noise, can you possibly get your own work e-mails to stand out?

Enter E-mail Signature Rescue (emailsignaturerescue.com), a business dedicated to creating custom, professional e-mail signature templates for all kinds of companies and teams. Using their proprietary software, it's easy to build a robust and beautiful HTML e-mail signature template that will make your e-mails pop. Signatures may seem small, but they can go a long way toward convincing a recipient that you mean business.

Granting Photo Access In iPhone Might Allow Unauthorized Photographing

An Austrian software engineer named Felix Krause has made a disturbing discovery about iPhones using iOS11. Once an app has been given permission to access the device's camera, it can take pictures and videos without alerting the user and upload them to the internet in real time.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of apps that users grant camera permissions to. Basically, any time you upload an avatar or post a picture with an app, you've got to give it camera permissions to do that.

Krause documented his findings in a short video presentation. As long as an app with camera permissions was in the foreground, it could snap photos literally every second, all without the user being alerted to what was going on.

Krause was quick to point out that he wasn't naming names, and so far, at least, there are no known instances of malicious apps abusing this flaw, nor are any legitimate apps misusing it to anyone's knowledge. The simple fact that it is possible, though, opens the door to a whole host of malicious apps that could, and that's disturbing.

For the moment, there are really only two ways to address the issue: either go in and modify all your apps' permissions so that they no longer have camera access, or use lens covers to make it so that your front and back cameras can't record anything unless you specifically want them to.

Longer term, there are a number of things Apple could do to address the issue. The two simplest fixes would be introducing expiring permissions for apps to allow for more precise user controls, or introducing LED lights that would activate any time the camera was in use, thus giving the user a clear visual marker.

In any case, for the moment, it's important to know that your phone may be watching and/or recording you.

Bits & Bytes

Become A Better Public Speaker With This App

Americans are terrified of public speaking. In fact, in most surveys about our fears, talking in front of a crowd far outranks even our fear of dying. But if you, like millions of others, break out in a cold sweat when you imagine giving a speech, you're in luck. There's an app for that.

Developed during the Disrupt San Francisco Hackathon, Vocalytics is a comprehensive project dedicated to building an AI that will teach you to be a better public speaker. The ultimate goal is to develop a virtual trainer that can give feedback even better than what you'd get from a professional speaking coach.

The app – called Orai – uses machine learning to analyze your body language as you speak, ensuring that every word hits home. When paired with speech analysis project SpeechCoach.ai, you can take concrete steps toward killing it in front of any crowd.
TechCrunch.com 9/17/2017

Top Tech Accessories To Make Your Life Easier

The best gadgets help us navigate our lives with ease, making particular processes that much more hassle-free. With technology, it's often the little things that make all the difference in the world. Take AUKEY's car phone mount, for instance. At only $7.99 on Amazon, there's no reason you should be fumbling with your iPhone while you're using Google Maps on a road trip. The clip attaches directly to any air vent, putting your phone front and center for easy viewing and reducing the need for dangerous fiddling.

Or, pair an Amazon Echo with the Tp-Link Smart Plug Mini ($29.99), which allows you to activate all kinds of devices with your voice or your phone. It's the perfect first step toward a smarter home and a world of convenience.

If you've got a phone that's always dying, hook it up to an Anker battery case, which can extend the battery life of most phones by as much as 120%.

For more small-scale tech solutions, check out Business Insider's list of "50 must-have tech accessories under $50."
BusinessInsider.com 9/28/2017

Ditch the meeting, get more done.

The average manager spends 30%-50% of their time in meetings. And most feel 67% of meetings are an utter waste. So what can we do to stop killing time? Quit having meetings. Here are three ways to tell if a meeting is worthwhile. 1) Compare cost to benefit. Take the number of folks attending times their average pay rate. Multiply that by their time spent meeting.
Is the desired outcome worth it? 2) Will this be a one-sided affair? A dead giveaway is the conference call when the boss puts everyone else on mute. 3) Is the meeting a guise for "communication"? Instead, send an e-mail, point to a website or suggest someone to consult with. Now you're talking…
-Entrepreneur