

July 2010

ITR Technologies, LLC

Tech Talk

Who Wants to Win a \$20 Starbucks Gift Card?

July is NOT....

- A. US National Ice Cream Month
- B. US National Baked Beans Month
- C. US National Chocolate Month
- D. US National Hot Dog Month

E-mail your answer to info@itrtechnologies.com. All correct answers will be entered into a drawing for a \$20.00 Starbucks gift card.

Good Luck!!!



The Risks of Facebook, MySpace, and Music Downloads

by Bob Jenner

Today businesses are starting to pay close attention to what employees are doing online. For some, this is purely a question of productivity. When employees spend time on Facebook, MySpace, music downloading, and instant messaging, they're not working. But even companies with liberal internet usage policies have learned that employees can unknowingly put the network at risk.

Social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace, along with free music and video download sites and peer to peer file-sharing applications, can be a source of viruses, spyware, and other malware to your network. Your computers can be turned into botnets that send spam. Your business data could be corrupted, or even stolen. If someone in the workplace accepts content from a non-trusted source, whether it is directly or through a friend, you are exposed. Firewall defenses won't help, because your employee has unwittingly welcomed in the bad guys.

In addition, music and video streaming sites such as YouTube or ESPN can consume

precious bandwidth and impact the performance of your network. When the network slows down, business slows down, and this is not an acceptable trade-off.

Fortunately, there are solutions that go way beyond firewalls to let you fully manage the activities on your network:

1. **Web Content Control:** Lets you permit or block websites based on categories (e.g. social networking, pornography, or gambling.) The list of websites in each category is regularly updated, so there is no ongoing maintenance. The site database can be stored locally to avoid round trip requests to external servers.

2. **Protocol Control:** Lets you decide which peer to peer applications, such as instant messaging, online gaming, or music sharing, can run on the network. These applications are nearly impossible to control with firewall rules because they will sneak out on ports used for other vital network traffic such as web and email. Protocol control

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Tales from the Trenches

by Candace Doler

This is a series that will allow you an opportunity to look into your colleagues' real world business lives, in order to learn from their mistakes—without having to make those mistakes! These are actual incidents from real organizations. No names or other identifying information is included.

A local manufacturing company was using a computer repair company to provide their computer service needs, within what is called a "break-fix" model. What this means is, when something breaks, they would be called in to fix it. Then they would go and wait for something else to break, so

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Risks of Facebook, MySpace, and Music Downloads

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solutions work by actually blocking the application signatures, which is the equivalent of each application's fingerprint.

3. Application Control: Lets you control what applications are available, when they are available and how much bandwidth they consume on a per application basis.

4. Time Control- A key feature to consider is whether you want to establish time based policies. These allow you to block certain categories and activities, such as shopping and instant messaging, during business hours, but permit them outside of business hours. Want to allow your users to visit MySpace, but only during lunch? We can do that!

As an additional measure of safety, many businesses now run anti-virus and anti-spyware scanning at the entrance or gateway to their network. These solutions check all incoming traffic and block suspect sites, activities, and infected files. Managing this centrally, and not on each desktop, makes it easy to ensure that the system is up-to-date and cannot be bypassed by an employee.



Reporting is the final piece of the puzzle. By monitoring your network, you can see how internet usage is evolving over time and identify which employees need further education on safe surfing habits. You can also troubleshoot issues with precision, rather than guesswork.

A product from **Cymphonix** integrates all the functionality you need to protect, control, monitor and "Compose" your network. Designed specifically for small businesses, it runs on a single appliance, so it won't bog down your servers with yet another application. It provides on-demand services including anti-spyware, virus protection, web content control, protocol control, application control, directory integrated user/group based control, reporting and more. Best of all, updates are automatic.

You can evaluate the product as part of a FREE Network Security audit. The professionals from ITR Technologies can come to your office, set-up Cymphonix Reporting analytics to monitor usage for risky activities, and then evaluate the options that best secure your business network. We will extend this service (normally \$695) to just the first 6 companies that respond!. To sign up for your free network security audit, call 713.344.1618 or email a support request to mtaylor@itrpro.com.

ITR Employee Spotlight



Get to know Sam Sengsouvanha, ITR's Help Desk Manager. It's time to put a face with the patient, friendly voice that talks you through your computer woes....

Hometown: Clearwater, Florida

I am inspired by: Random acts of kindness

My favorite part of my job is: Interacting with our customers

When I'm not working you'll find me: on the golf course!!

I want to learn how to: Speak Spanish fluently (in the near future)

3 random facts about me:

- 1) I have twin boys, Colby and Taylor
- 2) I am a proud Grandfather of 2, Ava and Addison
- 3) Glad that I moved to Houston!



Inquiring Minds

Google Android Phone Gains in Popularity: According to a recent May 2010 report by the NPD group, Google's Android operating system is gaining in popularity over the iPhone. The Blackberry is still the most popular Smartphone, with 36% of all Smartphones purchased in the United States. Google's Android system edged out the iPhone to take the number 2 spot, with 28% of overall U.S. market share. The iPhone dropped to 3rd place with 21% sold.

The Google Android system works on multiple phone manufacturers such as Motorola, HTC, and Samsung, whereas the iPhone operating system only works on the iPhone.

Dell Latitude Z Laptop Wows! This 16" laptop arrived on the scene late in 2009 to wide acclaim, and continues to provide the "Wow" factor. In particular, the Business Edition features the world's first wireless inductive charging stand. Along with its wireless charging capability, it weighs just 4.5 pounds, includes a fingerprint sensor for security, and has a soft-touch rubberized casing. It really is state of the art! Priced at around \$2,450 retail, these features are compelling reasons to consider the Dell, if you are in the market for a new laptop. The wireless charging occurs when the laptop is



less docking station to hook up a monitor and other peripherals. And the fun doesn't end there! The Dell Latitude also has Edge Touch, an LCD sensor on the right screen bezel (monitor frame) that allows for shortcuts on the screen to pop up when you touch it. And, if you'd like to check your email and use a browser prior to boot up, Dell has conveniently included the Latitude-On feature, which uses a different processor to allow for access prior to booting up Windows.

Easy-to-Use Web Analytic Tools: Many of you are probably familiar with Google Analytics and might use it extensively for your business website. And, if you have a webmaster or web designer, they probably use Google or similar tools to measure your visitors, keyword searches and more. Besides Google Analytics, here are a few other sites that can help with your web analytic and SEO efforts: Clicky (getclicky.com), GoingUp! (goingup.com/seotools), 4Q (4qsurvey.com), and Kontagent (kontagent.com). Each of these specializes in a certain niche. For example, 4Q provides free online surveys that quickly ask users why they are on the site, and if they found the information they needed. Kontagent tracks the "virality" of social media applications. Happy analyzing!

ITR Is Racing for the Cure...

ITR is participating in this year's Komen Houston Race for the Cure® which is being held on October 2nd.

One in eight women will be stricken with breast cancer in her lifetime. Through funds raised by the Race, the Komen Houston Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure® can give back to the community. The Komen Houston Affiliate funds vital breast cancer education, screening and treatment programs in our own community and supports the national search for a cure.



If you would like to contribute to team ITR please visit <http://www.komen-houston.org/goto/ITR> or join our team and run with us on October 2nd.



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Tales from the Trenches..

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they could do another service call. The computer repair company was not involved in the organization's planning, budgeting, or more advanced integration of technology. They didn't provide preventative maintenance, monitoring, or other proactive services.

Early on in the relationship, the computer repair company set up a nightly automatic backup routine, to secure the manufacturing company's server and accounting information. The routine would end with a report of the backup results on the screen, so that the staff person who was responsible for checking results and changing tapes would see it. This went on for over three years, without one report showing any errors.

Each year, a new version of the company's accounting software was installed by the company's CPA. With each upgrade, the accounting data was stored in a new location. Backups continued to complete, with no error warnings, until the server hard drive failed. At that point, the company needed a restore of the most current accounting information.

When the backup was checked, they found the accounting information to be over 3 years out of date. You can imagine the horror of that discovery, and the subsequent finger pointing that must have occurred. A new company, one that provides high level proactive computer service management, was brought in to save the day. But there was nothing they could do at this late date, other than document and explain what had happened, and then set up their Best Practice backup process to ensure that these problems wouldn't happen in the future.

***"We make all of your
computer problems go
away without the cost
of a full-time I.T. staff"***

*Ask us about our fixed price service agreements —
Computer support at a flat monthly fee you can budget
for just like rent!*

All in all there were 5 Errors documented:

1. The location of the accounting information changed every year, with each new accounting version, but the backup routine was never changed to point to the new location
2. The original backup routine was never checked or updated after installation, because the manufacturing company never thought to request this level of service, and the provider did not routinely offer it.
3. The backup program was not a quality business level program, so it did not provide adequate daily reporting that would have identified the problem.
4. There was no process to regularly do "test restores" of the accounting and other server information, which would have revealed the problem after the first test.
5. There was an absence of a Peer Review or Chief Information Office Review of the back-up process, to validate results and present proof to the CEO that a proper backup policy was always in place and consistently followed.

This disaster could have been avoided with a quality backup process. This level of service is not usually included in a "Break-Fix" model computer service, unless asked for by the client.

While insurance will replace a building and its contents, if destroyed by fire, wind, or water, no one can replace your data, or the costs of lost business due to data loss. In today's complicated technology environment, organizations need a technology service provider that takes responsibility for setting things up so they don't go wrong.