SECURITY ALERT! MELTDOWN AND SPECTRE
2 MAJOR VULNERABILITIES IN YOUR CPUs

Google Project Zero security researchers recently announced that all of the world's CPUs have two major vulnerabilities in them, known as Meltdown and Spectre. It's really a design flaw in the hardware that has been there for years. This is a big deal because it affects almost every computer on every network, including your workstation —Windows and Mac — and all your servers! Android phones, tables, all iOS devices, and IoT (Internet-of-Things) devices are also vulnerable.

This hardware bug allows malicious programs to steal data that is being processed in your computer memory. Normally, applications are not able to do that because they are isolated from each other and the operating system. This hardware bug breaks that isolation. So, if the bad guys are able to get malicious software running on your computer, they can get access to your passwords stored in a password manager or browser, your emails, instant messages and even business-critical documents. Not good!

Intel, Windows, Apple, and Google have already started issuing updates to five-year-old CPUs or newer. However, we know from the researchers who discovered Meltdown that the bug affects Intel CPUs at least as old as 2011, and potentially all the CPUs Intel has built since 1995, with a few exceptions. These patches only mitigate the risk and don't fix the underlying hardware issue. There are currently no hardware updates, when/if hardware updates are announced (and further action is needed) we'll notify our clients and send an updated alert through our Security Alert email system. If you'd like to be added to our weekly email updates and cybersecurity tips please contact jhembd@bssi2.com.

There have been no known attacks yet, but it's only a matter of time. Here are some important steps you should take to protect yourself and your company:

- Run any available software updates - now!
  If you are one of our managed service clients these updates are being applied as they become available—so you don't have to worry about them!
  Note: Intel has acknowledged that the patch will slow down its chips in some instances, but the slowdown will be workload-dependent.

- Do not act on any emails or popups that tell you to urgently update your computer. Patches should only come from official sources like the manufacturer of your PC or the developers of your Operating System (Microsoft Windows or Apple Mac). If you are unsure about an update prompt contact your IT person.

- Make sure your data has a secure backup.

- Have multiple levels of protection in place: antivirus, firewall, spam filter, and good passwords.

- Be alert for social engineering scams related to the bug announcements. These follow most major cyber incidents, and Meltdown and Spectre will be no different. Reinforce with your people that they're the last line of defense.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at support@bssi2.com or 312-752-4679.

Technology Tidbits

Are Your Kids Careless With Online Passwords?

With corporations taking hits left and right from cybercriminals, security on the Internet has become more important than ever. Still, even as many of us step up the security of our online presence, stragglers who believe they're immune to such attacks abound.

Based on a recent survey from Statista, young people are more careless with passwords. Thirty-four percent of people aged 18 to 34 years use the same password for "most online logins," compared to only 20% of the 35 to 54 demographic, and only 13% for those older than 55. In addition, a whopping 10% of 18- to 34- year-olds use the same password for all their online keys.

It goes without saying that this is bad practice. It can be all too easy to hack into a single, less secure account, but if different passwords are used for separate logins, it becomes much more difficult to access more important files in, say, a Gmail account or bank login. Not so if the passwords are identical.
- BusinessInsider.com 10/18/2017

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

3 Ways Technology Can Increase Your Home's Value AND Save You Cash at the Same Time

Implementing tech upgrades into your home — taking one more step toward the coveted "smart home" — can be a good time, but beyond that, it'll save you precious time and money every day. With smart lighting, you'll never accidentally leave a light on again, which will save you a lot more than you might think over time. If you have a smart thermostat, you'll have that much more control over the temperature of your home, easily making adjustments with the touch of a button and reducing heating and cooling bills. Not only that, but more permanent installations like solar panels can drastically increase the value of your home while reducing your carbon footprint and your utility bill at the same time. Smart homes

may seem like a luxury, but in fact, they're a lot more cost-effective than they appear. Check it out at inc.com
- inc.com 8/21/17

Your Copier Is Spying On You

It may sound paranoid, but it's true: the machines you use every day around the office could be spying on your data. Copiers and multifunction printers, particularly, are some of the leading causes of business data breaches. When you consider it, it makes sense. They're among the only devices on the network that rarely have their default password changed. But these advanced copiers and printers often house images of all the pages they've ever scanned on an internal hard drive, making them the perfect target for thieves. Make sure to change the password from the default on every network-connected device in your office. This one simple step can save you a costly headache down the road.
- intellisystems.com 01/31/2017

Fight Traffic Tickets WITHOUT Leaving The Comforts Of Home

"Off the Record" is a new app that allows you to contest those pesky speeding tickets without ever leaving your house. All you have to do is take a picture of your ticket, answer a couple questions, and pay a fee (ranging from $53 to $599, depending on your area). The app will then assign the case to a local lawyer to contest the charge. It may sound too good to be true, until you consider its 97% success rate. Best of all, if the ticket is not dismissed, deferred, or reduced to a nonmoving violation, you'll get a full refund!
- lifehacker.com 7/7/17

The No. 1 Most Important Word In Business, Which You Rarely Hear

Recently, a video podcaster named Nina asked me a simple question with complicated implications: "What's the most important mindset for success in business?"

At first, I doubted that I'd be able to identify a single mindset that was key to success. Ordinarily, my team and I emphasize the importance of context. Usually, it depends on a leader fitting a given situation, which has many variables that are difficult to reduce to a single answer.

That said, I realized there was one common mindset that I had observed in the many successful clients I've advised over the years — one severely lacking in those that continuously struggled. And not just casually, either. My firm has formally conducted over 17,000 in-depth interviews of leaders from all over the world, so we get to see which behaviors work in a variety of situations and which don't.

I realized the single most important word in business, a word that you rarely ever hear, is generosity.

No, not honesty, kindness, respect, learning, empathy or even abundance. None of those things actually force you to be a proactive agent of change. Leaders who succeed are generous, and they treat people — whether they're customers, employees, shareholders or members of the community — with a fundamental mindset centered

around that generosity. Those that lack the spirit of generosity never succeed in the long term.

Once when I was speaking with the CEO of a mortgage company, I almost immediately got a bad feeling about his character. He implied that his business succeeded by "tricking" low-income homeowners into signing up for mortgages that had hidden terms unfavorable to them.

Well, of course, that mindset backfired. When the housing crisis hit in '08, his company and career were snuffed out under a pile of lawsuits.

In contrast, I remember being impressed early in my career by the mindset of a self-made billionaire named Ted Waitt — the owner of Gateway, that old computer company. When asked about his success, Ted talked about making computers, which were scary for most people at the time, more friendly and fun. Ted loved making technology less stressful for customers, giving good people good value for their dollar, an enjoyable buying experience and just generally being eager to make lives better through his products.

There are dozens of such examples, both of selfish business owners getting their comeuppance, and generous ones being rewarded with abundant success and positivity. If you can spread a spirit of generosity throughout your team, you'll see the benefits immediately.

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The Lighter Side….

On New Year's Eve, Marilyn stood up in the local pub and said that it was time to get ready. At the stroke of midnight, she wanted everyone to be standing next to the one person who made their life worth living. Well, it was kind of embarrassing. As the clock struck, the bartender was almost crushed to death.

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

If you were born in September, its pretty safe to assume your parents started out the New Year with a Bang!

My resolution was to read more so I put the subtitles on my tv.

I love when they drop the ball in Times Square. It's a nice reminder of what I did all year.

An iPhone and a firework were arrested on New Years Eve. One was charged and the other was let off.

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

Shiny New Gadget of the Month

AirSelfie: The New Way To Take A Selfie

"You're right, it is easier said than done. That's why I said it; because it's easy. Try and keep up."

Move over, selfie sticks — it's time to take photo tech to the skies. The new AirSelfie, a pocket-sized camera equipped with four rotating fan propellers that allow it to take flight, aims to revolutionize the way we take pictures. The palm-sized device promises to take 5-megapixel, HD photos from up to 65 feet in the sky, steadied by an anti-vibration shock absorber that ensures images stay crisp and clear.

The hovering camera is the product by AirSelfie Holdings, an international team of developers and engineers, and is designed from the ground up to integrate seamlessly with your phone. To use it, all you do is slip it out from its charging case (which attaches directly to your smartphone), use the app to direct it to the desired height and orientation, and snap an aerial picture or video. The tech is available now, and with a $320 price tag, comparable to many other modern cameras. Check it out at AirSelfieCamera.com.