Taste Sweet Success

PII, PCI & PHI Compliance and Your Business

Are you a "Smartie" or a "Dum-Dum" when it comes to compliance? Whether you realize it or not, most businesses today are required to be compliant with one or more laws associated with security and protecting personal privacy. So, what are all these "P" acronyms about, and what do they mean to you?

The lowest common denominator is **Personally Identifiable Information** or PII. Many assume it refers solely to information such as a social security number, driver's license, and credit card or bank account numbers. However, it also includes information such as full name, home address, date of birth, birthplace, telephone numbers and more. This dissociated data that, if linked or is linkable to an individual, would become PII and, therefore, needs to be protected. Every business with employees, no matter how small, needs this information in order to pay its employees, subcontractors and more. Quite often, they may also have this information about clients in order to celebrate their birthdays, reach them after hours and more. Be sure you are protecting this information. Most cyber liability insurance policies will include confirming questions to ensure that you are properly protecting this data and the computer network from which it can be accessed. Be careful when answering these questions—answering them inappropriately could cause the insurance carrier to deny a cyber liability claim.

> "Don't make the mistake and assume that because you don't store the information on your network that you are compliant."

The **Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard** (PCI DSS) is a set of security standards designed to ensure that ALL companies that accept, process, store or transmit credit card information maintain a secure environment. If your business accepts credit cards, this applies to you. There are different levels of compliance required depending upon your volume. Only take credit cards over the phone? Don't make the mistake and assume that because you don't store the information on your network that you are compliant. At a minimum, you must complete a self-assessment questionnaire and have evidence of a passing vulnerability scan. And that's just the minimum!

PHI stands for **Protected Health Information**. The HIPAA Privacy Rules apply and hold entities that have access to this type of information to an even higher standard. Organizations that handle PHI have extensive compliance guidelines that must be followed.

So, what is a business to do? Historically, businesses wanted a network like an M&M—a hard crunchy outside and a soft chewy center. In today's environment, this is simply not

Take Note

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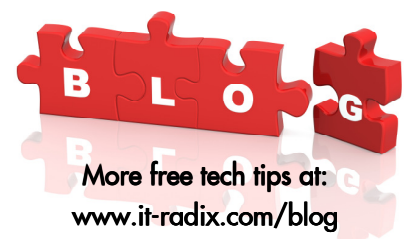
More free tech tips at: www.it-radix.com/blog

Tech the Halls With Gifts of Old ♫ ♩ ♪

Almost every one of us has the same problem every year…finding the right gift for that hard-to-buy-for person, the one who loves to have all the latest gadgets. This year he or she likely wants a Fitbit Blaze, an OLED 65" TV, an Apple Watch, the latest GoPro camera or maybe even a drone!

These tech-crazed folks are not a new thing; they have been around for a very long time. We thought it might be fun to look back in time at some of the most sought after "techy gifts of old" that tech-crazed folks had on their lists back in the day:

Pocket Calculator – Once small chips were available and used minimal power, the portable calculator became a big gift for those who liked the latest gadgets. The "Canon Pocketronic" was an early entry in this field, but likely the "Texas Instrument SR-10" (SR was for slide rule, cute huh?) was in lots of stockings in the 1970's.

Phone Answering Machine – Santa doesn't even answer his own calls these days because he got started with an answering device way back in 1971. That is when PhoneMate introduced the first commercially viable answering machine. The Model 400 weighed 10 pounds, screened calls and held 20 messages on a reel-to-reel tape.

Wireless Portable Communications – Today we text, snapchat, IM, hangout, etc. But in the 1980's, the way the office got a hold of you was to "page" or "beep" you. A good number of business managers "gifted" their employees with a pager—the most popular being the "Motorola Bravo." We do not think many considered it a gift though. ;-)

The Commodore 64 – Santa delivered more of these computers than any other model according to the Guinness Book of World Records. Somewhere around 15 million of them were likely under a tree from 1982 through its discontinuance in 1994.

GPS Navigation for Cars – Oldsmobile introduced their "GuideStar System" with the 1995 Oldsmobile 88. It was 2D and pretty limited in terms of features and points of interest. In 2000, the federal government made a more accurate GPS signal available for civilian use; and in 2002, portable GPS navigation came to the masses with the "Navigator" by Tom-Tom. Santa delivered a lot of those in the early 2000's!

Handheld Organizers – It is quaint to think now about organizers like the "Palm Pilot" and compare what they could do versus a smartphone of today. But during the holidays from 1997 through 2000, that was the "IT" tech gadget. Santa also delivered lots of AAA batteries with those and the accompanying sync station!

That is just a smattering of the top tech gadget gifts of old…and we did not even cover the Litton microwave oven, Black and Decker cordless tools, First Alert smoke detectors, Nintendo Game Boy or Sony Trinitron TV! Hope you find what you want under your tree this season!

Thanks for the referrals!

Referrals are the best form of compliment! We would like to thank the following for referring us to their friends and colleagues:

Eric from Generichem Corp.
Gladys from The Olive Group, LLC
Sweta from SKC & Co. CPAs, LLC
Travis from Electronic Office Systems

Visit us at www.it-radix.com to learn more about our Referral Rewards Program!

PII, PCI & PHI Compliance

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enough. Protecting the perimeter is ineffective against targeted attacks, malicious insiders or quite simply, poor internal vulnerability management.

IT Radix recommends at a minimum an annual external and internal vulnerability scan to identify your potential risks. In some cases, even deeper dives, such as a penetration test, may be merited. Once you've discovered your potential risks, you'll want to assess the risk and prioritize your action steps—creating a list of what to tackle first, second, third and so on.

Need help understanding all this? Want to have IT Radix conduct an external or internal vulnerability scan? Give us a call today to schedule a security consultation.

OUR CLIENTS SPEAK OUT:

THE BUZZ

"As a new employee to Liquor Outlet, my experience with IT Radix has been wonderful. I had a problem with my computer and reached out to them. Their staff was warm and friendly, and more importantly, they fixed my issue right away. We are moving into our busy season. It's great to have them for our IT needs!

Katie Moreno, Bookkeeper — Liquor Outlet Wine Cellars

The Power of Patches

Unlike the tart taste of Sour Patch candy, software patches provide sweet results. Their intended purpose is to quickly push out fixes to known bugs as well as protection from ever-evolving viruses. Update patches:

- Correct bugs within the software that make it perform less than optimal
- Fix security holes
- Add newer and more secure features
- Remove old/unprotected features
- Optimize the utilization of resources on the operating system
- Update hardware drivers to increase software efficiency (due to the constant development of hardware)

When a new patch becomes available, it's good practice to wait a day or two before updating. This way, any potential kinks can be worked out before you are affected. But don't wait too long! One of the best ways to protect yourself from cyber threats is to keep software patches up to date! This applies not only to Windows software, but all applications and devices—computers, networks, desk phones, cell phones, etc.!

Proudly folded & stuffed by Park Lake School

SPECIAL OFFER

A Sweet Deal

Sign up for a year of IT Radix Management and Support during the months of **October, November** and **December**, and receive a 3-month subscription to Enjou's Chocolate-of-the-Month!

Visit www.it-radix.com to learn more about what's included in each of these proactive maintenance plans. Offer for new managed service clients only. Some restrictions may apply. Call IT Radix today to learn more!

Phishing Lures and Red Flags!

Phishing is the act of defrauding or stealing information and data from a computer user or network by posing as a legitimate organization. Phishing emails are what hackers use to get access into internal networks by tricking the recipient of their fake email. The term came to be as a homophone of "fishing" because phishing involves using a lure (posing as a legitimate enterprise—name/website/links/documents) to catch a "fish" (the computer user) to take action that opens up a vulnerability within their network.

There are a good number of red flags that can be fairly easily identified in these phishing emails that, when identified, can help the user understand that this email is a risk and should be deleted immediately. They include:

The "From & To" Lines
- If you are uncertain about or do not know the identity of the sender, be on guard.
- If the "To" is not your normal identification/name, take note.

Date Line
- Be wary of any emails sent at unusual times of the day—that do not fit norms.

Subject Lines
- If it appears to be a reply to something you have never sent, avoid it.
- If the subject is irrelevant or does not match the message content, heads up.

Attachments
- If you were not expecting it, watch out.
- If the file type is suspicious, be suspicious.

Hyperlinks
- Hover over hyperlinks before clicking. Be sure that the addresses they appear to link to are legitimate. Watch for close spellings of the correct domain names.

Content
- Finally, the content. If there is supposedly an urgent need for you to take action…it is likely not true.

These red flags are just a few of the key things that your staff needs to be aware of so that they do not expose your network to attack via a phishing email.

The IT Radix team can share with your team more in-depth training on how to avoid such phishing emails and more. After training them, we can follow up with those employees with your own "fake" phishing emails to see how they react in "almost" real conditions to such attempts to access your network and steal data. These phishing tests have proven very valuable in helping clients reduce their risks, raise awareness and improve their overall network and data security.

"Every year, there are one million miles of Twizzlers Twists produced. If you lined up all of those Twizzlers candy there would be enough to travel from the Earth to the moon and back again…five times. No human should have to make that journey alone. Or without Twizzlers Twists."

"Peace on Earth, good will toward men?
There's an app for that!"

Enter and Win!

Trivia Contest

The first person to send an email to resource@it-radix.com with the correctly deciphered message below will win a Candy Lover's Basket.

Q: Which candy bar reminds us to "break out of the ordinary"?

_____

October Trivia Challenge

Q: "Which candy slogan was "gimme a break"?

(Answer: *Kit Kat*)

_____

October Trivia Contest:

Congratulations to Monica Parrino of Sedita, Campisano & Campisano LLC, recipient of a Candy Lover's Basket.

From the desk of: Cathy Coloff

As we close out another year, I'm thankful to the IT Radix team for another great year. As always, everyone worked together to ensure our clients' computer networks were reliably up and running— allowing them to focus on their business, not their technology. For many of us, it's our love of technology that brought us together at IT Radix. But even the non-techies in our ranks enjoy their "tech toys." Curious about your favorite IT Radix staffer's personal favorite, check it out at www.it-radix.com/tech-toy.
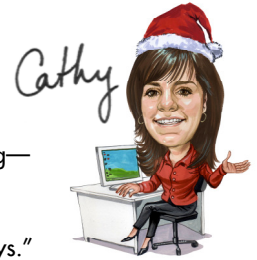
In the new year, we'll be exploring technology with a health, wellness and fitness slant. After all the candy we've had in our last few newsletter issues, we need it! Speaking of candy, my son Alex made out like a bandit on Halloween and was even able to cash in some of his less favorite candies for cash at one of the local dentists. He promised to use the money to buy me a Christmas present…wasn't that *sweet* ? Hope you'll forgive my bad pun. I'm notoriously fond of corny jokes and the like. We've been publishing our newsletter for 8 years, and I'm proud to see how it's changed and really become a great example of IT Radix at its best—friendly, uplifting, and fun. Do you have a topic you'd like us to cover? Don't keep it a secret…email us at resource@it-radix.com with your request and, in honor of Jolly ol' St. Nick, we'll send you some Jolly Ranchers to enjoy this holiday season.

From my home to yours, I wish you a safe and happy holiday season and a wonderful New Year!

The Candy Cane's Humble Beginnings

Holidays are full of sweet traditions! The candy corn of Thanksgiving makes way for candy canes of the Christmas season. What is the Christmas season without the minty goodness and decorative flair of the beloved candy cane?

The traditional candy cane was born over 350 years ago when mothers used white sugar sticks as pacifiers for their babies. Around 1670, the choirmaster of Cologne Cathedral in Cologne, Germany, bent the sticks into canes to represent a shepherd's staff. He then used these white candy canes to keep the attention of small children during the long nativity service. The use of candy canes during the Christmas service spread throughout Europe. In northern Europe, sugar canes decorated with sugar roses were used to brighten the home at Christmas time.

In the mid 1800's the candy cane arrived in the United States when a German-Swedish immigrant in Wooster, Ohio, decorated his spruce tree with paper ornaments and white sugar canes. The red stripe was added to the candy cane at the turn of the century when peppermint and wintergreen were added and became the traditional flavors for the candy.

Peppermint candy canes are not only a sweet treat, but also provide a few health benefits:

- Source of antioxidants
- Freshen breath
- Turn around tummy troubles
- Curb food cravings
- Ease tension headaches
- Boost concentration
- Relieve a stuffy nose

So, the next time you're enjoying the cool, minty goodness of a peppermint candy cane, know that you're doing your body good!