Tech Solutions INC.

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In This Issue

The Simple Document That Could Save Your Company from Complete Disaster!

It's official: end users are the weakest link in the IT security chain. You can set up a firewall, encryption, anti-virus software, and password protection up to your ears, but it won't save you from the employee who posts his access information to a public web site.

Most security breaches, viruses, spyware, and other network problems are a result of human error—an end user unknowingly downloading an infected file, e-mailing confidential information, or disabling their anti-virus, to name a few.

So what is a company to do? While there is no surefire way to keep end users from making mistakes, you can dramatically reduce the number of problems by creating an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and training your employees on what is and what is NOT acceptable behavior.

But if you want your employees to actually adhere to your security policies, here are a few tips:

- **Keep it simple.** A long, confusing policy that looks like a legal document is about as easy to read as the instruction manual for your digital camera. Make the policies clear and easy to read. Give

examples and include screen shots where necessary.

- **Provide group training.** Many companies make the mistake of distributing their AUP by e-mail and telling employees they must read it on their own. This gives the employees the option of NOT reading and simply signing and submitting. You don't need hours of classroom training but a simple 15 or 20-minute session will force even the most reluctant users to learn a thing or two.
- **Keep employees updated.** To add to the above tip, make sure you update employees on a regular basis to keep the policies fresh in their minds and to educate them about new threats.
- **Explain the consequences of not following the policy.** This is both explaining the negative effects to the business as well as disciplinary actions that will be taken if they refuse to follow policy. Occasional violators should be warned, and habitual violators should be disciplined.
- **Monitor their behavior.** The best policy in the world won't work if it's not enforced. There are many tools on the market that can do this for you automatically.

Creating an AUP and properly implementing are important steps in establishing a solid IT security plan. If you have questions or need guidance in this area, please feel free to contact us here at TechSolutions, Inc.

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What happens to our digital information when we die?

A recent question from a reader on Slashdot.org has sparked a lively discussion on a somewhat morbid (and distinctly modern) question: How do you manage the digital estate left by a deceased family member or friend?

Here's the question (slightly abridged) that touched off the conversation:

> My tech-savvy father died suddenly and unexpectedly. He did everything online: bill-pay, banking, eBay sales (and other auction sites), PayPal, investing, etc. When he died, he still had online auctions up for sale, items I had no idea how to fulfill when sold. He still had unprocessed auction refunds, people claiming they returned items and are waiting for a refund. […]
>
> How can I share my login credentials with my siblings so they don't have to go through this when I'm gone? I change my passwords every month and never use the same password on more than one site. I don't want my siblings to be able to impersonate me unless I'm dead, so publishing a monthly list to them won't help and would be insecure.

Since Slashdot is a popular website for savvy technophiles, the comments from readers have tended to be more useful and interesting than the average. For commenter Anonymous Coward, the answer is simple — go analogue: "Write [your passwords] down. Leave the sheet of paper in your desk drawer, locked if you're paranoid. Done."

But is it so simple? Nitehawk214 muddies the waters a little, questioning the legality of using someone else's passwords:

> Actually as far as bank accounts go... I don't think you can legally "pretend" to be a dead person by writing checks in their name or logging in to their back account. In any event you need official death certificate plus will papers to access old accounts. My power of attorney papers expired when my parent did. I had to re-access the accounts as the executor of the will. Continuing a business via Ebay or otherwise is probably fine, as you are acting as an agent of the business not impersonating the deceased. Also, my condolences, losing a parent unexpectedly is a massive depressing event. The headache added due to all the legal / paperwork stuff the state imposes is not fair. It seems to me that only the truly wealthy can afford to let someone else take care of the paperwork crap and be correctly prepared.

Another commenter, 93,000, shared a alarming personal anecdote that proves that sometimes bureaucratic hoops and red tape, though annoying, can be a source of comfort:

> My mom wanted to get into their Morningstar account and didn't have the password. I called and explained the situation -- basically that her husband was deceased and she needed the password, and I said I'd call on her behalf. What steps do I need to take to get it? The rest of the conversation:

>> Operator: "What's the username he has the account under?"
>> Me: "Uh, billsmith2222 is the username."
>> Operator: "OK, let's see... looks like the password is Sarajane. The 'S' is uppercase."
>> Me: -- Stunned silence --- "Thanks?"

> I was glad it went so quick, as I had expected to have to send a death cert and jump through god knows what other hoops, but it freaked me out how casually they gave it to me. I mean, I didn't do anything to verify that I was even any relation to the account. All I had was the username. Obviously someone was new, disgruntled, or just plain stupid, but it worked in my favor for once.

And at least two commenters mentioned fee-based services that make it easier for family members and estate executors to retrieve passwords and other account information. One is called Death Switch, the other Dead Man's Switch.

The two services operate the same way: they send periodic e-mails asking if you are still alive, and if you don't respond back after three attempts, a message containing the keys to your digital estate is sent out to the person(s) you initially specified.

Matthew Strain, partner at London law firm Strain Keville, was recently quoted in the Guardian (UK) newspaper as saying, "With more photos, books, music and so on being stored online and in digital format, the question of what happens to these when people are gone becomes more important every day."

"People have not yet come to grips with the value of these digital possessions and the risk is that they

may be lost if the owner dies, or even that their estate may be liable for ongoing subscriptions to online magazines or newspapers, for instance," says Strain.

Further reading:

Ask Slashdot: How to Securely Share Passwords
http://ask.slashdot.org/story/11/11/01/1414234/ask-slashdot-how-to-securely-share-passwords

Wikipedia: Digital Inheritance
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_inheritance

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Microsoft Office 365 at a glance

Microsoft Office 365 is a subscription-based service that was launched in June 2011 to compete with Google Apps. It includes Microsoft Office (which includes Word, Excel, and PowerPoint), Exchange, SharePoint, and Lync, and provides users with a complete business based user experience. The following is a list of seven of the most important facts about Microsoft Office 365.

1. All documents are held on Microsoft's servers, meaning that Office 365 is entirely cloud based. It is an update of Microsoft's Business Productivity Online Suite, and reduces overhead by removing the need to pay for IT systems and personnel.

2. Microsoft Office 365 has been launched in direct competition to Google Apps. Each provide broadly the same business tools, with ease of use, reliability, and price ultimately likely to determine which will be the more successful.

3. Microsoft has been criticized for their complicated pricing strategy regarding Office 365. There are many different packages available with various prices. Microsoft argues that having so many choices allows customers to tailor Office 365 to their own particular needs.

4. Office 365 is designed to be collaborative. A single document held within the cloud can be viewed and edited by separate individuals in real time. Furthermore, Lync has been designed with conferencing in mind, and will be a useful feature for many businesses. Office 365 can also be accessed by mobile devices.

5. One of the most important qualities of Office 365 is that it allows documents to be worked on offline. This gives it a significant advantage over Google Apps. Documents edited using SharePoint, for example, can be instantly synced with the cloud when a user goes online. Convenience is therefore

intended to be a key feature.

6. The security and reliability of Office 365 is of paramount importance to Microsoft. They promise a 99.9% uptime guarantee, and have incorporated over eight hundred controls into the package. These include firewalls, anti-virus systems, and other controls to comply with the information security management standard.

7. As would be expected, Office 365 is designed to work optimally with Windows based computers, specifically those running Windows 7. Google has argued that this is inflexible, and that their applications are designed to work on any operating system. Microsoft has countered by saying that the familiarity of their integrated systems gives a better user experience.

LinkedIn: 7 Do's And Don'ts

1. Presentation should be your priority. It goes without saying that the whole point of a profile is to put you/your business in the best possible light, as it will be your first impression to all potential employers, as well as clients and business partners. Having a good profile page can make you stand out from the crowd before contact is made.

2. You can use targeted keywords in your headline. By using very specific words on your professional headline you will be able to draw in companies that are searching specifically for what you can give them. This means only people related to you find your profile when they conduct a search.

3. You should maintain professionalism with all contacts. Although LinkedIn is a social network, it is important to maintain a certain level of professionalism with both friends and clients. You want potential employers to consider how professional you will be in a working environment and this allows them to see this prior to an interview.

4. You can do targeted research. You can search for targeted keywords to find companies relevant to you. Once you've found a company's profile you can conduct research on them, and find people who could possibility introduce you to hiring managers (if you're looking for work) and key decision makers (if you're in B2B sales).

5. You can promote your profile. You can use websites, blogs, social media, email, business cards and even stationery to promote your LinkedIn profile using the LinkedIn badges. This will point people towards your professional profile and give people and organizations a chance to learn more about you.

6. Another great thing unique to LinkedIn is that you can see who has viewed your profile. You can respond by looking at their profile, and if you like the look of things, respond accordingly.

7. Do not lie on your profile. This is something that many people do to make them more attractive to employers and recruiters. At the end of the day, an employer will often find out if you're lying about your

qualifications, so it's a lot easier to just be truthful from the start. And it's the right thing to do!

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The best gadget site for making purchase decisions

The Internet is full of websites that review the latest and greatest gadgets. Which is great ... until you want straightforward advice on *which* particular gadget to buy. Enter the Wirecutter, a new website devoted to helping people make smart tech purchases by providing simple, jargon-free product reviews and recommendations. Sample headlines: 'The Good TV I'd Get' and 'The Wi-Fi Router You Want' and 'The Best Laptop Ever Made.' 'The point is to make it easier for you to buy some great gear quickly and get on with your life," says site creator Brian Lam. Next time you need a new gizmo, consult thewirecutter.com.

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The sexiest label printer that money can buy

Sexy? Label printer? Rarely will you find these terms in the same sentence. Until you try the Epson LW-400. Check out some of these hot features:

- 14 fonts, 75 printed frames
- Backlit, two-line display
- Multiple label types, including glow-in-the-dark!
- Prints bar codes, wire wraps and cable labels

What's more, the LW-400 stores up to 50 files, so you can save commonly used labels. Pretty hot, right? Learn more at Epson.com.

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Advice For Entrepreneurs, From Entrepreneurs

Over at Quora.com there's a lively discussion on the best advice for

entrepreneurs, from entrepreneurs. As of press time, the following three submissions had received the most votes from readers.

Tim Westergren, founder of Pandora, a popular music-streaming service:

> *Learn public speaking. Of all the skills that an entrepreneur can have, I think the ability to convey an idea or opportunity, with confidence, eloquence and passion is the most universally useful skill. Whether you're pitching a group of investors, rallying your employees, selling a customer, recruiting talent, addressing consumers, or doing a press tour, the ability to deliver a great talk is absolutely invaluable. And it is perhaps THE most under-recognized and under-nurtured skill.*

Keshav Choudhary, investor and risk professional:

> *There is nothing more common than people with ideas who can't execute them. Focus on the execution more than on the idea. The difference between success and failure is how well you execute rather than how good your idea is.*

Michael Hughes:

> *Only consider advice and guidance from people who have started businesses - either successful or failed, doesn't matter. Do not, under any circumstances, listen to anyone who has never done it themselves. They don't know […] about it. Their minds have been poisoned by internet pundits and magazine stories. It's like listening to a 4 year old talk about cardiac surgery. Obviously this doesn't include advice from lawyers, accountants, etc.*

Read other suggestions and offer your own over at Quora.com.

See also: The 100 Rules for Being an Entrepreneur

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