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THE TECHNOLOGY TIMES NEWSLETTER

Crooks Update Their Exploits - Have You Updated Your Office?

Microsoft Office exploits are cunningly-crafted, deliberately malformed chunks of data, inserted into Office files, that crash the application in a way that gives cybercriminals control, so that they can install malware without you noticing.

With a reliable exploit in hand, they don't need to persuade you to click a web link, or to download and install a program, or to enable Office macros (which are off by default, with very good reason) and re-open the document at a lower security level.

Just opening the document to read it, or in some cases merely looking at it in a preview window, may be enough to infect your computer with malware.

Be sure to **UPDATE** your Office: **PATCH EARLY, PATCH OFTEN!**

- Naked Security by SOPHOS

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Howard Globus, Security Evangelist & Partner of **IT On Demand**.

Our Mission: To build a community of successful minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.



Missing Just One Of These Could Instantly Open Up Your Computer Network To A Cyber Attack

Welcome to the brave new world of cyber-warfare.

Gone are the days when software patches were just for nifty little feature add-ons or updates.

Today, a software update notice could mean your whole computer network is suddenly at risk. Dangers include data theft, crippling malware attacks and mischief you may not discover for months, or even years...

As with graffiti on your garage door, if you don't pay attention and clamp down on bad behavior, your problems have likely just begun...

And, like those who hire a professional security firm to keep thieves out of the warehouse, thousands of CEOs and business owners are now waking up to the fact that it's absolutely imperative to hire a pro when it comes to securing your data network.

Here's why you need a professional

handling this for you:

#1: Speed is of the essence.

"If you didn't update to version 7.32 within seven hours, you should assume you've been hacked." That's what software maker Drupal told millions of its customers around the world last year. It's just one example of what can happen if you don't respond with lightning speed.

Once a security breach has been identified, hackers rush in. On "Day Zero," cyber-crooks around the world go after at-risk targets. You've got to be quick to patch the gap, or else you risk a system compromise.

Unless you have the time, knowledge, experience and tool set to respond instantly, you are far better off leaving this to a professional IT firm you can trust.

#2: It's not just the big boys they're after.

Sure, the top news stories are about the attacks on companies like Target, Home Depot and Sony...

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Yet your business is just as vulnerable, if not more so. Chances are, you simply do not have the resources that giant corporations have to manage a data disaster. The statistics bearing this out are shocking: more than 60% of small businesses close their doors following a serious data breach.

The threat is not confined to giant corporations. Small and medium businesses are being attacked every day, and, unfortunately, your business is no exception.

#3: Dealing with data breaches requires specialized knowledge, skill and experience.

Here are just a few of the things a competent data guardian must be able to do to effectively protect your systems:

Review documentation and monitor forums. Sometimes your software vendor doesn't tell the

whole story. It's critical to check online forums and other communities to see if anyone else is having issues with the new patch before jumping in with both feet.

Know when to apply a patch immediately and when to wait. Typically, somewhere around 95% of patches work hassle-free. The trick is to spot the 5% that don't — before installing them. This requires identifying unique patching requirements, and applying exceptions accordingly. For instance:

Does the patch deal only with a security issue?

Or does it just add new features or fix non-security-related bugs? Obviously, security issues get top priority.

Is the system currently having issues?

If not, and if the patch doesn't address a security issue your system is vulnerable to, it may

be better to heed the old adage "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

What security gaps does it address? How severe is the threat to your particular network? If, for example, the only way a virus can enter your system is through an e-mail attachment and this functionality has been disabled for all users, perhaps the threat needn't be a great concern.

Keep options open in case of complications.

Once a patch has been applied, if things aren't working, it's critical to restore the data network to pre-patch functionality, with little if any downtime. That means having good backups in place along with a tested and proven recovery process. Does just thinking about data security give you a headache? We strongly advise that you let us handle this critical part of your business for you.

Call **(212) 235-0260** and schedule our no-cost Security Update Audit today. You'll discover how easy it is to rest assured that your network is secure 24/7.

"Chances are, you simply do not have the resources that giant corporations have to manage a data disaster."

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:

iTranslate Makes It Easier Than Ever To Speak With Interesting People

Other than the occasional epic (and hilarious) fail, translation apps are getting pretty good. And one of the best, iTranslate, now gives you voice translations on the spot.

Here's an "at-a-glance" rundown of all that iTranslate can do:

- Speak into your device and, with a tap or swipe, it recites what you just said in your choice of over 90 languages. That's twice the number of languages offered by Google Translate.
- Select a male or female voice, as well as dialect and speaking rate.
- Translates Chinese characters into alphabet-based words in English.
- Run it on your iWatch, iPhone, Android or Windows phone.

One downside is that the free version displays ads, but for five bucks you can upgrade and turn them off.

With this handy app, your world just got smaller — and, potentially, a whole lot more interesting.



Financial Regulators Weigh Cyber-security Requirements

As much as the internet is a boon for most of us, what with its global reach and connectivity, it can also be a curse for financial institutions that rely on major online operations to keep their businesses running. Technology evolves at a brisk pace, and so do the ways in which the internet can be used for exploiting the security of absolutely anything and anyone.

In order to counter this high level of vulnerability, The New York Department of Financial Services sent out a letter to all financial institutions under its supervision as well as other regulators recently to gain feedback and to possibly collaborate on significantly increasing the cyber defenses for the financial sector.

The letter specified among other things that cyber-security is one of the most critical and challenging issues of the financial world, and that the cyber-security space is in need for "robust regulatory action." Although financial institutions have substantially bolstered their cyber-security efforts in recent years, attackers are finding more clever and sophisticated ways to possibly break into their defenses.

The department aims to effectively work with other federal agencies to develop a security framework that will directly address the most critical issues while also staying flexible to address more common concerns. This proposal would encompass measures in areas ranging from access controls, customer privacy, data governance and disaster recovery planning to data encryption, multifactor identity authentication, audits and loss indemnification for third-party providers in the state of New York. This proposal will finally ensure a tight system to keep those attackers away and the financial institutions safe and working efficiently.

Guidelines to Get Protection against Cybercrimes this Holiday Season!

The holiday season is here, so excitement is at its peak. But before you forget the important things in your excitement, here's a gentle reminder that these are not holidays for cyber crooks, hackers and scammers. In fact, while you might be away from home meeting up with your old friends or hitting the malls to buy last-minute gifts, these very hackers could be trying to breach your privacy.

Therefore, it is wise to remember that even during the holiday seasons security should be on your foremost agenda. Listed below are some privacy and security tips that will come in handy during the holidays and even later.

Don't Let Hackers Track Your Location.

Social apps like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter track your location and allow you share it with others. Turn off location sharing right now because letting others know that you are away from your home can prompt hackers to take advantage of your absence.

Be Careful while Shopping Online.

Online shopping may save you from the rush on Black Friday, but it may make you a victim of cyber crooks. If you get an email with a subject line

promising super-sized deals or discounts, don't bother even opening because quite often, these take you to a phishing website. Stick to shopping on mainstream websites that are secured. Be sure these sites ensure protection for its customers and defend payment details.

Nothing Can be as Risky as a Free Public Wi-Fi.

If you are thinking of logging on to a public Wi-Fi network while at an airport, hotel, internet café or any other public place, think again! These Wi-Fi routers may have security bugs that can be exploited by a hacker or alternatively, a cybercriminal could set up his or her own Wi-Fi network to trap unsuspecting users like you.

Remember, it is not secure even if you use a legitimate public Wi-Fi network because it is easy for other users of that network to eavesdrop on your traffic as it passes through the air. The only secure option is a Virtual Private Network.

Awareness is key! Have questions? Contact us at **info@it-on-demand** and we'll be happy to guide you!

Happy Holidays!

Your Accounting

■ *Time to put your books in the cloud? Want to save time and money on bookkeeping in 2016?* If your company hasn't already made the switch to a cloud-based accounting system, it may be time to migrate. Here's why: with a cloud system, you can outsource your bookkeeping, saving you staffing costs as well as office space. Plus, your team saves time dragging files back and forth and keeping current versions backed up and secure. And an added plus is that you and your team can enter expenses on the go via smartphone. Popular apps include QuickBooks Online, Xero, Zoho Books and FreshBooks. Choose based on robust feature sets, solid support, ease of use and, of course, time and money saved.

Aggregated from recent issues of PC Magazine, Business News Daily and Merchant Maverick

Your Time

■ *3 Ways to End Holiday Overwhelm.* This holiday season, skip the stress with these time-saving tips: 1) Do

your homework before hitting the stores. Catch coupons on sites like dealcatcher.com, couponcabin.com and retailmenot.com. Quality-check gift ideas at Consumerreports.org for expert reviews, or sites with user reviews such as Amazon.com or Cnet.com. Then, rather than drive all over town for the best deal, check out Pricegrabber.com. 2) Plan a trip — it's a great way to share experiences rather than acquiring more things. 3) For those on your list who already have plenty of "stuff," give a Good Card. The Good Card lets users give to their choice of over 1.2 million charities.

Summarized from Family Circle, "Holiday Time And Money Saving Tips."

Your Health

■ *Eat, drink and be healthy this holiday season.* Here's how: keep the pounds down by knowing your number. Visit heart.org/explorer for a quick read on your recommended daily intake of calories. Think of it as your expense-account limit for holiday gatherings, and choose how much

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"So, as you can see, customer satisfaction is up considerably since phasing out the complaint forms."

you want to spend on drinks, appetizer, entree, dessert, etc. You could even keep a food diary to help stay on track with your target weight goal. At parties, wear snug clothing and keep one hand busy. With a drink in your dominant hand, you'll be less likely to grab goodies. And your snug-fitting outfit will keep you so busy pulling your tummy in, you won't have time to feel hungry.

Aggregated from recent entries: Heart.org and WebMD.com

Your Computer's Operating System

■ *Windows 10, Thumbs Up...* As even Microsoft admits, Windows 8 was a flop... So why make the leap to Windows 10? (By the way, in case you were wondering, for reasons we may never know, Microsoft decided to skip Windows 9.) To start with, the Windows 10 user interface just makes a lot more sense than W8's UI. It brings back the Windows 7 start menu, and key functions are accessed from the taskbar. It features a more refined design — for instance, smaller window borders. And, at least until July 29, 2016, you can upgrade your Windows 7 or 8.1 OS for free. So unless your Windows device is an RT version or is about tapped out on memory, we think you can feel pretty good about upgrading to Windows 10.

Aggregated from Tech Radar and IB Times

**Happy
New Year!**