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IN THE KNOW



CYBER CRIME AND INFORMATION SECURITY

In this advanced technological age most of our information is almost entirely stored, processed or transmitted electronically. The biggest problem we face is that we instinctively trust these methods and devices making us vulnerable and easy targets.

Think about the few examples

- The company intranet
- Your cellular phone

One scenario which is likely to become more prevalent is 'hijacking' company data. In a case in the US, 30,000 bank client information records including confidential credit card details were held to ransom. The cracker group demanded \$100 000 for the information in their possession from the bank. Failure to pay the ransom would cause the credit information to be published on the internet, resulting in potential losses of millions of dollars and vast reputational risk. This would also translate into extremely unhappy clients receiving details of transactions on their cards from online shops completely unknown to them.

Another person received a cell phone account for R15 000 and claimed that the service provider had made a mistake. On investigation, the service provider determined that the calls had been made from the person's phone and that the client was responsible for the account. The phone had been infected by malicious code! This gave the cracker the opportunity to use the phone to make calls and surf the internet when the phone was in the vicinity of the cracker.

Wireless networks are particularly vulnerable. Be aware not to carry confidential transactions such as banking from a public Wi-Fi facility.

What can you do about it?

- Take personal responsibility- take the time to educate yourself on how to protect your personal information
- Take the time to read through the manuals of your cellular devices and understand the features as well as the risks they represent
- Avoid getting caught in the "feature" trap, if you don't need it don't buy it/ use it or switch it on!
- Be aware of your surroundings and learn to spot insecure behavior- password sharing, forwarding of chain-letters and junk mail, unattended workstations that left logged-on, "shoulder surfers" at ATM's/ airports/ offices etc.
- Learn how to spot dangerous "neighborhoods" when Internet surfing- pop-ups, unreasonable questions and dialogues, strange content...
- Keep your anti- virus software up to date and enabled!

While the merging of technologies in the communications domain has simplified our lives, it has brought with it substantial risk of which we are largely ignorant.

Be aware and should you notice cyber crime taking place within your organization, report it anonymously to Tip-offs Anonymous.

Tip-offs contact details:

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