Formicio Insights
On business operations, technology, people and change

The Real Security Threat

At every security gathering I attend it is widely acknowledged that the insider threat is the most significant component in defending any organisation, but, without fail, the focus always reverts to technology, and specifically network-borne threats.

No one seems to know what to do about employees, part-timers, secondees, contractors, suppliers and visitors. So the focus is always on firewalls, Trojan horse, worm, virus, working practices, memory sticks, wifi and protocols. And it has been this way for decades!

I suppose one day the people issue will get addressed, but in the meantime I reckon there may be an even bigger threat that we all stare at and use every day! Where was your PC and laptop manufactured? Where did your printer and copier, memory stick, wifi and 3G dongle come from? Where did all the chips and other components come from, and where were they assembled?

Where was the software written for your OS and your various applications? For sure quite a percentage will be out of India, Russia, South America and China. Today software is a commodity business, often with components from different centres across the planet, and of course there is also a degree of copying and counterfeiting.

The same is certainly true for vast numbers of routers, switches and servers in our networks. And of course just about every Telco, Netco and ISP have sourced vast amounts of their infrastructure from China and if they haven't directly sourced them from China, there are counterfeit devices on the market that are almost identical to the real thing!

I'm sure you get the picture. We just don't know how much of this equipment and software has been deployed, or indeed where it is in the network. And for sure we have no way of knowing that all this equipment does not contain malevolent inclusions such as; back doors, traps, implants, activity monitors and so on.

So our only course is to assume that we are at least wide open to monitoring and data leakage today and in the future. Do all CIOs see it this way? I'm not at all sure all of them do!
So what should we do? How about weaving a web of contrived confusion! Encrypted

Why CIOs Are Last Among Equals

In a recent on-line Sloan *Management Review* article Peter DeLisi, Dennis Moberg and Ronald Danielson from Santa Clara University make the case that the perceived shortcomings of CIOs often are real. In most companies, the CIO still isn't viewed as a peer by other senior executives, who tend to see CIOs as specialists lacking the full set of broad management skills. Also, very few CIOs have become CEOs. But they equally argue that skills in strategic thinking, synthesis and leadership can be taught.

To read the full article, click here.
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About Formicio

Formicio was formed in early 2010 by a group of thought leaders and practitioners. We help our clients around the world address tough strategic problems, and develop the insights and organisational capabilities needed for them to successfully implement their chosen strategy.

We use innovative experiential learning approaches to develop the insights and capabilities needed by today's business and technology leaders. Our focus is always on outcomes, not process.

documents, apriori knowledge used to turn the cryptic useful, with the context split over two or three domains including: voice, images and documents; real world, virtual world, fixed and mobile. And of course, we generate a huge volume of irrelevant chit-chat that automatically produces quite an effective screen.

To read my full article, click here.

I welcome your thoughts.

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