The Mill

Like Newsletters Should Be.

📁 Business

Is Your Company's Information Being Inadvertently Exposed Or Leaked?

By Scott Birmingham, Principal Consultant, C.E.T., C.I.M.

Is your company's intellectual property (IP) or sensitive information being leaked inadvertently? From eyeglass reflections and new job postings to discarded printers, **there are odd ways that data can be unintentionally exposed.**

With technology permitting everyone to work from anywhere and cyber criminals trolling to find weak links or easy access points, we need to be more vigilant than ever with how and where we use company technology. **Cyber Security training helps bring awareness to those weaknesses within an organization.**

We are all very aware of phishing attacks through emails and texts, the need for strong passwords and the need to keep them unique and secure, while not sharing important information in an unsecured way.

However, have you thought like a cybercriminal and considered other sneaky ways to get your company's IP or confidential information? An article by CSO Online outlines a few different ways you may not have thought of.

Many printers & scanners now have internal storage, keeping a log of scanned documents, Wi-Fi passwords, etc. Proper destruction of old office equipment is a simple way to prevent information from leaking.

Employees sending company info or files to their personal emails, but the company has no control over the security or access to that email account.

Having a Zoom / Teams call in a coffee shop or another public setting where someone can watch over your shoulder; OR for those wearing glasses, getting information from the reflection in the glasses.

Sharing pictures of company office parties or meeting on social media. What is in the photo when it's shared? Are there documents or sticky notes in sight with sensitive info?

It's important to think of the different ways your company's data and IP could be inadvertently exposed or leaked. Cyber Security training and conversations about how, where and when employees work are all important ways to assist in bringing light to these areas of weakness.

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🔒 Security Discussion

What Is "Zero-Trust" When It Comes To Cyber Security?

By Veronica McMullen, Marketing Manager

Many cyber criminals rely on being able to impersonate an employee in order to access an organization's information. If they can impersonate an employee on the network, **they will have access to everything that employee has access to.**

As mentioned in a How-To Geek article, "In a traditional security setup, there's a built-in assumption that anyone with legitimate access is [trusted]."

> *"Remember that line from Star Wars? The one that goes, 'It's an older code, sir, but it checks out.'? That's the sort of [traditional] security we're talking about."*
>
> How-To Geek Article: https://bit.ly/3WJaF36

This level of security implicitly trusts anyone who has the credentials to login or access an organization's network – where once you're past the "gate", you have access to the entire kingdom.

Zero-trust cyber security architecture assumes that just because someone was let into the kingdom, **it doesn't mean they are free to do whatever they want.**

In a zero-trust environment, nothing is accessed without explicit permission. This includes every file, resource, service, or anything that's on the network.

Basically, **everything is segmented** so that even if there is a breach, access is limited to the small segment of resources to which those credentials are tied. If the criminal tries to run ransomware or malware, it won't be allowed because those applications are not trusted.

Almost every day there are reports of massive data breaches or individual people falling victim to their credentials being stolen and suffering financial or other types of damage. Using a zero-trust approach significantly reduces the ability of cyber criminals to cause damage to your network.

If you are concerned that a cyber criminal could access the entire kingdom with any legitimate credentials, let alone an "older code that checks out", visit www.birmingham.ca/consult.

⠿ Shameless Self-Promotion

Our Newly-Canadian Team Members

BCI Celebrating Yll's Canadian Citizenship

Birmingham Consulting has had the pleasure of celebrating a few of our team members' personal milestones and accomplishments in the past few years. **Notably, we have been able to commemorate two team members achieving their Canadian Citizenships.**

Originally from Zimbabwe, our Director of Technology, Iain, received his citizenship in November 2021.

We then celebrated Yll, Technology Associate, who is originally from Kosovo, on receiving his citizenship this past November 2022.

Both oath ceremonies were virtually attended in the BCI boardroom, followed by congratulatory treats and messages from the whole team - including our office cat, Kahn!

It is an honour to welcome Iain and Yll into our Canadian family, and we continue to embrace the ways they enrich our company. We are proud to support all of our team's achievements and look forward to celebrating milestones, good news and special occasions in the future.

"Seamless, Reliable, Challenge-Free"

" These last 2 years have been extremely busy for us. Our truck repair facility needed a completely new computer system as we were transferring our operations from paper to computer tablets. We decided on Birmingham Consulting to take on the challenge. **The transfer from our old system to new was seamless.** Their team adapted to our changing schedule to have us ready for business. After startup, whenever our team needs support, Birmingham responds and resolves quickly. **Everything has gone so well that we transferred our construction company IT to Birmingham.**

The challenges we had with our old system are gone. We now have a reliable, affordable system thanks to Birmingham Consulting. *I highly recommend them for any company who is looking to improve their IT.* "

**John Hutter, President - King Truck & Equipment Repair and King Paving & Construction**

Cyber Security Vs. Cyber Resilience – What's The Difference?

By Scott Birmingham, Principal Consultant, C.E.T., C.I.M.

Cyber security refers to the defensive measures to protect your business against cyber attacks. Think next-gen endpoint protection, spam filtering, multifactor authentication, application control, password security, security awareness training, etc.

But what happens when an attacker breaches your defenses? And they will - it's not a question of "if" but "when".

Many investments have some form of diminishing returns like the red line in this figure. Investing in cyber security is no different. You can invest an infinite amount of money and resources into defending your business but at some point, the incremental return on that investment is no longer proportional to the investment made.
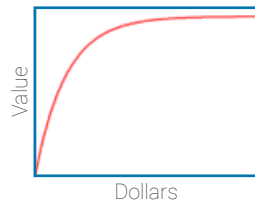
No matter how much you invest, there will still be ways for attackers to compromise your business. **The key when making the investment is to get the highest return.**

An effective approach is to make your defenses so good that an average attacker will give up and focus efforts elsewhere. It doesn't mean that there isn't a way in, it just means that you've made it difficult enough for the attacker to give up and seek easier targets. But what about diligent/skilled attackers who can find a way around all of your defenses? Now what?

"Plan A" is to prevent a breach. What's your "Plan B"? This is where cyber resilience comes in.

Defend your business and mitigate the impact when you are breached. How fast can you be functional again? Hours? Days? Weeks? Think disaster planning, backup, cyber insurance, detailed logs, etc.

True story: We were invited in by a company who had ransomware twice but didn't want to invest in proper disaster recovery. I asked the owner how long they could survive in the event of another hack, or if they had an equipment failure. The owner's response: "Two weeks."

He was adamant that the business would be fine for two weeks without their server. (Side note: their server was not in good shape and they ran some specialized software that was, to put it politely, "persnickety".)

I should have run away from that prospective client, but I didn't. About two months later, that "persnickety" software crashed hard, and they lost all of their data. We were able to get them running again and recover most of their information, but it took a couple days and a few sleepless nights - far less than "two weeks".

The entire time, the owner was furious because people couldn't work and he couldn't get paid. I had to gently remind him of the decision he'd made. We eventually fired that client; but I must admit that I am grateful for some of the stories we have from working with them.

Don't settle for 'just' having cyber security - make your business *cyber resilient* so that when the unthinkable

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🐈 Kahn's Korner

As an update to our last newsletter, our office cat, Kahn, received a Christmas gift for his favourite spot by the printer. We think he likes it - do you?

Key Word: Advanced Threat Protection (ATP)
Learn more at www.birmingham.ca/cyber-insurance-terms

🏠 Community

CityKidz Hamilton

Website: citykidz.ca
Phone: 905-544-3996
Email: info@citykidz.ca

What started in Hamilton as a weekend drop-in session for a few dozen kids has grown into multiple programs serving thousands of children and youth of all ages. CityKidz programs are a stable force of love and support for kids from before they can read until well after they've written their final high school exams. **They teach kids that they matter, that they are loved, and that they can change their future** – and with it, the world. CityKidz' mission is to increase resiliency and inspire BIG dreams for Canadian children living in low-income communities by providing inspirational experiences and nurturing personal relationships, one child at a time.

💡 Client Spotlight — AIRMAX COMPRESSOR SERVICES

Airmax Compressor Services
🔍 **www.airmaxcompressors.com** 📞 **(905) 681-6687**

Airmax Compressor Services sells and services air compressors in Southern Ontario. Since 1996, they have been a leading one-stop provider of total compressed air solutions - determined to provide an efficient air system for all customers with quality service and advice.

With a 7,000 sq. ft. warehouse in Burlington, stocked with all the consumable parts a compressor needs, Airmax offers a full range of compressed air equipment maintenance and repair services, including air end rebuilds. Backed by over 25 years of successful rebuilds, their overhaul repairs are an economic and environmentally sustainable alternative to new equipment.

Whether you're looking for a preventative maintenance program, new equipment, system design, repair or parts, Airmax is committed to providing you with maximum value. Their commitment is to ensure that your business remains as productive as possible with the least amount of interruption.

👥 Partner Spotlight — BULLPHISH ID

BullPhish Cyber Security Training

A name you may be familiar with, BullPhish is a crucial part of the Birmingham Consulting toolkit. **Providing cyber security awareness training**, BullPhish helps educate employees on red flags and ways to identify attempted phishing attacks.

In addition to being required by cyber insurance, security awareness training is one of the most effective defences an organization can have against cyber attacks. We always recommend regular, consistent training to help reduce the risk of data breaches, avoiding costly downtime and **increasing your cyber resilience**.

Why BullPhish For Our Clients?

There are many security awareness training providers in the marketplace. We currently use Bullphish for our clients for a few reasons:

1) Cost vs. value, customizability, and diversity of content.

2) We can aggregate results from all of our clients to identify trends and topics that may need reinforcement.

💬 Interactive Infotainment

Unscramble the cyber-themed words below (with one special word for a BCI fan favourite) to fill-in-the-blank! Answer under Kahn's Korner.
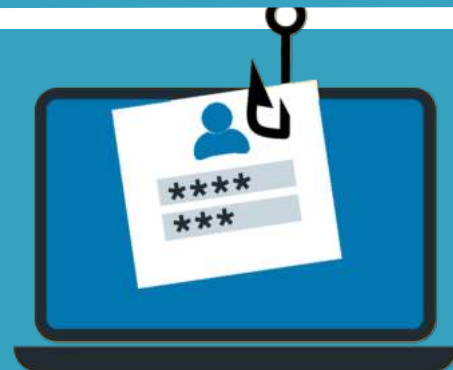
1. REZO-URTST ☐☐☐☐ - ◯☐☐☐☐
2. ACHBER ☐☐☐☐☐◯
3. CNPETORIYN ☐☐☐◯☐☐☐☐☐☐
4. NESILICREE ☐☐◯☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
5. NHAK ☐◯☐☐
6. UTIDA ☐☐☐☐☐◯

= ADVANCED ◯◯◯◯◯◯ PROTECTION

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