

# Indecent Exposure

Hackers, viruses and spyware; no matter which way you turn, your company's IT infrastructure is under attack. Whether an assault is launched for personal satisfaction or financial gain, unnecessary exposure to harmful outside forces can bring down an unprepared company.



Phil Canders is a Business Vitals CIO consultant who helps organizations with issues that threaten information security and business survival.

## What is the biggest external threat to IT?

Without a doubt it is hackers. Deloitte & Touche's 2003 Global Security Survey looked at 80 Fortune 500 financial companies and found a full 90 percent of security attacks were made by unauthorized external sources. Almost 40 percent had experienced an attack in 2002.

## What motivates hackers?

It used to be the challenge of taking a site down. But the reasons for hacking are more insidious. Recently hackers posing as legitimate businesses accessed critical personal data stored by one of the country's largest data warehouses. These hackers stole names, addresses, Social Security Numbers and credit reports of some 300,000 people.

## What other tactics are hackers using?

Hackers are increasingly motivated by financial gain. Some try to blackmail companies by overwhelming their email systems and then extorting money in exchange for putting an end to the electronic mayhem. This happened with a ring of Russian hackers recently prosecuted for extorting British companies.

## What about spyware?

This is particularly troubling because individuals are using the Internet to plant spyware in an organization's network without their knowledge. The spyware can be used to steal information and then pass it to a third party, a competitor for example. What business

wants its proprietary information passed on to an unauthorized source? It is theft plain and simple and represents a significant liability.

## Is there a way to reduce risk?

No company is immune from external threats; technology advances keep creating new points of entry. Businesses must recognize the threat and be more proactive in policing their systems. The best place to start is through a security audit to identify vulnerabilities. This is where Business Vitals can be a valuable partner.

## How can Business Vitals help?

We take a holistic approach, assessing traditional technology components, staffing, policies and processes that surround and support your technology infrastructure. Because information security is the focus of our business, we are up-to-date on the latest threats and can develop, implement, and maintain barriers to those threats. It is a practical approach that seeks to protect and prevent, thereby ensuring data confidentiality, integrity and availability.



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