

THE RHODENIZER REPORT

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CARS HACKED WIRELESSLY	1
OFFICE 2010 SET TO LAUNCH	1
COURT RULES ON NET NEUTRALITY	2
QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX	3
ARE YOU REALLY PREPARED?	4
ABOUT RHODENIZER IT	4

THE TAKE-AWAY POINTS:

- **Employers could be liable for lax security.**
- **Office 2010 web and basic versions free.**
- **FCC cannot regulate Internet providers.**
- **You can only prepare BEFORE the disaster.**

CARS HACKED WIRELESSLY

Over a hundred car owners in Texas recently discovered that their cars wouldn't start, or their horns wouldn't stop honking, all because of a disgruntled ex-employee-turned hacker.

Twenty-year old Oscar Ramos-Lopez, a former collection agent for an Austin car dealership, is accused of taking advantage of his former employer's lax security procedures and wirelessly disabling over a hundred cars by remote control. He is also reported to have deleted customer accounts and swapped celebrity names for the names of actual customers.

The vehicle disabling technology is only supposed to be used when someone fails to make payments, but his employer allowed numerous employees

to have user account ID's with weak passwords. Lopez is accused of using the account ID of another former employee to access the system remotely and wreak havoc with customer accounts and vehicles.

After Austin Police obtained records from AT&T to identify the IP address used, the trail led to Lopez's house. He was subsequently arrested and charged with breach of computer security.

The Texas Auto Center says it has learned from its mistakes, and has reduced the number of employees who have access to its remote disabling system. The dealership also plans to reset system passwords every time an employee quits, or is fired, according to KXAN.



Lopez is just the latest person accused of workplace mischief. In May 2009, the FBI arrested an ex-employee of a Texas power company after the man sabotaged his former employer's energy forecast system. Earlier that same year, a security guard at a Dallas-area hospital was charged with felony computer intrusion after installing malicious botnet software in the hospital's security system.

OFFICE 2010 SET TO LAUNCH

The software is finalized and in the hands of Microsoft's production facilities. We'll soon see new computers in stores with Office 2010 Starter Edition already installed.

Microsoft has plans to flood the market with this free, stripped-down version of Office that

includes very basic versions of Word and Excel. It will replace Microsoft Works, which is being discontinued.

The full featured version of the Office 2010 suite will also be compressed on the hard drive, ready to be unlocked when you need to use advanced features,

or some other Office app such as Powerpoint or Publisher.

In your moment of need, you will be able to simply type in your credit card number and have the additional functionality fully installed in a matter of seconds. Or, you can buy any number of (cont. on P. 2)

COURT RULES ON NET NEUTRALITY

Last week, a three judge panel from the Federal Appeals Court in Washington D. C. ruled unanimously that the FCC does not have the authority to regulate Internet service. In this landmark case between the FCC and Comcast, the court ruled that Internet service providers such as Comcast, AT&T, Verizon, etc., have the right to manage their own networks as they see fit so long as consumers have choices in a free market to go with whichever provider they wish.

Rep. Joe Barton (R) of Texas, ranking member of the Energy & Commerce committee, told C-SPAN that the court ruled correctly according to the law and that he would oppose any efforts to change it. "I don't think we need to legislate - I think the Internet is booming. Telecommunications policy in America today is based upon free markets and private capital. It's one of the few areas of the economy that is expanding and profitable. If it's not broke, don't fix it."

Sen. John Kerry (D) released a statement on the Comcast decision that reads: "I know the Congress did not intend for cable and telephone broadband internet service providers to fall outside the authority of the FCC to protect consumers." To which Barton responded, "Sen. Kerry wants an Internet that the federal government (through the FCC) has more control over, while people like myself want an Internet that is as free as possible from government interference."

"FCC does not have the authority to regulate Internet service."

OFFICE 2010 SET TO LAUNCH

(cont. from P. 1) Office "activation cards" that look like prepaid phone cards. Take one home, enter the code, and unlock your software.

What makes this idea risky for Microsoft is that the Office suite of applications is their main cash cow. What happens to the company's bottom line when it starts to give away its most profitable product? It could be bad news for Microsoft if a lot of small businesses find their lower-level employees can do just fine with the free Starter version of Office. After all, how many receptionists actually use PowerPoint or Access? How many customer service people or warehouse guys

really need the advanced features in Word or Excel?

As far as pricing... customers who opt for a disc-in-a-box version over the download will pay a heavy price for the extra cardboard. The boxed version of Office 2010 Professional is a \$499, while the download is \$349.

There's also significant price discrepancies between boxed and download delivery for other versions as well. For the Home & Student version, it's \$149 versus \$119. For Home & Business, it's \$279 versus \$199.

Microsoft is also offering free upgrades to a comparable version of Office 2010 to customers who purchase

Office 2007 between now and September 30.

Along with the desktop versions, Office 2010 includes an online version Microsoft is calling "Office Web".

With Microsoft Office 2010, Microsoft is including Web-based versions of the core Office applications: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. Users can store files in the cloud with the Windows Live SkyDrive, and seamlessly transition from working with the Office 2010 Web Apps, to working with the same files using the more comprehensive features of their desktop equivalents. That is, ... assuming you have purchased the desktop equivalent.



QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX

Q— “I’m still recovering from a sudden disaster that wiped out all of our company information. Is there anything I can do to get it back?”

A— At the risk of sounding facetious - you can’t restore what you never backed up. And, you can’t implement a recovery plan when you never prepared one.

Sometimes we assume too much. The batteries in the smoke detector will never die. The printer will never run out of ink on the night before my big presentation is due. The cord will be long enough, the parts will fit, and everything will always work the way it is supposed to.

I’ve seen Murphy’s law in action enough times to become the kind of person that carries a fire extinguisher, spare flashlight batteries, and a first aid kit in my truck. My data is automatically backed up every night and tested on a regular basis. I always assume the best, but prepare for the worst.

If any good can come out of your experience, perhaps it will be that you’ve become more aware of what you need to be prepared for in the future.

Q— “How can I know when the expense of a new computer system is justified for my small business?”

A— You will know when you have a need that your current IT systems are not fulfilling. Either it’s too slow, not accessible from where you spend most of your time, or inadequate for any other reason.

The answer to your need could be as simple as a few inexpensive upgrades. Or, it may be time to plan for purchasing a replacement. Only an experienced IT pro can recommend the best solution for your needs.

Granted, it doesn’t make much sense to hire an expert to consult with every time you need to replace something that’s broken. But, the implications of embarking upon something entirely new on a whim can lead you down a path that will cost you much more in the long run than if you had sought some technical advice beforehand.

Q— “We recently upgraded from Office 2003, to Office 2007 and now all our PC’s seem to be reacting much slower than before. What can be done to fix this?”

A— Office 2007 is much more resource intensive than Office 2003. You should have at least 1GB of RAM memory installed and a dual core Pentium D or greater as the bare minimum requirements for an Office 2007 upgrade.

I’ve seen many PC’s dragged

down terribly under the additional load of Office 2007. In my opinion, it’s just a poorly written product that is too resource heavy for the functionality it provides. There is no way you can fix that.

My advice would be to stick with Office 2003 (with all the latest service packs and updates) until you are ready to replace the entire computer with a new system that can handle the extra load. Even then, I recommend you install the first disc and throw the second disc away. Business Contact Manager for Outlook will cause your system performance to suffer noticeably. It’s only worth it if you really need to use those features for your business. If that’s the case, go with a Core i7 and at least 2GB of RAM memory.

If you can wait just another month or so, I would suggest holding off until Office 2010 is released this summer. The 2010 version is said to be faster and lighter on system resources— a much anticipated improvement after all the complaints from the previous version. Office 2010 will also be available for the first time in both 32-bit and 64-bit versions.

Definitely get the 64-bit version to run on a 64-bit version of Windows 7 Pro.

E-mail your questions to:
AskCliff@Rhodenizer.com



“Office 2010 will also be available for the first time in both 32 and 64-bit versions.”

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ARE YOU REALLY PREPARED?

No matter what you've been told, or how much you have paid, your computers will go down at some point. It's only a matter of time. And, the consequences to your business could be devastating.

You can choose to outsource the tasks, but you can't outsource the responsibility. It's your business, your data, and your loss if something goes wrong. Machines fail. People fail. The most important thing you can do is to be prepared.

Assume that computers will startup when they are sup-

posed to, and that people will keep their commitments, but be prepared in case they don't. Evaluate, and re-evaluate your options and your disaster recovery plan whenever something changes that may affect it.

Never stop exploring contingency plans and "what if" scenarios. Identify what would be acceptable and unacceptable losses, then decide what you need to do about it. **The only time you can plan for a disaster is before it actually happens.**

Are you confident that all your files, databases, e-mails, and important documents are being backed up nightly? Is this information secured so that no unauthorized person can gain access to it? Have you checked to make sure that you can actually retrieve this information and restore it to its proper place when you need it? Could you continue on with your business without this data?

If the answer is "no" to any of the above, what are you doing about it? Shouldn't you call an IT pro right now?



ABOUT RHODENIZER IT

We are a different kind of IT service provider. We don't resell any hardware or software. We find the best deals on what you need and pass the savings along to you.

Our mission is to help small businesses reduce expenses, increase productivity, and safeguard private information.

It's about more than just fixing computers. We also

provide IT consulting and services that include finding the best solutions to your business problems.

We work with clients to prepare disaster recovery plans that ensure their critical data remains safe, yet easily accessible. Additional benefits include money-saving ideas for managing your computer resources and planning for future business expansion.

We have the training, experience, and know-how to provide the right solutions for your needs, and your budget.

Just call to schedule your **free initial consultation with no risk, and no obligation.**

Tell me about your computer needs or IT issues. I'll recommend a course of action that makes sense for your situation at no cost to you. What have you got to lose?

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