

Internet Education is The Best Defense Against Network Security Threats and Spam

Internet security firm m2g Ltd. estimates that digital attacks from hackers and viruses have resulted in over \$100 billion in damages to websites worldwide in 2003. A record level of attacks - 20,000, in the month of January alone - helped make Internet security one of the leading issues in the online world in 2003. It is predicted that these numbers will continue to increase with the total economic damage from all types of digital attacks worldwide passing the \$250 billion mark in 2004. This poses a serious threat to online businesses, but it's a threat that can be combated through proper education on the subject. This is the message being relayed internationally by WSI, the world's largest network of Internet Consultants.

Once a business has made the decision to go online there are a number of important considerations beyond the development of the site itself. A concept such as security, an ongoing and evolving process, is rarely given the attention it deserves. Through the consulting services offered by WSI, a business can acquire the critical knowledge it needs to protect itself from becoming an Internet security statistic. "Education is the key to a business protecting itself online," explains WSI Internet Consultant Rene Garcia. "Everyday companies unknowingly make mistakes that leave their systems vulnerable to digital attacks. With the proper knowledge and software in place these mistakes can be avoided, saving money and increasing productivity and efficiency in the process."

Typically, the news media focuses on attacks to large corporations and government agencies, leaving small- to medium-sized businesses with the impression that Internet security isn't an issue that concerns them. Unfortunately this isn't the case. Any business, no matter what its size or function faces potential threats from hackers each day for numerous reasons. By teaching companies how to defend their systems, WSI Internet Consultants strive to keep their clients informed and safe. As WSI clients know, one of the largest daily threats is the increased reliance on email - one of the most versatile and important tools to any online business. However, email as a communication medium is insecure and opens the door to potential attacks such as virus distribution and unsolicited advertisements or "spam".

The popularity and widespread adoption of email is no accident; it is often more efficient than other



means of communication and allows customers to quickly contact a business from anywhere in the world at any time of day. But as inboxes fill up with orders, inquiries, and correspondence, they also fill up with spam. In November 2003, measurements by Brightmail's Probe Network showed that 56% of all email was spam related. This has caused many industry insiders to predict that by mid-2004 spam will surpass the 60% mark.

And with ever-increasing spam comes larger threats to security. Spam in itself is an annoying nuisance that many businesses find drains productivity, distracts employees, and can be offensive. It also has a negative effect on server and storage space and can slow down connection time. In addition to this effect on valuable network resources, spam can also contain malicious code, and in some cases has been connected to credit card fraud and software piracy. With thousands of email messages being received and sent by individual companies each day, many businesses are making themselves an easy target to hackers, viruses, and spam. By utilizing WSI's industry leading technology such as intrusion detection applications, authentication devices, and firewalls, a business can position itself to avoid the costly consequences associated with digital attacks.

Few can forget how fast the Sobig.F virus spread through the online world this past August, crippling entire network systems with the sheer volume of email traffic it produced. In just a few short weeks, this email-based threat caused \$29.7 billion worth of damage to companies worldwide that were caught unprepared for such an attack.

Businesses can avoid costly security threats by practicing safe online behavior and employing server-based traffic filtering technologies, such as those offered by WSI's hosting environment. As each business is different, WSI Internet Consultants can assess which methods will suit a particular company best and then deploy those solutions to protect their clients. As WSI Internet Consultant Garcia says, "Knowledge is power and with the right information in hand, most

Internet security threats can easily be avoided."

About WSI

WSI, headquartered in Toronto, Canada, is ranked the #1 Internet Services Business in the world and the 4th fastest-growing International Franchise. With systems that have been developed,

utilized and proven by over 700 Internet Consultants in 87 countries worldwide, WSI delivers thousands of e-Business solutions to small and medium sized businesses annually. Visit www.wsicorporate.com for more information. (Press Release, WSI)

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