



The VERY Basics of Small Business Infrastructure Safety (Simple Steps to Start)

Overview - Your data and the information you get from your customers (ie: names, addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers, credit cards, etc.) have value. Whether stored online or at the location where you work, state and federal laws are changing to mandate that business owners protect the information collected on their computers. **It is also important to note that ignoring or overlooking these safeguards combined with Payment Card Information (PCI) regulations, MIGHT result in your not being able to get paid.** Here are some VERY basic guidelines / considerations. . .

- **Education** – Over 90% of all hacks come from emails (<https://bit.ly/2YiKtCq>) and almost 70% of the businesses that get hacked shut down within 6 months due to either recovery costs, “total loss” scenarios, or customer’s going elsewhere due to lack of trust (<https://tek.io/2T8I3I2>). It is important for you and your employees to be vigilant not only in how technology helps to run your business but how to spot and avoid potential risks and dangers. . . which change constantly.
- **Access / Dissemination of Information** – Who has the “keys to your kingdom”? Which employees do you want to be able to see your banking or client information? Does Alexa, Siri, Cortana or Hey Google know the credit card information you used to call in your last order? Do you use 2-step authentication to access “personal” / private information online? Have you “announced” on Facebook that your house will be empty while you’re on vacation?
- **Antivirus** – While malware and anti-virus software are a “protection”, they are only part of a safety solution. What websites do you go to? Do you carefully read your emails (and possibly **not** click on attachments) and look at the sender’s (possibly spoofed) email address?
- **Backups** – There are two kinds of people in the world; those who backup and those who will. Whether on an external drive that leaves your business site daily, or stored online, a backup is “another elsewhere” that safeguards you and your customer’s information.
- **Email** – If electronic communication is the lifeblood of your business, protect and invest in your business. Paid email services (rather than free / consumer services) add “manned” helpdesks and extra layers of spam filtering and protection. Do you use the “bcc” field when you, “reply all”, to keep your contacts private? Openly distributed email addresses put computers at risk.
- **Passwords** – If you lock your car or your house, then think of passwords as the “keys” that help to lock your data. Try the “LEET” language (L33T 1@n9u@93) with 8 or 9 ch@r@ct3r w0rd5.
- **Updates** – There are over 80,000 “doorways” (ports) into and out of a computer. Software updates (as with anti-virus and anti-malware) “react” to problems and “plug up” holes.

Small Business Resource – gcatoolkit.org provides free software and assessment services.

In accordance with SCORE’s Code of Ethics and Conduct, below are 3 local, experienced technology support vendors

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DISCLAIMER – Despite these (and more) precautions, if you are “targeted”, your data can be stolen.