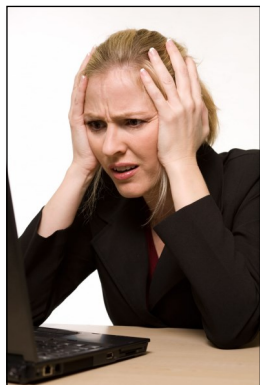


MC Connect

"Insider Tips to Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier, and More Profitably"

97% Of All Organizations Have Been Hacked!



Almost every time we do a network security assessment for a prospective client, we find bad, ugly, scary things. A recent report by FireEye suggests that 97% of all networks have been compromised (Google "fireeye real world assessment"). I haven't crunched the numbers, but I would guess that our findings are very similar.

If you read my article last month, you already know what goes on behind the scenes when your computers get infected by malware. Cyber criminals take complete control of your equipment and use your company resources for criminal activities. True, that's a problem, but it's just the beginning of your problems.

Ransomware is the cybercrime flavor-of-the-day. You may have dealt with it yourself, or at least heard of it. If you are the (un)lucky target, you'll receive a popup message that lets you know your files are all encrypted (which is true) and that if you want them back you'll have to pay. If you don't pay soon, the price goes up. If you don't pay at all, the encryption key is deleted and your files are gone forever. Also true.

As I write this, I'm reading a note from a colleague of mine who owns an IT shop in California. He received a call from a bookkeeping service who was infected with Cryptowall. All of her files were encrypted. PDF files, QuickBooks files, MS Word documents. Gone! "The hacker is asking for \$500 ransom to unlock her files." She was desperate!

Unfortunately, the problem is getting worse, not better. Every year thousands of small businesses are impacted by cybercrime. In fact, the most recent statistic is 1 in 5 small businesses fall victim to cybercrime each year. You hear about the large breaches in the news, but the little guys receive no



"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"

- Justin Shelley, Master Computing

April 2015

DENTON, TEXAS

Inside This Issue...

- 97% Of All Organizations Have Been HackedPage 1
- This Month In Technology
- History.....Page 3
- Windows Server 2003 About To Expire.....Page4
- Client Spotlight.....Page 5
- Improve your LinkedIn Profile...Page 6
- History Of April Fools Day.....Page 7
- Does This Password Sound Familiar?.....Page 8



"How often does he go online?"

press coverage. It's like fatal car accidents: they happen all the time, they are horrible, but we simply accept them as part of life. Pretty bleak, if you ask me.

How does it happen?

Apathy. But we'll get into that later. The short answer is that we get infected by opening malicious email attachments, clicking links in spoofed emails, or simply visiting well-known (but infected) websites.

So What's at Stake?

See, this is the scary part. In simple cases, like the one I mentioned earlier, we're talking about a few hundred dollars. Not pleasant, but most of us can survive that. The real problems come when someone gets infected behind the corporate firewall. In many cases, the ransomware (or other malware) will spread to other computers on the network, including servers and even cloud services.

Still, we're only talking about ransomware at the moment. That's just the tip of the iceberg. Cybercriminals will scour your computer, network, and cloud services every nugget of joy they can get their grubby hands on. This includes email account info, social media accounts, bank accounts, software license keys, etc. All of this can be sold in underground bazaars. Curious how much your personal information is worth? Here's a small sample: Credit card accounts go for anywhere from \$2 to \$90. iTunes accounts are worth \$8.

The value of your information to a cybercriminal is irrelevant. The real question is: how much is it worth to you? What impact would it have on your organization? How would it affect your reputation? Would you lose clients? What about lawsuits (perhaps even class action lawsuits) for losing client data? Then there's the associated legal fees, fines for non-compliance, the cost to replace your data, and the cost of downtime and lost productivity. I can't even do the math on all that for my own organization, so I won't begin to

guess that number for you. What's at stake? Everything!

So Now What?

Jay, my lead tech, just offered his advice: "Move into a cave with no Internet or power!" I actually have an uncle who lives a hundred miles from nowhere. No water, no power other than a few solar panels, no phone, and no Internet. Weirdo. I grew up in the country, but could not run to the city fast enough. So, sorry Jay, I need a better option.

Enough delay; here's your action plan:

- √ Software updates. Absolutely critical! Are they happening? Are you positive? How do you know? And I'm not just talking about Microsoft, but also all the other programs running on your computer.
- √ Solid antivirus/antimalware system. We have **five** layers built into our malware prevention program.
- √ Solid anti-spam software. Much of the malware today comes through spam. In many cases it is *targeted* spam. Yes, they know you by name! Creepy, huh?
- √ Data backup. And more data backup. When all else fails, you *must* be able to rely on your data backup. Is it running every day? Every hour? Are you sure? Have you tested it?
- √ Acceptable Use Policy. Every organization should have one. And enforce it.
- √ Education. The weakest link in security will always be the people operating the technology.

If that sounds like a lot, you're absolutely right. In fact, it is all we do every day, all day. It's not glorious, and most of it goes on behind the scenes. But we are absolutely committed to keeping our clients safe in this cybercrime-crazed world.

Shameless Plug: If you're not a client yet, you probably should be! 940-220-7817

Justin Shelley

This Month In Technology History

Jay Hathi

This Month in Technology takes us back to April 1994 – a mere 21 years in practically every respect except technology. That month, the last Commodore 64 home computer rolled off the assembly lines and Commodore International, the computer's manufacturer, filed for bankruptcy. It was a whimper of an ending for a company and a computer that had entered the market with a bang twelve years earlier.

In 1981, Commodore International, a company that specialized in computers for business and that also manufactured computer chips for industry giants such as Apple under its MOS Technology subsidiary, began work on a set of graphics and audio chips tailored for use in a next-generation video game console. However, during the development process, two engineers, Robert Russell and Robert Yannes, proposed a plan to build a low cost computer using these chips that would act as a sequel to Commodore's VIC-20 personal computer. They gained the support of Commodore's CEO, Jack Tramiel, who stipulated one requirement to the further development of the system – it had to come with 64KB of onboard memory.

The machine was ready for display by the Consumer Electronics Show in January 1982. Insiders from competitors such as Atari were stunned – the Commodore 64, as it was now called, was a fully functional computer with (for the time) exceptional graphics and sound, but carried a price tag of only \$595 (compared to the \$1300+ for competing systems). How could they do it?

The answer was vertical integration. Commodore held an advantage that few other competitors have held before or since – they owned and controlled MOS Technologies, which did all of the fabrication and manufacturing of the chips that powered the system. This allowed them to drive the production cost of the C64 as low as \$135. It also served to their advantage in other ways – when released in August 1982, the system faced an onslaught of competition from titans such as Apple and IBM to smaller players such as Atari and TI. Commodore doubled down by offering a \$100 rebate on a new C64 with the trade in of any working video game console or home computer. This move alone drove competitors such as Timex Sinclair out of business and was a significant contributor to the crash of the video game industry in 1983 and 1984.

Low price got consumers in the door, but the quality of the system kept them there. The C64's graphics were worlds ahead of the Apple II and IBM PC and could keep pace with most then-current video game systems – fitting, since the graphics chip was originally designed for video game consoles. The sound chip was so advanced that it is still used in some synthesizers to this day. These factors made the C64 one of the most developed for platforms in technology history, with more than 10,000 applications written for the system during its lifespan.

Much like Apple, Commodore expected the C64 to remain popular for only a couple of years. Like Apple, they developed a number of systems that they hoped would replace the C64 – namely the Commodore 128, with more memory and a better processor – but the machine continued to be popular well into the 90s. In March 1994, a beleaguered Commodore announced they were discontinuing the venerable C64. Although it was still selling well – particularly in Europe – Commodore's financial troubles made manufacturing the systems and particularly the peripherals difficult economically. Commodore announced that they would produce C64s through the year and discontinue them in 1995, but the company was not able to survive even a month – they declared bankruptcy in April 1994 and discontinued manufacturing immediately.

Despite its unfortunate ending, however, the Commodore 64 still stands as one of the most important personal computers in history. Its low price and huge software library got people into computing that had never worked with a computer before. Its graphics and sound capabilities led to it powering some of the biggest video games in history and led to creation of new art forms, such as the demo scene. To this day, the computer is still fondly remembered, with a recent survey showing that 87% of the respondents recognized the name of the computer.

Windows Server 2003 Set To Expire July 14th!

If your organization is currently running either Microsoft Windows Server 2003 or Exchange 2003 on any servers in your office, you need to know about a dangerous security threat to your organization that must be addressed very soon.

Windows Server 2003 and Exchange 2003 Replacements MUST Be Made By July 14, 2015

Microsoft has officially announced that it will retire all support on the Server 2003 operating system on July 14, 2015. That means any business with this operating system still running will be completely exposed to serious hacker attacks aimed at taking control of your network, stealing data, crashing your system and inflicting a host of other business-crippling problems you do NOT want to have to deal with.

This is such a serious threat that the US Department Of Homeland Security has issued an official warning to all companies still running this operating system because firewalls and antivirus software will NOT be sufficient to completely protect your business from malicious attacks or data exfiltration. Running Server 2003 will also put many organizations out of compliance.

Unless you don't care about cybercriminals running rampant in your company's computer network, you MUST upgrade any equipment running this software.

FREE Windows Server 2003 Migration Plan Shows You The Easiest, Most Budget-Friendly Way To Upgrade Your Server

During the month of April, we are offering a FREE customized Windows Server 2003 migration plan to all businesses still running this operating system on any computers in their office. At no cost, we'll conduct a full analysis of your network to help you determine what specific servers will be affected by this announcement. Additionally, we will provide a detailed analysis of all upgrade options available to you, along with the pros and cons of each option. While there, we will also assess other security, backup and efficiency factors that could be costing you in productivity and hard dollars. We will then put together a customized Server 2003 Migration Plan specifically for your office.

To schedule your FREE on-site assessment today, contact us at connect@master-computing.com to get started.

Shiny New Gadget



The WayTools TextBlade

When we are surrounded by touch-screen mobile devices, sometimes we can get a little nostalgic for a good old-fashioned keyboard. Sure, there are a number of apps that make typing on a touch-screen easier, but tactile feedback is non-existent. Or we want to type something more substantial than a text message or quick email, and we don't want to go through the chore of typing it all out on a small screen. And then it's often hard to find a wireless keyboard that is both practical and truly portable.

The WayTools TextBlade aims to solve these problems. The TextBlade offers a fully-featured and responsive solution—while maximizing portability. Through a Bluetooth connection, you can sync it up to your favorite smartphone or tablet. The lithium polymer battery lasts upwards of a month with average use, and it's quickly recharged via USB. Small but powerful magnets keep it held in place when you're using it and when it's tucked away in your pocket.

It's priced at \$99 and you can find it online at www.waytools.com.

Client spotlight: Classic Cafe



Brothers Curtis and Chris Wells opened the doors to The Classic at Roanoke in May of 1993 with a desire to serve a world-class menu in a casual, relaxed setting, where they could build a community around food. General Manager Francis Silmon brought his joyous spirit to the team a few years later. The result has been more than 20 years of good times and a wonderful, continually growing family of guests, staff and friends.

Classic fare has never been limited by continent or region, and Chef Charles Youts' weekly features are as likely to hail from the Pacific Rim as they are from his childhood home in West Texas. Chef Charles finds inspiration in the *Chef's Pantry* garden, maintained on The Classic grounds since 2009, and his features regularly highlight the seasonal fruits and vegetables grown there. Fresh, quality ingredients are foundational for great cuisine, and The Classic even keeps a small flock of free-range laying hens, whose fresh eggs are the basis of an extraordinary crème brûlée. Curtis, Chris and their staff hope you'll taste the difference. And the love.

For reservations, call 817-430-8185 or go to:
www.theclassiccafe.com/reservations

Six Easy Ways To Improve Your LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn is a great social media platform for entrepreneurs, business owners and professionals. Unfortunately, your LinkedIn profile may not be helping you to create those connections.

So let's tune yours up with six simple steps:

Step 1. Revisit your goals. At its most basic level, LinkedIn is about marketing: marketing your company or marketing yourself. Think about your goals and convert your goals into keywords, because keywords are how people find you on LinkedIn.

But don't just whip out a keyword tool to identify popular keywords. Go a step further and think about words that have meaning in your industry. Use a keyword tool to find general terms that could attract a broader audience, and then dig deeper to target your niche by identifying keywords industry insiders might search for.

Step 2. Layer in your keywords. The headline is a key factor in search results, so pick your most important keyword and make sure it appears in your headline. Then work through the rest of your profile and replace some of the vague descriptions of skills, experience and educational background with keywords.

Step 3. Strip out the clutter. The average person has changed jobs six to eight times before they reach age 30. Sift through your profile and weed out or streamline anything that doesn't support your business or professional goals. If you're currently a

Web designer but once worked in accounting, a comprehensive listing of your accounting background is distracting.

Step 4. Add in some personality. Focusing on keywords and eliminating clutter is important, but in the process your individuality probably got lost. Now add enthusiasm and flair. Share why you love what you do in your profile. Describe what you hope to accomplish. Remember, no one connects with keywords. People connect with people.

Step 5. Take a good look at your profile photo. A photo is a little like a logo. On its own an awesome photo won't win business, but a bad photo can definitely lose business.

A good photo flatters but doesn't mislead. The goal is for your photo to reflect how you will look when you meet a customer, not how you looked at some killer party. The best photo strikes a balance between professionalism and approachability, making you look good but also real.

Step 6. Get recommendations. Most of us can't resist reading testimonials, even when we know those testimonials were probably solicited. So ask for recommendations, and offer to provide recommendations before you're asked. The best way to build great connections is to always be the one who gives first.

Help Us Out And We'll Give You A Brand-New iPod For Your Trouble



We love having you as a customer and, quite honestly, wish we had more like you! So instead of just wishing, we've decided to hold a special "refer a friend" event during the month of April.

Simply refer any company with 5 or more computers to our office to receive a FREE Computer Network Assessment (a \$397 value). Once we've completed our initial appointment with your referral, we'll rush YOU a free iPod Nano of your choice as a thank-you (or donate \$100 to your favorite charity ... your choice!). Simply call us at 940-220-7817 or e-mail us at connect@master-computing.com with your referral's name and contact information today!

Master-Computing.com
connect@master-computing.com
 940-220-7817

MASTER
 COMPUTING

The History of April Fools Day

Jessica Shelley



While no one quite knows the origins of April Fools Day, there are many speculations. The first of many possible origins dates back to 1582 in France. This was the year that France switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. Many people who were slow to get the news and continued to celebrate the start of the new year at the beginning of April became the butt of jokes. They even had little paper fish taped to their backs by others and were called "April fish" which is said to be an easily caught fish or gullible person.

Another possible origin is in ancient Roman festivals such as Hilaria which took place at the end of March. Many people dressed up in disguises for this festival and played practical jokes on each other.

The tradition soon became popular in Britain during the 18th century and that is where the "kick me" sign first originated.

Today April Fool's Day is a widely popular holiday and is celebrated in many different ways. Besides just playing jokes on your friends and family, many radios, TV stations, newspapers, and websites participate in the fun. They often release false content to try to fool their audience.

So don't believe anything you read on April Fool's Day, odds are, it's a trap!

Does This Password Sound Familiar?

You know the difference between a good password and a bad one. Many of us do like the convenience of a simple, easy-to-remember password that requires no effort to recall and type when we connect to our WiFi network, buy from our favorite e-tailer or use for online bill pay. But many of us also appreciate an added layer of security so we **don't** use an effortless password when sensitive data is on the line.

In a recent study conducted by SplashData, they looked at a sampling of over 3 million passwords (all of which were leaked during a data breach last year). They compiled a list of the most common passwords—and the results weren't all that surprising. **123456** was the No. 1 password used last year, followed by the classic **password**.

While these passwords may have the IT and security crowds shaking their heads in dismay, it's not all bad news. These popular passwords may offer next to no practical security, but according to the study, the 25 most common passwords only represent about 2% of the overall total.

This means most people don't use these passwords—or **qwerty**, or **111111**, or **iloveyou**. The study found more variation among the most popular passwords versus the 2013 study. Is it a possible trend? Are people turning to more imaginative or secure passwords? Maybe, but only time will tell. Even if the study suggests most of us don't rely on overly simple passwords, SplashData's list serves as a reminder to use more secure passwords and to change them regularly.



The Lighter Side: A Pleasant Drive With The Queen Of England



In 2003, the recently deceased King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia paid a visit to the UK. During the trip, he met with Queen Elizabeth II at Balmoral, the royal family's castle and estate in Scotland. The queen asked then-Crown Prince Abdullah if he would enjoy a tour of the estate. The prince wasn't initially keen on a tour, but he decided it would be polite to accept as a guest of the queen. He agreed.

When their transportation arrived—two regal Land Rovers—the prince stepped into the front passenger seat. It allowed him an exquisite view of the estate and the surrounding countryside. What happened next, he was not fully prepared for. The queen opened the driver's-side door and climbed in. She swiftly turned the ignition, threw it into gear and hit the accelerator.

Keep in mind, women in Saudi Arabia are prohibited from driving.

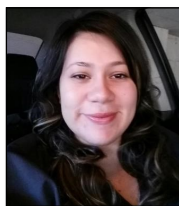
Also keep in mind, the queen is a very experienced driver.

While giving the prince the royal tour, she did not hold back. It was pedal to the metal. As she blasted down the narrow country roads, she remained attentive to her guest and kept the conversation lively. It was an attentiveness the prince felt was misdirected. He pled with the queen to focus on the road. She did not.

Following Abdullah's death in January, Queen Elizabeth takes the throne as the world's oldest reigning monarch at a spry 88. Abdullah was 90.

Who Else Wants To Win A \$25 Gift Card?

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Maggie Rodriguez! She was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month:



According to Irish lore, St. Patrick banished all the snakes from Ireland. What other island nation is also devoid of snakes?

- a) Cuba b) Madagascar c) New Zealand d) Jamaica e) Sri Lanka

The correct answer was c) **New Zealand**. Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a gift card to iTunes!

One famous April Fools' Day hoax occurred in the 1957 when the BBC aired a curious story that tricked quite a few viewers into believing they could grow what?

- a) Musical Shrubbery b) Horse-sized Hamsters c) Spaghetti Trees d) Chocolate Potatoes

E-mail Us Right Now With Your Answer!

Trivia@Master-Computing.com

Master-Computing.com
connect@master-computing.com
940-220-7817

