MC Heartbeat

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

Understanding a HIPAA Risk Assessment

Justin Shelley

In order to protect patient information it is important to understand the risks to the information. A HIPAA Risk Assessment will help you answer the following questions:

- Where is patient information stored, accessed, created or modified?
- What are threats to this information?
- How likely are these threats?
- What is the impact of these threats?
- What additional security measures can be implemented to protect the information?

Risk Management

Iterative Risk Management Process
At the core of HIPAA security is a process called Risk Management. It sounds much more confusing than it actually is. So what is Risk Management?

Step A – Identify how you are currently protecting patient information and identify current weakness in your protection.

Step B – Implement additional security safeguards to better protect patient information

Step C – Go back to Step A

This an oversimplified definition of Risk Management but it illustrates that the process is one that is repeated over and over.

Risk Assessment

How do you identify how you are protecting patient information and your weaknesses? The HIPAA Security Rule and Meaningful Use requirements call for all organizations to perform a HIPAA Risk Assessment. Let's look at a simplified definition of a Risk Assessment.

Step 1 – Identify where patient information is stored (EMR, PACS system, email, etc)

Step 2 - Identify threats to patient information (employee loses a

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- Justin Shelley, Master Computing

August 2015

DENTON, TEXAS

Inside This Issue…

WHEN ARE THEY GOING TO MAKE AN A/C APP?

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laptop with patient information, fire destroys your EMR, a patient is sent another patient's test results, etc.)

Step 3 – Assess how you are currently protecting patient information (backing up your EMR on a nightly basis, using secure email to send patient information, using anti-virus to protect your systems from viruses, etc.)

Step 4 – Determine your risk for each of the threats that were identified in Step 2. You determine your risk by looking at how likely something is to happen and the impact if it does happen. Let's look at an example to better explain risk.

Risk of a fire destroying your EMR

How likely is it that a fire will destroy your EMR?
The risk is probably very low. Fires happen but the probability of a fire is low.

What is the impact of a fire destroying your EMR?
Your first reaction might be "the impact would be huge!" There is no denying that a fire would impact your organization but you have to look at the impact more closely.

Let's look at the worst case scenario first. If a fire destroys your EMR and the data has not been backed up, all your patient information would be lost forever. You could not recover the information. Months or even years of patient records would be gone. You would have no history of any of your patients. This scenario could put your practice out of business and even jeopardize the health of your patients. It is hard to argue that the impact would not be great.

Let's look at another scenario where the impact would not be as severe. If your EMR data is backed up on a nightly basis and stored offsite, a fire would not have the same impact as in the first scenario. Yes your server would be destroyed and your patient information would be inaccessible but it would not be lost forever. You could purchase another server from Dell or HP. You can have your IT staff or company setup a new server. You can have your EMR vendor reinstall the EMR software. You can restore your EMR data from backup. It may take some time but you would eventually have your EMR and patient information up and running and accessible once again.

The impact of the second scenario is obviously much less severe than the impact of the first scenario where all your patient information data is lost forever.

Step 5 – Determine additional protections to lower the risk. Using the previous example, if you determined the risk of a fire would be high because you are not backing up your data then implementing a nightly data backup would lower your risk.

Again, these 5 steps are an oversimplified explanation of a Risk Assessment but hopefully it gives you a better understanding of the process. The key is to identify the risks that could have major impact to your organization and identify additional protections that could lower the risks.

Conclusion
Hopefully you have a better understanding of the HIPAA Risk Management process and the benefits of performing a HIPAA Risk Assessment. Risk Assessments should be performed once a year (or at most once every two years) or when major changes to systems occur (i.e. implementation of an EMR or Digital X-ray system).

Our HIPAA Secure Now service offers a streamlined yet extremely comprehensive Risk Assessment process which absolutely minimizes the time you will need to spend providing information. We have studied the HIPAA regulations and based upon them designed the initial questions which need to be asked, as well as the appropriate follow-ups based on your responses. The results of your assessment will be documented in an understandable format which includes actionable recommendations to better protect your patient information. All of this service and protection comes at a very affordable price. If you would like to discuss a HIPAA Risk Assessment or learn more about our comprehensive HIPAA Secure Now! service, feel free to contact us at info@hipaasecurenow.com .

This Month In Technology

Jay Hathi

TMIT isn't going back terribly far this month - only sixteen years, to August 15, 1998. On that day, Apple Computer released the iMac, an unusual looking computer that contained the monitor and the computer all in one unit. Although a subject for divisive debate about its usability following its introduction, the iMac put Apple back on the map after several years of unprofitability.

In 1997, a struggling Apple bought NeXT, the company founded by Steve Jobs after his exile from Apple in 1985. They hoped to use NeXT's OpenStep operating system as the core of a new, next-generation Mac OS. Along with the company's intellectual property, Apple also got most of NeXT's employees, including Jobs. Jobs quickly set about to take control of Apple again, which proved to be a relatively easy task - he was able to stack the board with his supporters and force CEO Gil Amelio's resignation just four months after the buyout.

Jobs immediately set out to return Apple to profitability. He cut projects operating in the red, such as the Newton PDA, and severed relationships that were costing the company money, such as the Macintosh clone licensing program. He slashed the number of active projects at Apple from more than 350 to about 15.

One of the projects that received the greenlight from Jobs almost died under Amelio's reign. Designer Jonathan Ive had created an all-in-one PC with a sleek, transparent look, bright colors, and most importantly, no floppy drive. Jobs enthusiastically embraced the project - "Internet PCs" were all the rage in the mid-to-late 1990s, and Jobs wanted to created the Internet PC that set the standard for all others.

Apple announced the the Internet Mac - or iMac - on May 6, 1998. The device instantly created a buzz in the media and popular culture - never before had a computer looked so stylish. Many people bought the computer simply because of how it looked. However, there was also a bit of a backlash. Many users complained about the lack of a floppy drive, then the most prevalent media for storing files. It also eschewed several of Apple's proprietary ports for a bank of USB ports, rendering many Apple peripherals and accessories useless on the new computer.

However, the opinion of the machine in popular culture prevailed. By the date of the machine's release - August 15, 1998, a significant demand had been created for the device, and the iMac quickly became the best selling computer of the year. It helped quickly return Apple to profitability, showed the world that Apple still had fight left in it, and solidified Steve Jobs's position at the top of Apple.

How Great Leaders Inspire Their Employees To Higher Commitment And Performance

It's probably true that most people who work with us will never care as deeply as we do about building our business. If they did, they'd probably be working for themselves! Yet there's a great deal we can do to raise the commitment level and inspire them to peak performance. The operative word here is INSPIRE. You can demand that people who work for you be punctual, or that they perform at a certain production level. Yet real commitment can only be INSPIRED. And inspiring people is what great leaders do best.

How do great leaders inspire others to commit themselves to their goals? It's not just their charismatic personalities, or that they give a lot of high-powered motivational talks. They communicate their vision so forcefully that other people adopt it as their own.

For example, Lee Iaccoca stepped into the ailing Chrysler Corporation and said, "We're going to turn this company around!" With clear goals, a solid plan of action and a strong conviction, he was able to inspire enough commitment from the US Congress that he secured the largest loan ever made to a private company. Then he inspired enough commitment in thousands of Chrysler workers to enable the company to pay back the loan ahead of schedule.

And that's the formula for any leader to inspire commitment – clear goals, a solid plan of action and a strong conviction. Communicate that to the people who work with you, and you'll have the kind of loyalty that makes them go the extra mile – if that's what it takes to get the job done.

Of course, it takes more than inspiration to run a successful organization. The people who work with you have to perform consistently at very high levels, and to get that kind of performance, you have to gain their trust. They have to believe that you will always be fair in your dealings with them, and that you are concerned about their best interests.

One of the most helpful insights I ever learned about leading others is that people do things for THEIR reasons, not for YOURS or MINE. So the goals, the plan of action and the strong conviction have to be communicated in a way that directly answers the question "What's in it for me?"

When people honestly believe they will benefit directly from their efforts, and that the more they give, the more they benefit, they perform at peak levels. So it's crucial that you show people how they will grow as they work individually and together to make the company grow, and then back up all your promises with solid actions.

People respond to clear opportunities for personal and professional growth. If I may paraphrase the Hallmark slogan, when people care enough, they'll give their very best!

It takes a lot of patience and effort to build a solid team of people who will share and help you fulfill your vision, but the results will be well worth all you put into it.

**ATTENTION ALL
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CUSTOMERS!!!!!**

Beginning in September 2015, we here at Master Computing will be adding a new feature to our monthly newsletter. If you've been reading our newsletter for some time now, you'll know that every month we feature one lucky client in our Client Spotlight. But that's ALL about to change. We are changing the Client Spotlight to our TECHNOLOGY GENIUS OF THE MONTH. Along with the privilege of this prestigious title, each month one lucky client will be featured in the Newsletter on this very page! As if that wasn't enough to get your motor running, the TECHNOLOGY GENIUS OF THE MONTH will also receive a ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR VISA GIFT CARD.

If this sounds appealing to you and you have an interest in being AWESOME, this is what you need to do:

1. Tell us a little about who you are as a company
2. Tell us about your technology situation before Master Computing saved the day
3. Describe how you master technology in your day to day operations and how you are a technology GENIUS
4. Explain what Master Computing has done for you in your journey towards GENIUSNESS
5. What advice would you give to others on their quest towards glory?
6. Send us a headshot of you, you and your partner, etc. Just about anything that has your face in it will do

Send us your tale of technological domination by emailing this information to Connect@Master-Computing.com

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How To Avoid Runaway IT Projects That Empty Your Wallet

In 2002, McDonald's decided to implement a system to provide their corporate executives with a bird's-eye view of their 30,000 stores, to track, measure and monitor everything from profitability to cooking-oil quality. The project, named "Innovate," was a massive five-year project with a billion-dollar budget. Two years into its implementation, McDonald's executives abandoned the project and wrote off the $170 million invested, saying they needed to reduce capital expenditures.

Even though YOUR business isn't a McDonald's with a billion-dollar IT budget, chances are you've had at least one failed IT project that derailed, emptying your wallet and leaving you with nothing other than a grudge. And if you haven't had that happen yet, chances are, as you grow, you will. So how do you avoid going down a rabbit hole of spending on an IT project? Here are five key strategies to keep you on track:

1. Begin with the end in mind. The clearer you are on what "success" is for the project, the more likely you are to achieve it. Take the time to sit down with your executive team and decide exactly what the new system LOOKS like (including the interface, if you're developing one), how it performs, what it does and how it works.

2. IT projects need to be driven by an executive who understands the business need and outcome, NOT the IT department. If you and your executive team aren't going to be heavily involved with the process, decisions and management of the project, don't start it.

3. Think in smaller, "bite-sized" projects. One of the problems with the McDonald's project was that it was so complex, affected multiple business systems and had such an enormous scope, it was almost guaranteed to fail. If you have a major system to build or overhaul, break it into smaller, manageable chunks so that problems are contained and costs controlled.

4. Manage the project hours. Scope creep is the biggest challenge to keeping your project on time and on budget. If your project starts to take on a life of its own and goes over your budgeted time frame and your budget by more than 10%, it's time to start re-evaluating what's going on. Excessive overtime is a red flag that the project was not thought through properly, that you have the wrong team working on it or that it's being grossly mismanaged. Don't ignore it.

5. Missed milestones are a red flag. While it's normal to miss a few milestones by a small margin, your IT team should not be allowed to consistently miss key milestones in the project. We recommend setting clearly defined milestones every two weeks or monthly versus monthly or quarterly. This allows you to keep a tighter control on the budget and deliverables.

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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 enact a new "refer a friend" policy.

Refer any company with 10 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 donate $100 to your favorite charity (even if that favorite charity is you) for every referral that you've sent, as a small thank-you for thinking of us.

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!

How To Survive Back To School
Jessica Shelley

As the month of August rolls around, the "back to school" ads start pouring out of our televisions, radios, and computers. Usually there are a few different reactions to these ads. Teachers and students tend to be in denial about the next few weeks. Preferring instead to just scream "NOOO" and go on pretending that they never have to return to that dreaded hall of learning.
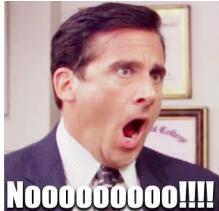
Parents of students might have a slightly different reaction…
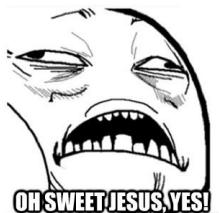
However you may feel about the impending school year, here are some tips on how to survive the next couple of weeks.

1. Get lots of sleep while you can. Soon the days of sleeping in will be over. Instead, early mornings will be filled with struggling to get out the door on time. Whether you're struggling with cranky children, you are the cranky child, or you're dreading a day filled with teaching cranky children, the first step is the hardest.

2. Try to keep a positive mindset. While this may seem daunting, smiling through those late night homework sessions (whether that's doing it or grading it), will help keep you away from the dark despair that can befall school goers (especially at 3 in the morning).

3. Buy cool school supplies! Always opt for the notebook that you love instead of that boring black one. It will give you something to look forward to (if you're a nerd like me).

4. Start training your body to sleep at more normal times. While staying up all night and sleeping all day may be fun now, you'll regret not being able to sleep when school actually does come around. Parents should encourage their students to sleep during the night time hours (how you go about encouraging is your business…).

5. Last, but certainly not least, remember that everyone is trying their best to get out of that summer funk. Even that driver that forgot to turn on their blinker. A little kindness goes a long way to getting what you want. Especially when dealing with the education system.

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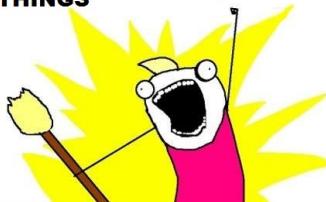
How To Back Up Your Smartphone

You regularly back up your computers (or at least you should), but do you do the same with your smartphone? Given the massive amounts of contact information, photos, videos and other data we all carry around on smartphones, it's critical to back them up or risk losing all that data forever. There are two basic ways to back up your phone: automatically to the cloud or manually to your computer.

To The Cloud. Cloud backups are secured with your password-protected account. They can easily be configured to run automatically so you can "set it and forget it." Apple users can use iCloud to back up photos, contacts, calendars and other data. Turn on and configure iCloud Backup by going to Settings > iCloud. Android users can back up to Google servers in much the same way, using a Google account. Configure your preferences by going to Settings > Backup.

To Your Computer. Both Apple and Android users also can back up data directly to a computer manually. Generally, connecting the phone to the computer by cable is the quickest way to do this. Apple users can also use iTunes Wi-Fi Sync to wirelessly back up phone data to a computer. Remember, though, when backing up your smartphone to a computer, your data is only as safe as that computer. Be sure to back up the computer regularly as well.

Who Else Wants To Win A $25 Gift Card?

The Grand Prize Winner of last month's Trivia Challenge Quiz is Angie Mendoza from ComCo! She was the first person to correctly answer my quiz question from last month: **Which kind of animal did Florence Nightingale often carry around in her pocket? a) Kitten   b) Puppy   c) Owl   d) Snake** The correct answer was **c) Owl.** Now, here's this month's trivia question. The winner will receive a gift card to **AMC Theaters.**
What is the hottest place on earth:

a) **Wadi Halfa, Sudan**   b) **Death Valley, California**

c) **Tirat Tsvi, Israel**   d) **Timbuktu, Mali**

Email Us Right Now With Your Answer!

Trivia@Master-Computing.com

The Lighter Side:

Are You A Walking Dead Fan?

Then you're going to LOVE this! There's a great way to prepare for the next zombie apocalypse while getting in shape and losing weight – it's called the Zombies, Run! app. This app combines gaming and audio adventures to make losing weight interesting. It works by giving you tasks and goals to reach in a zombified universe, like reaching humanity's last outpost or gathering supplies to live. Each mission is tied to a fitness goal, like running 5k in a session, so you're getting fit while you find out what happens next. Zombies, Run! is available to download on both iOS and Android.

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