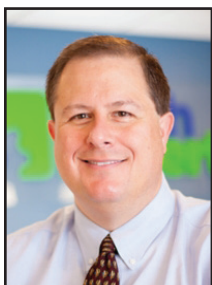


Is Your Network Due For A Security Audit?



Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, southeast Michigan's leading small business computer support company.

Businesses always face security risks from a variety of different sources.

Performing a security audit can help you to identify

where you have exposures, develop a better understanding of the security policies and controls you have in place, and catalog your IT assets.

This article presents a quick and simple guide to performing a robust security audit that will help safeguard your organization against risks.

Define the physical scope of the audit

The first major task involves determining exactly what you will audit.

For example, you may wish to focus on business processes, such as financial reporting, or asset groups, such as a specific branch office.

Clearly defining the scope up front

will help ensure your risk assessment methods remain focused.

Define the process scope of the audit

Determining the process scope of the audit involves achieving a fine balance between ensuring the risk assessment is not too broad yet not too narrow.

Defining what document and process areas will be included and excluded up front will, once again, help to ensure your audit is sufficiently focused.

Conduct historical due diligence

Perform pre-audit due diligence to ascertain known risks, evaluate the outcomes of previous audits, and identify previous security incidents.

Create the audit plan

To ensure your audit is successful, you will need to have a clear and detailed audit plan that contains details of the audit scope, deliverables, timescales, participants, and dependencies.

Implement the security audit plan

Begin the risk assessment according

to the predefined plan. Identify any vulnerabilities and catalogue them appropriately. Identify what security controls are currently in place and calculate the risk of any threats/vulnerabilities emerging.

Document the results of the audit

Produce a detailed overview of the security risks that have been identified, the probability of them occurring, the associated cost/threats if they do become a reality, and a list of actions to address key risks.

Share this document with the decision makers who have the ability to address the risks that have been identified.

Implement new/updated controls

The ultimate objective of any security audit has to be to improve business security and to protect your company's valuable financial and customer data.

As such, it is imperative that the actions identified in the post-audit documentation are implemented, and all identified risks are addressed, mitigated, or managed in a proactive and timely manner.



Performing a security audit can help you to identify where you have exposures, develop a better understanding of the security policies and controls you have in place, and catalog your IT assets.

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Data Redundancy And Why You Should Have It

“If you are worried that you might lose valuable information, then some sort of data redundancy is probably something you should be actively seeking.”



Ron Cochran is a Field Service Engineer at Tech Experts.

Data redundancy is the making of an exact copy of the data that you are currently working with, in the event of

a hardware failure, theft, or those pesky mistakes where you delete something that you really wanted.

What happens is you will have 1 or more hard-drives used for backups, housing those files that are kept nearly current. You will go through the steps to rebuild or restore the files or programs that were removed, then you will be back at the point you were at before the files were lost.

The above is extremely important when you are working with money or medical records. Let's say you were working with a customer on their tax returns and your office experienced a power outage, which turns your computer off in the middle of saving data. A short while later, the power is restored and you turn your computer on and open

the data to resume where you left off — and you find out that there is no record on your computer of your client and you start to panic.

If you had a redundant data solution, then you could restore the data, but if you didn't, then you will need to call that customer and explain that they will need to bring all of that data back in so you can enter it into your system again. Now, consider how this customer could begin to think of you and your business.

If you have a safety net, you would follow the steps from your program and, in a short while, all of that data that you lost will be restored and you'll be back at the point when the power went out, with all of your data intact. There are several different ways you can set up a system backup. One of the ways is to have more than one storage solutions to send data to.

With this solution, you will have more than one drive that is saving that information, which will do a couple of things. It will speed up the read/write times and you take less of a chance of losing more data. It's always wise to have more than one solution for data recovery.

You don't want to wait until it's too late and find out that in order to recover the data on your drive it's going to be thousands of dollars.

You can have an image copy of your hard-drive made one time a day (or once a week or maybe twice a month) with a scheduled backup. You could have an application running in the background of your computer that would take up very few resources as it copies your data to a drive or an offsite storage facility.

We offer quite a few different data redundancy solutions to our clients. Those options range from on-site RAID drives to a cloud-based solution that is off-site. With either option, you can have a data backup or an image of your operating system — or even a direct mirror copy of your hard-drive in real time.

If you are worried that you might lose valuable information, then some sort of data redundancy is probably something you should be actively seeking. If you're overwhelmed by the options and aren't exactly sure which method would suit your business best, contact us and we can help you narrow it down, as well as provide a solution.

My Laptop Battery Doesn't Charge Fully. What Could Be The Issue?

If your laptop has not fully charged after being connected to a power source for a prolonged period of time, you will need to conduct some basic troubleshooting activities to identify what is causing the problem. Try one of the options provided below to identify what is preventing your laptop battery from charging properly.

Verify that the AC/DC cable is in full working order

Remove the battery and plug the power adapter into the laptop to verify that the device can power without

a battery source. If not, the AC/DC cable may be faulty. Purchase a new cable and try again.

Service the battery

Once you have verified that the AC/DC adapter is not the culprit, you will need to check that the battery is working properly. An old battery may be inefficient and may need replacing or servicing. If you're using Windows, an application like BatteryCare can help you to identify the total capacity of the battery. Connect the device to power for two hours and monitor how this affects

the battery power levels. If the total capacity doesn't shift much, now would be a good time to get the laptop serviced. In some cases, you may need a new battery.

Check the charger board

If you replace the battery and have checked that the AC/DC cable is in full working order but continue to experience problems charging your laptop, it may be that the charger board is broken. If that is the case, you will need to arrange for your laptop to be professionally repaired by a qualified IT service company.



Working From Home: Can You Still Be Productive?



Jason Cooley is a Network Technician at Tech Experts.

“There’s no place like home” rings very true for a lot of people. There is just a level of comfort at home that you

can’t find anywhere else.

For me, some comfort is needed to really be efficient and most people probably work better when they are at least moderately comfortable, but is there such a thing as too much? I don’t mean only physical conveniences.

Don’t get me wrong, working from home sounds really great some days. You

can multi-task and throw in a load of laundry, do some dishes, or work on something else to break up the day. Sounds good, doesn’t it? You are being really productive!

How much work are you getting done, though? These little side tasks add up. It’s just one of many distractions that can really impede your productivity.

Noise, household tasks, or maybe even other people being home while you are trying to work can make your ability to get things done

a real challenge. When considering working at home myself, I have come to the conclusion that it just isn’t for me in most circumstances.

If you are putting in a traditional eight hour work day or 40 hour week at home, how much of that time is actually spent focused on your work? Personally, with a set task (or tasks) that need to be completed, success working at home would come much easier. While you are almost certain to run in to some distractions, having a set task to work on, even if it takes longer than it should, means you’re still being productive.



Let’s say you lose about five minutes an hour being distracted. Even those five minutes can easily add up to a ton of wasted time.

Over the course of a week, losing five minutes an hour adds up to two hours and 20 minutes a week.

Factor in that load of laundry, the 30 minute nap you took, or even just spending a little more time making lunch — we now have HOURS over the course of the week that are just lost time. If you struggle with working at home,

there are a few methods of staying focused that help you change your brain from home mode to work mode.

For instance, fight the urge to work in your PJ’s and get dressed like you normally would for work. Also, designate a work space while at home, but change your surroundings every so often if possible to get out of the house, such as working from a café or the library.

Building a to-do list and developing strict work hours (if possible) and sticking to them helps as well. If you have children or a partner

at home, you may also want to think about creating a “Do Not Disturb” sign for yourself to let them know that you should be left alone.

Not

everyone falls into this category of losing time to distractions and, sure, some people can be very successful while working from home.

Others would be shocked to see how fast the five minutes here and there really add up. Just like every other aspect of life, there are all types of people, and you are all free to make your own decision about working from home.

Some of us (myself included) will stick to keeping our work at work and home at home.

“Let’s say you lose about five minutes an hour being distracted. Even those five minutes can easily add up to a ton of wasted time. Over the course of a week, losing five minutes an hour adds up to two hours and 20 minutes a week.”



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Chrome: The New Standard Browser For Business



Jared Stemeje is a help desk specialist at Tech Experts.

Numerous enterprises still consider Microsoft's web browsers as the standard browsers. On paper, Internet Explorer is venerability defined. However, the reality of such claims are a bit different, industry analysts argue.

"Microsoft retains a very strong relationship with [enterprise] IT," says Gartner Technology Research analyst, David Michael Smith, in an interview. "Most enterprises still have a 'standard' browser, and most of the time, that's something from Microsoft. These days it's IE11. But we've found that people actually use Chrome more than IE."

Smith, who was updating a 2015 research report on browsers in enterprise, was adamant that, at the time of forecast, Chrome was and still is the king.

"It's the most-used browser in enterprise," Smith discloses, referring to Google Chrome.

Internet Explorer still retains a sizable share - Smith calls it "a significant presence" - generally because it's still essential in most companies. "There are a lot of [proprietary web software, portals, and]

applications that only work in IE, because those apps use IE browser specific plug-ins," Smith stated, indicating examples like legacy versions of Adobe Flash, Java, and Microsoft Silverlight.

"Anything that requires an ActiveX control still needs IE," Smith concludes.

Many businesses have adopted the modern/legacy implementation strategy: keep the IE browser to handle older sites, services, and web apps, but offer a modern browser for everything else.

That approach lets employees access the old, but does not punish them with a rigid, sub-standard browser for general-purpose use. With this strategy Internet Explorer has played (and continues to play), the legacy role. All while, Chrome remains the most used browser in the world.

There are a few reasons why Chrome is widely used. Doing business on the go is becoming more and more common, even necessary. For that, Chrome boasts some of the best mobile integration available. With Google mobile apps offered on every major platform, it's easy to keep your data in sync, so seamlessly browsing between multiple devices is easy.

Sign-in to your Google account on one device and all your Chrome bookmarks, saved data, and preferences come right along. It's a stan-

dard feature you can find on other platforms, but Chrome's integration is the best in the industry.

Secondly, Chrome is fast and light - and with a thriving extension library, it's as fully featured or as trimmed down as you want it to be. Everything is right where it should be. Privacy and security controls are laid out and accessible while the browser gets out of your way when you need it to.

With all of this included, the most important of these reasons is Google's announcement of a new Chrome Enterprise Bundle that is suggested to make integration and company standards compliance a breeze. It will help admins deploy and manage the Chrome browser across an entire company. It also provides admins a single installer for the Chrome browser and the Chrome Legacy Browser Support extension (for running an ActiveX widget and administrative policy templates).

Bottom line, Google is vying for the top spot in both consumer and enterprise browser usage, and they are doing a heck of a job achieving this goal. They have already managed to sideline Microsoft's browser on its own OS, especially in cases where users are not on Windows 10, and don't have access to "Edge"- Microsoft's modern browser platform. The true king of business web browsers has become, and will remain, Chrome for the foreseeable future.

Create new service requests, check ticket status, and review invoices in our client portal: <http://www.TechSupportRequest.com>