Ernst Enterprises, LLC
Business Advisors

# Ernst Enterprises Newsletter


## LAPTOPS AND PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

### WHO HAS THAT INFORMATION IF YOUR EMPLOYEE'S LAPTOP IS LOST OR STOLEN?

### THE ANSWER: YOU DON'T.

#### LAPTOPS PRESENT SPECIAL RISKS AND THEREFORE NEED SPECIAL PROTECTION...ARE YOU PREPARED?

Laptop computers have given employees significant flexibility and the opportunity to be more productive. These benefits are not without some risk, which can be significant because the laptop is mobile. Unfortunately many owners are unaware of the risks.

Consider for a moment all the information your employee's keep on the laptop: customer information that can include sales, credit information and history, prospect lists, price lists, product proprietary information, and more. That laptop goes everywhere with the employee and so does the information contained on the hard drive.

#### WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR EMPLOYEE LOSES THE LAPTOP OR IT IS STOLEN?

Who now has that information? The frightening answer is that you don't and potentially your competition, or worse, identity thieves do. Industrial espionage and identity theft are alive and well.

Is the information on the laptop backed-up on or in the office data base or will the information be lost to the company? How will you replace the information, and how much will it cost? If laptops are not regularly backed-up the information can be lost, and depending on how difficult it was to get in the first place, it may be harder or even impossible to replace. The potential cost to replace lost information and lost business can be significant!

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Will you need to notify the public of certain customer credit information that is lost and therefore may be compromised? How will this disclosure make your company look to the public and your customers? Certain information such as customer social security numbers may require public notification and create liability for your company if the information is stolen. Likewise certain employee information is required to be encrypted, and there may be penalties for accidental disclosure of the data.

Are your company laptop's software regularly updated with current software releases, especially security releases? Do they all have the same versions of the software? Is the anti-spyware/ anti-malware current and are scans run regularly?

Is there any inappropriate or unlawful information, unlicensed software, pictures or other employee information that could be construed as violating your company's anti-harassment policies? Unless the laptop's software is regularly updated there could be gaps in its internal security protocols. Further, if an employee has unlicensed software or pornography on the laptop your company could be subject to significant financial liability.

Do you have current policies and procedures regarding your company's computer systems, data, and authorized use of the systems? If you don't, you may not have the basic protection you assume you have.

## THE IT ORGANIZATION HAS VERY SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES. ARE THEY UP TO THE CHALLENGE?

Are your data and systems secure? Are you meeting your legal requirements to protect customer and employee information? Call today to schedule a complimentary security assessment of your Laptop systems.

Rich Kern is our IT Practice Leader. He brings more than 25 years of IT leadership and expertise to helping clients assess the effectiveness of their IT Operation and staff. Rich can cut through the confusion of "IT speak", and translate IT into business language.

Click on the link below to take a short laptop security assessment to test for yourself the security of your laptops.

**CLICK HERE TO TAKE YOUR LAPTOP SECURITY ASSESSMENT TEST**

**Sincerely,**

*Mark*

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