Monitor Newsletter July 10, 2006

Bowling Green State University

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New software, user caution can help thwart information theft

It's become an almost daily story—government agencies, private organizations and universities lose sensitive information, either through hacking or theft of portable devices such as laptop computers.

Colleges seem particularly vulnerable, according to national security experts. From Stanford and San Diego State universities in California to Ohio University, which was breached five times this spring, many have been struck. The problem is growing daily, and the ramifications could be long ranging and destructive.

It is clear that a proactive approach is necessary to combat the problem, according to BGSU's Chief Information Officer Bruce Petryshak. For one, individuals must take common-sense steps to avoid compromising information resources and, two, institutions must stay ever vigilant in employing means to safeguard personal and research information.

This becomes even more important as universities implement technologies providing users with greater access to shared information, because with that access come greater risks.

Celo Project protects data resources

As a positive measure, BGSU's Office of the CIO has created the Celo (Kay-Loah) Project, a multiyear, multilevel, multiphase plan to protect data and intellectual property, said Petryshak. A working group has been assessing campus needs and will be developing procedures and policies to add further layers of security to protect BGSU's sensitive data. The initial phases of the project have been identified as Celo Strategy, Public Key Infrastructure, Electronic Signature and Encryption.

Whole-disk encryption will be the first phase to be implemented. Encryption is the transformation of data into a form unreadable by anyone without the secret decryption key. By encrypting the whole disk, whether on a desktop, laptop or jump drive, the contents will be inaccessible to anyone for whom they are not intended.

A request for proposals for whole-disk encryption has been issued, and vendor presentations are being evaluated by the Celo Project team. Once the selected product is in place, faculty and staff will be asked to use the software to encrypt the information on their computers and portable devices so that sensitive data will not be accessible even if stolen. If used conscientiously by the campus community, encryption will provide much greater security, Petryshak said.

It is important to remember, however, that even encrypted information is not absolutely safe, which leads to the initial part of creating a secure environment—individual responsibility for taking precautions.

What you can do

Information sent, received, printed or stored on desktop machines needs to be treated with security in mind at all times, said Information Security Officer Kent Strickland.

"Remember that if you can see the data, so can someone else," Strickland said. "There is no way to magically secure all sensitive information. Like the shingles on your roof or siding on your house, weathering the environment requires applying security in overlapping layers."

Here are several guidelines:

• If you do not absolutely need sensitive information, do not gather, process or store it.
• Set up desktop and laptop computers so that passwords are needed to log in. Do not save those passwords for automatic login.

• Anti-virus and operating system software must be kept current and downloads of unap­proved applications avoided, since viruses or spyware could still enable an attacker to take control of the computer or harvest sensitive information. "A mobile laptop computer without current software and virus protection can physically bypass BGSU protections and introduce a virus/worm threat into the network," Strickland said.

• Remember that if sensitive information is backed up to CDs and they are lost or stolen, the information is exposed. Other tools would be required to encrypt data stored on other media, which is also being researched as part of the Celco Project.

• Destroy old diskettes or CDs prior to disposal.

• Shred or similarly destroy printouts containing sensitive information.

• Do not email unencrypted sensitive data.

• If forwarding sensitive information, be sure that the recipient is authorized to have that data.

• Take special care when moving or storing information, which includes emailing and using public file-sharing systems. Consider whether it could be viewed in the process by an unauthorized person.

• Respect the security wishes of the data owner. If you give someone access to information without the owner’s knowledge or permission, the information could be considered exposed.

**Portable devices are a risky business**

Portable devices such as laptop computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), jump drives, CDs, DVDs and even today's sophisticated cell phones pose a significant security threat. Recent news reports of employees of the Veterans Administration and the Ernst & Young accounting firm taking home personal information on laptops only to have them stolen point out the danger of transporting unencrypted information.

Recent cases have shown that even storing devices in locked car trunks is not protection from theft, Petryshak pointed out.

In addition to being stolen, every day thousands of portable devices are left in taxicabs and restaurants, and on buses, airplanes and trains. The potential for them to be lost or taken is so great that it is best just to assume the worst when using them, said.

Therefore, the University asks that employees not store personal or sensitive information regarding students, colleagues or research on portable media.

**Legal reporting requirements**

Many states have enacted legislation covering cyber-security incidents. Ohio's Breach Notification Act, which went into effect last February, requires that people be notified if any security breach involving their unencrypted personal information has occurred.

Federal legislation is also in effect requiring that states follow the rules of other states when information about citizens from those states is compromised. Thus, if information about a BGSU student from California were stolen, BGSU would have to follow California's laws on remediation and restitution for that individual. This could become quite costly and is yet another reason to strenuously avoid any such data losses, Petryshak said.

**A culture of openness**

The traditional academic culture of openness may have unwittingly contributed to the security problem, experts say. The Internet has made collaborative research projects and sharing of information immeasurably faster and easier. Posting student grades and paying bills online
is convenient. Colleges electronically store financial and even medical information for both students and employees.

Unfortunately, hackers have realized this and have tended to view universities as easy targets. A recent article in the Los Angeles Times reported that colleges accounted for the largest percentage, or about 30 percent, of security breaches reported in the media last year. And for the first time in seven years, colleges listed security as the number one concern in regard to their computer system, according to Educause, a nonprofit group that promotes technology use.

Foundation laid
BGSU has been keenly aware of the issue for nearly two decades and has been taking steps to help protect the identities of students, faculty and staff and safeguard sensitive information. From Project 90, in 1990, when BGSU began using personal identification numbers instead of Social Security numbers for students and employees—a practice still not used in many institutions—to the present, when more sophisticated means are being employed, the CIO’s office has worked diligently to stay abreast of information security threats and make recommendations to the campus to help keep it safe.

The latest round of security measures, especially whole-disk encryption, will provide another wall of defense against those who would gain access to data. But we must all be vigilant, Petryshak says, and not make things easier for criminals.

To view the Celo Project Web page, visit http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/cio/page21277.htm.

For more information about information security alerts, policies and more, visit http://www.bgsu.edu/its/security/.

BGSU hosts young leaders’ conference on future of U.S.-Muslim relations

Top students from across the country will meet at BGSU Saturday (July 15) to discuss “Hope Not Hate: The Future of U.S.-Muslim World Relations.”

The Young Global Leaders’ Summit will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Bowen-Thompson Student Union Theater. Participants have been selected from universities across the United States through a competitive nomination and application process, and are coming from as far away as Nepal and Egypt.

The summit is organized by BGSU student Jake Gallardo, a University Honors Program student from the Philippines, and sponsored by Americans for Informed Democracy (AID), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose goal is to inspire a new generation of internationalist leaders.

“As an international student with American and Muslim friends, I see the issues from both sides. I feel we need more informed decisions in the midst of the current tensions in the Middle East, especially between the United States and Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan,” Gallardo said.

“I see mutual skepticism and distrust between my Muslim and American friends, and I want to break this pattern and create a dialogue between them,” he continued. “In the future, 20-30 years from now, we will be the leaders in government, business and international organizations. Friendships formed now will be helpful for solving future conflicts, if leaders can simply pick up the phone and call one another to defuse tensions before they become global conflicts.”

The keynote address will be given by Dr. Michael Kraig, an expert on U.S.-Iran relations and
U.S. national security at the Stanley Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization devoted to promoting a global, collaborative approach to international issues.

A number of other guest speakers will help students to see the larger picture in world relations. They include: Imam Farooq Aboezahab, spiritual leader at the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo; Nurten Ural, honorary Consul General at the Turkish Consulate in Detroit; Dr. Naji Arwashan, honorary Consul General at the Syrian Consulate in Detroit; Dan Boos, president of Gorillas and Gazelles LLC, a Perrysburg mentoring firm for college- and career-bound young adults, and Barb Gottlieb, director of outreach at the Women's Edge Coalition, a global nongovernmental organization based in Washington, D.C.

The conference will also feature workshops on strategies for discussing international issues with Americans and techniques for organizing town-hall meetings on America’s role in the world. The workshops will prepare students to organize events on the same topics when they return to their home campuses this fall.

The BGSU summit is one of many such gatherings by young people around the country. In the fall of 2005 alone, AID hosted more than 250 major events across the United States—an average of more than two events a day. These events allowed students to videoconference with peers on all six major continents and to engage in town-hall discussion with community and world leaders.

See www.bgsu.edu/colleges/as/ygls for more information and an application.

Broughton, Cardwell named library co-interim deans

Kelly Broughton and Catherine Cardwell have been named co-interim deans of University Libraries, Executive Vice President Linda Dobb has announced. Their appointment becomes effective Aug. 1.

Broughton is currently the associate dean for assessment and technology, including digital initiatives and facilities. Cardwell is the chair of library teaching and learning. She provides oversight for reference services, first-year experience outreach, information literacy instruction and multicultural services.

Broughton and Cardwell’s new job duties will consist of strategic planning, development, community partnerships, OhioLINK initiatives and overall supervision of library operations.

"Broughton and Cardwell have served the University Libraries in many different capacities," Dobb said. "They both have a tremendous skill set, a strong administrative background and leadership skills, and both will be instrumental in planning the University Libraries’ 40th anniversary gala."

Broughton and Cardwell will replace Dr. Lorraine J. Haricombe, who has accepted a position as dean of libraries at the University of Kansas. The two co-interim deans will serve until a new dean is selected.

IN BRIEF

BGSU among founders of EBE Hall of Fame

BGSU has teamed with the University of Toledo and Gorillas & Gazelles LLC, a Perrysburg firm that specializes in talent assessment and leadership development, to create the
Entrepreneurial & Business Excellence (EBE) organization.

The group will pursue a shared interest in fostering and strengthening entrepreneurial enterprise in the region.

EBE has established a Web site (www.ebehf.com) and is creating an EBE Hall of Fame to honor successful entrepreneurs and business leaders. Community members can use the Web site to nominate successful northwest Ohioans for induction. The deadline for nominations is July 31, with ceremonies to be held in November.

“We want entrepreneurs who inspire others through intense vision, who have built and maintained a growing business, who have created jobs in northwest Ohio,” noted Kristen Krebs, associate director of Entrepreneurship Academic Programs and the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership in the College of Business Administration.

Those recognized by the EBE Hall of Fame will be candidates for potential national honors through the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year program.

In addition to creating a hall of fame, the EBE organization plans to hold a conference for the entrepreneurial community each spring and to develop networking and mentoring opportunities for students, entrepreneurs and business leaders.

CALENDAR

Monday, July 10
Bingo, noon-1 p.m., Falcon’s Nest, Bowen-Thompson Student Union.
Movie, “Rent,” 9 p.m., Union Theater.

Tuesday, July 11
Dissertation Defense, “Computers, Composition and Context: Narratives of Pedagogy and Technology outside the Computer and Writing Community,” by Richard Colby, English, 1:30 p.m., 206 East Hall.

Wednesday, July 12
Movie, “Rent,” 9 p.m., Union Theater.

Thursday, July 13
Movie, “Rent,” 9 p.m., Union Theater.

Continuing Events
July 11-15
Huron Playhouse Summer Theatre, “Steel Magnolias,” 8 p.m. nightly, McCormick School, 325 Ohio St., Huron. For ticket information and reservations, call the box office at 419-433-4744. Season passes and individual show tickets are available.

Through July 21
Photography Exhibit, Brian Baby, Little Gallery, BGSU Firelands. Gallery hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.
Art Exhibits, “New Talent 2006,” featuring works from freshman scholarship winners and pieces by School of Art faculty and staff, Union art galleries. Gallery hours are 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-9 p.m. weekends.

JOB POSTINGS

FACULTY
There were no jobs posted this week.

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions. Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/.
Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a "Request for Transfer" form and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED

On-campus classified:
http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified:
http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE
http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html

OBITUARY

Nancy Steen, 67, died July 3 in Bowling Green. Before she retired in 1990, she was a rare books librarian at the University.