

# Information Security 101

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Mr. Shi Yong of Boan Information Security, Shanghai shares about the steps to take to protect one's information

“Information security starts and ends with a single person - YOU”. This was the first statement our instructor, Mr. Shi Yong of Boan Information Security of Shanghai, shared during his lecture on Information Security on our recent IT Seminar in China.

In its simplest definition, information security is the protection of information from a wide range of threats. Confidentiality + availability + integrity collectively equals to security.

Information security, however, faces constant online perils - viruses/worms, Trojan horses and spywares. The first, viruses/worms, are software programs designed to invade your computer to copy, damage or delete your data. Trojan horses are viruses that pretend to be legitimate programs but actually destroy your data and your computer, while spywares are software that either secretly watch and record your online activities or send you endless pop-up ads.

Security in the workplace is fast becoming a big concern. 42% of a company's information is found with the staff, 26% in paper documents, 20% in electronic documents and 12% in other information media. To maintain the integrity of your system, Mr. Shi Yong recommends the following:

Practice internet behavior that lower your risk of being compromised - never reply to a spam message, keep passwords private and make them hard to crack. Avoiding posting business information on unreliable or public networks, using technology appropriately to reduce trouble and raising the alarm on suspicious online activities are also helpful ways to keep your PC safe. Turning on the Internet firewall is also a sure way to protect your computer. An Internet firewall is like a moat around the castle. It creates a virtual barrier between your PC and the Internet.

There are also steps to help protect your computer. Keep your operating system (OS) updated by installing security updates and setting up automatic updating to provide the best protection. Install and maintain anti-virus software and anti-spyware software. Anti-virus software can detect and destroy computer viruses before they can cause damage. Just like flu shots, for anti-virus to be effective, you must keep it up to date. Anti-spyware software will prevent unknown people from lurking and stealing your information.

Other ways to protect your computer are by backing up data regularly, thinking before clicking, reading website privacy statement and closing pop-ups using the red “X”.

Security practices and network access methods are also advisable. Download information or programs only from legitimate sites. Do not open an email from unknown sources - in particular, do not open an unknown attachment. Do not accept automatic pop-up installers. Do not visit sites that violate national laws and regulations. It is best to access any network legally.

To maintain your software, install anti-virus software which updates regularly. Change password frequently. Pay attention to security advisories while maintaining a regular back up important data. Do not arbitrarily delete files and change the system settings. Do not install undesirable programs or unknown procedures. Use legitimate software. Clean up hard disk data regularly, defragment the hard disk periodically and uninstall unused applications. Set password for shared directory. Finally, when temporarily leaving your computer, use the screensaver to lock the screen.

Information security is indeed a serious issue. Every bit of caution will go a long way in protecting you, your PC and the information it contains.