

# ISPIRIAN INSIDER

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## Small Business, Big Security

*Ispirian Incorporated delivers comprehensive security management solutions from McAfee to its small-to-midsize business customers.*

When it comes to defending networks against viruses, hackers and other malicious threats, there are only two categories of users – those who have a defined, implemented and managed IT security policy and those who do not.

There is good reason why many businesses have no IT security policy. They have limited IT security skills, and those resources they do have are focused on running their commercial operations. Mostly, these are small-to-midsize businesses (SMBs) and they need help to fight effectively against the overwhelming number of threats that could attack their networks.

That's why Ispirian Incorporated offers its SMB customers industry-leading security management products and the expertise needed to plan, implement and manage those offerings. One such partner is McAfee. McAfee creates best-of-breed computer security solutions that prevent intrusions on networks and protect computer systems from the next generation of blended attacks and threats.

In an ideal world, all threats can be managed by one solution in a style that would suit all types of users. It is not an ideal world. McAfee's experience is that one size does not fit all. According to McAfee, smaller users require a different set of parameters to

achieve 98 percent of the same goals, but within a simplified policy framework.

For several years McAfee has been operating its managed service anti-virus and firewall solutions to assist smaller users in this goal and, more recently, has released a purpose-built SMB man-

McAfee recently released a purpose-built SMB management console, McAfee Protection Pilot, for users who prefer to manage their anti-virus installation themselves.

agement console, McAfee Protection Pilot, for users who prefer to manage their anti-virus installation themselves.

The benefit to deploying one of McAfee's managed services offerings is the transference of management decision to an expert body. For many SMBs, McAfee Managed VirusScan service provides a quietly efficient, transparent anti-virus solution that gets updated automatically at least weekly or more often as the situation requires. The user does not have to make any judgments about the level of risk of a given threat. McAfee takes care of all updating decisions. However, the user is able to view the status of all users' compliance via the graphical dashboard interface.

In addition, ProtectionPilot is a centralized security management tool that provides a simple, proactive approach to the deployment and ongoing management of virus protection for network administrators who manage up to 500 computers. The installation wizard ensures the path to protection is simple and straightforward with automatic

updates beginning immediately.

For users with some IT skills, ProtectionPilot offers intuitive and wizard-driven task options that enable administrators to deploy and manage an automatically enforced security policy for their users. This form of self-managed defense is made feasible and effective for organizations with few IT skills because the whole design concept for ProtectionPilot was ease of use backed by years of experience delivering enterprise-scale manageability. The result is a range of anti-virus control and reporting functions that match the needs of customers without compromising the delivery of robust compliance throughout the network.

Whether or not other vendors expect users to dig through endless reports, McAfee makes it easy to see compliance issues via the reporting dashboard. When new computers are added, McAfee makes it easy to drag the new systems into the managed domain. When rogue users or well-meaning colleagues decide to "adjust" the anti-virus scanning options, ProtectionPilot automatically imposes the proper configuration back onto the user's system. When McAfee publishes an updated set of virus detection signature files, ProtectionPilot automatically gets them and updates every user on the network.

A simple security policy that is easy to manage will always be more effective than a sophisticated policy that is unmanageable. Perhaps more importantly, a simple security policy is much better than none at all. Customers can look to Ispirian to find McAfee policy management solutions at both ends of the spectrum, according to their ability to manage or the needs of their IT infrastructure. McAfee security management options enable customers to deploy the most effective, appropriate IT security policies. This means they can maintain control of their network security, without pushing their IT staff beyond the limit.

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# Working as a Team

*Grid computing harnesses devices to create powerful infrastructure.*

**G**rid computing has barely begun to take root outside of academic and research settings, yet it's already evolving. A flurry of new products promise to leverage the grid concept for everything from transaction processing to data storage. But what exactly is it?

The old dictum that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" lies at the heart of grid computing. The technology involves linking many devices to accomplish tasks far bigger and more complex than the machines could handle individually.

Conceptually, grid computing is wrapped up with some of the latest industry buzzwords, including "virtualization" and "utility computing." Buzzwords aside, however, grid computing promises to enable organizations to truly maximize their IT infrastructure investments as well as roll out powerful new applications and services.

## Power Play

Traditionally, grid computing has been used to harness computers, networks, databases and scientific instruments from multiple sources to form a virtual supercomputer. Grid software makes collections of computers more efficient by allowing them to share CPU cycles, memory and other resources so closely that they act almost like a single computer. Industry experts say grids are 25 percent to 50 percent more efficient than stand-alone servers, and 20 percent to 30 percent cheaper because server capacity isn't wasted and administration is easier.

Until recently, grid technology has been used almost exclusively in fields such as biomedicine and weather forecasting. Now, however, it is finding its way into a variety of commercial sectors. Financial services companies are embracing the technology because the speed and power of grids can be applied to complex applications involving market data, trade management, portfolio rebalancing and

advanced risk management. The concept is also moving into service-driven enterprise applications for transaction-intensive industries.

"The transaction grid is the latest evolution of grid computing," said Mitchell Kertzman of Hummer Winblad Venture Partners. "It clusters up to thousands of horizontally scaled commodity computers that work together to handle mainstream business applications. A transaction grid hosts all applications as Web Services, simplifying the development of composite applications and enabling them to be deployed, scaled, and managed across a grid. This innovative approach reaps huge cost savings when compared with traditional application server deployment."

## The Big Picture

Still, few organizations need that kind of computing power. Many industry analysts now say the real benefits of grid technology lie in the emerging utility computing model.

Utility computing — also known as "on-demand computing" — is based on the notion that computing power will evolve into a simple utility like electricity, with organizations buying resources on demand from an external provider rather than owning large computers themselves. Much of the computer research community believes this is the next evolutionary step in the development of the Internet, and grid computing forms its foundation.

A computing-on-demand approach is appealing to many organizations because of the near-constant transition in IT. Purchasing computing capabilities on an as-needed basis would remove some of the risk of long-term bets on specific platforms and operating systems.

## Best of Both Worlds

The utility computing concept can also be applied within an organization's infrastructure to optimize existing hardware resources and improve application performance. The ability to drive capital and operational costs down and improve profitability while simultaneously improving service levels across the enterprise is helping to spur interest in grid technology.

When applications are run on grids rather than dedicated hardware, it's easy to reallocate resources to handle peak processing loads. Recent trends toward the use of commodity servers, blades and Linux all point towards a utility computing model based on a grid computing infra-

structure.

"The market for traditional grid computing faces an impending disruption as enterprises look to move to virtual environments and fully leverage their hardware and software assets," said Vernon Turner, group vice president and general manager, Enterprise Computing, IDC.

Similarly, the grid concept is being applied to storage infrastructures to make storage more modular and scalable. Vendors are touting storage grids as the next phase in the evolution of the storage network, using commodity devices to create a flexible, large-scale, geographically dispersed pool of storage that can be managed and utilized as a single entity.

## Emerging Standards

A number of major systems, storage and software vendors have rolled out major grid computing initiatives in recent months. In addition, there are a number of industry consortiums working on standards-based approaches to building a grid infrastructure.

The Enterprise Grid Alliance (EGA) recently released the industry's first Reference Model for enterprise grids, laying the foundation for standardized solutions that will enable organizations to take advantage of the many benefits of grid computing. The Reference Model includes a common lexicon of grid terms, a model that classifies the management and lifecycles of the enterprise grids components and a set of use cases that demonstrate the requirements for enterprise grid computing.

"For the past year, the Reference Model Working Group has been working to drive consensus among industry leaders around the basic foundations of enterprise grid computing," said Paul Strong, chairman of the EGA technical steering committee and systems architect at Sun Microsystems. "The result of EGA efforts is a Reference Model that allows highly complex data center environments to be described in simple, easy-to-understand terms."

"EGA has a pragmatic approach to standards development, preferring to cooperate with other standards-setting organizations rather than creating specifications from scratch," said EGA President Dr. Donald Deutsch, vice president of standards strategy and architecture at Oracle. "The EGA Reference Model provides the framework for working collaboratively on the development of technologies and standards necessary for accelerating the deployment of grid technology."

## Securing the Grid

**G**rid computing can pose significant security risks — after all, a grid taps hardware and software resources whose origins and safety may not be known. To address these challenges, the Enterprise Grid Alliance (EGA) has unveiled its Enterprise Grid Security Requirements document, illustrating the risks and threats inherent in enterprise grid computing and outlining a set of security requirements to better equip organizations with the information needed to protect themselves.

The document arms users with information needed to evaluate and make informed risk management decisions as they deploy enterprise grids. Enterprise grid computing technology and service providers can also use this information to make their products more secure, competitive and readily able to support their customers' grid security needs.

"We believe members of the EGA's Grid Security Working Group have a rare combination of grid computing and security expertise. We've leveraged these skill sets over the last year by reviewing computing infrastructures and identifying the security

threats, issues and requirements associated with enterprise grid computing," said Lee Cooper, chairman of the EGA Grid Security working group and director, security program management, Oracle.

"As a result of our analysis, we've concluded that enterprise grid environments are better positioned to satisfy a company's security and compliance objectives when compared to traditional models of computing. This appears true during initial deployment, as well as throughout the lifetime of the grid."

The document provides a basis for collaboration among organizations to help eliminate redundant standards development activities and more quickly eliminate barriers to adoption. Like all of the EGA's work, these requirements are vendor neutral, technology and implementation agnostic, and will be continuously updated as the enterprise grid marketplace evolves.

Future versions will describe how these requirements can be satisfied using existing and new technologies, processes and recommended practices.

## 'Digital Pearl Harbor' Feared

Forty-five percent of corporate chief security officers believe a "digital Pearl Harbor" will take place eventually, with 13 percent anticipating such an attack within a year, according to a survey by CSO Magazine. The survey defined a "digital Pearl Harbor" as an attack that would "plunge America into chaos by using computer technology and the Internet to attack national critical infrastructures."

More than half of responding CSOs characterized themselves as not very or not at all confident in the government's ability to successfully respond to cyber-emergencies. Seventy-seven percent of respondents suggested the government establish better communication with the private sector to better safeguard cyberspace, and nearly half suggested creating a high-level cyber-security position at the Department of Homeland Security, a development that did occur not long after the survey was taken.

Paul Kurtz, executive director of the Cyber Security Information Alliance, told the United Press International that government preparedness for a large-scale cyber-attack is not where it should be, but the creation of the assistant secretary for cyber-security in the Department of Homeland Security was a step in the right direction.

## EX-AOL Worker Sentenced

A former America Online employee has been sentenced to 15 months in prison for stealing 92 million AOL e-mail addresses and selling them to spammers.

Jason Smathers, 25, pleaded guilty in February to conspiracy and theft charges and to violating the "Can-Spam" Act, a new federal law meant to fight the flood of unwanted commercial e-mail. The former AOL software engineer was paid \$28,000 by an Internet marketer for the names, which were taken from AOL's database.

Prosecutors said AOL, a unit of Time Warner, suffered an estimated loss of \$300,000 from employee time spent dealing with the issue, as well as hardware and software expenses. It is estimated that the theft resulted in 7 billion messages flooding the inboxes of AOL members.

## Internet Misuse Costly

Internet misuse in the workplace costs American corporations more than \$178 billion annually in lost productivity, or a loss of more than \$5,000 per employee per year, according to a study released in July by Websense.

The San Diego-based Internet management company reported that 50 percent of the surveyed workers admitted to using the Internet for personal purposes at work. Therefore, the company hypothesizes, about 34 million of the 68 million total U.S. employees who use the Internet at work are surfing the Web recreationally on company time, making Internet usage one of the biggest threats to employee productivity.

"The Web can be a critical business tool; however, in some cases its misuse can offset the productivity benefits of Internet access," said Leo Cole, vice president of marketing at Websense.

## Google in Copyright Flap


Stung by a publishing industry backlash, Google has temporarily scaled back plans to make the full text of copyrighted books in five of the world's great libraries searchable via the Internet. The company announced the suspension, effective until November, in a notice posted on its Web site.

However, Google is moving ahead with plans to scan books in the public domain that are not covered by copyright. Libraries participating in the program include Oxford University, Harvard University, the New York Public Library, Stanford University and the University of Michigan.

Google says it will stop scanning copyrighted books for three months, allowing copyright owners to inform the company of objections. Critics of the program said the new plan remains unacceptable because it forces publishers to opt out of the plan rather than opt in, effectively switching the burden of upholding copyright from infringers to the copyright holders.

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# Taming the Paper Tiger

*Document management systems help reduce the costs and risk associated with growing volumes of paper and electronic documents.*

Organizations run on information. However, only a small percentage of that information is housed in structured databases where it can be easily retrieved. Much of it remains locked in paper and electronic documents that are difficult to find — if they can be found at all.

Document management systems can help improve the flow of information throughout organizations. Originally such systems were developed to help manage the plethora of documents generated by law offices.

The document management system acted as a “card catalog” for libraries of case-related documents, tracking such details as topic, author, date and location.

Today, organizations in all industries are grappling with a veritable explosion of electronic documents — from e-mails to Word documents to PDFs — along with growing piles of paper. Effectively managing these documents and the business-critical information they contain is a top priority. Document management systems have grown and evolved to meet these changing needs.

### Many Benefits

Document management — or, more broadly, enterprise content management (ECM) — encompasses a number of processes and technologies, including records management, document control, e-mail management, information capture and forms handling. These systems perform a wide range of functions, including version tracking, security, sharing control and workflow integration.

A recent study by AIIIM, the ECM industry association, found that most organizations implement these technologies to save money, but customer- and risk-related business drivers are rising in importance.

Increasing media coverage of privacy and security breaches has increased interest in e-mail management, forms handling and content management. Statutory and regulatory compliance are also growing concerns.

“The survey clearly demonstrates that ECM technologies are becoming part of the core infrastructure of both large and midsize organizations,” said AIIIM President John F. Mancini. “Users who first look to the huge cost savings and rapid return on investment of ECM solutions are now also examining the compliance and process improvement benefits of ECM.”

### Document Capture

That’s not to say that the scanning of hard-copy documents is unimportant to organizations today. On the contrary, a recent study by AIIIM found that document capture is a ubiquitous part of business processes in many organizations. In organizations of all sizes, the fundamental business driver for capture technologies is greater efficiency and process improvement.

More than three-quarters of those surveyed — and an even higher percentage for larger companies — reported that the ROI of their document capture implementations met or exceeded their expectations. The awareness of this success is not limited to the IT staff. Regardless of the primary function within the organization, there is a high degree of satisfaction with implementations of scanning and capture technologies.

“Getting paper under control is the first step toward developing an overall information management strategy,” said A.J. Hyland, 2004-2005 AIIIM board chair and president of Hyland Software. “In an era in which organizations are under increasing pressure to justify information technology investments, users are extremely satisfied with the return on investment from their capture implementations. Over 85 percent of users who have deployed capture and imaging technologies indicate that their ROI met or exceeded expectations.”

### Revolution Ahead

Significant numbers of users in organizations of all sizes said they anticipate growth in their document capture spending. Much of this increased spending is earmarked for elements that “surround” the scanner itself — forms processing software, service and maintenance agreements and outsourced services.

Beyond document capture lies the concept of enterprise input management (EIM), which encompasses not only paper documents but e-mails, faxes, Web pages and other sources of information. While document capture remains a largely departmental function, experts believe EIM will encourage an enterprise approach to information management.

“We are at the early stage of a massive revolution in the way businesses manage information, considering both the input side of forms and documents and the benefits of electronic administration,” Mancini said.

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# Technology to Watch

*IP-based videoconferencing is an attractive alternative to face-to-face meetings.*

**V**ideoconferencing is proven to cut travel costs and associated downtime, as well as improve decision making, increase productivity, enhance customer service and reduce time to market of new products and services. Until recently, however, videoconferencing adoption was limited by expensive and difficult-to-use equipment.

The advent of IP-based video is delivering on the promise of videoconferencing. Integrated conferencing and collaboration tools make videoconferencing easier to use, while new high-performance algorithms deliver superior audio-video quality. At the same time, rising demand for video — along with the entry of major vendors into the market — has reduced the cost of videoconferencing systems. These price/performance gains are driving the rapid uptake of IP-based videoconferencing.

"We're finally beginning to see some traction in running rich media conferencing and collaboration over IP networks," states Andrew W. Davis, managing partner at Wainhouse Research. "The fear of running real-time communications over the enterprise LAN is beginning to dissipate, at the same time that Web conferencing and instant messaging are changing the rich media conferencing paradigm. The bottom line is that the products and services have improved continuously and are now able to overcome the behavioral and psychological issues associated with video to the enterprise desktop."

## Eye on Efficiency

On-demand videoconferencing can improve organizational efficiency significantly — even among workers in the same facility. By integrating video into the workflow process, videoconferencing has the potential to change the communications paradigm just as e-mail and instant messaging have. Collaboration moves away from the scheduled, conference room environment to the unscheduled desktop environment.

This benefit is even more profound when it comes to managing geographically dispersed project teams. Ad hoc, face-to-face meetings speed the product development process, increasing revenue while reducing development costs. In many industries, shorter time to market can have a dramatic impact on market share and profit potential.

Videoconferencing improves job satisfaction by reducing stressful business travel and enabling telecommuting — workers can live where they want to live. Videoconferencing also enhances the recruiting process by enabling organiza-

tions to quickly and cheaply interview more people from more locations.

## Face Time

When face-to-face interaction with clients is needed, videoconferencing can provide that personal touch without the need for business travel. A number of software vendors are starting to embed rich media conferencing and collaboration into CRM and ERP applications — videoconferences can be launched from within the application. Experts say this integration of video with other enterprise software is key to the long-term benefits of the technology.

Videoconferencing isn't the only application of IP-based video. Video streaming is ideal for training, both internally and externally. It can be used to enhance conference calls, board and investor meetings and public relationships.

The healthcare industry illustrates how all these benefits can come together. Videoconferencing is used to link geographic-dispersed facilities, manage patient care and deliver continuing education and training. Telemedicine systems help providers reduce costs, centralize resources, reach more patients and increase the quality of healthcare.

"The demands on our physicians and the requests for their knowledge from individuals and organizations around the globe are tremendous," said Alexander Nason, senior manager of business development for Johns Hopkins International. "Videoconferencing helps us reach people more efficiently than previously possible. When appropriate, we can coordinate patient care, offer educational content to medical teams in other countries, provide critical second opinions, consult with hospital management and offer remote participation in promising clinical trials."

## More Than Meets the Eye

Videoconferencing enhances real-time collaboration products that support file, screen and application sharing, chatting and electronic whiteboarding. Team-based products provide shared folders and workspaces, threaded discussions and document-based collaboration. Team-based technologies generally don't support real-time interaction but provide a persistent, easy-to-access archive of discussions and stored content.

The growing demand for real-time and team-based collaboration will drive the worldwide market for Web conferencing and team collaboration software to \$681.7 million in 2005, a 16 percent increase over 2004, according to Gart-

ner. By 2008, the market is expected to reach \$1.1 billion as organizations implement conferencing collaboration tools as part of line-of-business applications and to augment information access technologies such as portals.

Videoconferencing was not included in this forecast, but Gartner analysts said it will evolve to the desktop to support ad hoc conversations and become better integrated with Web conferencing and IM. When tied with the concept of "presence" video-enhanced collaboration becomes a powerful business tool.

## A Look Inside

Many organizations are still trying to figure out how to add voice to their IP networks. Despite the business benefits of IP-based videoconferencing, the thought of incorporating it into the network infrastructure can be a bit overwhelming.

Hardware and software issues are relatively easy to resolve — it is the networking demands of videoconferencing that can present the greatest challenge.

How frequently videoconferences occur, how long they last, the number of participants and their streaming rate capabilities are all wildcards in guessing how much bandwidth will be required. Quality of Service management tools and application-aware network devices can help facilitate smooth video by giving priority to video applications.

Easy-to-use administration tools can help drive use of the technology within the organization. Web-based scheduling and reservation software provides easy connections between conference participants, while features like push-button escalation from voice to video, shared browsing and document sharing enhance the user experience.

Videoconferencing has yet to become as common as voice conferencing, and even its supporters realize it cannot totally replace in-person communications. But as IP videoconferencing products become cheaper and easier to manage, videoconferencing will become a more attractive option as companies look for practical ways to trim costs and enhance competitiveness.

## Video Does Justice

**I**n the highly publicized BTK case in Wichita, Kan., the judge read 10 counts of murder to the suspect — who attended the deposition via videoconferencing. Increased safety concerns surrounding the BTK defendant led officials in Wichita to videoconference the initial hearing between the judge in a courtroom and the defendant in jail across town.

Videoconferencing is gaining acceptance as a way to avoid the potential for what happened recently in Atlanta, where a rape suspect overwhelmed and killed his guard, the judge and several others as he was being transferred to the court for sentencing. Telejustice applications offer judges, legal professionals, court officials, inmates and witnesses an efficient, cost-effective and safe process for depositions, trials and consultations.

"Telejustice is one of the fastest growing video applications," said Craig Lynar, vice president of solutions marketing at Polycom. "The TV-like quality of the video and near-CD sound quality ensures these face-to-face encounters are as clear and effective as in-person meetings."

Safety is not the only benefit to

video conferencing. It can save travel costs in rural areas and increase the number of cases a judge can process in a single day. In Florida's 10th Circuit Court, which mandates defendants be brought before the judge within 24 hours of arrest, video systems enable judges to double and even triple the number of first-appearance hearings conducted in a day.

West Virginia Supreme Court is the busiest appellate court of its type in the country, scheduling 100,000 to 150,000 first-appearance hearings a year. West Virginia's technical staff deployed videoconferencing to reduce the cost of transporting inmates from the jail to the court, which required an average of four to nine staff hours per prisoner. Videoconferencing saved the state \$30 million in transportation costs within the first year.

"We needed technology that would make the judicial process more efficient," said Kit Thornton, deputy director for technology for the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. "Every interaction affected by distance now uses videoconferencing — jails, courts, city hall."

## The Laptop Ate My Homework

Students at Empire High School in Vail, Ariz., started classes this year with no textbooks. The school near Tucson instead equipped each of its 340 students with a laptop computer. In fact, the brand-new school was designed specifically to be a textbook-free environment.

These computers aren't just fancy ways to store regular books. They aren't even loaded with texts. Instead, students tap into information stored on the school's server or the Internet. Every classroom has an overhead projector and a large screen, which teachers use through their own laptops. A science lesson can include a clip of an actual volcanic eruption. A discussion of mythology can include pictures of Zeus and Greek temples.

The laptops are wireless, and the whole campus has Internet capability, so students can use them anywhere. They can download homework if they don't have Internet access at home.

## Traffic Hackers Hit Red Light

Mobile infrared transmitters, or MIRTs, are gizmos that have the capability of changing traffic signals from red to green. No bigger than a dashtop radar detector, the devices were developed to allow fire trucks, ambulances and police cars to reach emergencies faster.

Naturally, they ended up being readily available over the Internet to anyone with a few hundred bucks and the desire to speed through traffic unimpeded.

Private use of MIRTs is now a federal crime, however. The Safe Intersections Act, part of a transit bill signed in August by President Bush, makes it a misdemeanor for unauthorized users to wield a "traffic signal pre-emption transmitter." Using an MIRT without authorization will carry a penalty of up to six months in prison, while selling a device to an unauthorized user can result in jail time of up to one year.

## Keyboard Gets Makeover

A company in Moscow has created a concept design for a computer keyboard on which each key has its own tiny video screen. That would allow the symbols on the keys to be changed to show different languages or symbols at the press of a button.

The Optimus keyboard, designed by the Art Lebedev Studio has a dedicated bank of keys on the left for switching applications and modes. Users would be able to switch from the Arabic, Cyrillic or Latin alphabet or HTML code in a matter of seconds. But it could also be programmed for the use of any given software, like Photoshop, computer games or music composition programs.

The designers said the keyboard will be operating-system-independent and use organic light-emitting diode (OLED) technology to give it a soft glow. They hope to have the product on the market in 2006.

## Game Over

A South Korean man who played computer games for 50 hours almost non-stop died of heart failure minutes after finishing his mammoth session in an Internet cafe, according to authorities in Seoul.

The 28-year-old man, identified only by his family name Lee, had been playing online battle simulation games at a cyber cafe in the southeastern city of Taegu, police said. He had planted himself in front of a computer monitor to play online games on Aug. 3. He only left the spot over the next three days to go to the toilet and take brief naps on a makeshift bed, they said.

The man had recently quit his job to spend more time playing online games. South Korea is one of the world's most "wired" nations, with an enormously popular computer gaming industry. Professional gamers can earn substantial amounts of money through sponsorships, television appearances and tournament winnings.

# Detective Work

*Digital forensics helps protect organizations from litigation and aids in regulatory compliance.*

Fans of the TV show "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" are familiar with the numerous forensic tools and procedures used to investigate violent crimes. Digital forensics uses similar techniques to gather evidence involving information technology.

Where crime scene investigations might involve fingerprints, ballistics and blood samples, digital forensics focuses on the careful examination of digital storage media. However, the two fields share a key constraint — evidence must be retrieved and examined in such a way that it is admissible in a court of law.

The digital forensics field dates back to the 1980s, when the increasing availability of PCs brought an associated increase in white-collar crimes. Federal law enforcement officials began developing techniques to obtain digital evidence associated with these crimes. By 1985, the U.S. Federal Law Enforcement Training Center was training agents in such investigations and, by 1989, had begun developing software tools and procedures. The field of digital forensics was born.

Today, law enforcement agencies employ digital forensics to investigate crimes ranging from terrorism to homicide. In fact, experts estimate that more than 85 percent of crimes leave a trail of digital evidence.

### Beyond Law Enforcement

At the same time, digital forensics is becoming a vital tool for organizations in today's litigious environment. If a company terminates an employee for misconduct — inappropriate use of the Internet, for example — and that employee sues for wrongful discharge, the company will have to prove that the misconduct took place. Digital forensics would come into play.

Organizations can also use digital forensics to look for evidence related to network security breaches, theft of proprietary information, embezzlement, fraud, harassment and other activities. In the case of a criminal investigation, the organization may be able to provide law enforcement with important clues.

"Digital/computer forensics is not just for law enforcement," said Steve Hailey, President and CEO of CyberSecurity Institute. "Computer forensic analysis is performed everyday in corporate environments to investigate electronic break-ins, misuse of computing resources and other company policy violations. There is also a growing need for digital forensics professionals to work on both criminal and civil cases."

Digital forensics isn't limited to illegal activities, however. More and more organizations are using it to help ensure compliance with government regulations that make executives personally liable for the integrity of their organizations' information management processes. Digital forensics can help organizations achieve and document compliance by monitoring information use.

"With the necessity for regulatory compliance with Gramm-Leach-Bliley, HIPAA, Sarbanes-Oxley, SEC, NASD and ISO regulations, businesses are realizing

*"Businesses are realizing the need to have competent staff capable of conducting a proper computer forensic analysis from start to finish."*

the need to have competent staff capable of conducting a proper computer forensic analysis from start to finish, with the knowledge to work with legal counsel, other forensic professionals and law enforcement," Hailey said.

### Rigorous Discipline

The procedures surrounding digital forensics are very rigorous. Each investigation must begin with the proper seizure of the digital media using protocols established by the U.S. Department of Justice. If the proper "chain of custody" is not assured from the beginning, the evidence won't be admissible in court.

For that reason, organizations should have an incident response team familiar with these protocols. Written policies and procedures should be established by IT and security staff in conjunction with legal counsel.

Digital forensics is much more than data recovery. Digital forensics professionals understand how data is stored, where to look for digital evidence and how to recover that evidence from various types of file systems while ensuring that it is not altered in any way.

Today, digital forensics extends beyond computers to include networks, telecommunications and a vast array of electronic devices, from picture phones to smart cards to PDAs. It is used to fight terrorism, investigate crimes and aid in regulatory compliance. The crime scenes may not be as grisly as those shown on CSI but the processes involved in investigating them are no less rigorous — or important.

# Gaining Insight

*Business intelligence helps organizations make better decisions.*

Some of the worst business decisions in history have been made on the basis of "gut feelings." Consider these examples:

- In 1961, an angry Allan Williams decided to quit managing a band of local musicians. In a snit over a \$55 debt, he even wrote them a letter saying he would make sure they never worked again. That band was the Beatles.

- In 1876, Western Union Telegraph president William Orton declined an offer to buy all the patents for a new technology for \$100,000. In a company memo, he noted that this new technology — the telephone — "has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication."

- In 1980, IBM decided to license a small company's operating system rather than buy it outright. Figuring there was little profit to be made in software, Big Blue agreed to pay most of the development costs and let its new partner — Microsoft — license MS-DOS to others.

While these blunders are extreme examples, all sorts of smaller mistakes can negatively impact business. That's why more and more businesses are turning to business intelligence software to gain insight into their operations and bolster their decision-making capabilities.

## Key to Growth

Nine out of 10 executives from the largest U.S. companies say they need stronger business intelligence capabilities that provide better analysis of and insight into their operations if they are to grow successfully in an uncertain economic and political environment, according to a survey released recently by Accenture.

The purpose of the survey, drawn from interviews with 150 senior executives at Fortune 1000 companies, was to identify and assess industry's preparedness to handle the major challenges that U.S. companies see as their greatest impediments to growth. While the respondents differed on the specific areas that would impede their organizations' growth, there was consensus on the capabilities that would enable them to address their biggest challenge. Specifically, 91 percent selected stronger analytical and business intelligence capabilities as an area that would help them become better prepared to address their biggest challenges. This was followed by an organizational culture that better accommodates change (84 percent) and a more robust information technology infrastructure (74 percent).

"Our research indicates that organi-

zations that are flexible and can adapt to uncertainty and change are better able to sustain high performance in the long term, and doing so requires a robust data gathering and business intelligence capability," said Tim Breene, Accenture's chief

**Gartner estimates that more than 25 percent of critical data within Fortune 1000 businesses will continue to be inaccurate or incomplete through 2007.**

strategy officer and group chief executive for business consulting. "Those companies best prepared to manage in this environment will invest in developing capabilities that help them harness information to improve decision making, financial management and customer service."

## Empowering Users

Business intelligence is hardly a new concept. Organizations have been capturing data for years in data warehouses and data marts. Business intelligence tools were originally designed to slice and dice these vast stores of transactional data as needed for strategic planning. However, the rapid pace of business has started to blur the line between "strategic" and "tactical," and data warehouses are being called upon to support rapid-fire, event-driven decision-making.

With capabilities far beyond the traditional data warehouse, today's business intelligence tools are allowing organizations to aggregate essentially real-time business data and make it available across the enterprise. Critical data that once was available only to corporate analysts is being placed into the hands of business users throughout the organization, giving them direct access to information they can use to make better decisions, create more effective plans and respond more quickly to problems and opportunities.

In essence, business intelligence converts information into insight. Applying advanced business analytics to stored data allows organizations to examine trends and histories in order to create roadmaps for future performance. Companies that can analyze precisely what they know about their customers and business partners, their supply chains and their operations are then able to make decisions that cut costs, speed time-to-market and increase revenue.

## Data Quality an Issue

However, gathering the historical data necessary to make future projections is a difficult process for the simple reason that most organizations have disparate sources of data. In fact, organizations today are swamped with data — particularly in the wake of data-retention requirements of recent legislation such as Sarbanes-Oxley, HIPAA and Basel II. As such, there is rarely a central depository or "single version of the truth."

As a result, many organizations face data quality and integrity issues. Many major companies are making important decisions routinely on remarkably inaccurate data, according to Gartner. The research firm estimates that more than 25 percent of critical data within Fortune 1,000 businesses will continue to be inaccurate or incomplete through 2007. IDC

estimates that poor data quality costs global business more than \$600 billion every year.

"Most enterprises don't fathom the magnitude of the impact that data quality problems can have," said Ted Friedman, principal analyst for Gartner. "These problems cause wasted labor and lost productivity that directly affect profitability."

To ensure data quality and reliability, industry experts say organizations must begin to standardize and optimize processes, methodologies, tools and capabilities.

Through continuous, aggressive efforts to clean and standardize underlying data, business intelligence tools can produce the type of insight necessary to ensure that key business decisions are made on solid evidence rather than gut feelings.

## Text Mining the Next Step for Business Intelligence

It is been said that many organizations are drowning in information but starving for knowledge. That's why business intelligence systems were developed — to help companies access, analyze and glean insight from the data they collect.

Unfortunately, much information is unreachable by traditional business intelligence tools. Studies indicate that as much as 85 percent of an organization's knowledge stores are in the form of unstructured data, such as text files and spreadsheets. This information isn't always easy to find, access, analyze or use.

As such, there's a growing interest in the development of text mining tools that will allow companies to link structured and unstructured data. These tools would allow organizations to extract key elements from large unstructured data sets, discover relationships and summarize the information. Ideally, an organization could draw connections between database information and the contents of PowerPoint presentations, Word documents and e-mails to create a true knowledge management system.

To that end, IBM recently announced that it is offering the Unstructured Information Management Architecture (UIMA), a framework that

searches text inside files of different formats to decipher facts and concepts.

"UIMA provides, for the first time, true interoperability among different knowledge discovery, search, business intelligence and text analytics software," said Arthur Ciccolo, department group manager for information and knowledge management, IBM Research. "This initiative will enable organizations to deliver groundbreaking solutions that can leverage unstructured information in entirely new and advanced ways."

UIMA provides an open software framework with standard interfaces for adding unstructured information analytics to any application. This framework makes it easy to integrate the analytic software tools and end-to-end enterprise applications across several different vendors. Business intelligence vendors ClearForest and Cognos have announced they will work together to develop advanced solutions that will be compliant with UIMA.

"By making the data source transparent, customers can leverage all data assets across the enterprise and beyond regardless if the data is structured or unstructured," said Pat O'Leary, VP of strategic alliances at Cognos.

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# At Your Service

*IP-enabled contact centers help organizations make good first impressions.*

**F**or many organizations, the contact center is where the rubber meets the road. It often represents the first interaction customers have with the company, and the success or failure of that initial experience can set the stage for all subsequent interactions.

While voice calls remain the most popular means of contacting a company, customers in growing numbers want the ability to do business by e-mail or through Web collaboration. At the same time, organizations are looking to a new array of contact center services such as video, wireless access, and compatibility with personal digital assistants (PDAs) and other smart devices in order to retain customers, enhance customer satisfaction and reduce expenses.

Thanks to voice over IP (VoIP) technology, today's contact centers are becoming more versatile than ever before.

## Virtual Efficiency

VoIP also enables the development of the virtual contact center model, in which calls are routed to agents working at home or to their counterparts working in the traditional contact center environment. The technology is absolutely transparent to the customer.

Leveraging a home-based workforce not only drives down the real-estate costs of brick-and-mortar operations, but allows organizations to break down the geographical boundaries of their labor pools. This opens the door to an untapped pool

*"With IP telephony, businesses can use every resource in their organization to serve customers better, faster and with greater levels of personalization."*

## Multiple Benefits

With a fully integrated IP contact center, customer interactions can originate from multiple channels including voice, Web, e-mail and fax. Customers utilizing the Web to research a product can "click to talk" and be connected to an agent who is familiar with that product and looking at the same screen. Supervisors can not only monitor calls, but can initiate online chat sessions with agents to offer advice while the agents are on the phone with customers.

The converged voice, data and video network underlying VoIP technology offers a number of other compelling benefits in the contact center. It minimizes the total cost of telephone services, reduces network management costs, provides consolidated reporting across all media types, eliminates the need for multiple databases and creates the ability to build geographically dispersed contact centers that satisfy "follow-the-sun" business-hour coverage and assure business continuity.

"The immediate benefits of a multimedia contact center are improved customer service and operational efficiency, but it does more," said James Haensly, CTO for Avaya Asia Pacific & Japan. "Enterprises can enjoy significant cost savings and higher returns on their investment, while in the same instance having a more resilient and secure network."

of highly skilled candidates who might otherwise not have applied for contact center positions, including stay-at-home parents and the disabled workforce.

Home agents, overall, have a higher job-satisfaction rate than their brick-and-mortar counterparts. According to a 2005 study by the Booz Allen Hamilton consultancy firm, the annual turnover rate of home-based agents is 10 percent — a stark contrast to the 50 percent annual "churn" rate for their in-house counterparts. In addition, the study showed home agents were 25 percent more productive than those working in-house.

"With IP telephony, businesses can use every resource in their organization to serve customers better, faster and with greater levels of personalization," said Eileen Rudden, VP of Avaya's enterprise communications applications division. "To achieve this, companies must be able to intelligently extend IP contact center applications to distributed agents, workers and experts in any location."

You only get one chance to make a first impression. By facilitating multimedia communications, providing customers with a better experience and improving information flow, IP-based contact centers provide organizations with a powerful edge in their quest to provide better customer service and cement customer satisfaction.

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# Bare Necessities

*Bare-metal recovery software simplifies server restoration.*

Surveys consistently show that most organizations focus their disaster recovery efforts on processes for backing up and copying their critical data — without fully considering how that data would actually be restored. Underlying operating systems and applications are often left unprotected.

When catastrophic failures occur, these organizations are faced the difficult and time-consuming task of restoring not only operating system and applications, but passwords, permissions and other key settings as well. This is known as “bare-metal recovery,” the process of reformatting a server from scratch following a catastrophic failure.

Today, numerous vendors offer bare-metal recovery software that automates and streamlines the server recovery process, making it unnecessary to manually reinstall operating systems or configure hardware. With simple commands, complete server restores can be accomplished in a fraction of the time without extensive training or tedious administration.

“Organizations want to recover from planned and unplanned downtime in swift, simple steps that do not interfere with their daily operations,” said Dianne McAdam, senior analyst and partner, Data Mobility Group. “Software that simplifies and automates the recovery

process enables enterprises to efficiently get systems back up and running and ensure business continuity.”

## Manual Labor

Without software automation, the restoration process involves reinstalling the operating system from product disks, installing backup software and then rebooting settings and device drivers before the data recovery can begin. Even after the data is restored, the process isn’t complete, however. Before functionality is fully restored, configuration files, permissions, etc., must be verified.

“Software that simplifies and automates the recovery process enables enterprises to efficiently get systems back up and running and ensure business continuity.”

With manual restoration, there is also a very good chance that user data and other files restored won’t match the software the machine was running when it crashed. If an application has been upgraded or a patch has been applied to the operating system, those revisions can be lost during the reinstall.

Trying to fix the configuration settings and reconcile any differences between the reinstalled and restored pieces can be a lengthy and error-prone process. The manual recovery time that most administrators face when a server crashes can range from four to eight hours and even up to three or four days. The potential errors can be so subtle that they may never be discovered and rectified, resulting in a drive of questionable integrity.

## Easy Does It

Restoring a machine with bare-metal recovery software is easy and takes only

items and applications without shutting down servers. This allows administrators to make system snapshots at the same time that they perform regularly scheduled system backups. One such product, Hot Bare Metal from Unitrends, also captures and saves open data files and applications as well as passwords, permissions and other settings that allow end-users access to critical data.

Today’s bare-metal recovery applications also have cross-platform capabilities — the ability to automatically recover data from one server to another, even if the two servers are not identical. That includes servers from different hardware vendors with different network interface adapters, storage devices, video adapters, motherboards, and CPU quantities and types.

“Organizations continue to take a hard look at ways to cost-effectively increase their resilience to unplanned downtime, including downtime caused by disasters or just routine hardware failures,” said McAdam. “Principal to reducing the cost of downtime is software that can automate recovery of the organization’s data from one server to another, even if the two systems are not identical. This capability reduces the time to get systems back up and running without requiring the CIO to keep a data center full of unused systems at the ready.”

a few minutes of human intervention. The entire restoration process consists of running one command on the boot server and rebooting the client over the network.

A series of recent refinements make bare-metal recovery software even easier. Some applications now have the ability to conduct “hot” backups of operating sys-

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# Establishing Trust

## *Using security standards for competitive advantage.*

**H**ow secure is your organization's information? It seems like every week some company reports a security breach exposing confidential data. How can an organization assure its customers that it is doing all it can to protect its information?

Willibert Fabritius, a lead auditor with ISO assessment firm TUV Rheinland of North America, says organizations should consider implementing internationally recognized security standards. Although little known today, these standards provide organizations with a means of proving they're serious about security.

"There are two standards that companies can implement that can help with IT and information security: ISO 17799 and BS7799-2," Fabritius said. "The ISO 17799 standard creates a code of practice for information security management. BS7799-2 is an information security management system that uses the same philosophies as ISO 9001 to help achieve continual improvement and effective management of information security. When

the two standards are combined, a company has a great platform from which to create a secure IT system."

### Multiple Benefits

Fabritius says there are many reasons why a company should consider implementing ISO 17799 and BS7799-2, but two stand out. The first is purely a sales and marketing benefit. By achieving such a standard, the company can tout its security when marketing its services.

"As companies become more familiar with ISO 17799 and BS7799-2, we'll see it become a bigger factor in whether or not a company gets business from consumers or other businesses," he said

More importantly, Fabritius says, these standards help management gain confidence in the company's internal systems.

"In most companies you have the IT staff speaking a different language than the C-level managers," he said. "An information security management system requires that the IT department log all inci-

dences of virus attacks, firewall breaks and other problems, but does the CEO really understand all of that jargon? In today's world with regulations like Sarbanes-Oxley, company executives need to know that their systems are up to snuff. Having the ISO and BS certifications can go a long way in helping the C-level staff sleep better at night."

### Comprehensive Approach

Another benefit of the standards is that they are not solely focused on information that is only found on computers. Fabritius says too many companies think

company may require different levels of security. For example, a marketing division would have confidential information about the company, but that information would require less security than the information stored in the accounting division.

As part of the ISO/BS audit, organizations determine what levels of security and what countermeasures (firewalls, encryption, etc) are appropriate for each division. Hard drives in the accounting department may be encoded or use several levels of password or fingerprint protection, while marketing department information may just use password controls.

Once a company becomes ISO 17799 or BS7799-2 certified, it must con-

**"In today's world with regulations like Sarbanes-Oxley, company executives need to know that their systems are up to snuff. Having the ISO and BS certifications can go a long way in helping the C-level staff sleep better at night."**

only in terms of IT security, when they should realize that all of their information is important and needs to be protected.

"We tend to think that information security is limited to IT, but once a company starts implementing the ISO and BS standards it quickly realizes there are many forms of information," Fabritius said. "For example, if an employee is riding in a taxi and is on a cell phone discussing important company data, how safe is that employee being? If the person is in a car they are pretty safe, but what if they were doing the same thing while sitting in an airport lounge or at Starbucks? This isn't a very secure setting. When implementing ISO 17799 or BS7799-2, these types of situations are addressed. The standards say that it's just as vital that a company keep this type of information secure."

Many organizations hire outside experts to come in and check for security leaks, but how much does the organization know about these experts? This is why the ISO and BS standards set up a screening process for outside vendors. The goal is to implement systems that give management and customers a high level of confidence that the company's information systems are as secure as possible.

### Calculated Risk

Fabritius suggests organizations do a risk analysis to see how porous their information systems are. It's important to remember that the various divisions of a

continue to focus on its information security systems. This includes ongoing monitoring of systems and procedures and could include more advanced tests such as hiring outside hackers to attempt to hijack your company's systems, Fabritius says.

### On the Horizon

No matter how you slice it, Fabritius sees ISO 17799 and BS7799-2 becoming the new "must haves" for businesses.

"Just like ISO 9001 certification of an organization's quality management system has become a requirement for many industries, I think the certification of an organization's information security management system will become a necessity for businesses over the next few years, especially those businesses that deal in lots of confidential information," Fabritius said. "Information privacy has become a huge issue and every time another story comes out about a company that has had its database hacked, the concern level ratchets up in the public marketplace."

"As time goes by, consumers and companies will be further scrutinizing how companies handle their information and will start to migrate business to those companies that are proactive about ensuring security. By becoming registered in ISO 17799 and BS 7799, a company can put itself on the cutting edge of quality control for IT security, show that it has independent verification of its quality of information security, and give itself a leg up on the competition."

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## Citywide Wi-Fi Projects Grow

Philadelphia is moving forward with its plan to develop a citywide wireless Internet network. Officials are negotiating with consortiums headed by EarthLink and Hewlett-Packard to implement the Wi-Fi network.

Meanwhile, several other major U.S. cities are preparing to follow suit. Chicago, Portland, Ore., Minneapolis, Charleston, S.C., and Orlando, Fla., also are at various stages in the same process, and San Francisco officials announced in August that they, too, are soliciting Wi-Fi proposals.

Officials in these large cities see wireless broadband technology as a low-cost solution to providing broadband access to low-income residents. They also believe that these Wi-Fi networks can help them save millions of dollars in operational costs by providing broadband connectivity for public-safety and other agencies within city government. Many believe the networks will help boost economic development by drawing more people to the city.

## Firm Predicts Healthy IT Growth

Worldwide IT spending is to increase to \$1.34 trillion by the end of 2009, with a compound annual growth rate of 5.9 percent from 2005-2009, according to a report from market advisory firm IDC.

Government, manufacturing and banking will be the industries that provide the most attractive opportunities for IT vendors worldwide. But the fastest growth will come from industries that until recently have been "IT laggards," the firm said, including the healthcare, media and communications industries.

Efforts by cable companies to provide more Internet and communications services should ensure increased spending in that sector. Meanwhile, Internet service providers are partnering with content providers to offer programming over their networks. As the industries pursue the hallowed "triple play" of voice, video and Internet services, IT vendors stand to benefit. Investments by telecommunications companies in third-generation wireless services will also boost spending, the firm said.

## Blog Readership Skyrockets

A new study from online research firm comScore Networks reveals that 50 million U.S. Internet users visited blog sites in the first quarter of this year, up 45 percent from the first quarter of 2004. That represents about 30 percent of all U.S. Internet users, or a sixth of the total U.S. population.

The study is based on data from comScore's opt-in research panel, which tracks the online activity of 1.5 million U.S. Internet users and reflects the behavior of consumers who visited the 400 top Weblog properties and blog-hosting services during the first three months of 2005.

Given their popularity, the study suggests that blogs can now be thought of as part of the mainstream media.

"The fact that we found 30 percent of the online population to have visited blogs clearly underscores the commercial importance of consumer-generated and driven media," said Dan Hess, senior vice president of comScore Networks.

## Hackers? What Hackers?

FBI Director Robert Mueller is urging business leaders to improve their cooperation with authorities to fight cyber crime in the wake of a report in which only 20 percent of businesses, universities and government agencies said they reported their computer intrusions to law enforcement.

"Maintaining a code of silence will not benefit you or your company in the long run," Mueller said in August during a speech to the InfraGard national conference. "We cannot investigate if we are not aware of the problem."

Mueller's comments were based on an annual survey conducted by the FBI and the private Computer Security Institute, which found just 20 percent of businesses reported computer intrusions last year, a figure that has held steady for several years. The reasons cited most often for keeping the incidents quiet were loss of business to competitors and potential damage to a company's image among consumers.



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