The Front Burner
Cyber Security

Office of the Chief Information Officer

Office of Cyber Security

Issue No. 8
April 2009

Don't Take Shortcuts with Cyber Security

Mind Your Digital Footprints

If television programming is a good gauge of our interests, then the expanding family of CSI and similar forensics dramas reflect our curiosity with technology and its capability to identify us by what we leave behind. We are captivated as we watch detectives extract even the slightest amount of DNA from the last place we would ever think to look. By the end of the show, we can't help but wonder where our DNA is lingers. Yet, how often do we consider our *cyber DNA* and the *digital footprints* we leave behind when surfing the Internet?

Being online is a functional necessity for most of us. It's hard to imagine not being connected. But what happens to the information we share and the information that is captured as we search and browse the Web? This information takes on a life of its own. And sometimes we don't even realize that we are sharing information! Like the DNA the detectives uncover in the CSI world, our digital footprints can be around for a long, long time.

With bits and pieces of our information being left behind, technology makes it very easy to connect these digital dots for both benign and malevolent purposes. Information is power, so it is no wonder identity theft becomes more pervasive every year.

Did you know…?

When you surf the Internet, website owners may be tracking your viewing habits. The organization that runs a website can probably tell when and how often you have visited that site, what you clicked on or viewed while surfing, and what Internet address you were using at the time.

If you create an online account through a website, you may be agreeing to their privacy policy. You should always review the policy to understand whether or not they plan to share your information with third parties or even if they plan to put spyware on your computer to get more information about you! This happens more often than you might imagine.

Your email may be saved online without your knowledge! Once you send an email, the information is out of your control – it may be forwarded without your knowledge or approval.

Any information you post online may be used or manipulated by others – whether it is posted on a blog, a social networking website, a dating website, or an online employment service. Your information, and even your pictures, may be used without your knowledge.

We can't live our lives in fear: everything we do has an element of risk. Knowing we could be in a car accident doesn't stop us from driving. Hopefully, having that awareness does make us put on our seatbelts. Likewise, we should continue to enjoy and experience the online world, while being mindful of where we go in cyberspace and what we may potentially leave behind. We should be prudent in sharing our information. Separate work information from personal information, and always protect access to our sensitive information. The identity you save may be your own!!

The 30th DOE Cyber Security Conference is approaching quickly!

The 30th DOE Cyber Security Conference is scheduled for May 11-15, 2009, in Henderson, Nevada. For 30 years, DOE has provided this excellent training and networking event for cyber security and information technology professionals within the Department.

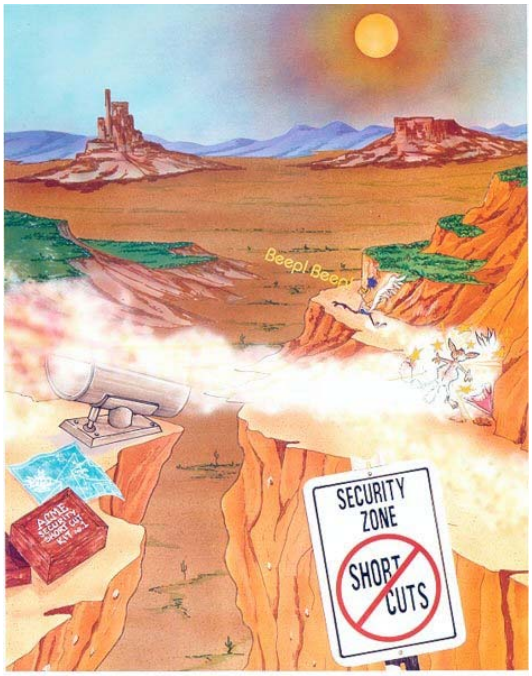
The focus of this year's conference is enhancing performance-based cyber security, while effectively implementing and managing emerging technologies in a constantly evolving threat environment. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from leading Government security professionals and renowned industry leaders that specialize in security disciplines and emerging security technologies on a global basis. Attendees will also be able to attend a variety of workshops and breakout sessions that address critical topics for today's cyber professional, such as training and awareness, information assurance, risk management, emerging technologies and trends, and incident management and response.

Finally, cyber security awards will be given to individuals that have demonstrated the highest level of dedication and contributory effort to Departmental cyber security initiatives. This year the award categories have been expanded to include: Outstanding Cyber Contribution to DOE/Charlene Douglass Award; Superior Leadership; Innovative Technical Achievement; and Cyber Security Training and Awareness.

For more information on conference specifics, please visit http://cio.energy.gov/csc_conference.htm.

Telecommuting Tips

- Ensure that your home work environment is set to meet DOE security and privacy requirements.
- Report security incidents immediately to your local Help desk.
- Participate in DOE's mandatory annual information security and privacy training.
- DOE equipment and information should be moved from the car to the home work environment and never kept in the car overnight.



Cyber Hero Answers Your Security Questions

Q: "The news has been filled with reports of stolen computers with people's Social Security numbers on them. I'm concerned about identity theft. What is the Department doing to protect Social Security numbers?"

A: The Department's Information Protection Task Force is aggressively working to eliminate the use of Social Security numbers on DOE systems. Where the use of identifiers is necessary, the Department is exploring ways to truncate their use and increase safeguards so only authorized personnel have access.

Q: "Should I report a security breach even if I only suspect something happened?"

A: Absolutely. The rule of thumb is always **"When in doubt, report it out!" Call your local help desk.** Trust your instincts. It's always better to be wrong and be safe than be right and be sorry.