



Virginia Chapter



Security in a Legal Environment

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Agenda

- ▣ Speaker Introduction
- ▣ Types of Threats
- ▣ The Perfect Storm
- ▣ Real World Examples
- ▣ Reducing the Risk
- ▣ Summary
- ▣ Q&A

Speaker Introduction

- ▣ B.S., M.S. – VCU
- ▣ Adjunct Faculty Member in IS and CS @ VCU
- ▣ CISSP, former Cisco CCIE in R/S
- ▣ VA SCAN, ISACA, ISSA, VCU FTEMS presenter
- ▣ ISSA, InfraGard member
- ▣ Published author with over 25 years in the industry
- ▣ Started Syrinx Technologies in 2007



Types of Threats

- ▣ Insider theft
- ▣ Data breach – external or internal
- ▣ Loss or theft of equipment containing sensitive data
- ▣ Incorrect handling of sensitive data
- ▣ Breach of a partner/client
- ▣ Hactivism



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The Perfect Storm

- ▣ Why is Securing Law Firms a Special Challenge?
 - ▣ Sensitive Clients and Their Data
 - ▣ Attorney – I.T. Relationship
 - ▣ Regulatory Issues

▣ Sensitive Clients and Their Data

- ▣ Law firms have sensitive data regarding celebrity and other high profile clients.
- ▣ Law firms have sensitive data on mergers & acquisitions.
- ▣ Law firms have sensitive data on wills, estates, divorces and child custody cases.
- ▣ Law firms have sensitive data on patents and new product developments.

▣ Attorney – I.T. Relationship

- ▣ The attorneys can be difficult to tame and are more independent than most other users.
- ▣ They don't necessarily want to comply with the stated I.T. policies and procedures.
- ▣ They tend to be driven by what the client wants, which may be in contradiction to the security procedures of the firm.

▣ Regulatory Issues

- ▣ The District of Columbia and 46 states have enacted data breach notification laws. You will not be able to hide if you are compromised.
- ▣ HIPAA and HITECH may expose attorneys to additional fees and penalties. Check those BA agreements.
- ▣ In October 2011, the SEC issued guidance advising law firms to provide details concerning cyber security breaches.
- ▣ The ABA places the burden upon the attorney to protect client information from cyber security attacks.



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Real World Examples

▣ From datalossdb.org:

Law Firm Receptionist Charged With Identity Theft

2009-11-25 - [WAWS FOX 30](#)

... JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — A reception for Jacksonville law firm that provides legal assistance to low-income customers has been charged with stealing the identities of at least 20 clients. Prosecutors say Tashannyo Adena Medley stole about \$232,000 through...

Via [DayLife](#)

- ▣ digitalriskstrategies.com – May 13, 2010
- ▣ “Employee at a Palo Alto law firm steals 90 laptops and 120 desktop computers and sells them.”
- ▣ “Paralegal at a New York law firm downloads a 400 page trial plan in a major case and offers to sell it to the adverse party.”
- ▣ “Employee of a vendor at the Los Angeles office of a major law firm steals a client’s highly confidential encryption data and posts it on hacker websites.”
- ▣ “Thief remains in the offices of a Phoenix law firm after it closes and steals 3 laptops.”

- ▣ Bloomberg.com – January 31, 2012
 - “China-based hackers looking to derail the \$40 billion acquisition of the world’s largest potash producer by an Australian mining giant zeroed in on offices on Toronto’s Bay Street, home of the Canadian law firms handling the deal.”
 - ▣ 7 different law firms were compromised.

- ▣ Bloomberg.com – January 31, 2012
 - In November 2011, the FBI met with the top 200 law firms in New York to discuss the rising number of law firm breaches.
 - ▣ November 1, 2011: The FBI issues an advisory warning to law firms that they were specifically being targeted by hackers.
 - ▣ One tech firm estimates at least 80 law firms were breached in 2011.
 - ▣ The FBI warning: “Hackers see attorneys as a back door to the valuable data of their corporate clients.”

- ▣ senseient.com – February 9, 2012
 - *Anonymous* attacks the law firm that defended Segeant Frank Wuterich, who admitted to the 2005 Haditha killings of 24 Iraqi citizens with several other Marines.
 - Their site was hijacked and it was reported that 3 GB of private e-mail belonging to the law firm was obtained.

- ▣ Senseient.com – February 15, 2012
 - An allegation in a lawsuit by Elliott Greenleaf & Siedzikowski against former partner William Balaban and his new firm, Stevens & Lee.
 - ▣ It is alleged that Balaban and others deleted 5% of the backup tapes client files and took 78,000 files from the firm's computer system, installing Dropbox.

- ▣ BBC online – March 22, 2012
 - Data theft: Hacktivists 'steal more than criminals'
 - ▣ From the 2012 Verizon Data Breach report:
 - Hacktivists stole more data from large corporations than cybercriminals in 2011.
 - Anonymous and LulzSec are among the most active hactivist groups.



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Reducing the Risk

- ❑ Protect laptops with full disk encryption. Don't forget about removable media.
- ❑ Strong password policies are unpopular but critical.
- ❑ If you use cloud-based services, encrypt the data before uploading.
- ❑ Implement an incident response plan and test it.

- ▣ Change default configurations on all network devices and applications.

- ▣ Protect your backup media from physical theft.

- ▣ Patching, AV and malware updates are vital. Include the OS and the applications.

- ▣ Don't forget wireless access.



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Summary

- ▣ These issues are real and they're not going away.
- ▣ There are probably many more breaches than we know about.
- ▣ It is very difficult, or impossible, to restore client trust if a breach occurs.



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Q&A