BIZ STRATEGIES

LOCAL IT FIRM CEO SHARES TIPS *TO KEEP YOUR NETWORK SAFE*

Q&A

If your business uses a computer that operates on Microsoft Windows, you may want to take notes on what this local executive has to say.

The latest outbreak virus is called WannaCry – a ransomware attack that started on May 12 and has infected more than 230,000 computers in 150-plus countries. The virus targets Microsoft Windows operating systems and demands payment via bitcoins.

The widespread attack did not surprise computer professionals like Tim Taylor, owner and CEO of Longwood-based TaylorWorks Inc.

The 18-year industry professional has seen – and fixed – his share of computer problems, from the time before most devices were connected to the internet to now when nearly every electronic item has Wi-Fi capabilities.
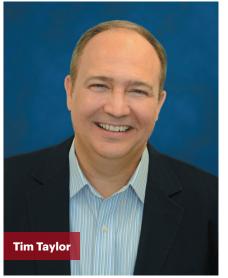
Here, Taylor talks about ransomware, cryptolocker hacks and more:

Tim Taylor

Why are more computer hacking cases popping up? Hacks and cryptolocker-type infections are the biggest threat right now, and the reason we are getting them is because people are demanding more access to their networks. People want to be able to access stuff from their phone while they are on vacation or to tap into their computer remotely, so you have to open those pathways to get in, and it's hard to prove who that person is via remote access. That can be locked down, but a lot of IT guys either don't know how to do that or won't take the time to do it right.

What are some tips to help prevent computer hacks? Change your password every so often, and everyone should not have the same password. We've gone in places where we enforced 90-day password changes, and we will come in later and [the client] will make us take it off, and people log in with the same password. Also, limit how much access you have to your network. Another reason people are getting infected is because they are doing personal work on their work computer that they shouldn't be doing. Businesses should lock down which websites employees can go to. A lot of businesses have the ability to do that, but don't know it. It's built into most firewalls, and it just has to be turned on.

Are more small businesses being targeted for ransomware? Not necessarily. But because there are so many small businesses, many of them get swept up in a blanketed email that's sent to 10 million addresses. Small businesses are getting hit more because they don't have the protection they need. You can get filters to scan emails as they come in and ones that check attachments – those tools are not that expensive and small businesses can afford them. If you don't deal with a lot of financial information or medical records, then you don't have to worry because you don't have the kind of data hackers want. They want to get paid, so they want to get you a cryptolocker or malware infection so you have to pay them $300. They make that amount small because they want something people can afford to pay.

What's the biggest challenge you face? Keeping up with everything coming down the pike. When I started my company in 1999, my first customers didn't have internet connections or websites, and I couldn't remote in and help them. The first law firm I worked with couldn't even email outside of their office and they had an AOL dial-up modem. With all the changes today, I've had to learn all of that as I go along. In IT, you have to be inquisitive and learn new things. That's the No. 1 thing I look for when hiring a new person – the ability to learn new things.

What do you think the future of cybersecurity holds? Biometrics security is where we're heading. Or you'll have a card key with a chip to access your computer. A lot of monitors have cameras built in them, and they can scan your face when you sit down. That's what going to make it simple one day when your computer recognizes you when you sit down just because of biometric scanning.

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Provides a range of services such as technical helpdesk support, computer support and consulting to small and medium-size businesses

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