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Publish is a monthly publication dedicated to covering the people, events and companies that are the community publishing industry.

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Publish is mailed free of charge to community publications all across North America. Other businesses may subscribe for \$20 annually.

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Cover Photo:

By Daniel Chetroni / Shutterstock.com



CONTENT/INDEX

IN THIS JANUARY ISSUE...

- 7 FROM THE TOP by John Draper
RESOLVE TO BE RESOLUTE
- 9 THE ONE THING by Douglas Fry
UNITY
- 11 PERSPECTIVE by Loren Colburn
WHERE DO WE DRAW THE LINE
- 13 INDUSTRY FEATURE by Jackie Wilson
RANSOM ATTACKS
- 16 THE SURVEY SAYS
- 18 INDUSTRY UPDATE by AmTrust Financial
RANSOMWARE PROTECTION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES
- 20 ON THE HORIZON
- 21 INDUSTRY FEATURE by Douglas Fry
I WAS HACKED!
- 23 RISING STAR by Nathaniel Abraham III
2022 LOOKING FORWARD
- 25 THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE by Jim Busch
ANTICIPATION
- 26 SALES TIPS by Bob Berting
6 POINT SERVICE PHILOSOPHY FOR PUBLICATIONS
- 27 AD-LIBS by John Foust
KEEP 'EM TALKING AND LEARN MORE
- 28 GRAPHIC HOOKS by Ellen Hanrahan
DESIGN TIPS
- 29 BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY

COMING NEXT MONTH

The February *Publish* plan is to look at things publications can do to find the right people for staff openings. As always, we will also cover the people, information and issues that are influencing the community publishing industry.

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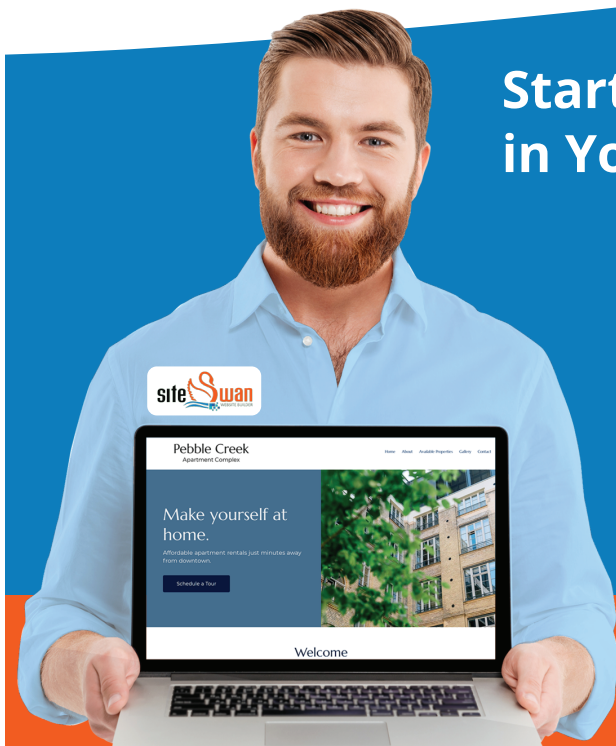
4. Websites Are a Gateway to Other Services

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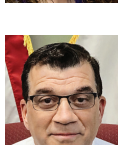
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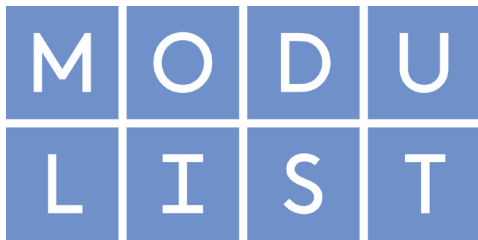


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RESOLVE TO BE RESOLUTE



JOHN DRAPER
ACP PRESIDENT

With a new year comes talk of resolutions. Personally, I think New Year's resolutions typically fall into the category of a temporary wish lists. By attaching the New Year's label, one's mind can quickly move past the resolution stage as time moves away from the onset of the new year. Like any goal, unless we keep these resolutions in front of us with firm, actionable plans and accountability, they will not be reached.

Perhaps the only real resolution then is to be more resolute in the management of all our resolutions?

All this being said, there are certainly some goals I've set for 2022. I will choose to keep these out of the printed page. (You can now fairly argue that I'm failing at my first chance for accountability). Rather, I'll share a few items that may be general resolutions for consideration by more than just myself.

LET'S RESOLVE TO BE INVOLVED

This can go in many directions. Locally, this means seeking out opportunities to volunteer, stepping up to serve on committees and civic organizations, or getting more involved with our staff. The opportunities in our communities are vast and I know many worthwhile endeavors are always looking for additional help.

Get involved in our association. ACP conducts regular conference calls with members from around the nation, our committees can always

use a hand to help us reach our goals, and when training opportunities are brought forward, please jump in.

Being more involved can also be much simpler, like spending more quality time with our families or friends. Let's not fall for the mantra of "I've got so much work to do." A simple game night, reading books to children, having a family meal, or spending some time at a local park can go a long way.

LET'S RESOLVE TO SERVE OUR READERS

This one is paramount in the newspaper business of course and we live it every day. As trusted leaders in our community can we resolve to slow down and ask ourselves, "What don't I know?" about this or that rather than rushing to get things out before our beloved community 'journalists' hit social media. We might live in a world of immediacy, but simply taking a little time to get things figured out and to show depth of content based upon fact, will provide for many more truthful interactions.

LET'S RESOLVE TO MOVE FORWARD

In our private lives, in the businesses we work for, and in the community we call home, let's take some steps to be proactive and get things done. Keeping this resolution in the fore will help us to create a positive answer to the question of, "what did I accomplish?" when 2022 comes to an end.

These three resolutions may hang on the edge of the wish list category, but they are actionable. If we keep the first resolution – to be resolute, we can make strides to be more involved, understand the facts and always be moving forward. ■

“ We might live in a world of immediacy, but simply taking a little time to get things figured out and to show depth of content based upon fact, will provide for many more truthful interactions.



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BY DOUGLAS FRY

UNITY

If you have ever read any of these monthly articles you know that I enjoy riding my bicycle. I ride to keep what little sanity I have left and to keep myself in reasonable shape. Right now that reasonable shape looks a lot like a circle. But I keep trying.

There are two things that slow you down on a bicycle: hills and the wind. Realistically you can't do much about either of these two impediments to speed. Living in this area of Tennessee means that no matter where I go I get to go up hill. Being the optimist that I am, that also means I get to go down hill too. Going down hill is the only time that my mass actually helps me. I love going down hill, up hill not so much.

I don't want to dwell on hills in this article. I hope you will discover a truth about wind as you read this. When you ride a bicycle most of the time the wind is in your face slowing you down. It seems that regardless of what direction you ride you can count on an overwhelming force impeding your progress, the wind. But the other morning a magical event occurred.

At one point in the ride I turned a corner and started to pedal hard to overcome the wind that I presumed would continue in my face. As I got up to speed the world went completely silent. The only sound was the hush of the tires spinning against the road. In this noiseless bubble I thought one of two things had happened: 1- my mother had several strokes so I wondered if I was having a stroke, or 2- my father suffered from hearing loss/deafness and I figured my heredity had caught up with me. But then I heard birds chirping so I could rule out #2 and stuck my tongue out straight so I ruled out #1.

Having realized I dodged both genealogical bullets I looked for another explanation. It dawned on me that I was traveling at exactly the same speed and direction as the wind. Thus the silence. What I hadn't recognized is that I was zipping along at a very fast pace while my pedaling effort was nearly zero. The wind was pushing me along in such a way that the wind and I were one. We, the wind and I, had reached Unity. It was a quasi mystical sensation as I rode in complete silenced for about 1/2 mile. Then the road curved and so did I. The sound of the wind came back and my pace slowed.

I thought about that incident several times during the day. What could I learn from this encounter? Naturally I thought of you, my publishing industry friends. How can we reach Unity in our businesses? What does Unity look like from a publishers perspective? Simply put, Unity is achieved when everyone is working in the same direction.

Perhaps an example will help. Let's start with the Unity that is the easiest to explain but the most difficult to achieve, Production versus Sales. If we are honest with ourselves we recognize that sales and production

rarely play well with each other. Sales complains that production is slow and only occasionally realizes their artistic vision of what an ad should look like. Production complains that sales always waits until the deadline to turn in their ads and gives sparse information on what a new ad should contain. If one group is the wind and the other is the cyclist they seldom, if ever, head in the same direction. This conflict can easily be converted from antagonism to unity by both groups asking the question, "How can I help them do their job better?"

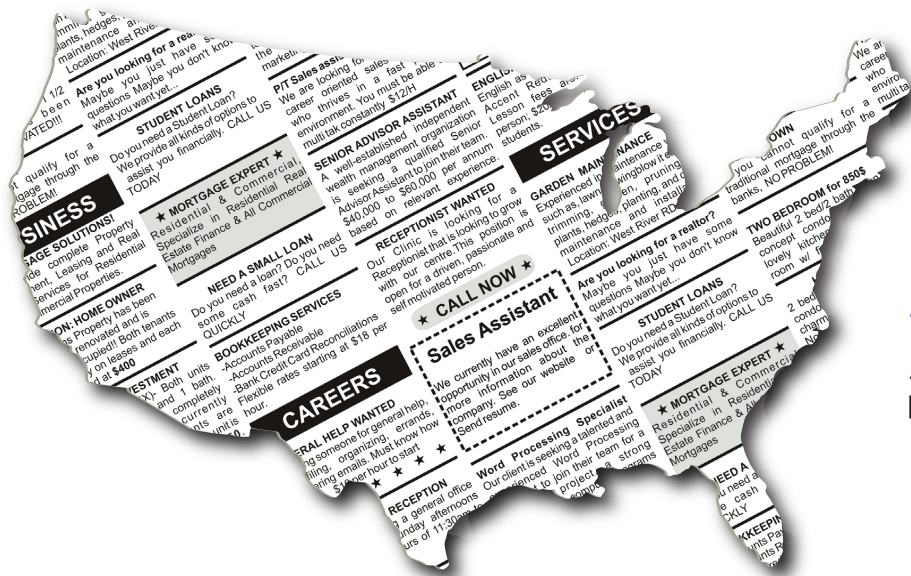
If each person in your organization asks, "What can I do to make their job easier?" You and your company will reach Unity. Let's remember that Unity makes the ride easier and faster for everyone. Looking for ways to make others lives better results in better feelings about ourselves as well. If the sales person truly tries to help the production artist she/he will enter the ad in the system as quickly as is prudent and give all the information they can to help create the ad. The graphics person does all they can to make the ad as compelling and correct as possible. If they have a question about the vision of the ad, they could text, email, Slack, Zoom, call, or even get up from their workstation and ask them in person what the customer wants.

This may sound simplistic but it truly is that easy. As each person is doing their job they should continually ask themselves how their actions impact others in the organization and what they can do to make others jobs easier. If everyone is pulling in the same direction, working together rather than in siloed pods, unity will be reached.

I look forward to seeing you zip past me as I seek for another magical ride during which the wind and I are one. It can happen to you too. ■

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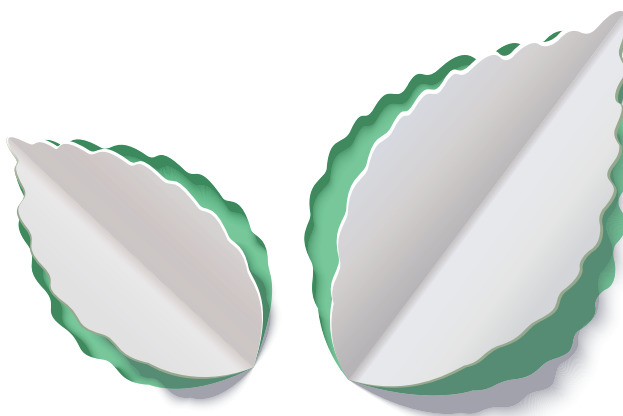
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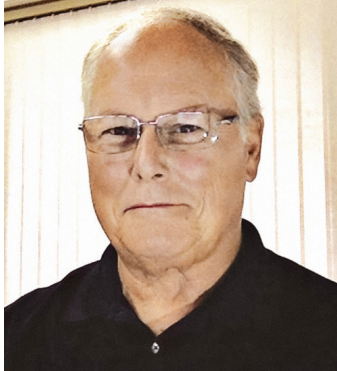
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WHERE DO WE DRAW THE LINE?



BY LOREN COLBURN

The whole issue of the cyber security, spam, scam and the complexity of securing personal information absolutely amazes me. When I go to my bank's website and sign in, I now have to enter a username and password, which actually makes sense to me. Here's where I lose it, if that works, then I must answer some question related to my first dog, or the city my maternal grandmother lived in when she was in elementary school, or maybe the eye color of the best man in my wedding! As if that weren't enough, it then looks to see if it recognizes my computer and if not, I have to wait while it sends a random code to an email or phone number that is connected to my file! Then, if and only if, I enter that correctly along with my original password – I can enter to see my bank account!

I wish there was enough value in that bank account to get some would be intruder excited, but it is more apt to make them wonder what I have been doing the last 40+ years that I have not put myself in a better financial position. We'll leave that whole discussion for a future column. The point being, this multi-level security process is not driven by the need of the bank to protect my funds as much as it is the need to protect the bank's funds from the liability of having me get hacked while they hold



my money! If it was just to protect me, they would tell me to change my password regularly and make the entry a complex enough code to baffle the cryptanalysis team at the FBI.

I guess the good news is (knock on wood) that so far, I've only been hacked twice and both times the thieves were not able to get away quietly in the night and my funds were protected by the fraud department of the bank. Those experiences may actually set me up for some major disappointment down the road but as long as the intruder doesn't know my grandmother's life history, I believe I'm safe for the time being! The bank has devoted an incredible amount of resources to make sure depositors can not blame them when the eventual intrusion takes place. Again, to be clear, it really isn't about protecting me – it's about protecting them.

So where am I going with all this? If we can create this multi-tiered digital filter process to secure my

accounts, why can't the phone company or my email provider apply the same multi-level filter process to the spam calls and spam emails to avoid the intrusion? Technology should be able to develop a way to distinguish an original call number as opposed to the spoofed number they want you to believe is behind the call. The same should also be technically available for an originating email address. If there were incentive enough applied to these two security issues, you would have to believe Gmail, Verizon, Yahoo, AT&T and all the other players would devote some of their profits to actually solving these issues.

Unfortunately, there has not been meaningful legislation or regulation to incentivize the tech giants to protect us. That will only come when the incentive is to protect themselves. If Verizon had to make a senior citizen whole when they get taken by a spam caller who spoofs to be a social security or IRS phone number, things

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Somebody once said...

The tree golden rules to ensure computer security are: do not own a computer; do not power it on; and do not use it.

Robert Morris

would change quickly. If Gmail had to be responsible for damages from a person falling prey to a Nigerian Prince scam email with nothing to trace back to, things would change quickly.

Cell providers may argue that those incentives already exist with the existence of the federal Do Not Call list put in place in 2003 and currently has 239 million numbers registered. The truth is according to a 2020 article in The Detroit News, that since 2003 there have only been 148 cases involving-large scale Do Not Call list and robocall violations. One company estimates there were 58.5 billion robocalls made in 2019 alone – which equates to approximately 178.3 calls per person. Until there is regulation AND enforcement, the calls will keep coming. The reality reported by CNBC is Americans lost \$29.8 billion to phone scams alone over the past year and it affected 59.4 million people.

Although email providers may say that they are doing everything they can to properly identify and filter spam emails and that spam is down from its peak, the statistics would prove it is still an overwhelming problem. Last year there were an average of 122.3 billion daily spam messages – nearly 85% of all email volume! The big three topics for email spam are 36.0% Advertising, 32.7% Adult-related and 26.5% Financial. Surprisingly, scams and fraud account for only about 2.5 % of all spam emails, but based on the volume, that is an incredible 3.1 billion emails per day. The estimated rate of return on spam email according to TechRadar is one reply per 12,500,000 emails sent. This may seem unproductive, but with the cost to generate them being next to nothing, the average number of responses works out to approximately 9,784 per day!

The numbers indicate it is time to devote the technical expertise, regulatory oversight and delivery channel “incentives” to clean these two costly and incredibly wasteful practices up. We have struggled to produce meaningful activities in Washington for quite some time, but these two issues should not be red or blue, right or left. They only seem to shape up as right or wrong, and that is something everyone should agree on. If we do a good enough job at it, we can eliminate the \$703,000 in Nigerian Prince scam losses identified in 2019 (true number according to ADT and CNBC)!

Until next month, tell all those media buyers, “If it’s free, buy it!” ■

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RANSOMWARE ATTACK

CYBER CRIMINALS THREATEN DATA

BY JACKIE WILSON

Email. It's a necessary communication tool for businesses. As we scroll through messages one by one, we quickly scan, hitting reply and delete. When an email message about a credit card charge appears, we're annoyed. What's this \$450 charge for? I did make an Amazon purchase, but maybe they overcharged me? I better click on the link to double check...

BAM!

Within three seconds, a cyber attacker has gained entry into a computer's memory, sending malware to encrypt sensitive data. Yet, these hackers aren't phishing to snag a credit card number to purchase designer jeans. These cyber criminals hold and lock data; shutting down systems and demanding money until a ransom is paid. Ransomware has infiltrated the system.

Ransomware is a type of malicious software created to block access to a computer's system, until a sum of money is paid. As files or computers are held hostage, criminals only release the system if the ransom is paid.

Ransomware first appeared in 1989 and in the past decade increased as criminals and hackers become more sophisticated in their methods. Ransomware infiltrates a computer when a user unknowingly clicks on a link or downloads an attachment. Phishing scams account for 70 percent of the data breaches.

In the past year, hacker attempts alarmingly increased by 148 percent over previous years, due to the millions of pandemic-related remote workers. Remote workers are now cyber criminal's main target as personal devices and tools are easier to hack than traditional business servers.

Data breaches are targeted in all types of businesses, but prey on those with sensitive information, such as bank account numbers, private health information and social secu-



ity numbers. Healthcare, education, finance and government sector hacks occur every 11 seconds.

With names like NetWalker, Conti and DarkSide, these criminals often hail from Europe, mainly Russia and Ukraine. Hackers demand money be paid in cryptocurrency as it's less easy to trace.

The FBI doesn't recommend ransoms be paid, because there is no guarantee that the files will be released and there's a greater chance of it happening again.

However, ransoms have been paid. In 2020, the average payout was \$312,493; for small businesses, \$5,900. Large companies, such as FedEx lost \$400 million in expenses from the NotPetya attack in 2017. The DarkSide attack on the Colonial Pipeline reportedly paid \$4.4 million in cryptocurrency ransom in May 2021.

Besides payouts, other costs factor in downtime, with an average of 15 business days lost, not to mention added costs for overtime, new servers and more.

Publishers big and small are not immune to cyber thieves. Several of our ACP members were hit by ransomware attacks and malware. We've featured a few of their stories and how they handled it.

DEMANDED \$1.2 MILLION

Jonathan McElvy's golf game was one of his best games all year. Long drives hit the green and putts sunk in easily...until he received a phone call, along with a disturbing screen shot from his IT director at MVR Publishing Saturday morning, July 31, 2020.

The screenshot was a picture of a ransomware note the company received that morning. "I knew something was wrong because I stopped getting emails Friday afternoon. Normally I get the press lists, so I thought it was weird. I thought it was just an email server that was down," explains McElvy.

The ransomware note demanded \$1.2 million from the Conti malware which had infiltrated the system. He and his IT staff scrambled to see

INDUSTRY FEATURE

what was lost on the server. “They had everything on the server. We had a Monday morning deadline and couldn’t get any of our files,” he says.

McElvy recalled a few weeks earlier about a news article regarding how the government paid ransom for an attack and believed his company was immune. “We’re in the newspaper business. We don’t have money. Why target us?” he asked.

They turned to the company’s security director for advice. The ransomware note offered a link with an encrypted email to read, which was hosted on the Dark Web, which doesn’t track users who visit a certain website. “We wanted to know what their terms and understand what exactly was happening. After that – and after realizing nearly all our data was backed up offsite, we didn’t go back,” he says.

Taking the IT director’s advice, they didn’t respond to the demands or emails. The attackers came back with a second demand after a non-response. McElvy called the local sheriff, who filed a report and suggested they contact the FBI. “It took two weeks for the FBI to call back. They said they have 200 calls a week for this and they were no help,” he says.

Fortunately, the company had backed up data and files on a Thursday at midnight through an off-site server. They put the backed-up data on a virtual server and hosting site for the weekend, to the tune of \$22,000.

After a costly, stress-filled weekend, they were back up on a Monday; however, not to full capacity. The account server was down, so they were unable to complete billing for several days. Clients weren’t affected, as they don’t store credit card information on their server.

Another glitch was the pagination software wasn’t working and they discovered the time-saving features had vanished. “We lost the ability to auto tag pages. It usually took an hour to do, but took us five hours to do it to key it in manually. We were late all the time and couldn’t do classifieds the correct way. There was a lot of overtime for employees,” he says.

McElvy believed the \$4,000 software they installed was supposed to protect them by identifying and quarantining bad files before they entered the system. “Our security guy said, this program you just paid for – let it go into your system,” he says.

After the breakdown, the company decided to change email providers to a Google business platform. “We might be a little late to the game. The Cloud servers are cheaper, with less upkeep,” he says.

To recover costs, he examined his general liability insurance and found it was ‘worthless.’ “It stinks,” he says. “If someone walked into a store and stole our stuff, it’s covered. But still it (the attack) was theft – as if someone walked into our office.”

“In the past year, hacker attempts alarmingly increased by 148 percent over previous years, due to the millions of pandemic-related remote workers.

To prevent future hacks, he instructs employees to refrain from clicking on unknown links. “We all have employees who get tricked,” he says. “Communication is the key to prevent this from happening again.”

MACS SAFE; PCS HACKED BY CERBER

Six years ago, Denton Publication and Sun Community News & Printing was hit hard by ransomware. Their press foreman opened up an email, warning that his computer files had been taken over. The message read:

Cannot find the files you need? Is the content of your files that you looked for not readable? It's normal because the files' names, as well as the data in your files have been encrypted. Great!!! You have turned to be a part of a big community #CerberRansomware.

The message was a five-page document, with step-by-step instructions on how to get their data back and payment to restore the files. The document ends with the following quote:

Remember that the worst situation has already happened and now it

depends on your determination and speed of your actions to further life of your files.

Dan Alexander, publisher emeritus, says they didn’t click on links or pay to recover their files. “We never considered paying them or communicating with them,” he says.

The breach came from one of their employees who opened up a file that was on a spreadsheet on their account’s server. It was located on a PC platform, where they saved their files to the master server. He was fortunate the Macs weren’t affected. “It didn’t affect our publication. All of our Apple products were protected with a different operating system,” he says.

An entire spreadsheet with lineage, deposit and sales information was compiled differently from their accounting software and the data was completely wiped out. Less protected items from personal files that weren’t super critical, were also lost. Employees had to replace the entire spreadsheet by hand and rebuild the files.

Alexander says, “It was time-consuming to recreate the documents. We learned not to cry over spilled milk.”

A Russian company was most likely to blame. Alexander reported it to the FBI, who filed the information, however nothing came of it.

Since then, Alexander interviewed several IT companies to see who could recommend and install a new firewall protection system, which is doing its job.

“We don’t do a lot with it. It does its job and we haven’t done anything with it since then,” he says.

It’s a new cost the company had to build into their operating budget, but he feels it’s worth it. “We see the benefit outweighs the costs. It depends on whether you want to get hacked or not,” he says.

As the protection system is up for renewal each year, he’s considering moving their system to a different platform.

“The bad guys are getting smarter, too. It’s staying one step ahead of the technology. It’s worth it to sit down with vendors and get proposals,” he says.

WEAK PASSWORD THE CULPRIT

When Greg Bruns received an email from his internet service provider saying their service was going to be terminated because of too much spamming, he questioned the validity. Over the weekend, a complaint had been lodged against his company, Acadia News, from Columbia University Law School that Bruns' server was being used to attempt a brute-force hack on the school's server.

Monday morning, he went into the server room and sat down, wiggling the mouse to clear the screen saver when he saw dozens of user account icons. He then noticed someone was logging in the icon and hundreds of command prompt lines and screens kept popping up.

After confirming with the IT department that it wasn't him, another IT specialist, 'Stu' shows up, ready to click on the screen. Frustrated, Bruns shouted, "Wait – we don't want the bad guys to know that we know what's happening yet, do we?"

With Bruns tech-savvy background, he called the owner of the IT group for further instruction as he didn't trust Stu. Bruns checked his own public folder on the server and everything was corrupted. Before long, Stu confirmed it was a ransomware request.

There was a ransomware timer, but unfortunately Stu didn't take a screenshot of the request. Normally payments ask for \$1,000 to \$150,000. "I wanted to see it. I know computers and would have liked to see the ransom demand," he says.

The breach was most likely due to a weak password. The company's original firewall had the ability to block certain countries and the attack came from the Russian Federation. Again, Stu failed to have the most common scammer countries blocked. Eventually they fired Stu, because of his incompetence and bungling of their company's security.

A back-up server saved them; and they were able to obtain files. Fortunately it was mid-month and issues weren't set to publish for a few weeks. Customers weren't affected; however email was down temporarily.

RANSOMWARE PREVENTION TIPS PROVIDED BY INTERVIEWEES

- Communicate and educate staff to never click on unknown links or download attachments. Send constant reminders, especially with new staff members.
- Have a written plan if a data breach or ransomware attack happens.
- Back up files and update systems on a regular basis. Use off-site backup servers.
- Install anti-virus software and block access to known ransomware sites. Discuss with an IT professional the best software, firewall and systems recommendations.
- Check your business insurance umbrella policies to see what might be covered.

ily. It took about 40 hours by the IT company to get back to normal.

Since then, they've hired a different IT provider, installed another firewall and modem and locked the network down. Bruns takes a portable server once a month from home and backs it up case of another attack or fire emergency.

He continues to educate his staff. "People are the number one reason why hackers can get through," he says. "I'm more vigilant about remote backups and make sure to keep educating my staff."

ARCHIVES LOST

Although Deb Paul didn't get hit with ransomware, her family newspaper got hacked with malware, stripping all their archives from 2011 and beyond.

At the height of the COVID pandemic, Paul said various customers kept getting emails from her email account, requesting money or credit card information. Her exact email address appeared in other peoples' inboxes.

"People were calling me, asking why I was sending them emails, asking for money," she says.

Then she noticed on their website, archives starting in 2011 were disappearing. "It was unnoticeable at first – then all of a sudden, everything was gone," she says.

She feels the hackers were targeting the paper's 'freedom of press,' forcing them to lose credibility with advertisers and hoping to shut down the voice of an independent newspaper by preventing information from getting out.

"They wanted to cripple us," she says. "In turn, it makes the customers uneasy. By targeting small papers, we can't pay for a firewall."

Because of the hack, she changed how they do business. "Credit cards have to be called in. You can't order online anymore," she says. "We had to reassure our advertisers were are still a credible business."

JUST UNPLUG IT

For one of Carol Toomey's Smart Shopper papers, it was a simple fix to a hacker's attempt at corrupting valuable files.

One of her employees opened an email and clicked on an attachment. As she saw the link, she quickly realized it was in error the minute she opened it. Knowing time was critical, she immediately asked the graphics department head for advice. He ran to the computer to shut it down, unplug it, disconnecting it from the network.

After a quick search, thankfully only a few files were lost. The IT department helped to get things up and running within a day.

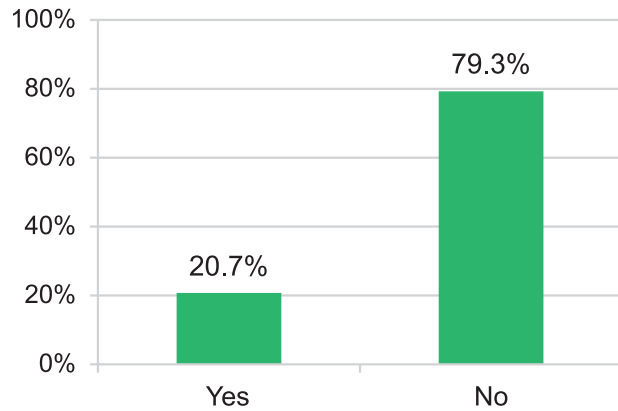
"We didn't lose much," says Toomey. "Thanks to his quick thinking it wasn't a big deal. But it makes us more diligent going forward with our emails." ■

Resource: AFCEA (Armed Forces Communication and Electronic Association), Signal Magazine; Sponsored: 81 Ransomware Statistics, Data, Trends and Facts for 2021 <https://www.afcea.org/content/sponsored-81-ransomware-statistics-data-trends-and-facts-2021>.

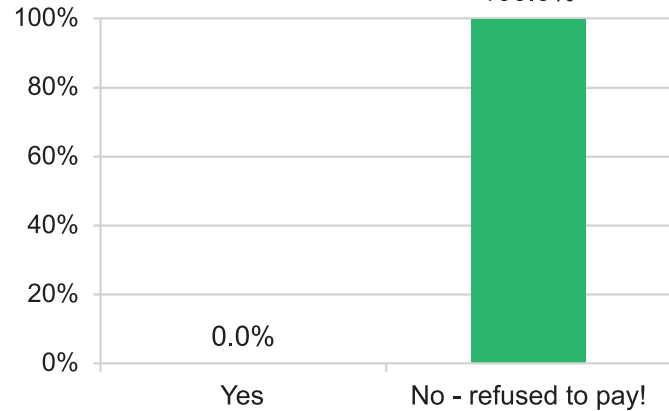
THE SURVEY SAYS...



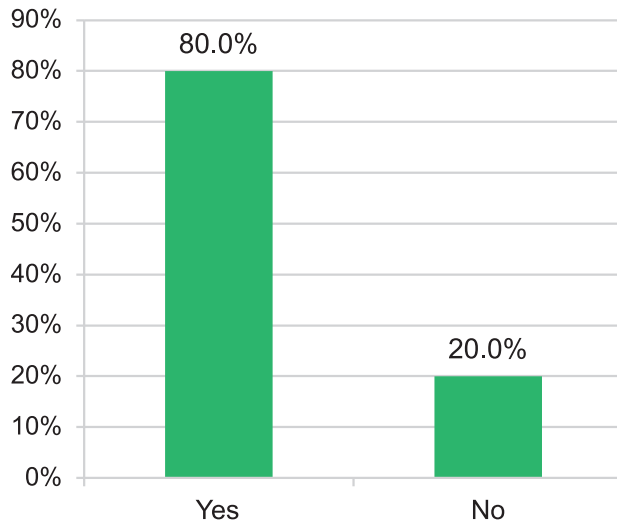
Has your company experienced a ransomware attack?



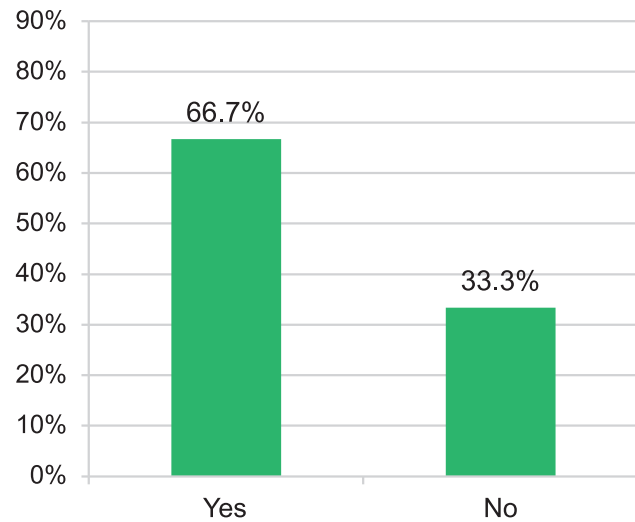
Did you end up paying the ransom?



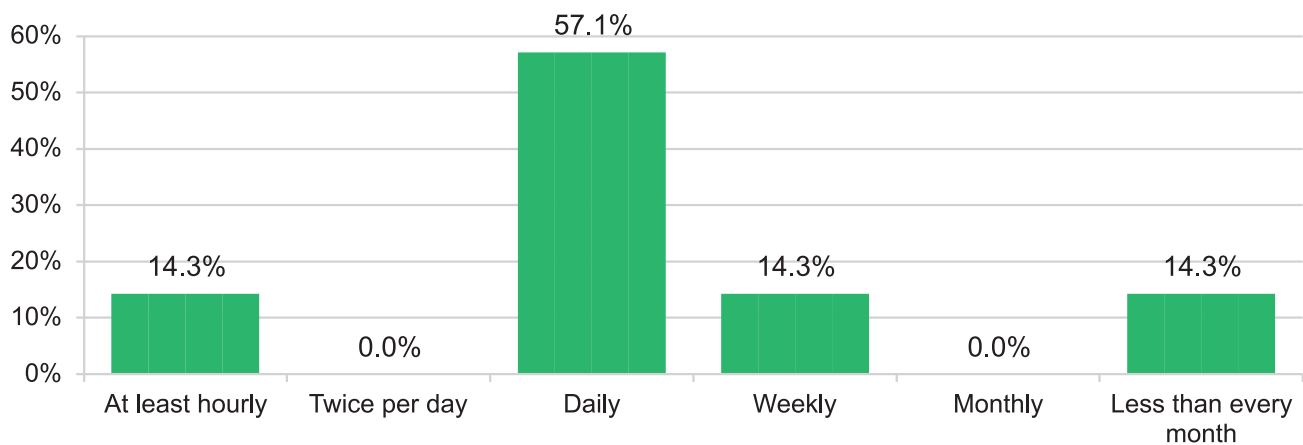
Did you have a firewall prior to the attack?



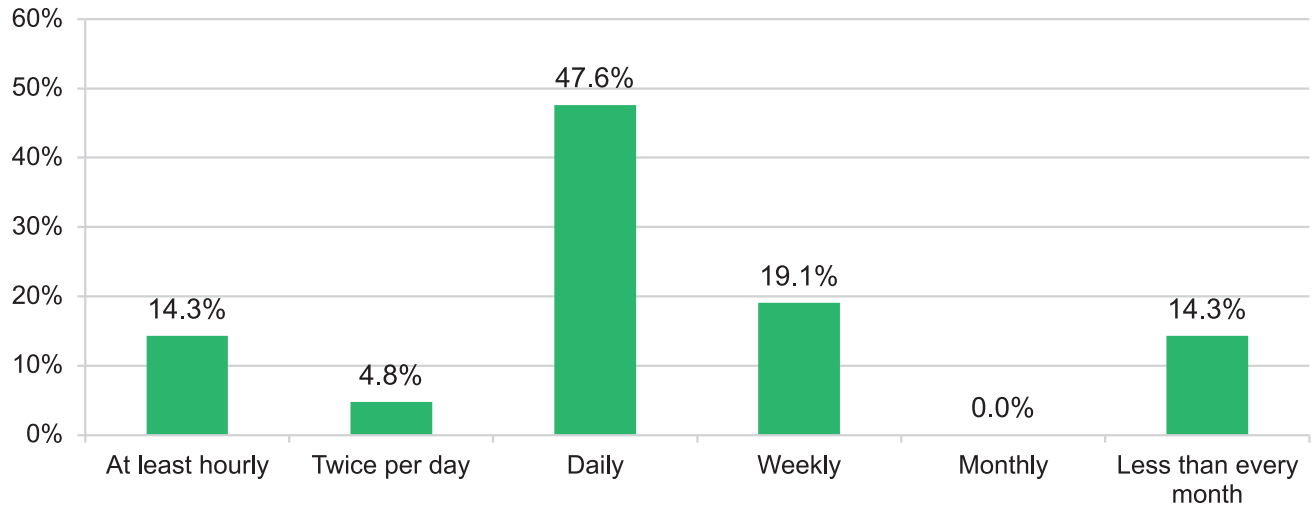
Did you upgrade your firewall after the attack?



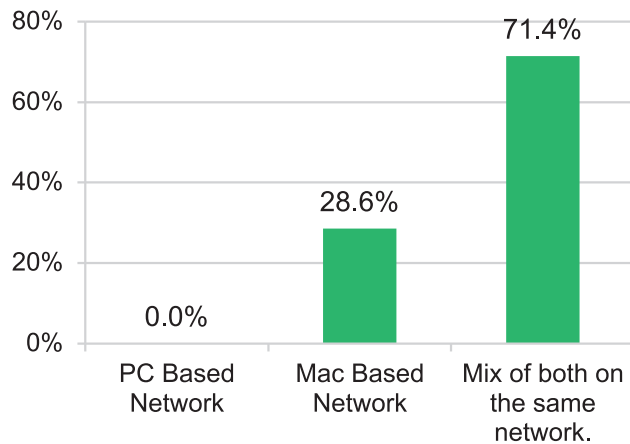
How often do you do a system backup?
(publications hit by ransomware)



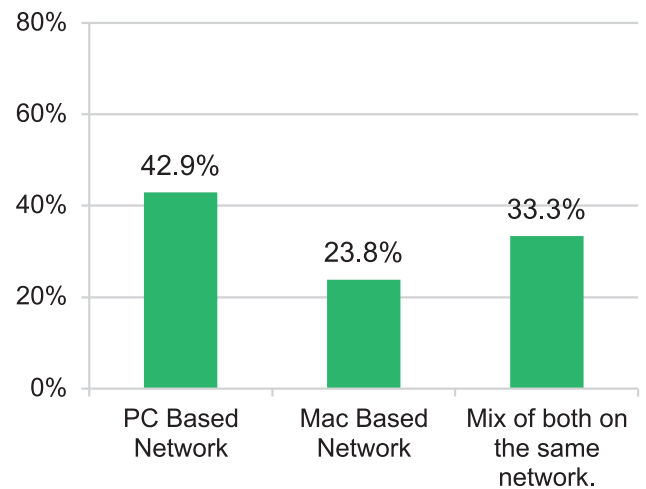
How often do you do a system backup? (publications not hit by ransomware)



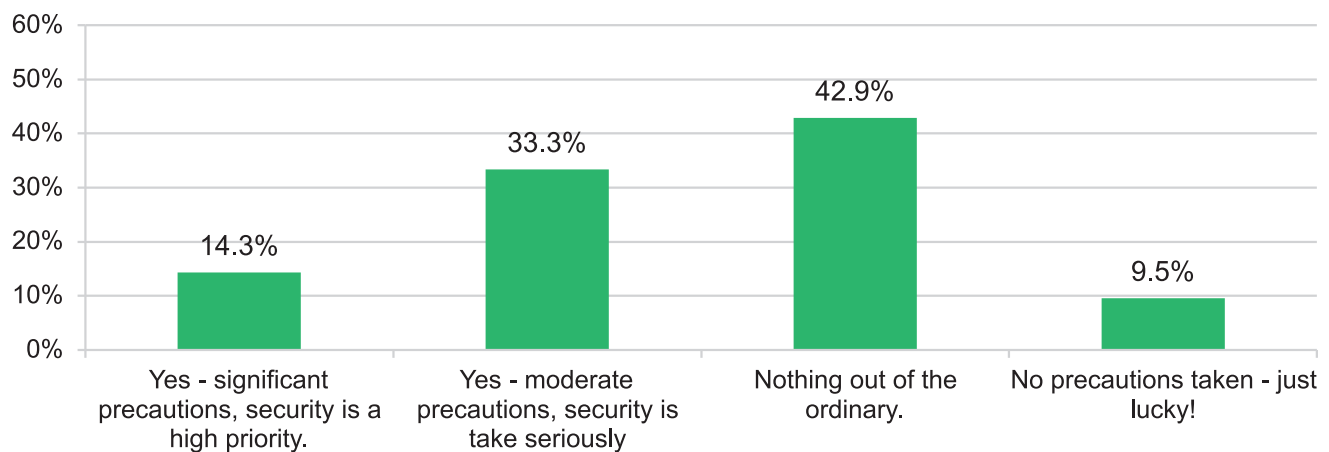
What type of system do you have? (publications hit by ransomware)



What type of system do you have? (publications not hit by ransomware)



Have you taken precautions to avoid ransomware attacks? (publications not hit by ransomware)



RANSOMWARE PROTECTION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

SUMMARY: *It's a common misconception that small businesses aren't typical victims of cyber attacks or data breaches. In this article, we'll discuss a particularly damaging type of malware known as ransomware, and what small and mid-sized businesses can do to protect themselves from these types of cybersecurity attacks.*



Small and mid-sized businesses account for 90% of companies worldwide, and they employ over 50% of the global population. These businesses play a critical role in the economy, but they can also be prime targets for hackers and cybercriminals.

Data shows that small to medium-sized businesses were the victims of 71% of ransomware attacks. These attacks may have occurred because many smaller companies typically spend less on cybersecurity measures than larger corporations, making them easy subjects for hackers.

WHAT IS RANSOMWARE?

Ransomware, or ransom malware, is a type of malicious software designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money (or ransom) is paid, or some other action is completed. Cybercriminals often use this file-encrypting malware to go after specific targets who can pay the largest ransom possible, but this is not always the case. As mentioned previously, small to mid-sized businesses are likely targets because they usually have smaller security teams. Hackers also will target organizations like government agencies, healthcare facilities and financial institutions

that store sensitive data because they may be willing to pay up quickly to restore access to their files. According to the FTC, some ransom demands have been as high as \$30,000.

Ransomware locks a company's files, basically holding them hostage by making data, documents and files inaccessible without a decryption key. The files are still on the device, but without paying the ransom within a specified timeframe, the organization faces losing access to them forever.

According to Norton, some common ransomware examples include:

- **Lock screen or screen lockers:** Locker ransomware makes it impossible to access any files or applications on your device. Users will see a full-screen message that prevents them from accessing data on their PC.
- **Encryption ransomware:** Also known as crypto-malware, this type of ransomware modifies files so users cannot open them. There is no guarantee that paying the ransom or completing the required action will allow access to the PC or files again.
- **Scareware:** Scareware is an example of ransomware that acts like virus protection. Users will see a pop-up message saying their

files are at risk with a demand for payment to fix the issue. Scareware may lock the computer or flood the screen with alerts and pop up messages.

- **RaaS:** Also known as "Ransomware as a Service," RaaS malware is hosted by an anonymous hacker who handles distributing the ransomware, collecting payments and managing decryptors in exchange for a cut of the ransom.
- **Doxware:** More people are storing sensitive, personal information on their computers and mobile devices these days, and doxware threatens to share that data with the internet unless they receive the ransom requested.

RANSOMWARE PROTECTION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

IT security has to be a priority for businesses of all sizes. Companies should not only understand how to prevent cyberattacks like ransomware, but they should also create a data breach response plan, so the steps to take in the event of a breach are spelled out in a straightforward manner. Here are a few things small and mid-sized businesses can do to help protect themselves from cyberattacks like ransomware.

- **Upgrade to the most recent operating system version**

As operating systems update, new versions can include patches or firewalls for potential security issues that could make a business vulnerable to ransomware.

- **Provide regular cybersecurity training to employees**

Human error causes 52% of data breaches. Staff should receive ongoing cybersecurity training to understand the organization's security policies and the risks associated with a breach. Employees should understand the basics, like not opening emails and attachments from unknown senders and how to recognize fake websites and email addresses, which often contain misspellings.

- **Keep security software updated**

Many cybersecurity software programs offer real-time protection from malware attacks like ransomware. Use a trusted security suite and up-

date it regularly, as new threats continuously pop up for both businesses and consumers.

- **Backup data regularly**

While this may take businesses considerable time and effort, the importance of backing up information cannot be stressed enough. Consider utilizing a cloud service that incorporates high-level encryption and multiple-factor authentication. At the very least, files can be saved to USB or external hard drives – as long as they are disconnected from the device, as they can also be susceptible to ransomware.

- **Purchase insurance coverage that covers ransomware**

Cyber liability insurance can protect businesses from a range of cyberattacks, including ransomware. Every year, organizations, both large and small, are victims of data breaches, and every employer faces the fact that they could be the target of a network security breach. Cyber

liability coverage helps protect businesses of all sizes from the financial damage incurred from cyber attacks and data breaches. ■

Cyber Liability Insurance from AmTrust Financial – AmTrust Financial offers cyber liability insurance to help protect small businesses from some of the costs associated with a variety of cybersecurity attacks. AmTrust is committed to evolving our coverage as new cyber threats emerge for our customers. To learn more about our cyber liability insurance policies, please contact us today at <https://amtrustfinancial.com/about-us/contact-us> or go to <https://amtrustfinancial.com/insurance-products/cyber-liability>.

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Midwest Free Community Papers (MFCP)

Spring Conference at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center in Ames, Iowa. Go to mfcp.org for program updates or contact Lee Borkowski at 888-899-6327, email: director@mfcp.org for more information.

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Mid-Atlantic Community Papers Association (MACPA)

Annual Conference – "Let's Strike Gold with MACPA" will be held at the Comfort Suites in Carlisle, PA. Go to macpa.net for updates or contact Alyse Mitten at 800-450-7227, email: info@macpa.net for more information.

APRIL 1, 2022
(No fooling)

Association of Community Publishers (ACP)

Spring Leadership Summit will be held in Nashville, TN, contact Cassey Recore, email: cassey@communitypublishers.com or call 877-203-2327 for more information.



I WAS HACKED!

HOW TO AVOID MY FAILURE

BY DOUGLAS FRY

After returning from one of our meetings in Orlando, I had all kinds of great ideas that I wanted to put to use as soon as I got back to the office. Life was good until I started working on my computer early in the morning and noticed that the pointer on the screen started moving all by itself. Then I noticed that my “screen sharing” icon in the toolbar was lit up. I disconnected the user and looked up the web address the user came from. It was from the island of Malta.

Please understand, I don’t get around enough to have friends in

Malta. This was not a friend. In fact, as soon as I could disconnect the interloper they connected right back on. So, I shut down the computer thinking that would stop the attack. When I started it back up 10 minutes later the hacker was right back on and I couldn’t disconnect them. I did what any panicked person would do, I disconnected the Ethernet cable from the back of the computer.

I believe the person gained access to my computer when I logged on to a wi-fi network while I was traveling to Orlando. I accessed my computer from the road through

VNC (Virtual Network Computing). The nefarious ne’r do well had to see what I entered as my username and password and thus gained access to my computer and network. The fact that my American Express card was compromised a day after the conference should have been my wake up call. But I was too smug thinking that no one would be able to access my fortress of solitude. Wrong!

Having that person snooping around my computer was shocking and scary. It was like going into a room in one’s home to find an intruder. The worst part is that I HAD

INDUSTRY FEATURE

(past tense) a folder on my computer cleverly named “Passwords” that contained all the different passwords to all the sites I frequent which require one. All the hacker needed to do was take that folder and they would have access to all my information.

With the computer disconnected I first changed the main computer password. Then, for the remainder of the day I reconnected to the internet and logged in to each site and changed the passwords to all my accounts. That meant resubmitting over 100 different passwords. It was tedious and time consuming but necessary in order to safeguard my information from future prying eyes.

With all my passwords changed I have been watching my computer screen to see if anyone is “peeking” at me. So far, so good. But that doesn’t mean I’m safe. More likely I’m not. What follows are some suggestions as to how you can avoid my failure to protect my virtual assets.

BEFORE A CYBER ATTACK:

You can increase your chances of avoiding cyber risks by setting up the proper controls. The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family, and your property before a cyber incident occurs.

- Only connect to the Internet over secure, password-protected networks.
- Do not click on links or pop-ups, open attachments, or respond to emails from strangers.
- Always enter a URL by hand instead of following links if you are unsure of the sender.
- Do not respond to online requests for Personally Identifiable Information (PII); most organizations – banks, universities, companies, etc. – do not ask for your personal information over the Internet.
- Limit who you are sharing information with by reviewing the privacy settings on your social media accounts.
- Trust your gut; if you think an offer is too good to be true, then it probably is.

- Password protect all devices that connect to the Internet and user accounts.
- Do not use the same password twice; choose a password that means something to you and you only; change your passwords on a regular basis. I had used the same password for my network for over 10 years!
- The extent, nature, and timing of cyber incidents are impossible to predict. There may or may not be any warning. Some cyber incidents take a long time (weeks, months or years) to be discovered and identified. Familiarize yourself with the types of threats and protective measures you can take.

DURING AN ATTACK: IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

- Check to make sure the software on all of your systems is up-to-date.
- Run a scan to make sure your system is not infected or acting suspiciously.
- If you find a problem, disconnect your device from the Internet and perform a full system restore.

AT HOME

- Disconnect your device (computer, gaming system, tablet, etc.) from the Internet. By removing the Internet connection, you prevent an attacker or virus from being able to access your computer and perform tasks such as locating personal data, manipulating or deleting files, or using your device to attack others.
- If you have anti-virus software installed on your computer, update the virus definitions (if possible), and perform a manual scan of your entire system. Install all of the appropriate patches to fix known vulnerabilities.

AT WORK

- If you have access to an IT department, contact them immediately. The sooner they can investigate and clean your computer, the less damage to your computer and other computers on the network.

- If you believe you might have revealed sensitive information about your organization, report it to the appropriate people within the organization, including network administrators. They can be alert for any suspicious or unusual activity.

AT A PUBLIC PLACE (library, Hotel, etc.)

- Immediately inform a librarian, teacher, or manager in charge. If they have access to an IT department, contact them immediately.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS IF YOUR PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION (PII) IS COMPROMISED

PII is information that can be used to uniquely identify, contact, or locate a single person. PII includes but is not limited to: full name, social security number, address, date of birth, place of birth, driver’s license number, vehicle registration plate number, Credit card numbers, physical appearance, gender or race.

If you believe your PII is compromised:

- Immediately change all passwords; financial passwords first. If you used the same password for multiple resources, make sure to change it for each account, and do not use that password in the future.
- If you believe the compromise was caused by malicious code, disconnect your computer from the Internet.
- Restart your computer in safe mode and perform a full system restore.
- Contact companies, including banks, where you have accounts as well as credit reporting companies.
- Close any accounts that may have been compromised. Watch for any unexplainable or unauthorized charges to your accounts.

It’s a scary world in which we live. Protect your digital assets just like you do your physical ones. And change your passwords from time to time. ■

2022 LOOKING FORWARD

A REFLECTION OF THINGS TO COME



NATHANIEL ABRAHAM III

The Holiday season has been upon us once again, and it always represents an opportune time to reflect. And there is no shortage of things to reflect on. 2021 was a fascinating year, preceded by a year so eventful, it is no exaggeration to say it will have left an impact and created reverberation for decades to come.

Last year, being the first to follow the infamous year of 2020, has served as a testament to our ability to endure. Throughout the unimaginable, unforeseeable circumstances, we are still here. Shaken but not stirred. The isolation of quarantine, the many losses of life and health, the sunk businesses, the redefined dynamics of work, and the list goes on and on. This massive paradigm shift has been nothing short of a challenge. A challenge that we all continue to overcome to this day.

Looking back at the trials of this year serves as a stark reminder of what we are capable of. For example, with the quarantine in place and public safety mandates implemented around the country, face to face human interaction dropped to an all-time low. This didn't stop people from gathering. Instead, we adapted the way we interact in groups. I have personally attended both business meetings and family reunions by video call. When the world came to a standstill and entire industries could no longer conduct business as per usual, so many companies adapted. Working from home, delivery services, and updated sanitary precautions are just a few of the new practices seen commonly in the modern business environment.

When faced with unfathomable hardships, we understand, we adapt, and we ultimately overcome. As the Holidays wind down and the new year rolls in, I am every bit confident that 2022 will be a continuation of this movement. Looking forward, I see a year of new normal and fresh solutions. All observable trends indicate as much. As we move forward, it is essential to reflect on the past and let the wisdom of yesteryear be a compass for the future. Reflection on the past year leaves me optimistic about the future. ■

“When faced with unfathomable hardships, we understand, we adapt, and we ultimately overcome. As the Holidays wind down and the new year rolls in, I am every bit confident that 2022 will be a continuation of this movement.”

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AWARDED BY ACP**

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**DIFFERENT CLASS
CURRICULUMS PRESENTED**

ANTICIPATION

BY JIM BUSCH

“Wisdom consists of the
anticipation of consequences.”
—Norman Cousins

Not many Americans have heard of Paul Van Riper. Van Riper is a retired Marine Corps general who won the first Gulf War—for the Iraqis! The Marine general was selected to play the role of Saddam Hussein in a war game titled Millennium Challenge. He got this job because he had a reputation for being, “sort of a devious guy.” Van Riper immersed himself in the role, dressing in an Iraqi uniform and carefully studying all the resources available to Saddam. When 60 Minutes interviewed Hussein, Van Riper studied the video to identify which books the dictator read. Before the exercise, conventional thinking was that the American team would quickly overwhelm Van Riper’s team. The “devious” Marine general, didn’t plan to fight conventional “war.” Instead of holding his stockpile of weapons in reserve, Van Riper preemptively threw them at an American fleet in one rush. The computer scoring the game determined that in an actual attack, 29 ships, including a nuclear aircraft carrier, would be sunk causing tens of thousands of casualties. Van Riper then planned a repulse of a Marine landing before the officials running the game called it off. Paul Van Riper left his opponents thoroughly confounded, embarrassed, and much wiser for the experience. By shattering the belief in their invincibility, he convinced American military planners to consider every possible consequence of their actions. This allowed them to develop contingency plans for virtually every eventuality. Instead of an inflexible set piece battle plan, the American military planners developed a flexible strategy that could evolve as the situation on the ground changed. Before a single shot was fired every chink in our armor had been plugged. As business leaders we can benefit from the lesson Paul Van Riper taught the U.S. military. In our industry, we have been taught the power of positive thinking. We don’t like to dwell on negatives but sometimes thinking about potential problems is the smart thing to do. We must think about challenges before we encounter them so we can develop a plan to deal with them. This is true in every aspect of our businesses, from anticipating customer objections to planning for severe weather to implementing cyber security protocols. It is truly wise to anticipate the consequences of our actions while there is still time to do something about them. ■

6 POINT SERVICE PHILOSOPHY FOR PUBLICATIONS



BY BOB BERTING,
BERTING
COMMUNICATIONS

After the sale, many times, there is a letdown in the manner in which a new customer is serviced. As a matter of fact, a lot of business is lost because the intensity of caring drops off and the customer is now taken for granted. The publication salesperson who sold the account sometimes doesn't know why the new customer has lost interest. Is it because the response is lacking, is it because other media competition has convinced him or her that they have made a mistake in going with your publication—or what happened? I'll give you the answer. Many times it's because the publication doesn't have a service philosophy that resonates with the new customer and takes them for granted.

Here are 6 ways for a winning service philosophy:

1. "We want your business." What do we have to do to show you how much we appreciate your business?

2. "We want to make you happy."

We not only want to make you happy but very satisfied.

3. "We are as close as your phone."

Call us if you have any questions. We want to hear if you have any questions.

4. "We take care of our contract

customers." You have made a commitment to us, so we owe you the utmost consideration.

5. "We want you to feel comfort-

able". This is important because there should be a definite comfort level with us.

6. "Confidentiality". We will never discuss your business goals with your competitors.

THE OVERALL IMPORTANT FACTOR IS TRUST

When it comes to earning a customer's trust, actions speak louder than words. Sometimes it takes a little more time and effort to forge that bond, but trust is the most important factor in developing long range relationships. The 4 elements of trust are: competence, reliability, intentions, and appearance.

COMPETENCE

When you know advertising and your publication well, you will inspire the customer's confidence. They will look to you for answers to their problems, so make yourself a well read resource. Take constant responsibility for your own career growth and sales expertise. Do the things necessary to encourage your customers to have faith in you.

RELIABILITY

Your reliability will be the most important factor in their decision to trust you. Position yourself as a problem solver in correcting prob-

lems quickly and efficiently. Like it or not, your reliability may suffer due to a careless sales secretary or absent minded service person, so insist on a high level of performance from everyone who comes in contact with your customers.

INTENTIONS

At certain times, your relationship may get off track due to some glitch in communication. But if the customer knows your intentions are good. You usually will have a good chance to redeem yourself. Emphasize that their needs come first and you'll do whatever it takes to earn their complete trust and satisfaction.

APPEARANCE

Though appearances can be deceiving, sometimes you can judge a book by its cover. If you drive a clean, late model car, and have a well-groomed, professional appearance, customers will be more than likely to view you as the representative of a reliable, well established publication. Enhance your image further with good posture, a broad vocabulary, a clear voice, and frequent eye contact. The latter says to the customer "you can trust me".

The more your customers trust you, the greater the odds that your profitable relationship with them will last a long time. ■

Bob is the author of 4 e-books for the newspaper industry, available on www.bobberting.com. Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher marketing consultant and columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.

KEEP 'EM TALKING AND LEARN MORE



BY JOHN FOUST
RALEIGH, NC

Lori told me about some simple techniques she uses in advertising presentations. “Once the other person mentions a problem,” she said, “it’s important to slow down and show some restraint. A lot of salespeople are conditioned to pounce on the slightest opening and shift the conversation. They can’t wait to talk about the ways their products can solve the problem. For example, if the prospect says, ‘My advertising is not generating enough traffic on weekends,’ the salesperson is tempted to jump in with a suggestion to run more ads on weekends.

“That’s a bad move,” she said. “Although that kind of instant-answer approach may seem like good idea at the time, it’s too early to propose a solution to the problem. So instead of expressing an opinion, I encourage the other person to keep on talking. That keeps them on their train of thought. The more they talk, the more I learn. And as a result, I might find out that their weekday traffic has been declining along with the weekend business. That would call for a different solution.

“To keep them talking, it helps to use a minimum number of words, sometimes just one or two,” she explained. “I’ve learned some techniques from sales seminars and books, but I’ve also picked up ideas by watching good interviewers on television.”

Lori knows the importance of looking below the surface. Here are some phrases that work:

1. Say “that’s terrible” or that’s awful,” when a problem is mentioned. Say “that’s good,” when the news is positive. These simple phrases can help you get in step with the other person. “When you agree with what they’re saying, they usually keep right on talking,” she said. “You’re

sympathizing with their bad news and giving them a verbal high five for their good news.”

2. Repeat their last phrase as a question. This is a well-known technique that has been around for years. When you hear, “We’re not getting enough weekend traffic,” say “You’re not getting enough weekend traffic?” and raise your voice on the last word to emphasize the question. That’s less formal than saying, “That’s an unusual statement. I’d like to know more.”

3. Say “How do you mean?” instead of “What do you mean?” Although your old grammar teacher would scold you for using “how” in place of “what,” “how” is a friendlier way to ask for more information. “What do you mean” can sound abrupt and defensive.

4. Say “Hmm.” “Crazy as it sounds, this is one of the best ways to keep the momentum going,” Lori said. “Think of all the different things you can express with ‘Hmm.’ With different inflection, you can convey agreement, happiness, surprise, sympathy or sadness.

“All of this is intended to help them flesh out problems. As the conversation moves along, you can ask some questions to tighten the focus and help them see the long-term implications of their specific situation. Then you’ll be in a better position to propose a solution.”

Hmm. That’s good. ■

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

hanrahan.in@att.net ©2021

A new year is upon us... and I am still working on my to-do list from January 2021! I admit, I also did not catch any of the sessions from *Adobe MAX—The Creativity Conference*. My will power was weak and the pool, beach and buffets beckoned. Sorry—not sorry!

However, I can report on the change from *InDesign Magazine* to *CreativePro Magazine*, but will have to wait because I have St. Nick on my mind (real time—not publishing time) and so I, too, will present some more simple holiday design tips that appeared in many of my ads! After all, we still have last minute holiday ads to do!

Shhhh... Vectors at work



Vector art saved many of my ads! Some of the above icons were from a group of ornamental graphics from some years ago, but talk about multi-tasking, oh my!

These would be perfect to use as a “fill.” The border has got to go, but the shapes are simple and easily recognizable, so are great for small ads and small spaces.



See our special
section Gift Guide

Only 25 shopping
days until Christmas!



MOST STORES OPEN
TILL 11:00PM!

Let it snow...

especially once the holidays are over! Snowflakes work well in an ad because you can vary the size, or even use just a part of the artwork... not to mention that they can be rotated, recolored and placed on top of each other. Some of the vector snowflakes would be easier to use if I dropped an Illustrator file directly into *InDesign* so I could change color more readily. However, I can alter this by going under *Objects>Effects>Transparency* to adjust the values.



Sometimes “Type” is All You Need

I have chosen the typeface *Zelda Regular* (from Mighty Deals, of course). The font size is 30 points. The first sample was the original type. The second sample I have add swashes from the *Glyphs Panel*; and I increased the “H” and “S” to 36 point for a bit more contrast.

Holiday Savings
Holiday Savings
Holiday Savings

Finally, I took the streamlined swash version, increased the size, gave it another color to separate it from the original two, added a white .75 stroke and a drop shadow. To use as a headline/artwork I hung an ornament from the “s.”

It is ready to be saved into a “Library.”

There are also many script typefaces (not the same as an italic!) that would work very well with this option.

Add Artwork

Holidays always brought the “add artwork” phrase to the instructions from the advertisers. The hard part is keeping the art from becoming a “fill” for some empty space and because a lot of our ads were small sizes—2x2, 2x3, 2x4—it was difficult.

We subscribed to *Metro Newspaper Service* for our “clip art,” but many of these files were suitable for large space ads—and made up of many great little “pieces” that I could easily use in small ads. (Maybe this was when I appreciated the endless possibilities of vector art...)



In the example above, the geometric shape of a gift package can fit into a slightly longer heading with planned “breaks.”

In the sample below, the art was used to fill the space created by the varying sizes of the words, breaking up the negative space and tying the headline to the art.

Shapes created by “negative space” in an ad can actually be more dominant than the “positive space” (those elements that are words, photos or artwork). Combining text with the art creates a unifying visual.



When text needs to be set off, you can always box that info and add art to the box.

The problem with just filling “extra space” with art can result in a “spotty” look...no balance or unity. Art should almost never overpower the message in the ad.

At times it may work, but small space ads just don’t have room.

The above approach takes the idea of a slightly confined area but gives it a holiday twist. You can’t go wrong with a bow or two... or holly. Holly always works. The idea is for it to be subtle and just suggest the idea of a wrapped gift without actually creating a “package.” That’s the difference between design and decorate. Sound familiar?

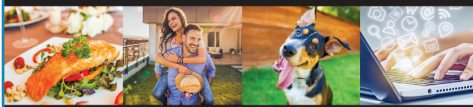
Enjoy my little St. Nick gifts ... and see you next year!



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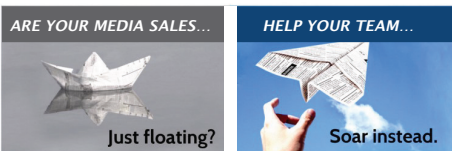


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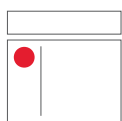
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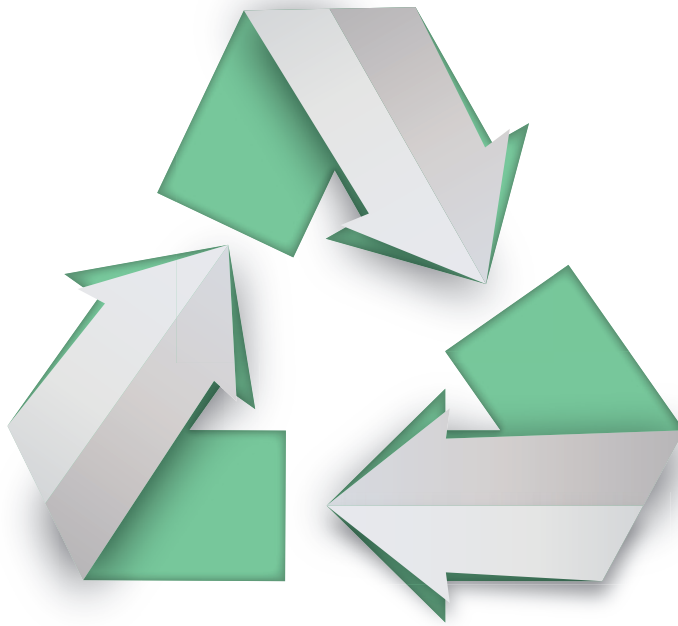
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