

Are You Vulnerable?

By Bob Grossman

This is the point of the summer where I start looking forward to broadening my education on one of the biggest threats facing the world. Cybersecurity is the challenge facing businesses of all sizes as well as governmental entities. If it has an IP address it can get hacked. And since we are looking at a future where there will be billions of connected devices in the world, it is high time we all become better educated on what we can do to mitigate the risks.

First things first: Update your software and keep it updated on your devices -- all of your devices. If you are one that thinks it's cool to operate your toaster remotely from your office, then make sure you are running the latest update. IoT-connected devices have been estimated to number 26 billion by the year 2020 according to Gartner, opening up a whole new dynamic in vulnerability.

Second, know your connection. Do you really think it is smart to do your banking while sitting on the airplane? Just because the airtime is expensive does not mean it cannot be hacked.

How about your internet service provider? While AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile, Comcast and Time Warner do a good job with their security, there are some smaller players that are not quite up to snuff. They should be held to the same standard. I know the FCC is looking into it. All ISPs are your first line of defense. Ask what yours is doing to protect their network and, ultimately, your business or family.

Third, got passwords? Change them often. Use one the many apps available to help you keep track. Also, while dual-factor authentication has been popular, NIST has recently come out with a report that says that if you are getting a one-time code over SMS, then it can be intercepted and is not as secure as one would have thought. Google Authenticator is a great workaround, and other apps are coming.

Do you let anybody on your network? Knowing who is getting on your networks is really key. If they click through on the wrong email to the wrong site then your network can be compromised.

Finally, do you have policies in place to protect yourself? A little thought and the right help can keep your network safe. Most attacks are not as sophisticated as one might think, and there are vendors out there to help.

I am off to Black Hat in a couple of days to learn about the latest advances in cybersecurity and who is there to help.

More to come ...

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