

Data Hardly Ever Dies

Encrypt Your Warrior's Laptops

Flight delays, missed connections and lost luggage have become the standard inconveniences of business travel. Now, on top of these travel horrors, unsuspecting road warriors are facing a new danger: data thieves. These thieves lurk wherever chaos provides cover like airports, hotels and convention centers.

According to a recent survey, one in every ten laptops will be stolen during its lifetime.

For data thieves, a pilfered laptop is as good as gold. The laptop, software included, will fetch about \$1,000 on the black market, chump change for an ambitious crook. The real value of the machine lies in the data stored within.

You see, electronic data does not die—it lives on in removable storage devices, lost or discarded hard drives, on CDs and in e-mail. Think of the information that your corporate executives have stored on their work-issued mobile devices. When you take into consideration the intellectual property, customer lists and financial details, it comes as no surprise that a typical laptop contains data worth between one and five million dollars on the black market.

Finding an interested buyer for this pirated data requires little more than an Internet hookup and a bit of technical savvy. The Web is a virtual bazaar for all manner of illicit products, from mass-market goods to those that are highly specialized. Not only will the thief find a buyer, but the Internet practically guarantees that the parties in this illegal transaction will remain anonymous.

Put that Data in a Vault

Like many organizations, UNICCO Service Company, one of the country's largest facilities services firms, has become increasingly reliant on laptop computers and mobile storage devices. As a result, the Boston-based company needed to take steps to secure its data on thousands of devices so that the information would be secure even in the event of theft or loss. To solve this problem, UNICCO



turned to a vault approach (Rocket Software's Mobile Security Suite), which creates computer-based lockboxes that can be accessed by authorized users but are invisible to everyone else. "One of the reasons we chose (this approach) is that all of the protection features can be centrally managed," said Bill Jenkins, Senior IT director at UNICCO. "More than 70 percent of our workforce is mobile, meaning that they are frequently taking their computers out

of the office. Every person that has a laptop in the company may also have a memory stick, so that's also a crucial area of interest for us. Obviously, there is a huge potential for loss, so we are committed to protecting that information as well as data stored on laptop computers."

Most of the public attention on the repercussions of data theft has focused on the potential damage to consumers. The Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, which as its name implies, tracks cases of privacy breaches, reported in 2006 that more than 93 million individuals had their personal data exposed as a result of a data breach.