A Consultant's View

Privacy and Security Balance

Shakespeare's queen, Elizabeth I, lived under the threat of assassination from foreign powers. Religious disputes fueled the efforts along with the dash for colonies. She endured the attempted invasion by the Spanish Armada. In response, she employed secret police and a network of spies to protect her. The current NSA spying program would have suited her fine.

Our civilization needs both sharing and secrecy. When there is no privacy, new ideas, products, and companies do not form and economies stagnate. When organizations and groups can operate in total secrecy, some people use that secrecy to oppress others and to cause harm. In order to keep improving our lives, we need to find the balance between privacy and sharing.

Never Have Perfect Security

Corporations may operate as if others are trying to assassinate them. Cyber-warfare is targeting corporations as much as or more than other governments. In today's world, often government spying is used to gather information for rivals. The estimate of what stolen information has cost U.S. companies runs into the $100+ billion.

The problem is that if a government can read our communications, so can a rival. We, too, need privacy in order to keep plans, discussions, and communications secure from those who want to use the information against us. For example, Bloomberg claims that companies are watching IP addresses from rival companies to see what kinds of Google searches people at the rival are doing. The current protocol for electronic mail is so insecure that it should not be used by anyone needing privacy let alone the Secretary of State.

In order to be secure, corporations need to have enough security to keep government agencies out of their communications.

On the individual level, there are a whole series of companies from Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Skype profiting from letting people share data online. A deep question has to be whether or not they should share those profits with those who are generating the data.

While there are many companies trying to replicate the success of the leaders in social media, there are several companies looking to upend the social media whole business model and put the control of the data back into the hands of the consumer. Companies such as Wickr and MobiSocial allow for posts to really disappear or never get past the few people that you want them to go to.

There are a number of places working to provide a radical level of privacy both to individuals and to corporations.

There are tools out there for secure email, instant messaging, and voice over IP communications. These tools can, with proper training and set up, provide secure communications between two parties. Communications with a group is far more difficult.

None of these tools are sufficient by themselves. A combination is required to get full privacy. It is proper that it is a lot of work to get privacy. In that way, only those who need it pay that price.

Are you saying No enough?

We are constantly bombarded with requests for our time. Currently, time is our most valuable asset. The reason why many of us feel like we are not getting enough done is that we feel the expectation of doing far more than is possible. We often need to start by saying no more.

The computer based calendar is one of the biggest problems with getting stuff done. Because our calendar is visible to others, they often steal our most important time and make us less effective.

We do well to say no to time thieves because each of us has a different peak operating period. Others are unable to know when that peak period is and often will assume that everyone has the same operating cycle. One person claims that we have only two good working hours per day. The rest of the day is eaten up with meetings, phone calls, and interruptions.

A current fad is to fill up our schedules with planned activity. It is almost like we have to check off 100 or more items from our "bucket list" before we die. The result is that we do not have the time to think about whether or not those items are the best things to have on that list. People don't get the full value of those experiences.

Each decade of our lives, our priorities go through a significant change. Marriage, children, their teen years, college years, and empty nest years all have different priorities. We do well to spend time every few years to rethink what we have on our schedules. We need time away from activities to be able to reflect on what truly is important. We need to say "No." to more activities.

Risky World - Big Data Algorithms

Recently, one of the more popular "big data" algorithms was tested against a reference set. The algorithm could not produce repeatable results and was only 90% accurate. While that is sufficient for getting business guidance, it is not sufficient for detailed work.

Prairie Trail Software, Inc

3821 Beaumont Lane
Plano, TX 75023

Address Service Requested

Prairie Trail Software, Inc.

Making *Information* from Streams of Data

Custom Gift and Loyalty Solutions

For the Retail and Restaurant Trade

We provide technology for

Merchant Services

We pull the whole system together
 - or just the parts you need

Custom Gift and Loyalty Card Servers

Database Design and Management

Web Services and Servers

Custom solutions to meet your needs

Call 1800-618-4199
www.prairietrail.com

Prairie Trail Software, Inc

3821 Beaumont Lane
Plano, TX 75023

Address Service Requested

Prairie Trail Software, Inc.

Making *Information* from Streams of Data

We pull the whole system together
 - or just the parts you need

Custom Software Solutions

Business Process Automation

For the Business Improvement

Database Design and Management

Web Services and Servers

Custom solutions to meet your needs

We provide technology for

More Profit

Call 1800-618-4199
www.prairietrail.com