



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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- Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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## RECENT CASE STUDIES OF RISK IN INFORMATION SECURITY

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### ABSTRACT

*Risk is omnipresent in every walk of life, whether it is in day-to-day personal life or in business or in information technology sector. Every human activity involves a certain amount of risk. Even after meticulous planning anything go wrong unexpectedly and we may have to suffer a loss. In this modern age of rapidly changing business scenario, individuals and organizations rely to a great extent on automated computer systems to store, retrieve, process, and exchange information. Organizations use the information stored on these systems to conduct essential business operations. Therefore organizations need to protect the information from unauthorized access and potential destruction. With increasing dependence on computers for information storage and retrieval and with more number of persons becoming knowledgeable in the intricacies of information handling, there is a corresponding increase in cyber crimes. The number of crimes have increased recently thus putting at grave risk the business of corporations. Of late, there have been a large number of cases of abuse of computer information. The paper reviews information on the recent happenings involving risks in information technology and suggests methods of preventing such heinous cyber crimes.*

### KEYWORDS

Case Studies, Information Technology, Information Security, Risk, Risk Management.

### INTRODUCTION

**R**isk is omnipresent in every walk of life, whether it is in day-to-day personal life or in business or in information technology sector. Every human activity involves a certain amount of risk. Even after meticulous planning anything go wrong unexpectedly and we may have to suffer a loss. In this modern age of rapidly changing business scenario, individuals and organizations rely to a great extent on automated computer systems to store, retrieve, process, and exchange information. Organizations use the information stored on these systems to conduct essential business operations. Therefore organizations need to protect the information from unauthorized access and potential destruction.

In olden times, computer system of an organization was developed, used, and maintained in isolation from other areas of business. These computer systems were centrally located and were responsible for all business operations. However, in today's modern Internet world of information browsing, the information of an organization has unwittingly become vulnerable to misuse by unauthorized individuals who has gained easy access to such classified information. IT managers and network administrators face an increasing challenge of managing and protecting information and network resources from unauthorized access. Missing of confidential information from an organization may prove harmful for the reputation of the institution and it may loose valuable clients. To avoid such situations, organizations must secure information from misuse and damage.

With increasing dependence on computers for information storage and retrieval and with more number of persons becoming knowledgeable in the intricacies of information handling, there is a corresponding increase in cyber crimes. The number of crimes have increased recently thus putting at grave risk the business of corporations. Of late, there have been a large number of cases of abuse of computer information.

### WHAT IS RISK?

Risk often is used to mean uncertainty. It creates both problems and opportunities for businesses and individuals in almost every walk of life. Executives, employees, investors, students, householders, travelers and farmers all confront risk and deal with it in various ways. Sometimes a particular risk is consciously analyzed and managed; other times risk is simply ignored, perhaps out of lack of knowledge of consequences.

### UNDERSTANDING RISK

Even in day-to-day life, we unintentionally or unknowingly pay attention to the possibility of suffering loss. For example, we look both ways before crossing the road or we research an organization's prospects before accepting a job offer. Risk is related to uncertainty. The more risk we take, the more are our chances to lose or gain. However, by quantifying risk, we can make rational decisions whether or not the risk is worth taking.

### DEFINITION OF RISK

Risk can be defined as the possibility of suffering loss. For example, the data on the intranet of an organization is at risk if virtual employees, such as the employees on contract, can access the data. Therefore measuring the probability of the occurrence of an adverse event enables one to estimate the impact of the risk. For example, skiing in bad weather poses a high probability of danger, and therefore, the threat to one's life is high.

Even though risk and uncertainty are used interchangeably the main concern here is with the type of uncertainty in which the possible outcomes are either "loss" or "no loss," rather than with uncertainties that also present the opportunity for profit. It is worth noting here that organizations are considering the broader set of risks that they face, regardless of type. This new definition reflects the realization that risks from different sources interact to define the overall risk profile of the firm and recognizes the importance of all forms of risk that affects a firm's ability to realize its strategic objectives (NIIT, 2004).

### CASE STUDIES OF RISK IN INFORMATION SECURITY

With wide spread use of Internet and communication facilities, there has been a considerable increase in the number of cyber crimes damaging the functioning of even well established corporations. Some of the case studies involving the pilferage of information and their abuse by causing enormous loss to leading corporations are highlighted below.

**PIRACY OF FILM BEFORE RELEASE**

In January 2010 there was a sensational cyber crime of the film 'Jaggubai' starred by actor Sarath Kumar was clandestinely copied on CDs and uploaded on Internet even before its release in theatres for public viewing.

**BOOK CLANDESTINELY UPLOADED ON INTERNET**

Another actor Parthiban had lodged a complaint with the Commissioner of Police, Chennai that his book he wrote and published in 1995 was sold at Rs. 200/-. He stopped selling his book in 2000. Recently he had detected that his book was clandestinely uploaded in Internet and the culprit was selling it at Rs. 490/- and thus made a roaring money to the tune of several crores of rupees.

**CAT FIASCO**

The country witnessed the great fiasco of the computer based entrance test of CAT for admission to elite IIMs in the country in December, 2009. The computers could not be booted on the first day of the test which was later attributed to virus attack. The whole operation was organized by an American firm Prometric. A large number of management aspirants were terribly shaken by this colossal failure of information technology.

**FAKE WEBSITE AND FAKE EMPLOYMENT**

Two engineering graduates created a website that resembled the original website of an information technology company at an Internet browsing centre where they gave false identity particulars. A security guard of the genuine company provided the duo the database of job applicants. The duo asked a few candidates to appear for an interview. They used a prepaid SIM card that had a fake address. When three candidates responded, the accused asked a few questions and said that the outcome of the interview would be communicated online. A couple of days later, the three received e-mails which stated that they had been selected for the job and they had to deposit Rs. 30,000 in the company's account. Believing this, the trio deposited money in the account of a nationalized bank which was actually that of a person in Assam. The duo had stolen his debit card for transacting through ATM located in remote areas. Like this the duo had cheated to the tune of Rs. 2.4 lakh. The police have stated that the method adopted was new (Vijay Kumar, 2010).

**STOLEN EMAILS**

At a recently held Climate Summit at Copenhagen, Denmark several thousand files and email messages stolen from one of the world's foremost climate research institutes were circulated. This action set off a debate and led some who oppose limits on greenhouse gas emissions, and at least one influential country, Saudi Arabia, to question the scientific basis for the Copenhagen talks (Revkin and Broder, 2009).

**DIGITS ON THUMBS AND INDEX FINGER CHANGED**

Lin Rong, a Chinese woman initially entered Japan with a fake passport and overstayed there illegally. So, she was deported to China in 2007. Now she has managed to sneak back into Japan after surgery to change the skin on her thumbs and index fingers. However, she was arrested for illegal entry. The skin patches from the digits on her right and left hands were removed and then re-grafted onto the matching digits of the opposite hand. Her main objective was to fool the biometric security system at the airport because Japan's airport security system matches the finger prints of incoming foreigners to a database of wanted criminals and past deportees. Police noticed that her fingers had unnatural scars when Lin was arrested sometime ago for faking a marriage with a Japanese man. The woman had told the police that she had paid some 100,000 yuan (\$16,000) for the surgery, leading investigators to believe Chinese brokers are arranging such fingerprints changes.

**FILM PIRACY**

Samantha Tumpach, a 22-year old female film fan from Chicago, Illinois during her surprise sister's birthday celebration at a movie theatre captured for three minutes a pivotal segment of the film The Twilight Saga: New Moon on her video camera while taping a part of the party. On a complaint from the theatre bosses the police arrested Tumpach and put her behind bars for two days. Now she faces serious piracy charges.

**VOIP MISUSED BY TERRORISTS**

It has now come to light that terrorists including the 26/11 Mumbai attackers, increasingly use popular global VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) engine provided by operator Skype. In this system analog voice signals are converted to digital format, compressed into Internet Protocol packets and transmitted over NET. For this, VoIP systems employ audio codecs (programs) which encode speech as digital audio. VoIP thus turns a standard Internet connection into a way to place free calls, bypassing phone networks. Because Skype has not shared its encryption code with India, it has become difficult for the Indian Intelligence agencies to intercept conversation of suspected terrorists (Chatterjee, 2009).

**GOOF UP BY BA**

British Airways (BA) offered in October 2009 a \$40 round trip fare which includes taxes, fees, and surcharge, from any city in the US to any destination in India. Scores of eager beaver flyers snagged the tickets in the two-hour window on October 2. Later BA said it was a systems' glitch. The airline claimed that it was actually filing for a \$40 increase in fares between the US and India and somewhere down the line the plus sign got knocked off (Rajghatta, 2009).

**FALTERING BY PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT**

Sometime last year President of India was to visit Udipi in Karnataka. Normally it is a practice by president secretariat to send minute-by-minute programme to district authorities for necessary security arrangement. But this time such a programme was sent to a software engineer in Bangalore who was not at all connected with the issue. Here the officials of president secretariat goofed up. They would have landed up in deep trouble had the information landed in the hands of antisocial groups.

**CONCLUSION OF CASE STUDIES**

All these above case studies have highlighted the vulnerability of information to be stolen by unscrupulous elements for furthering their own interest thus causing serious damages to organizations and individuals.

**MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

After sources of risk are identified and measured, a decision can be made as to how the risk should be handled. The process used to systematically manage risk exposures is known as a risk management. Risk management is a systematic approach to identify, analyze, and control areas or events that can cause unwanted damage or loss to an individual or organization. Risk management helps to:

- (a) Assess the risks involved in a project or business
- (b) Systematically manage and reduce the risks to an acceptable level
- (c) Develop cost-effective strategies and action plans to mitigate the risks

Risk management begins during the planning phase of a project and continues throughout the project development cycle. The process of risk management is dynamic in nature and involves making decisions and following up of decisions with actions to prevent the risk from materializing in future.

**UNDERSTANDING INFORMATION SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT**

Now-a-days organizations are investing heavily on computer systems and information technology processes and methods to gain a competitive edge in the market. Critical business information is being stored, processed, and transferred through the electronic medium. However, apart from the advantages, technology brings various threats to information and networks resources. Spams, viruses, spoofs, eavesdrops, and tamperers are some of the issues which have, of late, become very serious.

**INFORMATION SECURITY (IS) RISK MANAGEMENT**

The IS risk management helps the organizations to identify and manage the potential risks associated with information and information technology in a cost-effective way. The IS risk management deals with all the components of information security risk, which are assets, threats, vulnerabilities, risk impacts, and

countermeasures. Usually, organizations set up an IS risk management system team to identify and analyze technology-based risks. IS risk management is an integral part of an organization's overall risk management system.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this modern age of widespread Internet use for various business activities of an organization, it has unwittingly exposed the confidential information of these organizations to hackers and antisocial elements. This has endangered the security of information of the organizations to very high level of risks. There have been an increasing number of cyber crimes that are taking place worldwide. This is the result of wide spread use of Internet and communication facilities. As the hardware and software involved in the equipments are relatively simple which could be handled easily by persons with criminal intent who could put this for wrong purposes thus causing damages to organizations and individuals. The research, therefore, intends to identify various risks associated with information security and to develop a model to deal with such risks and to make the information security tamper-proof.

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