

# BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY QUARTERLY

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## SPAM! Let's kill it!

By Richard Pusey

**What is Spam?** Spam is unsolicited commercial email (UCE). Any commercial mailing that you did not ask for is spam. With the ever increasing number of spammers, spam filtering software is fast becoming a must-have for businesses and individuals alike. Spam filters block spam based on the sender and/or message content.

There are **two places** one can try to block spam with a filter. One is at the server and the other is at the pc itself.

A **server-based approach** is good if you have an on-site network administrator (with time on his hands) and have Microsoft Outlook on the desktop pcs (Many spam filters are designed to work with

Outlook). There are several products on the market such as MailFrontiers Anti-Spam Gateway and NetIQ's Mail Marshal SMTP 5.5 to name a few. We have personally had good luck with Mail Marshal.

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### —NEWS BRIEFS —

**MyDoom Virus—Fastest Spreading Worm Yet!** See page 5 for more...

**Microsoft offers reward for virus perpetrators.** See page 5 for more...

**Two spam filters for home and business.** See page 5 for more...

**DVD burners offer an affordable backup solution** that beats a ZIP drive. See page 5 for more...

**Have an issue or technology concern** that you would like to see an article on? Let us know by faxing back the enclosed fax-back form. We would greatly appreciate it!

## Just for Health Care Providers

### Standard Health Identifier Adopted

US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

On January 23, 2004, HHS published the Final Rule that adopts the **National Provider Identifier (the NPI) as the standard unique health identifier** for health care providers. This rule becomes effective 16 months after its publication date (May 23, 2005).

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## Just for NonProfits

### Microsoft software, Cisco hardware for pennies on the dollar just for having a 501(c)3!

By Mark R. Torello

Struggling with Windows 98 on old pcs? Do you think that upgrading 10 pcs will cost thousands? Guess again! A new operating system such as Windows XP Professional upgrade that costs \$450, can be obtained for \$8 if you're a nonprofit. What's the catch you ask? There is none! Red tape? Just a little.....

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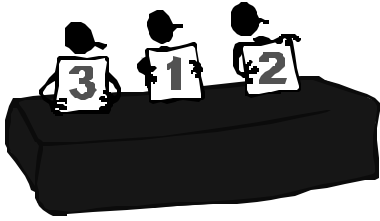
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## Standard health identifier adopted

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Providers need not take any action to apply for NPIs until that date.

This rule is available at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-1149.pdf>

The CMS web site at <http://cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/hipaa2> will also provide a link to this rule.

**The compliance date** for all covered entities except small health plans is **May 23, 2007**; the compliance date for small health plans is May 23, 2008. When the NPI is implemented, covered entities will use only the NPI to identify providers in all standard transactions. **Legacy numbers (e.g. UPIN, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Numbers, CHAMPUS Number, Medicaid Number, etc.) will not be permitted.** Providers will no longer have to keep track of multiple numbers to identify themselves in standard transactions with one or more health plans. (The Taxpayer Identifying Number may need to be reported for tax purposes as required by the implementation specifications.) An NPI is expected to last indefinitely; it will not change over time.

**The NPI is all numeric.** It is 10 positions in length (9 plus a check-digit in the last position). It is easily accommodated in all standard transactions. It contains no embedded information about the provider that it identifies. At the current rate of provider growth, NPIs will be available for 200 years.

**Providers will be assigned NPIs upon successful completion of an application form.** The form can be submitted on paper or over the Internet. Once a provider has been assigned an NPI, the provider must furnish updates to its data within 30 days of any changes.

The National Provider System, being built under a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) contract, will process the applications and updates, ensure the uniqueness of the provider, and generate the NPIs. It will also produce reports and information based on requests from the health care industry and others.

A single entity, known as **the enumerator**, and performing under a CMS contract, will operate the NPS. The enumerator will receive applications and updates from providers. The enumerator will assist providers in completing applications, in furnishing updates, and will be responsible for resolving problems and answering questions. The enumerator will notify the providers of their NPIs. The enumerator will also process requests for, and disseminate information containing, providers' NPIs.

## HIPAA compliance deadlines to remember:



**HIPAA standards for the security** of electronic health information: April 21, 2005. You should be scheduling a security review early in 2004.

**National Provider Identifier (NPI):** Application deadline: May 23, 2007

## Health care practices need to schedule their IT security review early in 2004

By Mark R. Torello

Many health care practices will wait until the compliance deadline of the Security Rule (April 21, 2005) to review and button up their IT security for compliance with the rule. By then, these same practices will find it difficult to find available, qualified security consultants to provide the compliance review and remediation. Don't let your practice get into this situation. There's still plenty of time. The rule and criteria are finalized so compliance can be achieved now. Plus, there are other, even more compelling reasons to button up your security.....such as thwarting off malicious spam, viruses, and hackers that can lead to practice disruption, downtime, lost medical data, unnecessary expense, and more.



## Microsoft software, Cisco hardware for pennies on the dollar just for having a 501(c)3!

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You must fax in a copy of your 501(c)3. Some sources only let you purchase once per year so planning is important.

Since we specialize in nonprofits, we look out for their pocket-books and make it our business to know all the sources for nonprofit discount programs. We have helped many of our clients save thousands. Honest. Give us a call and let us help you plan to save thousands too!



### DELL Authorized Reseller

Call The Technology Group, LLC for **lower than web site prices** on DELL computers for your business. Call for a quote at 860-524-4400.

Ask **why the Optiplex line from Dell is a better choice** than the Dimension line. Confused about **which laptop is right for you?** Ask about the difference between Inspiron and Latitude laptops. We can help! Call Mark at 860-524-4433.

## Have Critical Staff on Vacation? We Can Help!

By Jerry Pangakis

If those "bumps" in the regular operation of your business are causing you grief, we have a solution!

Our sister company, Charter Oak Resources, LLC is a specialized staffing company that concentrates primarily on temporary and permanent placement of accounting, financial and book-keeping personnel.

Over the past two years, we have recommended Charter Oak to several of our clients who **needed help to iron out those "bumps" in the road.** Accountants for small manufacturers and bookkeepers and financial executives for nonprofits are recent examples where clients got the help they needed for as long as they needed it.

Charter Oak Resources employs experienced individuals who have serviced hundreds of clients in the Central Connecticut area for over 15 years. They have provided **accountants, controllers, CFO's, bookkeepers, payroll specialists, billers and other specialized staff** to a wide variety of industries and businesses.

This professional resource, another Whittlesey & Hadley affiliate, stands ready to help your company when staffing problems arise.

Call Mark Torello at 860-524-4433. You'll be glad you did!

## SPAM! Let's kill it!



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If you do not have an on-site administrator with the time to spend with a server based approach, a **PC based solution**, such as Norton's AntiSpam 2004, InBoxer, or MailWasher, will be right for you.

The big **drawback** to any of these solutions is the **false positive (the filter thinks a good email is spam)**. This requires a human to sift through the entire list of filtered email to see if any legitimate messages were blocked. With a server based approach, the network administrator must do this. With the PC based solutions, each PC user must do it themselves.

**To prevent your mail server from sending spam** to others, you should have "mail relaying" turned off. All mail servers should have it turned off unless needed. However, the spammers have found a way around this already. Some high end firewalls such as the Mail Guard in the Cisco PIX firewall can thwart most savvy spammers.

One thing is for sure: **spammers will continue their fun** regardless of regulations or laws and will continue to flood the world with spam. Now we must add the task of filtering and deleting, hoping we don't delete that email we actually needed!

## For the technologically thirsty

### Choosing a firewall for your organization (Firewalls 101)

By Jeff Gerace

In today's Internet ready business world, **addressing Internet security** should be of utmost importance in your business plan. Many businesses do not understand the danger of the Internet until they **have paid the price**, either with damage or loss due to malicious activity. The best way to secure your network is to make sure you have a multi-tiered security plan, starting with a firewall.

**First let's understand** a little bit more about the function and operation of a firewall, then we'll talk about how to choose one.

All **Internet communication** is accomplished by the exchange of packets of data. A packet contains information you create on the computer and send across the Internet. A firewall isolates your computer from the Internet by inspecting each packet as it arrives at either side of the firewall, then determines whether it should be allowed to pass or be blocked. Essentially, two machines "agree" that they are connected and the receiving machine sends back "acknowledgement packets" to let the sending machine know that the data was received. Network engineers will create rules (for allowed traffic) based on the type of traffic that needs to get through the firewall.



**How does my firewall know what to let through?**

**A firewall uses a technique** called "packet filtering". During this process, the firewall inspects packets to make sure that the packets coming into your network were requested. A firewall can easily determine whether an arriving packet is initiating a new connection or continuing an existing conversation. Packets arriving as part of an established connection would be allowed to pass through the firewall, but packets representing new connection attempts (i.e. a hacker from the outside) would be discarded. Thus, a firewall can permit the establishment of outbound connections while blocking any un-requested connection attempts from the outside.

Many higher end firewalls perform a higher level of inspection called "**stateful**" **packet inspection**. Instead of simply examining the header information of the first packet (IP address, destination port, source port, etc.) and allowing all subsequent packets in the session to pass, each packet is examined thoroughly, including its payload (the data content of the packet). A "stateful" firewall can help prevent situations where packet headers are altered by a malicious source to masquerade as legitimate traffic, when in fact they often carry worms, viruses, or Trojan horses. Yikes!

Now that you understand a little bit about how a firewall works,

here's how to select one: **Let the experts do the testing for you.** There is an organization called the *International Computer Security Association (ICSA Labs)*, which is a division of the TruSecure Corporation. One of the functions of **ICSA** is to test firewalls and make sure they meet a minimum of security requirements. ICSA certification is globally recognized and accepted. **Make sure the firewall product you are considering is ICSA Certified.**

**Some other factors** to include when choosing are;

- Ease of use
- Ability of the firewall to detect common attacks
- Management and logging options
- Intrusion detection ability
- VPN (virtual private network) ability
- Expandability
- Cost

**One of the biggest misconceptions** about a firewall is that it's better if it costs more. This is not always the case. Though most firewalls provide more features as the cost increases, many of these features may not be needed. The best course of action is to sit down with your network security consultant and discuss your concerns and options. There is no single best solution because the solution must be tailored to the specific needs of the organization.

That said, here are some of the **leading firewall brands** on the market today: Cisco, Checkpoint, Sonicwall, Watchguard, Netgear, and Linksys. Microsoft has a built in ICSA certified firewall called ISA Server which comes with Small Business Server Premium Edition.

## For our nonprofit MIP users

MIP

### MIP Tricks & Tips

By Deborah Swanson

- ? Use the Report Binder feature to group reports and print them together. Ideal for running monthly report sets for Board and Management.
- ? Review the effects of unposted documents. The Normal Trial Balance and Expanded General Ledger reports both have the option to include unposted transactions in the report. Just check the box on the Options Tab of the report. You can also filter for specific unposted Session IDs on the Filter Tab. The report title will include the words "Unposted transactions included in report".
- ? Speed up monthly budget entry. Use the Memorize Document feature to memorize a budget entry for one month. Then recall the memorized document each month to create the budget for the entire year.
- ? Do you have questions about MIP? Call Deborah Swanson at 860-524-4465 for answers!

### Best Software Now Has 3 Great Fundraising Solutions

By Deborah Swanson

Nonprofit organizations looking for fundraising and donor tracking software have **three good reasons** to look to Best Software. Paradigm, GT Pro and Millennium are Best's entry level, mid level and high level fundraising systems. All interface with MIP Fund Accounting. But even if your organization uses another accounting product, these are

worth a look. Below is a list of the basics:

#### Paradigm:

Starts at \$2,900. Very user friendly and easy to learn without formal training

#### GT Pro:

Starts at \$9,000. Modular system with SQL database option

#### Millennium:

Starts at \$29,000. For the most sophisticated fundraising needs

## MyDoom Virus: The Fastest Spreading Worm Yet!

By Mark R. Torello

MyDoom.a, a **mass-mailing worm**, masquerades as a test message. There is **now a second version, MyDoom.b**. Both take advantage of the ZIP file format's ability to pass through e-mail filters. They also use the program Kazaa to spread. Within the first few hours, MyDoom.a **spread quickly around the world**; in contrast, MyDoom.b is not spreading as quickly. MyDoom.a contains a payload that launches a denial-of-service (DoS) attack on the Web site [www.sco.com](http://www.sco.com), and MyDoom.b launches a DoS attack on the Web site [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com). MyDoom.a and MyDoom.b will self-terminate on February 12, 2004 and March 1, 2004 respectively. Because these viruses spread via e-mail and could severely slow or shut down email servers with excess traffic, they can be extremely damaging.

This virus **triggered the first alert from the newly formed Department of Homeland Security's cyber alert system**.

#### How it works

Both versions arrive primarily as e-mail. The subject line reads "Mail Delivery System," "Test," or "Mail Transaction Failed." The body text reads:

"The message contains Unicode characters and has been sent as a binary attachment." The attached files may include:

document.zip, document.pif, doc.scr,message.pif, readme.exe, file.zip, message.zip, oia.zip, text.zip

Both versions of MyDoom are known to open Windows Notepad and display garbage text; in addition, they may open ports 3127 through 3198 to listen for commands from a remote attacker.

On February 1, MyDoom.a **successfully launched a denial-of-service attack on sco.com, shutting down the Linux vendor's Web site**. On February 3, MyDoom.b **will attempt to shut down Microsoft.com**.

#### Prevention & Removal

If you receive MyDoom, do not open the attached file. Delete the e-mail message. The major antivirus companies have updated their software to help protect and remove these worms.

### —NEWS BRIEFS—

#### **Microsoft offers reward**

Microsoft will pay a \$250,000 reward for information resulting in the arrest and conviction of those responsible for unleashing the MyDoom.b worm.

#### **Two spam filters we recommend for home and business:**

InBoxer—For workstation level filtering. [www.inboxer.com](http://www.inboxer.com)

Mail Marshal—For server level filtering. [www.mailmarshalssoftware.com](http://www.mailmarshalssoftware.com)

#### **DVD burners offer an affordable backup solution**

DVD's can hold 4.7 gb of data compared to only 250 mb on a Zip disk. The drives cost between \$106 and \$650 with DVD's costing about \$3.

**In House News:**

**Gregory Rothauser** has joined the firm as a Network Systems Technician.

**The Technology Group** is proud to have recently become the outsourced IT department for Jensen's Inc., developers and managers of high quality residential communities.

**The Technology Group, LLC**

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*Current security alerts and past newsletters available on our website:*

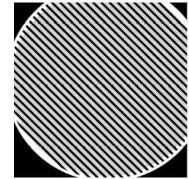
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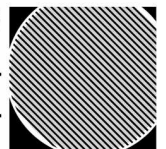


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