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"TAG specializes in providing management level responsibility for all the technology in your business. This includes support for your network and working with other hardware & software vendors who's technology you use.

We do this with friendly, proactive & responsive service!

Joe Stoll, President
Technical Action
Group (TAG)



That Fake App Just Stole Your ID

Ryan loved tweaking photos on his Android phone.

He'd heard rave reviews from his friends with iPhones about Prisma, a new iOS app for image editing. So when he heard Prisma would soon be released for Android, he logged in to the Google Play Store to see if it was there yet.

To his surprise, he found one that looked just like what his friends were describing. Delighted, he downloaded and started using it. Meanwhile, the app—a fake—was busy installing a Trojan horse on his phone.

When he got to work the next day, he logged his phone into the company network as usual. The malware jumped from his phone to the network. Yet no one knew. Not yet, but that was about to change... Now, this isn't necessarily a true story (at least, not one we've heard of—yet...), but it absolutely *could* have been. And similar situations are unfolding as you read this. Yes, possibly even at *your* company...

Fake apps exploded onto iTunes and Google Play last November, just in time for holiday shopping. Apple "cleaned up" iTunes in an effort to quell users' concerns, but hackers still find workarounds. Unfortunately, these fake apps pose a real threat to the security of your network. Especially if your company has anything but the strictest BYOD (bring your own device) policies in place. And the more your network's users socialize and shop on their smartphones, the greater the risk of a damaging breach on your network.



Fake apps look just like real apps. They masquerade as apps from legitimate merchants of all stripes, from retail chains like Dollar Tree and Footlocker, to luxury purveyors such as Jimmy Choo and Christian Dior. Some of the more malicious apps give criminals access to confidential information on the victim's device. Worse yet, they may install a Trojan horse on that device that can infect your company's network next time the user logs in.

Shiny New Gadget Of The



Handheld? Console? No, It's Switch!

You've no doubt seen the TV and You Tube ads for Nintendo's long-awaited new gaming platform Switch. It combines the best elements of handheld games with a home console. Handheld, the gamepad is the screen. Slip it into its dock and it plays on your TV.

The gamepad comes with two detachable "Joy-Cons." One player can hold a Joy-Con in each hand, two players can each take one, or bring in more Joy-Cons and multiple people can play.

If you're on the go, pull out the "kickstand" on the back of the gamepad and prop it up on an even surface for easy viewing. There's a slot on the side for game cards and a USB-C port for quick charging. Because it has greater processing power than the Wii U, you'll have no trouble playing Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, Super Mario and a host of your other favorite Nintendo games.

So what can you do?

First, keep yourself from being fooled. Anyone can easily be tricked unless you know what to look for. Take the following advice to heart and share it with your team:

Beware of Fake Apps!

In case you weren't aware, one of the latest and most dangerous Internet scams is fake apps. Scammers create apps that look and behave like a real app from a legitimate store. These fake apps can infect your phone or tablet and steal confidential information, including bank account and credit card details. They may also secretly install on your device malicious code that can spread, including to your company network.

Take a moment and reflect on these five tips before downloading any app:

1. When in doubt, check it out. Ask other users before downloading it. Visit the store's main website to see if it's mentioned there. Find out from customer support if it's the real McCoy.
2. If you do decide to download an app, first check reviews. Apps with few reviews or bad reviews are throwing down a red flag.
3. Never, EVER click a link in an e-mail to download an app. Get it from the retailer's website, or from iTunes or Google Play.
4. Offer as little of your information as possible if you decide to use an app.
5. Think twice before linking your credit card to any app.

Most importantly, get professional help to keep your network safe. It really is a jungle out there. New cyberscams, malware and other types of network security threats are cropping up every day. You have more important things to do than to try and keep up with them all.

The Most "Bullet-Proof" Way To Keep Your Network Safe

Let's not let *your* company become yet another statistic, hemorrhaging cash as a result of a destructive cyber-attack. Call Joe Stoll at 416-489-6312 x 204 or e-mail me at JStoll@TechnicalActionGroup.com, and let's make sure your systems are safe. I'll provide you with a Cyber Security Risk Assessment to check for and safeguard against any points of entry for an attack. This service is FREE, but DO NOT RISK WAITING: contact me NOW *before* the next scam puts *your* network at risk.

Smart Closing Technique, Step 2

Let's say you're closing a deal and you've already taken the first step: you've summarized the client's underlying need... Now you're ready for Step 2: Say what you plan to do.

Describe exactly what you'll do to help the client successfully satisfy their underlying need. Even smart people worry about putting themselves out there by offering a plan. They worry that someone may disagree with them. They worry about proposing a plan that doesn't work. That's why many advisors stay "safely vague" rather than offering a specific plan.

But being vague doesn't help leaders solve some of their biggest problems. You have to have the courage to propose a plan. For example: "I have some ideas about how you can achieve your goals. Want to hear them?"

"Yes!" (the client says, while taking out a notebook and a pen).

"There are five parts to what I think you need to do, in this order. They are designed to increase your power score, starting with priorities, who is on your team and relationships. First, there is no way you are going to be able to take the company in a whole new strategic direction without the board's support."

"That's true."

"So first we have to articulate your vision and your priorities on paper, with goals and strategy and budget implications, and then get the board's support."

"Right, it's going to change our budget, so rather than let the board nix it this fall, I should get out in front of this and get their support from the beginning."

"Second, you seem to have questions about the capabilities of many of the key leaders in the US, Europe and in your Asia region. It would be helpful to assess your team, to have a clear view of who is going to fit in the new organization, and who is not a fit."

"Yes, that would be helpful—to have an X-ray of the org chart and figure out who needs to go where to align with the new strategy."

"Third, fourth and fifth will be all about culture change. Change the incentives. Change the meeting cadences of what metrics are tracked and discussed—who meets when to discuss what. And what some of our most successful clients have done in situations like this is design workshops—like a roadshow—for you and key leaders to educate and train the next two levels on what you expect from them, and why, in the new world order. This gets the troops aligned behind your new vision."

"Wow! Yes, yes and yes."

"And even if you do all of that, I only give it a 70% chance you will fully actualize your goal within three years—in the market and culturally. Still, that's a lot better than the 5% chance you give yourself today."

"I'd take 70% over 5%." Now that you've stated your plan, you are in a much better position to close the deal.



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Bits 'n Bytes

Anti-malware programs can't even touch this new kind of attack...

"Fileless" attacks became all the rage among hackers in 2016. According to a report by cybersecurity firm Carbon Black, fourth quarter 2016 saw a 33% rise in these "non-malware" attacks compared to the first quarter. Experts expect the trend to continue through 2017. Cyberbad-guys carry out these attacks in any number of ways. Their "en vogue" method at the start of 2017 was hijacking PowerShell and WMI (Windows Management Instrumentation) to do their dirty deeds. Brian Kenyon, chief strategy officer for Symantec, said recently, "Fileless infections are difficult to detect and often elude intrusion prevention and antivirus programs." Reports show the Democratic National Committee hack last year used a fileless attack.

DarkReading.com, 12.27.16

The Furbo Dog Camera lets you play with your pet from miles away.

Missing your pup while you're at work or on the road? Pull out your Android or iPhone and check in. Furbo delivers 720p video in a 120-degree field so you see what's going on at home. Call your dog through the microphone and even flip her or him a treat for responding to your command. Just swipe your phone's screen in "Dispense" mode and Furbo launches a treat out onto the floor—or right into your dog's mouth, if he's clever enough to catch it. Furbo can be placed anywhere with an electrical outlet nearby. And with its sleek white hourglass design and bamboo wood top, it blends in with any décor. NerdTechy.com 12.5.16

TAG Note: Does anyone else see their food motivated dog (especially if you have a Labrador Retriever) destroying that camera looking for more treats? Or learning to swipe your phone itself to get the camera to shoot out more treats? :-)

Cassette audio tapes (remember those?) are making a comeback

Compact disk sales are declining, yet vinyl records have enjoyed a resurgence over the past several years. And last year, cassette sales rose to 129,000 units, an increase of 74% over 2015. So what's up with cassettes – why so popular all of a sudden? Actually, the numbers are still miniscule compared to the 105 million CDs sold in 2016. Yet the bump in cassette sales reflects a growing appetite for tangible items that fans can cherish. Also, it doesn't hurt that artists like Justin Bieber, Eminem and Prince brought tape reissues to market. Or that online retailer Urban Outfitters has exclusive deals to sell their cassettes, as well as vintage gear to play them on.

TheVerge.com, 01.23.17

Uh-oh...these AI machines just created their own secret language. And they're probably talking about us right now...

Well, sort of. And the last part is certainly not true. As far as we know... Google's AI team recently ran across something curious. Back in September, Google announced its Neural Machine Translation system had gone live. Using deep learning, it improves translation from one language to another. But the AI guys decided to take it a step further. Until then, they had to teach the machine how to translate. But having learned the process, could the machines then translate unfamiliar languages on their own? Turns out they can. So can they now talk among themselves? We don't know... Don't panic (yet), but do stay tuned.

-TechCrunch.com

This simple, 30-second breathing exercise wakes you up like a cup of coffee.

Whether you skip caffeine to get a better night's rest, or just wake up slowly, here's a quick way to activate your brain and give yourself an energy boost. It can help you beat that mid-afternoon slump, or to just get going in the morning. If you're doing it in the office, find a quiet place, like an unused corner or stairwell. Stand up straight, arms gently at your sides. Leaving your elbows pointing down, raise your hands up to shoulder level. Now, inhale deeply and raise your hands and arms straight up over your head. Quickly exhale and lower your arms. Repeat for 30 seconds, or until you're re-energized. -Lifehacker

Imagine careening through a virtual forest on the back of a Pegasus in a race against other fitness buffs...

VirZOOM hopes their stationary, VR-equipped exercise bikes will soon be coming to an arcade or fitness center near you. They've already installed the bikes in over a dozen venues in the US, from Connecticut to California. Walk into any of these places and you can strap on a VR headset and compete in live, multiplayer matches. Plans are already being hatched for full-blown tournaments, complete with prizes and onlookers. You can ride your way to fitness with the aforementioned Pegasus, straight bike races or even a good old fashioned tank battle... Who'd'a thunk doing something so good for your health could be so much fun?

Engadget.com, 01.05.17
www.virzoom.com