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Technology Times December 2024 Issue

“With over 20 years of experience providing remote support to clients that rely on technology, I know what it takes to deliver business continuity. Add to that another 20 years of support in the service industry you’ll not find another company that takes customer service to heart as I do. Find out for your business what a difference it makes. “



Dan Foote
Owner/President

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Effects of Proposed Tariffs on Hi-Tech Equipment

Increased Prices for Consumers: Tariffs act as a tax on imports, which means that the cost is often passed on to consumers. For example, prices for laptops, smartphones, and other electronics could rise significantly. Some estimates suggest that laptop prices could increase by over \$350.

Impact on Tech Companies: Many tech companies rely on components manufactured in China. Tariffs on these components would increase production costs, which could lead to higher prices for finished products or reduced profit margins for companies.

Economic Burden: The tariffs are intended to address national security concerns and protect against unfair trade practices. However, they can also place an economic burden on U.S. businesses and consumers. The Consumer Technology Association (CTA) has warned that proposed tariffs could result in a net loss for the U.S. economy, with the burden carried by consumers.

Potential Job Losses: Higher costs for tech products could lead to reduced demand, which might result in job losses in the tech sector. The CTA has projected that tariffs could risk thousands of U.S. jobs and stifle innovation.

Long-term Effects on Supply Chains: Tariffs could force companies to rethink their supply chains, potentially leading to more domestic production. While this might benefit the U.S. economy in the long run, it could also lead to short-term disruptions and higher costs.

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Beware of Fraudulent "Emergency" Data Requests

Cybercriminals are compromising government and police email accounts to send fraudulent emergency data requests to US-based tech companies.

These seemingly official requests often solicit and expose private customer information, including customers' email addresses and phone numbers.

When valid, emergency data requests are part of a legal procedure that allows police and federal authorities to obtain information from companies to respond to immediate threats affecting someone's life or property. The urgency of these requests stems from the lack of time to seek a court order.

Hackers have been able to generate legitimate-looking subpoenas through these compromised email accounts.

The FBI advises law enforcement organizations to strengthen their cybersecurity measures, including using stronger passwords and multi-factor authentication. They also recommend that private companies critically evaluate emergency data requests before responding.

While the abuse of emergency data requests is not a new tactic, the FBI has observed an increase in these activities since August 2024.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT SAFETY OF YOUR DATA?



Policies and Procedures: Why are they Critical for your Organization?

Besides satisfying legal requirements, helping your company avoid penalty fees and fines, policies and procedures organize and guide your company, reducing your risk of liability. It's crucial to have these in writing and reviewed regularly by members of your organization.

What Do Compliance Policies Cover?

Policies and procedures ensure your company rules, standards, values, culture, and benefits are clearly outlined; they also can provide consistency for your customers and employees.



Specific Compliance Policies

- **HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)** This U.S. law is designed to protect patient health information and ensure privacy and security in healthcare.
- **PCI (Payment Card Industry)** These are the security standards established to protect sensitive financial information during transactions.
- **CMMC (Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification)** This uses a three-level model to assess a company's cybersecurity maturity and protect controlled unclassified information (CUI). Certification will be required for any business working with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) starting in 2025.

All business owners want their operations to run smoothly. Incidents and crises can interrupt your business continuity, often in disastrous ways. Having policies and procedures in place will give your company a response plan to reduce the impact and loss of time that could result.

It is essential for organizations to properly explain their policies and procedures to all employees. Employees should sign an acknowledgment that they have received and understand the policies.

Aside from government-required compliance, one of the largest drivers for businesses to comply with cyber security protections comes from the insurance industry.

You may have noticed that insurance questionnaires have expanded their questioning about how your business is protected. Policies are essential for this purpose—along with the technology and services used to secure your networks, computers, and data.

While a cyber insurance policy is not cyber security protection, the policies your company has in place are critical to assuring that your cyber insurance policy can withstand scrutiny should a claim need to be filed.

Step Up Your Printing Game with the Kodak Step Printer



When you want a hard copy of your photos instead of leaving them on your phone, this is the printer for you. [The Kodak Step Printer](#) connects seamlessly (via Bluetooth or NFC) to any mobile phone, tablet, or similar device, allowing you to print pictures instantly. Whether it's selfies, portraits, or social media posts, you can turn your fun memories into physical pictures in no time.

Included with the product are a Micro USB Charging Cable, Starter Pack of Kodak Zink Photo Paper, Quick Start Guide, and Limited Warranty.

Zero-Ink (Zink) Technology: Say goodbye to expensive ink cartridges, toners, and ribbons. The Kodak Step Printer uses Zink technology, which embeds dye crystals in the 2" x 3" sticky-back paper. This innovation delivers high-quality, durable prints that are resistant to moisture, rips, tears, and smudges.

Full Editing Suite via App: You can download the free Kodak app to create collages and customize your photos with fancy filters, interesting borders, cool stickers, funny phrases, and other personalized flair. Edit photos on your phone and send them to the printer for instant printing in less than 60 seconds.

Photos to Go: The palm-sized Kodak Step Printer weighs less than a pound, sets up quickly, and delivers gorgeous prints you can peel and stick anywhere. Perfect for decorating notebooks, scrapbooks, guitar cases, laptops, and more.

Photo-loving influencers and crafters of all types enjoy this printer because it's cute and lightweight, along with being handy. It runs on a built-in lithium-ion rechargeable battery and can print 25 photos with a full charge. It's available in a variety of colors and makes a fantastic gift for any occasion.

IT Companies Most and Least Affected by Tariffs

Most Affected

Apple: Apple relies heavily on components manufactured in China for its devices. Tariffs on these components could significantly increase production costs, leading to higher prices for consumers or reduced profit margins.

Cisco: As a major player in networking equipment, Cisco could face increased costs for imported components, affecting its overall profitability.

Dell: Dell's reliance on Chinese manufacturing for its laptops and other hardware makes it particularly vulnerable to tariffs.

Least Affected

Microsoft: While Microsoft does produce some hardware, a significant portion of its revenue comes from software and cloud services, which are less impacted by tariffs on physical goods.

Google: Google's focus on software, cloud services, and digital advertising means it is less affected by tariffs on hardware.

IBM: IBM's shift towards software, cloud computing, and AI services helps insulate it from the direct impacts of tariffs on hardware components.

These companies' ability to adapt their supply chains and focus on less tariff-sensitive areas can help mitigate some of the negative impacts.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me either by email or phone (907-360-4754 or 907-885-0501).

Dan



Two Engineering Students Invent A Sonic Fire Extinguisher

Sonic Extinguisher: Using Sound Waves to Fight Fires

Two US engineering students have developed a cleaner fire extinguishing solution using the power of sound waves. This innovative extinguisher doesn't use water or chemicals to put out fires. Instead, it uses sound waves to push oxygen away from the flame, effectively extinguishing the fire by depriving it of oxygen.

The invention is based on the concept that sound waves have the potential to manipulate solids and gases, much like how a loud bass thumping from a car or speakers can be felt in your chest.

To find the ideal sound, the researchers experimented with a wide range of frequencies. While the high frequencies had little effect, low frequencies – below 30 and 50 Hz - successfully moved the oxygen away, extinguishing the flame.

This attempt isn't entirely new. In 2008, the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency attempted to use acoustic technology to fight fires but were unsuccessful. Undeterred by historical failures of others, this pair of inventors solved the problem by adding vortex rings, which moved in circles around a central core, allowing sound waves to travel farther without losing mass or kinetic energy.

The team designed this extinguisher for use on kitchen fires and in medical facilities. Another possible application is in space, where traditional extinguisher contents can spread uncontrollably. Sound waves, on the other hand, can be directed without the influence of gravity.

The prevention of wildfires has also been suggested as a potential use for this extinguisher. However, concerns have been raised about its ability to prevent larger fires from reigniting after the sound is turned off, as it contains no coolant.

The researchers hope to address this issue by attaching a drone to track the firefighting progress and extinguish reignitions as needed.

The 5 Emerging Responsibilities for Today's CISOs

In addition to developing and implementing cybersecurity strategies, conducting employee training programs, assessing the quality of security controls, and investigating security breaches, CISO's (Chief Information Security Officers) are now facing an array of additional responsibilities. Here are five that are top of mind for today's cybersecurity teams:

- **Expanded Threat Landscape:** With the rise of cloud computing and hybrid work environments, companies' attack surfaces have significantly expanded. The volume and complexity of cyber threats have also increased.

- **The Downpour of Regulations:** There are a greater number of compliance requirements that often necessitate lengthy trainings, vary by region, and include challenging demands.



- **Risks from third-party vendors:** As companies use more third-party vendors, CISOs find they have less control over the security of their supply chains, creating vulnerabilities that must be addressed. Emphasis is now on thoroughly understanding all parties involved.

- **Securing AI Within the Business:** The rapid evolution of AI is requiring IT and cybersecurity teams to secure its use without hindering adoption. This includes preventing external security breaches and the internal act of uploading sensitive data to large language models.

- **Staying Ahead of the Ever-Changing Cybersecurity World:** Safeguarding operations and data involves constant research, investigation, and application. It's essential that CISOs stay ahead of the curve rather than playing catch-up.

**Computer problem? Network Questions?
Call Us at 907-885-0501**