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New Mass Law Regarding Data Protection

If a company maintains payroll records that associate employee names with SSNs, the company is bound by the new rules.

A new law set to take effect March 1 will effect virtually every business in Massachusetts. In simple terms, the law, 201 CMR 17, says that if a business collects data that includes a name (defined as first and last name or first initial and last name) AND any one of the following: Social Security Number, driver's license number or any financial account number, they must comply with the provisions of the law. This type of data is typically associated with customer relationships, but in effect also applies to employee data. In other words, if a company maintains payroll records that associate employee names with SSNs, the company is bound by the new rules. The law pertains to both written and electronic records.

Impetus for this law came from numerous widely publicized data breaches (TJ Maxx, Home Depot, Hannaford, etc). The new law applies to all businesses and organizations with the exception of municipalities - there is no exemption for small business - and fines are substantial for breaches.

The law requires the creation of a Written Information Security Program (WISP) and that businesses/ organizations take reasonable steps to protect data. This may include encrypting sensitive e-mail and restricting rights to data. If there is ANY personal

on the web

Privacy Rights Clearinghouse

Comprehensive Chronology of Database Breaches
<http://www.privacyrights.org/ar/ChronDataBreaches.htm#CP>

Identity Theft Resource Center®, Nonprofit Organization

Includes Data Breach List, Scam Alerts, assistance on Lost/Stolen Wallets, Medical Identity Theft, Beginning Steps for Financial Identity Theft, Victim Impact Studies (statistics), and Identity Theft in the Workplace.
<http://idtheftcenter.org/>

Links referred to in this newsletter as well as links to additional information about the topics discussed may be found online at www.cwsite.com/news

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Law Regarding Data Protection

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344,680,708 - TOTAL number of records containing sensitive personal information involved in security breaches in the U.S. since January 2005 (Approximate number of *records* that have been compromised due to security breaches, not necessarily the number of *individuals* affected. Some individuals may be the victims of more than one breach, which would affect the totals.)

1 in 6 - Or one million Massachusetts residents have had their credit card numbers, medical records, or other personal information leaked or stolen over the past two years (according to records provided to the Globe by state officials).

\$5000 - per violation under Mass 201 CMR 17. A single incident involving thousands of records could be interpreted as thousands of violations!

Up To \$50,000 - fine for each instance of improper data disposal under Mass 201 CMR 17.

information within an organization's possession, caution would dictate that the safest course is to treat all personal information as confidential. For example, it is simpler and more reliable to encrypt all e-mails rather than somehow consistently and reliably identifying emails that have sensitive information or attachments. (For example: distinguishing between non-sensitive communications and a reply email sent with the PDF of the client's tax return.)

Most small companies are not ready for this. Some industries have more exposure than others (CPAs, lawyers, financial services firms, insurance agencies, etc) however, virtually all businesses have at least some personal data, and if they have any, they are bound to protect it and are subject to the same fines. Unless a business is a sole proprietor that only handles cash transactions, it is likely that this law will apply.

Disclaimer: CompuWorks does not provide legal advice, nor are we attorneys. For more information about the law and how it effects your business, we recommend that you consult an appropriate professional. More information can be found at the Mass.gov website (search "201 CMR 17").

Help is Here!

CompuWorks with its partner data security firm Peritus, offers risk assessments and assistance in the development of a Written Information Security Program (WISP).

In addition, CompuWorks can provide the technology planning, resources and services necessary to carry out a successful WISP.

Email As (Social) Networking

In an article on the Harvard Business Review website, Tom Davenport describes *forwarding* as the new networking. He qualifies this statement by stating that forwarding is not new, that "smart" networkers have long recognized forwarded email as a way to nurture their relationships/network.

In a study conducted by Mr. Davenport and associates, they found that high performers were disproportionately good networkers who consciously grew and nurtured their networks, not by passing out business cards at events or sending LinkedIn invitations, but by offering information of value to their networks. Selective forwarding was a key ingredient of this effort.

Careful use of forwarding says that you are thinking of someone(s) in your network, that you found something of value and you wanted to share it.

Before you start hitting that forward button, a few words of caution are in order. Don't be a mass forwarder, this is thoughtless and says nothing good about you or your concern for your network. Don't forward things that you find humorous to a large list, you can be assured that not everyone shares your sense of humor and many will be annoyed by the waste of time.

Read the original article at http://blogs.hbr.org/davenport/2009/09/forwarding_is_the_new_networkki.html

Where Did The !\$%*! Attachment Go? (Tip)

Ever save an email attachment and have trouble finding it when you need to? If so, here are a couple pointers that might save you the search next time.

By default Windows likes to save email attachments in a hard-to-find temp folder. You can avoid this little hide-n-seek game by making sure that you use "save as" the first time you save the document. Make sure that you take the time to change the folder location before you hit ok. Finally, make sure that you make a note of the file name. You can even change the file name at this point to something more useful to you, since you'll be the one looking for it.

Green IT Tip

Reduce power consumption with set it and forget it tools - smart power strips which turn off peripheral devices when the main device is turned off.

Watch What You Post!

A recent survey found that 70% of hiring managers have rejected job applicants because of information they found online. Those surveyed indicated that they used search engines, social networking sites, personal Web sites and blogs, gaming sites, online classified sites as well as professional background checkers to look for information candidates.

CompuNews

Congratulations to Dan Rench on his ten year anniversary with CompuWorks!

Welcome New Clients

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New Lebanon, NY

Chipurnoi Candy, Inc
Sharon, CT

Store at 5 Corners,
Williamstown, MA

LTI Smartglass
Pittsfield, MA

Richmond Appraisal, Co
Richmond, MA