

News

Third-Party Apps Responsible For Most Vulnerabilities

Analysts for security company Secunia say that the recent 71% upsurge in vulnerabilities in common software applications is due mostly to problems with third-party applications rather than problems with Windows or other Microsoft applications. Noting that Microsoft has long been perceived as the main security culprit, Secunia spokespersons say that this may no longer be true, largely because Microsoft uses a common updating mechanism to patch vulnerabilities in all of its products, including applications and operating systems. Other vendors all use different systems—with only a few offering auto-update options similar to that offered by Microsoft. The absence of a common update system opens vendors to cyberattacks, Secunia reports.



VMware Q4 2010 Revenue Up

VMware's Q4 2010 revenue finished ahead of analyst expectations, totaling \$835.6 million, an increase from \$608.2 million for the same period in 2009. The increase represents a 37% rise in revenue. VMware reported a fourth-quarter operating income of \$131 million (up 84%) and non-GAAP operating income of \$248 million (up 57%). Net income for the quarter reached \$120 million (28 cents per diluted share), up from \$56 million reported in Q4 2009. Operating cash flows for the fourth quarter, meanwhile, rose 43% to \$407 million compared to the same period the year prior, while free cash flows totaled \$406 million, up 57% year over year. For all of 2010, VMware's revenues hit \$2.9 billion, up 41% from 2009. Operating income for the year reached \$428 million, up 95% from 2009. Net income reached \$357 million vs. \$197 million for 2009. "VMware clearly benefited in the fourth quarter from both an uptick in spending and the momentum of virtualization as the central technology for modernizing infrastructures," says VMware CEO Paul Maritz.

Email Shifting To Mobile Devices

A new survey from comScore finds that U.S. consumers are beginning to rely more on their mobile devices for email. As of November 2010, visits to Web-based email sites declined 6% compared to 2009, while 36% more users accessed email via their mobile devices. According to the research firm, the shift is largely due to easy access to on-demand communication options and the multitude of ways in which people can communicate electronically.

Most IT Workers See Modest Salary Increases In 2010

According to Dice.com, employees in the tech industry received an average 0.7% increase in salary from 2009 to 2010. Although about 50% of the workers surveyed earned raises, IT workers in Silicon Valley-based or larger companies earned slightly better increases in pay, and more than a third of Silicon Valley IT workers received a bonus last year. The average IT worker in the United States earned \$79,384 in 2010.

STORAGE

HOW TO

Prepare Data For Long-Term Archival

Get Ready For Storage

by Holly Dolezalek

IT'S TIME. The data that was once critical to your company's mission is now passé, and it's time to move it into lower-cost storage for long-term archival. Your mission: Get the data ready for the migration. But this is not a straightforward, IT-only project. To get your ducks in a row and your data on the right medium in the right format, check the following items off your list.

Decide What To Archive

The age of data and the infrequency of its use are two criteria that help determine whether it should be archived. But this is not a decision you make on your own. Archiving data is a group effort, because there are different stakeholders who will need to weigh in. Human resources, the legal department, and business division heads will all have necessary information, such as what the company's retention policies are, what type of storage different kinds of data has to be stored on, and other guiding factors. "Deciding what data should be preserved, vetted, or warehoused for long-term archival or retrieval is the domain of the business unit(s) managers," says Ron Copfer, principal of Visual Evidence (www.vevidence.com), an e-discovery company in Cleveland. "The ultimate decision on what data and how often that data might need accessing should not be the responsibility of IT."

Involving other stakeholders prevents compliance violations, but it also brings more resources and help IT's way as the project moves forward. It also keeps the project from failing by getting input from stakeholders as issues arise. "During the process, you will need stakeholders to be available for questions and to provide answers to important decisions, such as specific questions about which data to keep and what to destroy, and any exceptions to the rules," says Tom McCaffrey, director of archiving for Kroll Ontrack (www.krollontrack.com).

Regulations & Industry Standards

Before preparing data for long-term storage, make sure you know what regulations or industry standards might dictate how that data has to be stored. "For example, in the communications sector, call data records are required to be retained for up to seven years," says Deirdre Mahon, vice president of marketing for RainStor (www.rainstor.com), an online storage company in San Francisco. "In more established industries such as health care and financial services, there are a number of external compliance regulations that dictate retention laws where 20-year data retention timeframes are not unusual. Not adhering to these time-sensitive regulations can result in serious financial penalties in addition to serious headaches for the IT group."

Other Data Considerations

Once the data marked for storage has been identified, you obviously need to know where it's located and on what infrastructure. Whether you limit your inquiry to the data being moved or decide to map out all of your organization's data, you'll need to get all of its vital statistics to know how to migrate it. "The first step in the process is to develop a data map of the entire organization and understand who all the custodians are, where their data is stored, the type of data stored, and

inexpensive form of storage, but compliance requirements for some industries mandate that certain types of data be stored on more readily accessible media than tape. Again, your choice may also depend on your company's potential exposure to litigation. "IT and data center managers must be knowledgeable about legal requirements for data preservation if a lawsuit is presented to them or if their organization intends to file one against another party," Copfer says. "These lawsuits can include HR claims all the way to white-collar crimes such as price fixing."

Key Points

- Migrating data to long-term storage means working with multiple stakeholders, including HR, legal, business division heads, and units that access the data for reporting or other purposes.
- Regulations, industry standards, legal obligations, and other rules or processes might affect how long you need to store data and what format or media you use.
- To migrate data to long-term storage, you'll need to know where it resides, how often it's changed, what type of data it is, who uses it, what infrastructure it's on, and other vital statistics.

any other pertinent information that may reside (ERP databases, CRM systems, backup data stores and their locations, etc.) within the organization," Visual Evidence's Copfer says.

For example, how much data is involved? How much storage will you need to archive it? What are the types of data—emails, instant messaging, documents, or other types? What is the backup schedule for this data, and what's the rotation? How often is the data accessed, and does anyone use it for reporting or analysis? Finally, what capabilities do you need for the data once it's in storage? For example, if data is likely to be used in a lawsuit, you may need to be able to search it, suspend scheduled destruction for certain documents, and export data for discovery and investigations.

Costs Involved

The cost of migrating data from a production environment to long-term storage depends on whether you use a third party or handle the project internally. You may need consultants to help you define your regulatory obligations or your data retention policy. Your choice of storage media will affect the cost, and so will your choices about whether to use a cloud or hosted storage provider, if either is an option. If your company is involved in a lawsuit or faces significant risks of one, a legal hold and review system may be necessary, which also increases your cost.

Although cost will figure in your choice of storage media, regulatory or industry standards will also come into play here. Tape has historically been the most

After Data Is Stored

Your job isn't over once the data makes it to long-term storage. Both to avoid unnecessary storage costs and prevent risks associated with having data that could be used against the holder, many companies make efforts to purge data as soon as possible after any regulatory requirements for retention have been satisfied. After you've mapped out how long the data should stay in storage, get agreement among stakeholders about when the data should be purged.

But keep in mind that there may be exceptions. "It is important to plan for exceptions to every retention rule," says Jonathan Langdon-Phillips, director of research and development for Westbrook Technologies (www.westbrooktech.com), a document management software company. "For example, typically an invoice is retained for seven years. However, if that invoice has never been paid or may be required as evidence for an ongoing court case, you will want a mechanism to flag that document and save it." □

TOP TIPS

- Don't forget to establish security parameters for long-term archival, including who will be allowed access to data in the archive and which data they can access.
- Email journals are one method for email preservation. "A journal is a log file of all the messages sent and received through the server, and anything sent to or by a user is recorded by the journal," says Tom McCaffrey, director of archiving for Kroll Ontrack (www.krollontrack.com). "If users delete a file out of their inbox, it will still be accessible in the journal, and that's the place to capture from."
- Migrating data that is no longer needed to long-term storage can improve your server performance.
- Consider standardizing your storage infrastructure and database technology. "Streamlining infrastructure with a tiered approach is important not only because you can gain efficiencies, but also because you avoid training your IT team on multiple systems," says Deirdre Mahon, vice president of marketing for RainStor (www.rainstor.com).