

AntiOnline.com

Hackers Know The Weaknesses In Your System. Shouldn't You?

=Welcome to the Official AntiOnline Newsletter=

Issue #1

Introduction:

Hey,
Happy New Year!
Ennis here! Welcome to Issue One of the Monthly AntiOnline Newsletter, brought to you by the members of AO for the members of AO. Its aim is quite simple. AntiOnline consists of individuals with a keen interest in Security related topics.

Since we all aim at the common goal of securing our systems, why not help each other by pushing the boundaries and working together. And so our unified team has been working hard to bring you tutorials on many aspects of security.

However considering the vast array of talents connected to AO I decided to include different sections other than security. Incorporated into the newsletter are Networking tutorials, Web Development tips and some humour ;) for good measure. Overall I hope to have created a newsletter worthy of the AO members and I also hope it helps both newbies and you gurus alike!

On a side note I will not be continuing to edit and put together future issues of the Newsletter due to personal issues but I think out next editor is well worthy of the cause...more on that in the next issue.

Note: To ease the reading of this document, print it out so your eyes don't go crazy and you don't have to scroll. Just a suggestion!

Disclaimer: The Author takes no responsibility for the misuse of any information contained in this document. The information is provided to gain an understanding of how hackers work not to copy them. This is the aim of AntiOnline, please use your head and don't get into trouble. Thank you for your time.

Editor: Ennis

Distribution: JP

And a special thanks to MsMittens for her help!

The Itty Bitty Print:

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Security

Firewall Security Submitted by Uraloony

The software firewall discussions can be heated in their debate, but here is the breakdown...

Firewalls I have used -

10/10 - ZoneAlarm (<http://www.zonelabs.com>) - User friendly, I have found to be the most compatible with networking (this is just my personal experience.)

9/10 - Tiny Personal (<http://www.tinysoftware.com>) - Great for the advanced user who likes to tweak things.

7/10 - BlackICE (<http://www.networkkice.com>) - Has had a lot of problems recently, and with all the free software firewalls out there, I wouldn't pay for it.

5/10 - ConSeal - used it for a bit and didn't like the interface, but could not say anything against the security.

5/10 - McAfee Personal Firewall - Is an ok firewall, but the version I used lacked the features I wanted in a firewall.

Firewalls I haven't used -

N/R - NeoWatch - Have never used, but have heard good things about it.

N/R - Norton Personal Firewall - I have heard mixed reviews on this firewall.

N/R - Sygate - Have heard good things about this firewall, but not many people use this firewall.

3/10 - eSafe - Have heard nothing but the bad about this firewall.

N/R - Deerfield - Mixed views on this firewall, but I have not heard of many that use it.

Another option (the best one) -

Get a Linux box to be a firewall/router and get Ipchains working good on it... I have Red Hat 7.2 working great on my machine. The scan at <http://www.grc.com/> came back as all in stealth.

Further sources of information -

<http://www.firewall.com>

<http://www.firewallguide.com/software.html>

<http://www.free-firewall.org/>

<http://www.hackfix.org/software/firewall.html>

<http://www.homenethelp.com/web/howto/free-firewall.asp>

<http://www.grc.com/>

Securing Windows Against Physical Local Access

Submitted by Rewandythal

Screensavers

Screensavers offer minimal protection against those who are totally computer-illiterate, although simply switching the computer off and back on again will get you either the windows desktop, totally unsecured, or a login box that can be easily bypassed in Windows 9x by pressing Esc or clicking Cancel.

Windows 9x and ME User passwords

Thus, to increase the security of a screensaver, obviously make sure it has a password, and that it switches on within 1 minute of the computer being left idle. Another way of strengthening this weak method of security is to put your screensaver into the Startup folder in your Start -> Programs menu. This will launch the screensaver automatically at start up, although fast computer users will have an opportunity to disable it whilst Windows is deciding what to load first.

This feature is most useful to allow more than one user on a single computer, so that each user can set their own screensaver, desktop wallpaper and color schemes. It offers no security protection of any kind, since logging in as the default user (by clicking Cancel) then deleting all *.pwl files in the Windows directory will allow you to log in with any registered user name on the computer and type in any password or no password at all. If you only have Windows 9x or ME, I would suggest upgrading to 2000 - avoid XP wherever possible, it is relatively stable and secure but it is slow and annoying.

Windows NT/2000 and XP User Passwords

Windows NT, 2000 and XP take passwords more seriously. You can set computer security policy to disallow guest login etc. thus increasing your security by only allowing registered users to log in with their pre-set passwords. Out of the three, I would recommend 2000 since NT is not very user-friendly for home users and XP is just plain irritating.

Choose a password between 6 and 20 characters, and try to include letters, numbers and other symbols. Avoid car registrations, birthdays, family names etc.

BIOS Passwords

These are programs that are designed to add security to Windows 9x. they usually launch from Autoexec.bat and ask for a password before letting the rest of the boot-up process continue.

It is, however, easy to edit autoexec with a DOS boot disk and the EDIT command, so this method is again, useful only in places where people with half a brain are not likely to be (for example, this method would work fine in schools, but in a computer-related business most of the professionals will know how to use a boot disk!)

Screen Locking Windows 2000 and XP

Ctrl. Alt. Delete, Enter...

That is all it takes in 2000 or XP to lock the computer screen, which is just as secure as logging out. If the computer is restarted, the user is greeted by the login screen which requires the same password... There is no way around it, 2000 and XP have sufficient security for most users to be happy with it.

Screen Locking Windows 9x and ME

Almost an impossible task, since 9x allows programs to run on top of screensavers (I've seen it happen... the My Computer window came up on top of a password protected screensaver when I pressed Alt. & Tab to switch programs... It ignored the fact that the screensaver was password protected and switched focus to the My Computer window. Of course, if no windows were open behind the screensaver this would not happen, but locking a 9x computer is virtually impossible.

Alternatives

One word... LINUX

Basic Virus Survival

Submitted by Ennis.

I was going to put one of my old tutorials in here, but then something happened. I got a phone call a day or two ago from a good friend. He was telling me 'Help I got a Virus or something...!'

So I went around he is running Windows ME [he is an avid gamer and mp3 lover] and points out that all his Word Documents have been overwritten to show some gibberish.

I asked him how he had come to receiving the virus and well this is the reason I am writing this tutorial. He replied 'Just opened some e-mail and next time I booted, this happened'.

He was lucky I suppose, hell viruses come in malicious forms and this was a fairly harmless virus in my opinion. I checked up his 'anti-virus' protection, I'd been advising him for weeks about the dangers of Trojans and viruses and what they can do to your system. Of course he simply ignored me.

First thing I checked up was backup, this as anyone knows is very important, little did I know he had shunned the idea and he simply shrugged. Lets just say Rescue Disk, AntiVirus Software, were not on his agenda!. He had not bothered to protect himself in any way but I assumed this little shock would wake him up. It did.

So now I want to focus on a security issue which is widespread but can be prevented with a little common sense. Firstly we must define the Virus and take a peek at what kind of malicious code there is.

Ok a virus is an executable program; it can affect the following areas of computer:

System Sectors, files, Batch Files, Source Code..

..And more, they can be described in many ways, from what size they are, stealth, their methods, polymorphic and well the list goes on, it's impossible to define them all with new virus' coming out daily.

Now lets just clear up some myths about viruses, you can infect yourself from a: executing the program [e-mail attachments are a very common method of spreading virus'] b: booting from an infected floppy or hard disk. Now remember it must be executed so be skeptic about what you open, many virus send you e-mails from trusting friends who unwillingly have passed you on a virus.

So how do you know you have been infected, well unexplained growth of .exe or .com files is a dead giveaway. Your computer may run slower, system resources depleted and unusual behavior from your box are major signs.

Well what happens when the damage is done and it's all too late. Lets not think about that and look at prevention to cure the virus attack. As you should know being cautious is a great advantage, i.e. making sure attachments are not viruses and don't just click on anything that arrives in your mailbox [your hand is the enemy!].

Get yourself good antivirus software, which should be updated, as often as possible, set your antivirus to scan mail attachments. This will rapidly reduce the chances of infecting yourself.

Back up, back up, back up! I cannot stress this enough, imagine losing all your important data through your own laziness. People who assume it wont happen to them are taking major risks, who knows what may happen in the future. Create a rescue disk which programs such as Norton Utilities will allow you to.

Now remember not all unusual activity on your computer is virus activity, it is common for people to assume when they are having problems that they have a virus or Trojan! Also keep regular scans of your computer but don't overly trust your AV software, use your own initiative to keep a virus free system.

You could get yourself a copy of a Linux distro which means less chance of virus attacks, there are Linux viruses but they dwindle when compared to the huge amount of Windows viruses.

Anyway Good Luck!

Networking

TCP Header explained

Submitted by Guus

This tutorial is best read as a follow-up to this post on IP headers <http://www.antionline.com/showthrea...threadid=131474> . In that tutorial, I used the synonym of an envelope containing data - the IP header was the address on the envelope.

Now, to roughly sketch the relation to TCP to this, think again of that envelope. Thanks to the IP header, the envelope was delivered to the right place. The receiver opened the envelope, and in it, there was another envelope, with room number on it. This second envelope, this is the TCP packet.

In this tutorial, I'll give you a bit-for-bit blueprint of a TCP header, just like I did for the IP header. Like the IP header, the TCP header typically consists of 32-bit words. If no options are being used, the header contains 20 bytes (or five 32-bit words).

Source and Destination port

The entire TCP packet is written in the "data" section of the IP packet - thus, information about (ip) addressing is not necessary in the TCP header - that data is read from the IP header. Instead, the TCP header tells you to which port (or, in my synonym, to which room) the data has to go. For this information, the first 4 bytes of the TCP header are used. 16 bits for the source port, and another 2 bytes for the destination port.

Up to this point, at least four things are known: the source IP-address and port, and the destination IP-address and port. These two pairs make a socket pair. Once this connection is established (in TCP through a three way handshake, more about that later), you have a valid connection which you can use to send data.

To start a connection using TCP, a three-way handshake is needed to establish a connection. One computer starts with sending a TCP packet with the SYN (synchronize) flag set to another computer (more about flags later on). The other computer replies with a packet in which both the ACK (acknowledge) and SYN-flags are set. Finally, the first computer sends another packet, now with only the ACK-flag set. Now, a connection is established. If either computer wants to close down the connection, a similar handshake occurs, but instead of SYN-flags, FIN-flags are set.

Sequence Number

Every TCP packet is numbered. The entire second word holds this sequence number. The sequence number identifies the first byte within each packet sent. If the receiver doesn't ACK this packet, the sender re-sends the packet.

Acknowledge Number

This number is used to ACK a previous packet - it equals the received packet's sequence number plus that packet's length. If the original sender receives this acknowledge number, it knows the previous packet has been received correctly, and it won't have to be sent again. The acknowledge number is 32 bits; it's situated in the third word of the TCP header.

Offset

Like I said, the TCP header usually is 20 bytes (5 words). After the header, the actual data (the stuff IN the envelope) is sent. Because you can't be sure how big the header is (it could be bigger than 20 bytes), this is written down in the first 4 bits of the fourth word.

The next 6 bits in the fourth word aren't used - they are reserved for future use. For now, they are always set to 0's.

Flags

Bits 11 through 16 act as flags. They are set individually to identify the purpose of the packet sent. By 'setting' a flag, the bit involved has a value of 1. A flag 'not set' is a bit with a value of 0.

The first flag (bit 11) is the URGENT flag. If this flag is set, the data up to the byte pointed to by the Urgent pointer (more on that, later) is considered priority data.

The second flag (bit 12) is the ACK (acknowledge) flag. It is send as an acknowledgement of data, as discussed above.

The third flag (bit 13) is the PUSH flag. When this flag is set, the TCP protocol is told to push the data send directly to the application it was meant to be sent to without any delays. If this flag is not set, data collected by TCP is periodically send to those applications.

The fourth flag (bit 14) is the RESET flag. This flag is set when an error occurred - it tells both parties to reset de session.

The fifth flag (bit 15) is the SNC flag. It's used in the three way handshake discussed above.

The sixth flag (bit 16) is the FIN flag. This is used to close the session.

Window

The last two bytes in the fourth word of the header are used to indicate how much data can be sent. If the window is set to 0, one is indicating that no more data can be accepted until already received data is ACK'ed.

Checksum

Just like the IP header, the TCP header also has a checksum included, to verify that the data has been sent correctly. After receiptment, the checksum is recalculated - if the calculation does not resemble the original checksum, something went wrong, and the packet is not ACK'ed (thus indirectly requesting a re-send of the package). The checksum contains two bytes (first half of fifth word).

Urgent pointer

This pointer exists only when the Urgent flag is set. If it exists, it points to the first byte of data which is no longer considered urgent.

After this, it is possible to include custom options in the TCP header. After these optional options (err...right) filling up could be necessary to make sure the header ends at the end of a word, just like in an IP header. After this, the actual data is sent.

Above, I shortly discussed the architecture of a TCP packet. There's much more to TCP than this though - compare the above with a recipe for baking bricks, but realise, knowing how to make bricks does not mean you know how to build houses.

TCP Ports

Submitted by Rewandythal

File Transfer Protocol

- Port 20: FTP Data
- Port 21: FTP Control

FTP is used to transfer files over TCP/IP networks such as the internet. Risks include many Trojans which operate FTP servers on these ports

Telnet

- Port 23: Telnet

Telnet allows you to login to a remote computer and execute commands on that computer. Usually, root login is prohibited, but 'su' works in some cases.

Simple Mail Transfer Protocol

- Port 25: SMTP

SMTP is used to send e-mail from a computer to an SMTP server, where it is routed to its intended recipient

Hyper Text Transfer Protocol

- Port 80: HTTP
- Port 8080: HTTP Alt

HTTP is used to serve web pages and files to a web browser such as Internet Explorer. HTTP Alt is used for servers where port 80 is already in use, or where operating system restrictions prohibit the use of port 80, which is in the 1024 reserved TCP ports protected on a Windows NT or Unix system so that only Administrator (NT/2000) or root (*nix) can assign a service to these ports.

Post Office Protocol Version 3

- Port 110: POP3

POP3 is used in mail delivery. A user will log into a POP3 server with a username and password, and any mail in their mailbox on the server will be sent to them. Mail sent using SMTP is deposited in the correct POP3 server for the intended recipient, from which he or she can download the mail.

Reserved TCP Ports

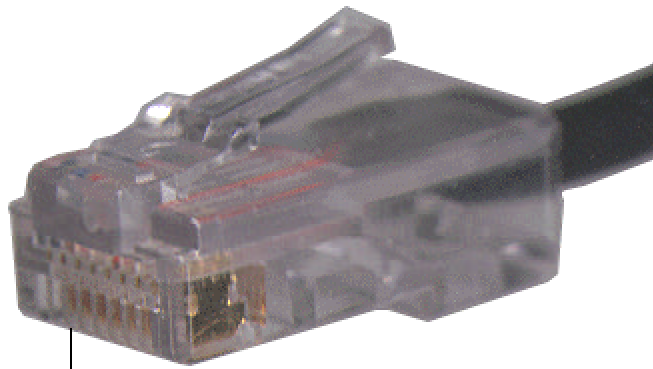
Apart from Port 8080, all of the discussed ports are within the reserved port range 0-1024.

Only the Administrator of a Windows system, or root in a *nix system can assign a service to ports within this range.

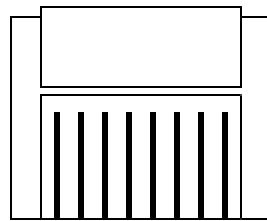
For this reason, most Trojans use port numbers out of this range, 1025 being the first dynamically assigned port number.

Services on ports between 0 and 1024 can usually be trusted, unless the system they are running on has been compromised.

How to create RJ-45 network cables.
Submitted by Casper 3699



Pin 1



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

casper3699@sisna.com

Things that you need.

- section of Cat 5 cable, length is up to you
- network cable crimper
- pair of pliers or small flat head screwdriver(if you have no crimper)
- some RJ-45 cable connectors

First off you need to strip the main insulation off about an inch from the end. There should be 8 color coded wires(four sets of twisted pairs). The colors are like this, White/orange, Orange, White/Green, Green, White/Blue, Blue, White/Brown, and Brown.

Here is what the wiring standards for each pin is:

Pin#	Signal	EIA/TIA 568A	AT&T 258A or EIA/TIA 568B
1	Transmit+	White/Green	White/Orange
2	Transmit-	Green	Orange
3	Receive+	White/Orange	White/Green
4	Not used*	Blue	Blue
5	Not used*	White/Blue	White/Blue
6	Receive-	Orange	Green
7	Not used*	White/Brown	White/Brown
8	Not used*	Brown	Brown

*Even though they are not used they need to be there

 For standard twisted pair network cable the order goes like this,

Side 1		Side 2
Pin 1	White/Orange	Pin 1 White/Orange
Pin 2	Orange	Pin 2 Orange
Pin 3	White/Green	Pin 3 White/Green

Pin 4	Blue	Pin 4	Blue
Pin 5	White/Blue	Pin 5	White/Blue
Pin 6	Green	Pin 6	Green
Pin 7	White/Brown	Pin 7	White/Brown
Pin 8	Brown	Pin 8	Brown

Here is a diagram:

1 Tx+	1 Rc+
2 Tx-	2 Rc-
3 Rc+	3 Tx+
6 Rc-	6 Tx-

(Pins 4,5,7,8 are same on both)

For crossover cable the order is like this

Side 1		Side 2	
Pin 1	White/Orange	Pin 1	White/Green
Pin 2	Orange	Pin 2	Green
Pin 3	White/Green	Pin 3	White/Orange
Pin 4	Blue	Pin 4	Blue
Pin 5	White/Blue	Pin 5	White/Blue
Pin 6	Green	Pin 6	Orange
Pin 7	White/Brown	Pin 7	White/Brown
Pin 8	Brown	Pin 8	Brown

Diagram for Crossover cable:

1 Rx+	3 Tx+
2 Rc-	6 Tx-
3 Tx+	1 Rc+
6 Tx-	2 Rc-

(Pins 4,5,7,8 are straight through)

When you get the wires organized the way that you want them then put them into the cable connectors. Before you crimp the connectors together you should double check and make sure that you have the wire config right, if not then reorganize and try again. And make sure the wires are pushed all the way in to the end of the connector. Once you get it right then use the crimper(or pliers if no crimper) and make sure all the connections are locked tight. Now you should probably test it to make sure it works.

Standard network cables are used if you have hubs, or switches in your network. They are used to connect your computer to the switch or hub, and to connect one hub to another on the uplink port. Cross over cables are used if you have no type of switch or hub and need to connect two computers together. It provides a direct connection between two nics. The only thing that you need to remember is to set up your networking using either static IP's or NetBEUI. You can also do this on ones with a hub or switch.

Programming

QBasic Programming Tutorial

Submitted by The Preacher

So you heard a long time ago about some programming language called QBasic. This language isn't used much anymore except in its new incarnation as visual basic. If you learn QBasic, vb is quite simple. So what am I going to show you today? How to write a simple program in QBasic. First of all Basic stands for "Quick Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code" and was developed in the 1960's as a simple way to learn programming. This first simple program will use multiplication to find the area of a room.

First of all the program in its entirety:

```
CLS
```

```
INPUT "Please enter the length"; Length
```

```
INPUT "Please enter the width"; Wdth
```

```
LET Area = Length * Wdth
```

```
PRINT "The area is"; Area
```

```
END
```

QBasic is a very simple language, and for those programmers who are reading this that have never dealt with QBasic, this is an unstructured programming language meaning that you can use the GOSUB command to jump around to any place in the program at any time. Many experienced programmers do not like this feature, but when I took a class for this, it saved my life while writing programs. Also in this language there is no need to declare variables. Now I will explain the program line by line.

```
CLS
```

This command tells QBasic to clear the screen. Often times this is needed because old data from the same program doesn't automatically disappear.

```
INPUT "Please enter the length "; Length
```

This tells Basic to accept input from the user, and displays a message with the text in it. This user input is then assigned to the numeric variable "Length".

```
INPUT "Please enter the width "; Wdth
```

This is the same as the "Length" variable except one thing. If you haven't noticed you've been misspelling the variable "Wdth". This is because the word "Width" is a word that is reserved.

```
LET Area = Length * Wdth
```

This is the mathematical function in the program. Once again since the variables don't have to be declared, it is easy to use "Area".

```
PRINT "The area is"; Area
```

Shows on the screen the sentence followed by the results of your calculation.

```
END
```

After you are finished you must tell QBasic that the program is finished. This is accomplished using the "END" command.

A program of a similar nature written in java, or C++ would have taken a longer to write and more code. There is a lot more to QBasic, but this should get you started on your way. I feel that QBasic still has use as a teaching aid and that it is important to learn. If you need a QBasic compiler, Microsoft has a small one known as QBASIC. There isn't anywhere free to find it except inside a textbook at the public library. If there are any mistakes in my post feel free to correct them.

More QBasic Commands

In addition to those QBasic commands that are shown above I decided to add that a string variable (words or letters) can be identified by the "\$" sign located at the end of it. An input string statement would look like this:

```
INPUT "Enter your name"; Name$
```

Next I will go over the goto command for QBasic, its called "GOSUB". This command enables you to go to a subroutine which is similar to a function in C++, and a method in Java. I will use the previous program to demonstrate how to use the subroutine. First the complete program.

```
CLS
```

```
GOSUB MainRoutine
```

```
END
```

```
MainRoutine:
```

```
INPUT "Please enter the length"; Length
```

```
INPUT "Please enter the width"; Wdth
```

```
LET Area = Length * Wdth
```

```
PRINT "The area is"; Area
```

RETURN

The main differences between this and the original program is:

GOSUB MainRoutine

This tells QBasic to jump to the part of the program with the name that is indicated.

MainRoutine:

This tells QBasic that the subroutine begins here.

RETURN

This tells QBasic to return to the main section. Unlike other programming languages, the data from within the subroutine is automatically available for use by other routines and the main program.

Web Development

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The following has been taken from Personal-Consultant.com with permission of the Author. -Ennis

Designing a Website Submitted by Porus

Many a times I have been asked about this very same subject over and over again and thus I have decided for the benefit of the masses to post it here as a online review. This e material is very general in purpose and utility and is meant for those who are just starting out in making their first website or have no idea about it whatsoever.

The basics:-

Make a Master Plan This includes the reasoning, the purpose, the essence of existence for your website. This is the first and the most important stage for you since if you frame this wrong then your website will not attract any hits and will be just one more page on the internet. Be very careful making this and ask yourself "WHY is this internet site needed"? Then comes your question you usually ask everyone HOW. If your WHY isn't strong enough then don't even think of proceeding to the HOW.

Now here comes the part you wanted to know all about. How? Well, there are many tools of the trade as I call them mostly available. Some of them are free but the really good ones cost money and involve a lot of time. Once you build a website it's as simple as framing a joke. It's actually a joke to build to your website but to keep maintaining your quality standards and attracting quantity crowds if no joke. that is serious business and its this serious business which cannot be afforded to be over seen when you're framing your joke (website).

Once your choice of WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) editor is done, we can start working on the integrate details of the website.

Your website development work falls under two broad categories:-

1) Personal and 2) Commercial Personal:- this can be your homepage, which hold information about who you are where you from and giving out your own personal information for the rest of the world. A well designed homepage attracts word of mouth advertising. This can be your gateway to the internet and your can try out your page building skills firstly by experiencing this. You can use commonly available software and or write your own htm code for this purpose. Cgi scripts, animation effects, pictures, colors, banner advertisements, links to other homepages, these make up your fill on the pages and its quite alright to host them at one of

the widely available free servers. A good example of this is Geocities.com which provides you with 20 Mb free server space, with the catch being that every page that loads will also pop up their affiliated banners.

Commercial :- This is your ticket to nirvana. But there is a wide difference here now between personal and commercial purpose websites. Commercial websites are business websites and special care and attention is to be paid every step of the way. One mistake in designing a commercial website means loss of business. If you are developing your own site then start calculating your each mistake as one order lost. Try understand again here the very essence of your purpose to have a website. Are you looking for a web presence only or are you targeting customers to make online sales. The more additional facilities you provide her will cost you in accounts of time and money as well. So be careful before you start developing any commercial purpose website. Your purpose will determine what tools and methods to proceed with. You cannot start with a web presence and then simply one day wake up out of the blue and say "we're also connected on the internet". Wake up from your dreams and step into the real world. If this be the case then I suggest mental therapy for you here. For a commercial purpose website you require firstly a game plan which lays down your future plans and services you will offer currently as well as in the future. Once you decide the purpose goals of the website and then lay down the master plan how to achieve your goals, everything else becomes easy. you simply start following your plan.

You could use simple html for a mere web presence (and scream to everyone "we're also on the internet") or you could adopt a more professional approach and have a full-fledged website encasing your company's strengths and weaknesses.

Now in my field of work I have come across many a number of commercial websites which are made by the best tools of the trade but they don't make money. (Remember the Internet technology Boom days). That means too much money chasing after an idea where there is no purpose.

Many a webmasters have told me " but I spent like \$1000 developing this part of the website". The customer does not care what you spent. What the customer wants is value for his time and money. As long as your site provides value (can be in different forms) you will gain a steady line of customers. The day your customers find drop in value of their time they spent on your website they will shift loyalty to another website. The customer is king, so cater to the king. As a general rule avoid making sites in fancy fonts and formats (1024 X 768) may be it looks cool to you but to your customer whose wearing glasses or is standing far away from the monitor it looks like a website to avoid. He does not care if you serving free champagne to him, if he cannot access and read whats written. To him it will be all useless unless he has a specific need or desire to visit your website. I been told 65% of the world still uses 14" monitor screens.

Your over all site should preferably have a theme. A theme incorporates that you have consistency in all your pages. You cannot show to your customer a main page with loads of white space and then remaining pages with information overload. It is even possible to allow your customers to choose what they want. One of my own portals uses a method by way of which once the customer enrolls he or she can actually change the theme of the portal according to their own whims and fancy. This is not value added service as you think. IT is a necessity in today's competitive world markets. One of my clients is actually faithful on my site and she keeps coming back because she gets the freedom to do what she wants (she says to me in her email and I quote " ...I feel I can actually personalize your

portal and make it "MINE" whenever I visit your site. I've never thought of registering myself at any other portal site because in your website I find what I want, what I desired always for my own self in a website.)

Just by allowing her to change her own theme on the portal gained her confidence and courage to deal with my site and not any others. She feels free to do what she wants. There are many other features also on that site but this one appealed to her the most. She doesn't feel that my portal is being entrusted upon her because I made it. I made the site but the fact she can personalize it to what she wants to see and what she wants to do, with colouring and themes of her own choice makes her satisfied.

Once you gain your customer or web visitors confidence its half the battle won. You cannot change strategies mid way. I have known a web portal changing and revamping their entire portal from html to php. It's not alright to do such things. If you start with html stick to html. If you start with asp serving pages then stick to asp serving pages. If you start with .php stick with php. You can shift from htm to html that's ok, You can shift from php to .php3 that's allowed but radical shifts like html pages converted to php is absurd and unnecessary. Every technology serves a specific purpose. Your purpose will point which technology to adopt. Once you adopt it, stick to it and develop within that technology. Example :- A portal may use php technology and develop .php pages but that doesn't mean a commercial website which just seeks presence as an addon to its brick and mortar business, also use and develop their website on php.

I asked once a webmaster of a new and popular commercial site here, why they were stuck with a html site and not developing user friendly online buying sites. Wasnt it a plan in the first place to build a web portal and not a website. To my astonishment the reply was " I'm planning that for next year" Now this is a clear case of shifting technologies. Html to asp. Some company sure is going to loose a lot of money on this now.

Whatever may be the purpose of your website, personal or commercial. As long as you have framed your purpose for being there on that valuable web server space you using, the means to fulfil them will slowly encompass you over time. The choice is yours. Either go Boom Or Bust!

This e material was written specifically for fresh starters and newbies on the internet scene. Specifics and intricate details have been avoided here at this stage and this article is meant only to give foundation guidance and an overall view to anyone who wishes to build a personal or commercial website. More e-materials and reading can be found in the downloads section of my site at <http://kickme.to/porus> or alternatively feel free to email me at porus@personal-consultant.com

Miscellaneous

Tutorial: Introduction to IRC and AO IRC
Submitted by MsMittens

Well, it was asked of me to write up a tutorial on using IRC and specifically, on using the AntiOnline Servers especially in relation to the new change in one of the bots there, AntiBot. This tutorial will cover the more common basic commands along with commands specific to AntiBot. In addition, I will cover something that seems to be have been long forgotten but very important -- Netiquette.

Let's begin.

IRC, Internet Relay Chat, has been around a long time. It's not a new service. In fact, it's probably the most common use of internet communication, long before Instant Messaging. The only service older would be e-mail itself. There are many different servers that play host to thousands of channels. A **channel** is a chat room that users go into. Often it is about a specific topic. When I used to be on EfNet (one of the major IRC group of servers -- www.efnet.org), I would frequent **#macintosh** (a channel for macintosh users) and **#internex** (a help channel setup by my ISP at the time. I could actually get online help in the channel or just yap away).

Many irc servers have help channels. If you are on a server and need information about it try one of the following. They are often present and helpful: #help, #irchelp, #service, #helpdesk. Some of the major IRC server groups include:

EFnet -- Possibly the oldest around. Quite wild at times: www.efnet.org
Undernet -- Possibly the largest around. Recently they were DDoSed by hackers but they seemed to have pulled through, albeit with a little more of a serious look on things: www.undernet.org
DalNet -- Second only to Undernet. Note: if you're an @home user, you'll find you've probably been k-lined (I'll explain this later): www.dal.net
Everywherechat -- I found these guys via web chats: www.everywherechat.org
ChatNet: www.chatnet.org
and many, many more.

To find a listing of servers you can go to yahoo.com and do a search for **IRC networks**. They have a full category entirely dedicated to it. In addition, many IRC applications have built-in lists. AntiOnline has opened it's own IRC server that is separate from any of the larger networks. This was to allow for AO members to get to know each other as well as help each other and generally yap (JP, I hope you don't mind the poetic license). The AO Chat Network, as it is often referred to, consists of two servers. When you are connected you can type **/map**:

```
/antichat.res.cmu.edu (6) 2  
^-services.antionline.com (3) 1
```

This shows there are two servers. Services.antionline.com has, in this example, 3 users and antichat.res.cmu.edu has 6 users (light night). By the way, thanks to **xy** for graciously lending us access to his server. Now since AO chat is a separate network and not on most irc programs I've put the info below for you to enter into your IRC program as a new server.

antichat.res.cmu.edu port: 6667
services.antionline.com port: 6667

When you connect to any server you often want to join your favourite chat room(s). To do this you type in the command **/join #room**. So to join AntiOnline's room you'd type **/join #antionline**.

Now, here at AO, given our orientation and concern for security we did need a way to prevent users from pretending to be someone they aren't. For this purpose, the bot AntiBot was setup to recognize people by their AntiOnline user name. (*Editor's Note*: Bots are programs that are used for a variety of things from channel protection to nick protection to asking trivia questions. If you want to find out more about eggdrop bots -- the most common form -- go to www.egghelp.com)

To get AntiBot to recognize you, you need to type **/msg AntiBot IDENTIFY YourAntiOnlinePassword** to set your nick to your AO handle or your it will be changed to Guestxxxx (where xxxx represents a number) in 60 seconds. If you are successful, check in the console or status window. AntiBot should come back with *-AntiBot[antibot@irc.antionline.database]- WooHoo, You Have Now Been Identified* response. If it's something else, double check your spelling of your password and try again.

If you don't have an AntiOnline.com login, please register for one now at <http://www.AntiOnline.com/register.php> . Users with a space in their name have special situation as on IRC spaces are not allowed based on current specifications. At the time of writing, the bot was being worked on to deal with this. If you have a space in your name, mention it to xy or JP when in chat.

Commands sent to the server are prefaced with a /. Below are some of the more common commands:

/join #room: to join an existing room or to create a new room. All rooms are identified with a #

/list: list all the channels available

/msg username: to send a private message to someone. It's recommended to ask first.

/nick yourAOnickname: to change your nickname to your AOnickname. Don't forget:

To get AntiBot to recognize you, you need to type **/msg AntiBot IDENTIFY YourAntiOnlinePassword** to set your nick to AntiOnline.com login, please register for one now at <http://www.AntiOnline.com/register.php> (note: your password is only seen by Antibot. None of the other users will see it unless you accidentally type it in the channel).

Now, that said some irc programs may have a feature to change your nick if the "NickServ" (A **NickServ** is a program-bot that protects nicknames) tells the irc program that the nick is protected. Some programs have a serious issue with this and it results in something called a "nick flood", where

the program attempts to keep your nick. Please turn this feature **OFF**. You may inadvertently get kicked/banned from the chat channel if you leave this running. (*Editor's note*: I believe the *nix irc program, BitchX has this a default that cannot be turned off. Make sure that you identify yourself to AntiBot to avoid this or to a guestxxxx name).

/whois username: to find out info about a specific user

/ping username: to see how great or small the lag is between yourself and another user (same as ping in networking).

/map: to see what servers exist on this IRC network.

/me action: allows for actions to be done to show emotions, actions, etc. The most common and well known is the infamous trout action: **Punkin slaps MsMittens around a** your AO handle or your it will be changed to Guestxxxx (where xxxx represents a number) in 60 seconds. If you don't have an **bit with a large trout**. This is found as a default on the mIRC windows-based IRC program.

/notify username: to let you know when a user comes online

/ignore username: so you do not see any messages, actions or anything else by a specific user. Often good for those user(s) that are abusive or irritating.

/part message: to leave a room and leave with a message (optional)

/quit message: to quit the server and leave with a message (optional)

That should cover all the user commands. Now a little understanding of the hierarchy. When you join you will see a variety of other user types. Users with:

@ before their nick name indicates that they are **channel operators**. This means that they have abilities to kick other users, ban other users, change topic, give ops to other users and set the modes for the channel.

% indicates a **half channel operator**. This means they have abilities to kick other users, ban other users and change the topic.

+v indicates that the user can talk when the channel is set on moderated.

There is a special user. When you do a **/whois nickname** you might see ***** User is a Network Administrator**. This user is a server operator and has absolute authority.

Channel modes that can and often exist include:

+t = indicates that topic can only be changed by operators

+n = indicates no messages from external sources can be sent

+m = channel is moderated. Only operators, half ops and voiced users can talk.

+i = invite only meaning you have to be invited to get in

+s = keeps the channel from being listed when using the list command.

+p = indicates the channel is private. Often used with +k (indicates keyword password must be entered when joining)

+l = indicates limit number of users. Often used with high-traffic channels.

At this point, we've covered a fair amount of the commands and such. I'm now going to cover something called Netiquette. One of the biggest issues with IRC is, oddly enough, miscommunication. We, as humans, are often influenced by what we see or hear when talking with others. This is harder to convey in IRC. So some conventions have been created.

CAPS LOCK: often frowned upon as it conveys anger, yelling and usually, ignorance of some type

Emoticons: are welcomed. They show feelings and emotions that are often not found. Ones you use in email or with IM often originated on IRC.

Abbreviations: until your typing speed improves, abbreviations are often used. I've put some of the more common ones below. Use them as needed:

LOL=laughing out loud
ROFL=rolling on the floor, laughing
ROFLMAO=rolling on the floor, laughing my ass off
BRB=be right back
BBIAB=be back in a bit
TTYL=talk to you later
LTNS=long time no see
SOL=shit out of luck
STBU=sucks to be you
A/S/L=age/sex/location (this is frowned upon and considered tacky/crass. Don't use it).
IMO=in my opinion
IMHO=in my humble opinion
WB=welcome back
AFK=away from keyboard

Arguing with opers (irc/network operators) and/or channel operators is a great way to get kicked/banned/klined. K-lined means banished from the server. Never mind trying to get into a room, you often can't even connect to the server. Opers are the ones with the power. They make the rules. It may be harsh but deal with it. Racism and sexism is often frowned upon in the channel. While banter is animated at times and sarcasm flows fast, there are limits to this. Don't try to test it right away. Your first visit may be your last.

ThePreacher reminded me of another thing in relation to opers that is frowned upon: that is something referred to as "ops begging". Whining, asking, demanding, etc. to get a magical @ or % is given a dim view. Ops is often earned and gained with respect. Get to know people, ask questions, help others and it might come with time.

Questions: Asking a question like "how do I hack Hotmail/yahoo/email accounts" in a security related chat channel is silly and will be met appropriately. Additionally Don't be surprised at the response. If you are having difficulties with something, want to know about how a particular thing works, eg, networking, need help with unix/windows, setting up firewalls, etc. ask. But, ask once. Don't repeat. We often hear you the first time. Sometimes however we may be trying to formulate an answer that makes sense, trying to find you a site to go to or maybe away from the screen. Patience is important in IRC.

For those users that connect via the java chat you will see colourful emoticons to play with. Use them **SPARINGLY**. They are only viewable by other java client users.

For those where english is a second language, don't be afraid to try and ask. We'll usually figure it out. We may ask you to try it another way. That's ok. =)

I hope this has helped some of you. I'm usually in the IRC channels most days/evenings (EST in Canada).

Bigger HardDrive?

Submitted by VictorKaum

Many times there is a question like how to install large disk? Or my HDD doesn't work... so here's some info on the item. I made it easy for myself, why type some info if it already exists? This is taken from the readme file for the Seagate DiscWizard. Modified by Victorkaum for AO.

BIOS LIMITATIONS

Included here are brief explanations of a number of drive capacity limitations that exist in the computer industry. The use of Disk Manager and its Dynamic Drive Overlay offers a solution to each of these problems.

*** 528 MB Limitation ***

Using the traditional IDE interface limits the system to a maximum drive capacity of 528 MB. The cause of this limitation is Int 13h (BIOS) and IDE field sizes for the CHS (Cylinder, Head, and Sector) entries.

Because the system must perform a translation between the CHS parameters recognized by the drive and those established in the Int 13h code, parameters are limited to the smaller of the field sizes allowed for each parameter by the BIOS and the IDE register set. The chart below displays the BIOS, IDE, and limiting field size.

	BIOS	IDE	Limit
Sectors per Track	63	255	63
Number of Heads	255	16	16
Number of Cylinders	1024	65536	1024

Maximum Capacity	8.4 GB	136.9 GB	528 MB

The maximum system drive capacity in a combined BIOS/IDE setup is determined by the limiting field size -- 528 MB.

Currently, computers are being shipped with a BIOS that implements Extended Int 13h or "Logical Block Addressing" (LBA), both of which are solutions to the 528 MB limitation.

*** 4096 Cylinder (2.1 GB) Limitation ***

Some computers have a BIOS that does not properly deal with the "13th bit". The 13th bit is needed to provide support for a drive having 4096 or more cylinders. The chart below displays the corresponding cylinder values in decimal, hex, and binary values.

DECIMAL	HEX	BINARY	SIZE
1023	= 3FF	= 10 bits	= 528 MB
2047	= 7FF	= 11 bits	= 1.0 GB
4095	= FFF	= 12 bits	= 2.1 GB
8191	= 1FFF	= 13 bits	= 4.2 GB
16383	= 3FFF	= 14 bits	= 8.4 GB

If you have added a new drive and your system locks up at boot time (right after turning power on) or during System Setup, there may be several causes. Verify that the data cable is properly attached to your drive, pin 1 is correct, and the cable is not installed off a row of pins.

If your new drive is larger than 2.1GB and your System Setup (CMOS) is set to "AUTO", you may have a BIOS with a 4096 or greater cylinder limitation. In this case, power off your system, remove your new drive, and follow the instructions that DiscWizard provides. When configuring System Setup (CMOS), DO NOT USE AUTO. Rather, choose one of the following:

- USER DEFINABLE set to 1024 cyls 16 hds 63 sects
- Drive type 1.

Another option is to contact your computer manufacturer to get a BIOS upgrade that will support more than 4096 cylinders.

*** 6322 Cylinder (3.27 GB) Limitation ***

Some computers have a BIOS that does not properly handle a cylinder value over 6322. If you are in the CMOS Setup attempting to set the cylinder value higher than 6322 (for a 3.27 GB+ drive) and your computer hangs, your computer may have a BIOS with this limitation. To by-pass this limitation, you have two options:

- Set the cylinder value to 1024 or less and use Ontrack's Disk

Manager to provide support for the whole drive.

- Contact your computer manufacturer for a BIOS upgrade, if one is available.

*** Invalid BIOS information ***

Some computers have a BIOS that may display invalid information in the CMOS setup. This issue may show up in one of two ways:

- The CMOS will display the drive parameters and capacity correctly. However, it is not translating the drive correctly.

- The CMOS will display invalid drive parameters. However, the BIOS is translating the drive correctly.

To ensure your drive is translated to its full capacity, you will need to check the actual drive size. This can be done when creating partitions on the drive.

*** 8.4 Gigabyte limit ***

If your drive is larger than 8.4 gigabytes, the capacity may exceed the limits of your system BIOS and operating system. Most system BIOS cannot support ATA drives this large. DOS and Windows operating systems limit the drive capacity to 8.4 Gigabytes per physical drive and 2 Gigabytes per partition.

Because of these limitations, a 32-bit file allocation table (FAT32) is required to achieve full capacity of your drive beyond 8.4 Gigabytes. To achieve full capacity of your drive you need a Windows operating system that supports FAT32 and BIOS support for drives greater than 8.4 Gigabytes, from

one of the following:

Third party device driver, such as Disk Manager , or An intelligent ATA Host Adapter, or A system BIOS upgrade.

Have fun with your large HDD.

idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of
idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots

-----To: some
idiot

CC: a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of
idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of
idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of
idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of
idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of
idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of
idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of
idiots,a bunch of idiots,a bunch of idiots

That goes on for about a zillion pages...give or take

3) Idiot scrolls down and makes their stupid wish that Leo DeCRAPio will
marry them or whatever...then they send it to about 10-20billion other
people. Their wish doesn't come true and it never will but the mindless
yuppies go right ahead and keep on sending them.

Alright...so lets imagine how many people see this one e-
mail...well..there's about 120 in this example alone...and I know you've
all seen more. So what happens when spammers get these Forwards? I'll tell
you right now they love forwards more than everyone else because now they
got a few hundred more working e-mail addresses to send ads to...how do you
like that?

###NOTE: I don't care how sweet the story is or if the jokes are really
funny...because to be honest, I don't care... and if it's about the little
girl with cancer...it's not true...and if it's about Bill Gates and his E-
mail tracker and he's going to give us all \$1000 if you send it out to 10
people...well that's not true and you're a moron for believing it...E-mail
trackers don't exist and probably never will. ###

Oh boy...and I haven't even begun yet...

So we've established that all those spamming companies...the porn ones
especially, they love to get those Fwd's, and they won't hesitate to send
mass e-mails either.

Lets take a look at some other ways spammers get your e-mail
addresses...The most common way that I know first hand of is
AOL...basically if you have AOL you have spam...and if you make a
profile...you have 10 times more... and if you go into chat rooms you might
as well just turn your e-mail off b/c it'll get overloaded.

HTML. FRIEND OR FOE?

Sometimes people make clever webpages to lure peoples e-mail addresses
in...I'm sure you've all seen this. You visit a website and it cracks you
up it's so funny...or it shows disgusting pictures...Guy hit by train or
something, and on the bottom it says "Send this page to a friend" so
instead of being smart and just sending the address to the person you type
in their e-mail address and now they will get the link to the page...along

with a bunch of other e-mails to follow...selling flowers, furniture, porn, books, or even houses.

###NOTE: You're not my friend if you ever do this to me...thanx ;)###

One of the most recent encounters that I came up with was secretattraction.com. This is how their system works:

1) A person can go to Secretattraction.com and type in their name and e-mail address and then type in the name and E-mail address of a bunch of people that they have a crush on. Then Secret Attraction will send all those people an e-mail saying that someone has a crush on them.

2) The unsuspecting will go to the link given in there e-mail to see who it is that has a crush on them.

3) Darrrrrrrrrrr!!! They have to guess who it is...and how do they guess who it is? With more names and e-mail addresses...so now secretattraction.com has a long list of names and e-mail addresses. The whole deal with how secretattraction.com is supposed to work is this:

Lets say a girl named Sammy is attracted to this guy named Roger....

Sammy will go to the site www.secretattraction.com and type in Sammy as her name and Rogers e-mail address as who she has a crush on. Next, Roger will get an e-mail from secret attraction saying Roger-I've got a crush on you!!! He opens it up and clicks on the link which brings him to the page where he can guess who it is that has a crush on him. (clicking on the link tells secretattraction.com that your e-mail address is valid) Now the guessing begins and whenever Roger types in a name and an e-mail address those people are put on the Secret Attraction secret spamming list.

I will go more into detail on www.secretattraction.com in a later posting...but right now... that's it. Now you know what causes Spam so lets do what we can to prevent it.

The Art of Security or How did I get myself into this Mess?? **Submitted by MsMittens**

Part 1: Getting Started... Maybe.

I had walked into the office, looking for a computer to begin at. They had asked me to check their security. At the least they could do is provide me with the necessary equipment. The "External Internet and Network Systems Administrator" (to this day, I'm convinced they are having a contest to see who can have the longest legitimate title) pointed me to the ancient 486 that had about an inch of dust on it.

"I'm allergic to dust", I said to him. He shrugs his shoulders. "Look, I need something that will run Windows 2000 Advanced Server decently plus something that will run Red Hat with the GUI. Got a P3 and a Pentium 200 lying around?"

I needed to start somewhere. If I was going to do the audit, it was best that I at least have the equipment. I got two laptops to use. One was a Pentium 166 with 64MB of RAM. Decent Enough. The other was a Pentium II 366 with 192MB of RAM. They'd do albeit a bit slow. I poked and prodded the laptops some more, trying to figure out how I would configure them. The BIOSes were in desperate need of updates. Sheesh. They weren't even Y2K

compliant. I chuckled to myself as I thought of what one of my students said when I discussed Y2K in relation to BIOSes. He was convinced it was a conspiracy by Big Corporations and the Big Banks (everything capitalized). I thought about it for a second. Maybe it was a conspiracy. To buy newer and better equipment. Actually, wouldn't surprise me given Microsoft and a few other's recent exploits. Ah well.

Thankfully, they are IBM, I thought. I download the latest BIOS updates. RTFM. Note to self: find batteries that last longer than 30 seconds. I go hunting through the "Leftover Closet". I'm in luck. Some schmuck has left two batteries that actually keep a charge longer than 5 min. Good. I fully charge the batteries and prepare the update diskettes. I pop the diskettes in and begin the update. The P2 has decided not to play. I think it senses I'm putting Linux on it's older sibling and it's getting stuck with a Microsoft product, even though its a decent product. I hear grinding noises. Uh oh. Not good. Not good at all. I look at the screen, hoping there is an error code. There isn't. All there is on the screen in big bold letters: THERE IS A HARDWARE ERROR. Well no duh! I heard it have the hardware error. Heck, half the building heard it. Sigh.

I call IBM's Support Line. The company I'm at is a multi-million dollar company. The largest purchaser of equipment from IBM of any private vocational school or pretty much any company in Canada. We still get the 2nd rate Support Line and I have to wait about 40 minutes. Thank god for speakerphones. I punch in the various codes to eventually end up at Support Heaven. I think. Maybe it's just a level of Hell I don't know about. I feel Dilbert on this day.

"Good morning. Thank you for calling IBM. I'm John. How may I help you today", a voice asks me. He sounds ok. Maybe this one will be brilliant. BWAHAHAHAHA... wishful thinking on my part. I tell him my activities and the response by the machine. He listens politely and puts me on hold. I figure it must be some new tech and he's asking his boss which button he needs to press to recover all the information he just erased. He pops back on.

"It's not supposed to do that." Eh? Oh geez. He can't be serious. IBM, the largest manufacturer of pretty much anything, making billions every day, get's a brilliance such as this with these kinds of deductive reasoning powers. Oh joy.

"And what might have caused this?", I asked him. To which I get another "Please hold" while he goes off. I'm sure he's laughing somewhere. He can't be that dumb, can he??

"It's a hardware error," my woeful Sherlock Techie comes back with. We paid how much for the laptops and desktops and support?? Sheesh. I tell him that the laptop is going back, please send the box and the courier and then replace the motherboard and/or the BIOS, whichever is easier. I don't say cheaper as I know the motherboard represents half of the price of the laptop. I hang up and go back to the King (I figured it was easier to mentally call him that then go through his title).

"That laptop is dead. Can I have another? I've got the Pentium almost up and running so I'll begin with some audit scans.." I said and stopped midway through my requests. I looked at his screen. This guy is in charge of the huge Lotus Notes Server. He is responsible for the email and information transmittal of thousands of users. I see a sticky note with the following:

lotus acct: lking40
lotus pass: lking40

ftp acct: admin
ftp pass: adm!n

ftp user: user
ftp pass: letmein

I cringe. Oh boy. This is going to be a long day.

The End. ;)

Thanks for reading and look out for Issue #2 which will deal with more advanced topics.

Ennis.