Are you the weakest link?

August 31, 2010

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- Agencies spend a lot of time, energy -- and money -- securing their networks, but one of the most effective ways of attacking your network isn't technological at all. It is called social engineering -- and it is based on the premise that you are the weakest link. You may remember a few weeks ago we spoke to the team behind the social engineering capture-the-flag competition held at the big DefCon cyber-security event in Las Vegas. We thought it would be good to follow up and find out what they learned through that competition. Chris Hadnagy is the Operations Manager for the Offensive Security company. And he helped to organize this social engineering contest. The idea was to test how secure several companies were. Unfortunately, he says, they did not perform very well. For more information, click here.

- Agencies are dealing with a shortage of cybersecurity professionals right now. The Homeland Security Department and the Air Force have the authority to expedite the hiring of almost 17-hundred cyber-workers over the next two years. But, fast-track hiring is only seen as a stopgap solution. Information Week says, the long-term answer is going to require new training programs and better ways of attracting and retaining the workers that have the right skills. Chief information security officers and other government IT managers did recently manage to identify a range of the issues they're going to have to address going forward. At a recent cybersecurity workforce conference, the discussion focused on several issues -- a terrible federal hiring processes that identify candidates based on buzzwords. There was also a discussion about what really constitutes "bona fide" experience. Then there are the federal mandates that can push unqualified people to the front of the hiring line. Government still has a hard time just describing what a cybersecurity specialist really is. The Office of Personnel Management has found cybersecurity workers working in as many as 18 different federal job series. Right now, they're mulling over whether the cybersecurity workforce needs its own series.

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