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# Is Your Company Vulnerable to Social Engineering?

Thursday, August 05, 2010

Contributed By: [Katie Weaver](#) **Lessons learned from a recent hacking competition at Defcon revealed yet again that your employees are the biggest threat to your organization.**



With just two phone calls, a hacker posing as a Louisiana-based employee handling claims involving the Gulf oil spill was able to trick a computer support employee at BP into divulging sensitive information that could have proved crucial in launching a network attack.

The employee provided information to the caller including the model of laptops BP used, the specific operating system, browser anti-virus and VPN software. The hacker also convinced the employee to visit an unknown web site, Social-Engineer.org.

Other hackers in the competition asked company employees what version of Adobe Reader the company used or who the garbage collector was that hauled their trash. Employees seemed extra willing to help the hackers who pretended to lack specific information.

Several large corporations were targeted including BP, Shell, Apple, Google, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, Proctor and Gamble, Pepsi, Coca-Cola and Ford. Only 3 of the 10 companies passed the test and did not provide any sensitive information.

## **Are your employees this gullible? Is your company vulnerable to social engineering attacks?**

By sharing real-world stories like the competition results above, you can help your employees understand risks and potential consequences of revealing sensitive information.

Managers can help employees become aware of how they can protect their jobs, their organization and your organization's clients by preventing data breaches, information losses, lawsuits, etc.

Hackers are continuously developing new tactics and more sophisticated strategies for retrieving information

from unsuspecting employees.

Because we know hackers are getting better at social engineering, it is critical for your organization to develop better awareness training and education to keep up with changing risks, threats and more sophisticated techniques.

Link: [Companies Fail Social Engineering Contest](#)

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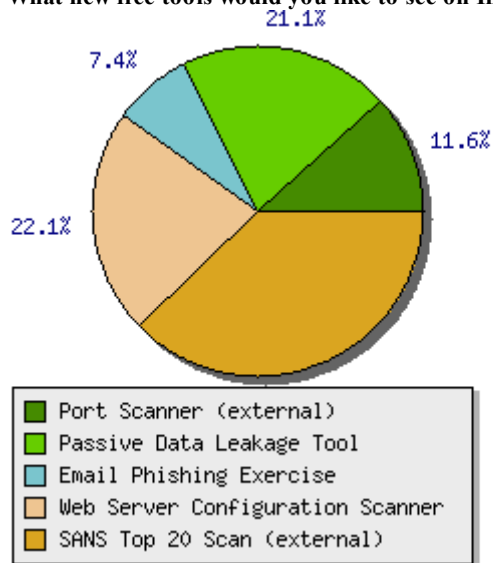
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