The Top 10 Ways Hackers Get Around Your Firewall And Anti-Virus To Rob You Blind

Cybercrime is at an all-time high, and hackers are setting their sights on small and medium businesses who are "low hanging fruit." Don't be their next victim! This report reveals the most common ways that hackers get in and how to protect yourself today.

Provided By: Aldebaran Group, Inc.
Author: Robert Kinnell
1300 Eye Street NW, Suite 400E
Washington, DC 20005
https://www.aldebarangroup.com/

Are You A Sitting Duck?

You, the Manager of a small business, are under attack. Right now, extremely dangerous and well-funded cybercrime rings in China, Russia and the Ukraine are using sophisticated software systems to hack into thousands of small businesses like yours to steal credit cards, client information, and swindle money directly out of your bank account. Some are even being funded by their own government to attack American businesses.

Don't think you're in danger because you're "small" and not a big target like a J.P. Morgan or Home Depot? Think again. 82,000 NEW malware threats are being released every single day and HALF of the cyber-attacks occurring are aimed at small businesses; you just don't hear about it because it's kept quiet for fear of attracting bad PR, lawsuits, data-breach fines and out of sheer embarrassment.

In fact, the National Cyber Security Alliance reports that one in five small businesses have been victims of cybercrime in the last year – and that number is growing rapidly as more businesses utilize cloud computing, mobile devices and store more information online. You can't turn on the TV or read a newspaper without learning about the latest online data breach, and government fines and regulatory agencies are growing in number and severity. **Because of all of this, it's critical that you protect your business from these top 10 ways that hackers get into your systems.**

1. **They Take Advantage of Poorly Trained Employees.** The #1 vulnerability for business networks is the employee using them. It's extremely common for an employee to infect an entire network by opening and clicking a phishing e-mail (that's an e-mail cleverly designed to look like a legitimate e-mail from a web site or vendor you trust). If they don't know how to spot infected e-mails or online scams, they could compromise your entire network.

2. **They Exploit Device Usage Outside of Company Business.** You must maintain an Acceptable Use Policy that outlines how employees are permitted to use company-owned PCs, devices, software, Internet access and e-mail. We strongly recommend putting a policy in place that limits the web sites employees can access with work devices and Internet connectivity. Further, you have to enforce your policy with content-filtering software and firewalls. We can easily set up permissions and rules that will regulate what web sites your employees access and what they do online during company hours and with company-owned devices, giving certain users more "freedom" than others.

Having this type of policy is particularly important if your employees are using their own personal devices to access company e-mail and data.

If that employee is checking unregulated, personal e-mail on their own laptop that infects that laptop, it can be a gateway for a hacker to enter YOUR network. If that employee leaves, are you allowed to erase company data from their phone? If their phone is lost or stolen, are you permitted to remotely wipe the device – which would delete all of that employee's photos, videos, texts, etc. – to ensure YOUR clients' information isn't compromised?

Further, if the data in your organization is highly sensitive, such as patient records, credit card information, financial information and the like, you may not be legally permitted to allow employees to access it on devices that are not secured; but that doesn't mean an employee might not innocently "take work home." If it's a company-owned device, you need to detail what an employee can or cannot do with that device, including "rooting" or "jailbreaking" the device to circumvent security mechanisms you put in place.

3. **They Take Advantage of WEAK Password Policies.** Passwords should be at least 8 characters and contain lowercase and uppercase letters, symbols and at least one number. On a cell phone, requiring a passcode to be entered will go a long way toward preventing a stolen device from being compromised. Again, this can be ENFORCED by your network administrator so employees don't get lazy and choose easy-to-guess passwords, putting your organization at risk.

4. **They Attack Networks That Are Not Properly Patched with The Latest Security Updates.** New vulnerabilities are frequently found in common software programs you are using, such as Microsoft Office; therefore, it's critical you patch and update your systems frequently. If you're under a managed IT plan, this can all be automated for you so you don't have to worry about missing an important update.

5. **They Attack Networks with No Backups or Simple Single Location Backups.** Simply having a solid, reliable backup can foil some of the most aggressive (and new) ransomware attacks, where a hacker locks up your files and holds them ransom until you pay a fee. If your files are backed up, you don't have to pay a crook to get them back. A good backup will also protect you against an employee accidentally (or intentionally!) deleting or overwriting files, natural disasters, fire, water damage, hardware failures and a host of other data-erasing disasters. Again, your backups should be AUTOMATED and monitored; the

worst time to test your backup is when you desperately need it to work!

6. **They Exploit Networks with Employee Installed Software.** One of the fastest ways cybercriminals access networks is by duping unsuspecting users to willfully download malicious software by embedding it within downloadable files, games or other "innocent"-looking apps. This can largely be prevented with a good firewall and employee training and monitoring.

7. **They Attack Inadequate Firewalls.** A firewall acts as the frontline defense against hackers blocking everything you haven't specifically allowed to enter (or leave) your computer network. But all firewalls need monitoring and maintenance, just like all devices on your network. This too should be done by your IT person or company as part of their regular, routine maintenance.

8. **They Attack Your Devices When You're Off the Office Network.** It's not uncommon for hackers to set up fake clones of public Wi-Fi access points to try and get you to connect to THEIR Wi-Fi over the legitimate, safe public one being made available to you. Before connecting, check with an employee of the store or location to verify the name of the Wi-Fi they are providing. Next, NEVER access financial, medical or other sensitive data while on public Wi-Fi. Also, don't shop online and enter your credit card information unless you're absolutely certain the connection point you're on is safe and secure.

9. **They Use Phishing E-mails to Fool You into Thinking That You're Visiting A Legitimate Web Site.** A phishing e-mail is a bogus e-mail that is carefully designed to look like a legitimate request (or attached file) from a site you trust in an effort to get you to willingly give up your login information to a particular web site or to click and download a virus.

   Often these e-mails look 100% legitimate and show up in the form of a PDF (scanned document) or a UPS or FedEx tracking number, bank letter, Facebook alert, bank notification, etc. That's what makes these so dangerous – they LOOK exactly like a legitimate e-mail.

10. **They Use Social Engineering and Pretend to Be You.** This is a basic 21st-century tactic. Hackers pretend to be you to reset your passwords. In 2009, social engineers posed as Coca-Cola's CEO, persuading an exec to open an e-mail with software that infiltrated the network. In another scenario, hackers pretended to be a popular online blogger and got Apple to reset the author's iCloud password.

Want Help Ensuring That Your Company Has All 10 Of These Holes Plugged?

If you are concerned about employees and the dangers of cybercriminals gaining access to your network, then call us about how we can implement a managed security plan for your business.

At no cost or obligation, we'll send one of our security consultants and a senior technician to your office to conduct a free **Security And Backup Audit** of your company's overall network health to review and validate as many as 23 different data-loss and security loopholes. We'll also look for common places where security and backup get overlooked, such as mobile devices, laptops, tablets and home PCs. At the end of this free audit, you'll know:

- Is your network really and truly secured against the most devious cybercriminals? And if not, what do you need to do (at a minimum) to protect yourself now?

- Is your data backup TRULY backing up ALL the important files and data you would never want to lose? We'll also reveal exactly how long it would take to restore your files (most people are shocked to learn it will take much longer than they anticipated).

- Are your employees freely using the Internet to access gambling sites and porn, to look for other jobs and waste time shopping, or to check personal e-mail and social media sites? You know some of this is going on right now, but do you know to what extent?

- Are you accidentally violating any PCI, HIPAA or other data-privacy laws? New laws are being put in place frequently and it's easy to violate one without even being aware; however, you'd still have to suffer the bad PR and fines.

- Is your firewall and antivirus configured properly and up-to-date?

- Are your employees storing confidential and important information on unprotected file storage cloud apps that are OUTSIDE of your backup?

I know it's natural to want to think, "We've got it covered." **Yet I can practically guarantee my team will find one or more ways your business is at serious risk for hacker attacks, data loss and extended downtime – I just see it all too often in the professional services businesses we've audited over the years.**

Even if you have a trusted IT person or company who put your current network in place, it never hurts to get a 3rd party to validate nothing was overlooked. I have no one to protect and no reason to conceal or gloss over anything we find. If you want the straight truth, I'll report it to you.

You Are Under No Obligation to Do or Buy Anything

I also want to be very clear that there are no expectations on our part for you to do or buy anything when you take us up on our **Free Security and Backup Audit**. As a matter of fact, I will give you my personal guarantee that you won't have to deal with a pushy, arrogant salesperson because I don't appreciate heavy sales pressure any more than you do.

Whether or not we're a right fit for you remains to be seen. If we are, we'll welcome the opportunity. But if not, we're still more than happy to give this free service to you.

You've spent a lifetime working hard to get where you are. You earned every penny and every client. Why risk losing it all? Get the facts and be certain your business, your reputation and your data are protected. Call us at (202) 683-6175 or you can e-mail me personally at robert.kinnell@aldebarangroup.com.

Dedicated to serving you,

Robert Kinnell
Web: https://www.aldebarangroup.com
E-mail: robert.kinnell@aldebarangroup.com

Here's What A Few Of Our Clients Have Said:

Aldebaran Group Keeps Us Working!

Kim Fitzgerald
Director
Squire, Lemkin + Company, LLP

Squire, Lemkin + Company, LLP have used Aldebaran Group for the last ten years. Being an accounting firm, we need our systems to be top notch and secure at all times. Aldebaran Group is continually taking a proactive approach to issues, alerts and keeping us top notch and secure at all times. They are always very responsive to our request no matter whether it is early morning, late at night, weekend or a weekday when they are not scheduled to be in our office. I always get a response and resolution in no more than 30 minutes. Our critical systems have continued to be up at a rate of 99.99% of the time. All of their personnel are very personal and a pleasure to work with. These are some of the reasons we continue to use Aldebaran Group and would highly recommend them.

It's Great to Have a Partner You Completely Trust!

Shaun Leighton
Chief Operating Officer, Reno & Cavanaugh PLLC

Robert Kinnell has been a trusted advisor to Reno & Cavanaugh since 2001, and we have been clients of the Aldebaran Group since its founding. Aldebaran handles our IT infrastructure from network installation to end user support and has been instrumental in maintaining a stable network environment enabling us to focus on our expanding business rather than information technology. Over the years, Robert and Aldebaran have helped us navigate successive generations of technology and software to make sure we have secure, reliable, and cost-effective systems across our three offices.

Reno & Cavanaugh relies on Aldebaran for proactive network monitoring and management and we depend on them to resolve issues/alerts without waiting for input from us. We are thankful for Aldebaran's responsiveness to emergencies both large and small - from assisting staff members with technology issues on weekends to larger scale network issues. Aldebaran are always prepared to work long hours and do what it takes to complete new installations on time or make sure the network is up and running to minimize disruption to our business.
Aldebaran Group are more than a service provider to Reno & Cavanaugh; they are our technology partner.

Aldebaran Group Puts My Mind at Rest!

Robert Kotwicki
Office Manager
Cooper Ginsberg Gray PLLC

Aldebaran Group is, hands down, the first vendor I recommend to colleagues when asked about services that our firm uses. I have known and worked with Charles Speer for over 18 years. He is known to our firm as "Charles in Charge." Charles and the entire Aldebaran Group are trustworthy, knowledgeable and reliable. We have two points of contact at Aldebaran Group, both of whom know the firm's computer system inside and out. This consistency is not only helpful, but cost effective and reassuring. Aldebaran Group always has the firm's best interest in mind when coming up with solutions for the office. They understand the firm's budget and always work with us to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep our network safe and protected, and to stay ahead of the computer and office technology curve. As an office manager for a busy and growing law firm, I am exceptionally grateful for the services and peace of mind provided by Aldebaran Group.

I Can't See Us Using Another IT Firm… Ever.

Victor Klingelhofer
Partner
Cordatis LLP

Robert Kinnell has been assisting this firm with regards to computer and system maintenance and support for the last 20 years. Mr. Kinnell initially worked for two separate companies providing these services for us. We thought so highly of his expertise, professionalism and ability that, when Mr. Kinnell went to work for a different company, we immediately switched to that company so that he would continue to assist us. Similarly, when he opened up Aldebaran we immediately signed up for that company as well.

In a nutshell, I cannot imagine how much more difficult it would be to try to function without Mr. Kinnell's services. And this certainly goes far beyond his unquestionable technical knowledge. It goes to his attitude regarding customer service. Mr. Kinnell has accommodated our scheduling needs by working weekends, evenings, early mornings, and other odd times. Furthermore, this same level of customer service and professional ability to meet our specialized needs can be found in all of Aldebaran's employees and is why we continue to utilize those resources today, without reservation. Frankly, a company that can continue to keep a law firm — with all of its inherent quirks and unique personalities — happy for more than 20 years must be providing extraordinary customer support.