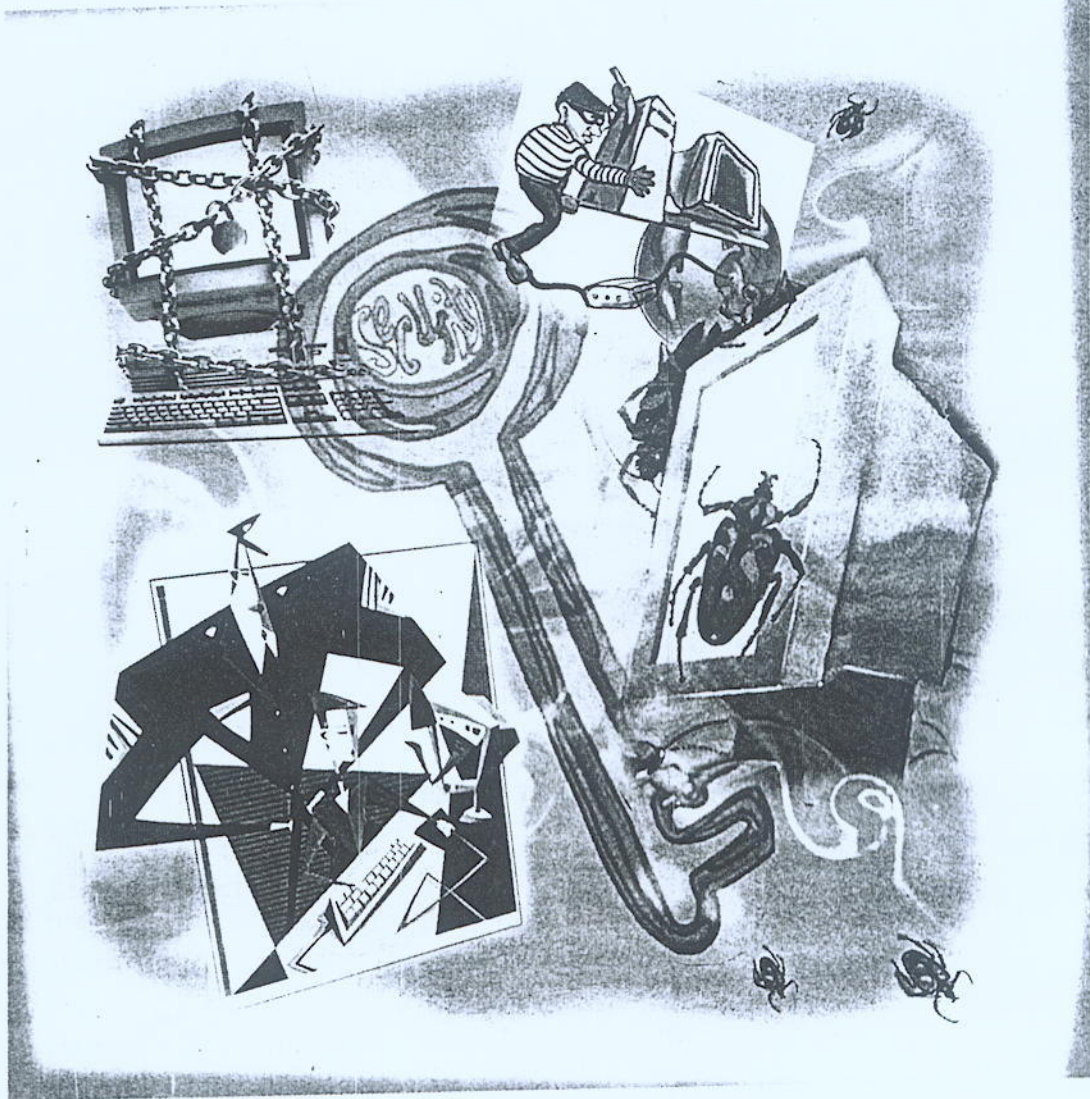


The hunt for total security

Small businesses are becoming aware of security issues, but they have a long way to go as many do not have either a basic security policy or a full-fledged IT team, says Abhinav Singh



Small businesses are a part of global supply chains of larger organisations and hence they need to have the right mix of security solutions in place coupled with regular security policy refreshes. Many are awakening to the fact that having an effective security policy will brighten their chances of having a secured link to global supply chains.

Viruses top the threat perception barometer

A good chunk of respon-

dents (95 percent of the companies) surveyed in the IMRB survey consider viruses to be the main threat to their corporate network followed by spam. 26 percent of the companies indicated that spam is a security risk followed by attacks from hackers and Internet security-related breaches. Theft or damage to corporate data, remote access control and Internet fraud were considered to be lower security risks vis-à-vis viruses and spam.

With the advent of broad-

band at aggressive prices, the threat of viruses and spam has escalated. According to Ambarish Deshpande, Head Channels & Consumer Sales, Symantec India, "These days a large number of small businesses are going online as they cannot remain competitive without it. Take for instance the case of a ticketing agent who has to be in touch with the ticketing departments of other airlines. Online transactions are part of e-ticketing. Companies such as travel houses need to

protect themselves against any security breach especially virus threats that can bring down an entire network causing business losses or in a worst-case scenario putting them out of business."

No regular security policy

56 percent of the respondents do not have a security policy. There is no clear roadmap for small businesses as far as security policy or IT policy is concerned. Kartik Shahani, Country Manager, McAfee India, says, "Small

businesses in India do not have a holistic security policy as they are uncertain about their future and prefer to have a point solution rather than a proper security roadmap."

heads involved in framing enterprise-wide security policy. CEOs were involved in framing a security policy in 44 percent of the companies that have one. 15 percent of CIOs

A good chunk of respondents (95 percent of the companies) consider viruses to be the main threat to their corporate network. This is followed by spam

The growth pattern of a small business is complex—it might grow to become tomorrow's enterprise or chances are that it will be acquired by a large company in which case having a comprehensive security policy may not make much sense. This uncertainty is substantiated by the fact that of the 56 percent of respondents who do not have a security policy in place, most do not intend to go in for the same in the short term.

The majority of respondents having a security policy belong to verticals such as manufacturing, garment manufacturing, retail, logistics, and education. Many manufacturing companies are part of the global supply chain, and exports account for a substantial chunk of their business. This calls for a robust security policy as they connect to their global suppliers using the Internet.

Who calls the shots?

Of the 85 companies that have a security policy in place, 47 percent of small businesses had functional

and 2 percent of CFOs are involved in forming a security policy. Small companies do not have a full-fledged IT team and they often do not have a regular CIO to manage IT, and most of these decisions are taken by functional heads or the CEO.

Data security gets prioritised

Companies with a full-fledged security policy in

Survey highlights

Viruses, spam, hackers and Internet security continue to be main security risks encountered by small companies in India.

56 percent of companies do not have a security policy in place. For those who have a security policy, data security is at the top of their list of priorities, followed by unauthorised employee access.

Companies with a security policy in place have mixed reactions to the time frame as far as review of security policy is concerned. This ranges from one month to a year.

Firewalls, access control devices, security appliances and intrusion detection systems are high on the priority list of security deployments for small companies.

place put data security on top of their priorities while framing their policies, as most of them have to protect their confidential and sensitive data that is churned out from their regular interactions with



Small businesses largely depend on system integrators to deploy products as they do not have a trained IT team that can supervise and manage security implementations

Jagdish Mahapatra
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
CISCO SYSTEMS, INDIA AND SAARC



Small businesses in India do not have a holistic security policy as they are uncertain about their future and prefer to have a point solution rather than a proper security roadmap

Kartik Shahani
COUNTRY MANAGER
MCAFEE INDIA

customers and dealers. Most of this data is critical to small businesses due to their transactions with other dealers and large manufacturers. Hence data security holds relatively greater importance for these companies than for larger

once a year. Pharmaceutical, manufacturing and logistics followed by retail review security policy regularly as many of them (small businesses) are part of global supply chains and need an effective security policy.

companies. Small businesses don't want to give access to the critical data to all employees, as some of the data needs to be protected from access by all and sundry employees. About 53 percent of companies having a security policy feel that unauthorised employee access needs to be taken deeply into consideration while framing a security policy. Data security in transit is another important area that is considered while framing a security policy, according to 20 percent of the companies having a security policy.

Security policy review

About 25 percent of the companies with a security policy in place review their security policy once a month, while another 24 percent review it once every six months. 20 percent review their policy once in three months and about 20 percent say that there is no fixed criterion for reviewing the policy. The remainder companies review their security policy

Anti-virus tops the list

A majority of the surveyed companies have already invested in an anti-virus solution in verticals such as chemical and pharmaceutical sectors, manufacturing, education, retail, logistics, garment manufacturing, auto and auto components. This can be interpreted in the context that majority of companies in the above verticals have reported virus threats as the biggest security risk. The survey also highlights the importance of Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) and Firewall (FW) adoption by small businesses. IDS and FW adoption is largely seen in manufacturing, followed by garment manufacturers, retail and education in that order. Interestingly, the survey also points out that many small businesses have depicted a high incidence of adoption of access control devices mainly driven by healthcare and education, followed by retail and logistics. Many have shown high



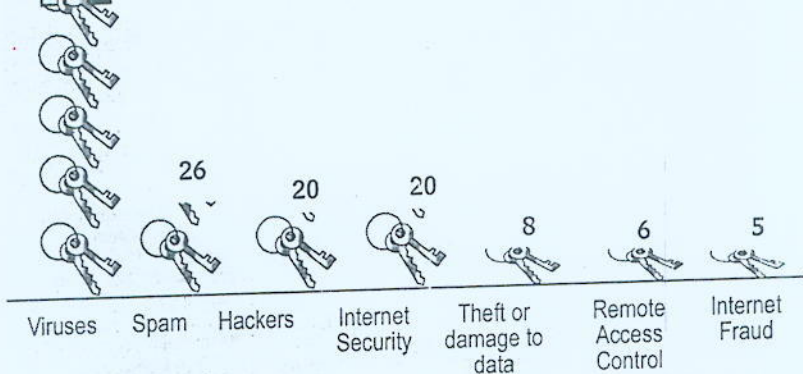
These days a large number of small businesses are going online as they cannot remain competitive without it

Ambarish Deshpande
HEAD CHANNELS & CONSUMER SALES
SYMANTEC INDIA



Small businesses in the BPO segment are doing critical work for their overseas clients

Vishak Raman
COUNTRY MANAGER
INDIA AND SAARC, FORTINET



Base: All respondents

incidence of adoption of security appliances, which has been led by companies in logistics and manufacturing. The driver for security appliances by small businesses was largely because many of them want to have integrated functionality in a single box. It

teams to manage IT.

Opportunity for security vendors

According to a majority of vendors whom *Express Computer* spoke to, small businesses prefer using solutions that are easy to

to deploy products as they do not have a trained IT team that can supervise and manage security implementations." Vendors such as Cisco are running an SMB campaign under which they are working closely with their partners.

Most security vendors say

Companies with a full-fledged security policy put data security on top of their priorities while framing their policies, as most of them have to protect confidential and sensitive data from their regular interactions with customers and dealers

includes having an anti-virus, anti-spam, firewall and IDS in an integrated appliance, which brings in ease of manageability for smaller businesses who do not have full-fledged IT

use and deploy. Explains Jagdish Mahapatra, Business Development Manager, Cisco Systems, India and SAARC, "Small businesses largely depend on system integrators

that to target small businesses, they need to go along with their partners as they share a close relationship with small businesses and can sell better. Another

These businesses have to fall in line because they trade with foreign companies and are part of the global supply chain of large multinationals.

BPO businesses with low turnovers but doing high-end work are the ones which will drive the security market in the segment.

As time progresses, many small businesses are likely to have a security policy in place as they have to identify their IT assets and then protect them. There will be a steady demand for integrated security appliances.

fact that emerged during conversations with security vendors is that small businesses are price-sensitive and the products have to be redesigned or the high-end version of the products have to be pared down to meet their requirements. Security vendors such as Fortinet think that the inclination to spend on security-based solutions by small businesses is still quite low, but that is changing with the mushrooming of small BPOs across India. Vishak Raman, Country Manager, India and SAARC, Fortinet, comments, "Small businesses in the BPO segment are doing critical work for their overseas clients. Their concern for security is high since they are also affected by international regulations and compliance and hence they need to have a robust security infrastructure in place."

Says Pravir Arora, Director Marketing & Head Channel Sales, Computer Associates India and SAARC, "Awareness regarding the need for efficient network security is low among small businesses in India. They need to realise that security threats are there for each and every company, be it small or large, as threat levels remain the same."

Many small businesses are likely to have a proper security solution in place which gives them an edge over the competition and helps them protect their IT assets with increased automation in small businesses that is likely to happen in the future.



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Pravir Arora
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