Security and Social Networks

Washington State Department of Information Services

Overview:

Web 2.0 and social media sites are becoming popular for both personal and professional use. These sites are high value targets for hackers that provide opportunities to access large quantities of personal or organizational information.

The most recent security reports reveal that hacking attempts on Web 2.0 sites and social media are on the rise. In a special report entitled "Web 2.0 Hacking Incidents – 2009 Q1", analysis of databases of successful hacking attempts in the first quarter of 2009 revealed that Web 2.0 sites are now the premier target for hackers.

Statistics:
- Web 2.0 sites make up 21% of all reported hacking incidents
- 95% of user-generated comments on blogs, message boards, and chat rooms are either spam or contain malicious links
- Over 60% of the top 100 Web properties either hosted malicious content or redirected users to malicious sites without their knowledge
- One new infected webpage is discovered every 3.6 seconds (four times faster than in first half of 2008)
- 40,000 new suspicious files are examined by a security vendor every day

These reports clearly spell out the need for businesses using these tools to implement a comprehensive security strategy, and Web 2.0 specific security mechanisms.

The challenge is: How can we leverage the positive aspects of this emerging set of tools, while ensuring we do not create unacceptable risk to the organization?

Determining appropriate use within an organization; ensuring employees have the proper awareness and training; as well as addressing potential impact on network bandwidth are just a few areas that need to be addressed.

The question is not "if" we use these tools; but rather "how" to use them while embracing security best practices.

References

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