Chapter XIV

Information Security in Small Businesses

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Abstract

This chapter discusses the impact of security in small and medium enterprises. It views the development of a security policy in serious light and come up with some recommendations on how this can be handled.
Introduction

The management of information security and security related events has become an issue commanding ever-increasing attention from the various professions attending to the information needs of organisations using ICT\(^1\) (Von Solms, 2001). The basic need of developing secure information systems (IS), however, continues to remain unfulfilled. This is because the focus continues to remain on the means of delivery of information (i.e., the technology (Galliers, 1993)). Management continues to believe that information security and related problems can be solved by technical means (Vermeulen & Von Solms, 2002). The responsibility of information security is entrusted to the technical department without proper, direct, and continuous support from executive management. The net result is that technology is used to solve the information security problem without a total, comprehensive solution (Von Solms & Von Solms, 2004).

This chapter describes the contribution made by small businesses\(^2\) to the South African economy, reviews some of the current literature in information security, and examines some of the more recent (2002 to 2004) survey statistics describing the state of information security in organisations. This chapter is aimed at academics, information security researchers, information security practitioners, and owners of small businesses that make use of computer-based information systems. Additionally, any student of information security that needs to understand the fundamentals of effective information security implementation in small businesses will find this chapter useful.

Small Business Profile

South Africa has a thriving small business sector supported by a network of financial and non-financial service providers. By enabling people to meet their basic needs for survival, small businesses play an important role in economic development. It has been proven in many parts of the world that the small business sector stimulates economic growth, redistributes wealth, and creates jobs. The latter being particularly important within the context of the reality that large corporations’ demand for labour does not increase in proportion to their growth (Ntsika, 2002).

According to Ntsika (2002), some of the reasons why small businesses in South Africa have become an important target for policy makers are: (1) they can easily absorb excess labour capacity as compared to other sectors, (2) the cost of creating a job is lower than in the large businesses, (3) they create more competitive
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