

All.Net Analyst Report and Newsletter

Welcome to our Analyst Report and Newsletter

Stupid security getting even stupider

Every year or two, I write an article on stupid security. This year, in the name of security, things are getting unusually ridiculous. Someone should introduce the concept of usability to security folks. This year, I restrain myself to the last 4 hours. For brevity, not lack of options...

Routers that are nearly impossible to actually configure to work

These are among the most ridiculous. I believe that we should be able to have all sorts of protective mechanisms in place if and when we want them. But why I am not allowed to disable MAC address association with IP addresses via DHCP with assignments done in the order of arrival of MAC addresses at the router is beyond me. Remote control is intentionally hard, so once I got one system working on an external IP address of the router's choosing, I arranged to ssh tunnel to VNC to administer the router via LAN Web interface. I copied the router password and now spend hour after hour to get the router to let me get the next device a valid external IP address. Manual configuration is theoretically possible, but I get an error saying I didn't provide all the required information, with no entry areas in the form... Stupid!

An email address required to make a purchase online with a credit card

You would think that after a big box store just got tens of millions of email addresses stolen, they might decide not to collect them as a requirement to complete an order online. My credit card, physical address, and delivery details should be enough. But they really want to spam me I guess. So I made up yet another new email alias to let me know when they violate their policies even though I unchecked the default checked "send me spam" (email offers) button on the Web site. I cannot wait to hear how much they have to pay in the class action suit considering that they stupidly still collect the same unnecessary things they seem unable to protect. At least this isn't in the name of security. They should charge back marketing for the losses, costs, and damage to reputation associated with their spam machine.

A physical key-code lock for a door

I want to use sequence locks on some doors instead of keys. But I don't want an electronic device for many reasons; (1) the Internet of vulnerabilities (things), (2) if the electronics fail I can't get in, (3) if there is a key as backup, then I still need the key and you can still pick it, (n) etc. Can I get one? I can... but not at an actual store. I have to buy it from an online dealer. And soon these will be completely phased out. Guess which costs more... the electronic ones! Worse, less reliable, more expensive. The opposite of the better, faster, cheaper we look for.

Summary

It's usually in the name of "security", but it's just stupidity. If anyone wants to know why there are so many large-scale security problems, before we start into the technical stuff, we should say first that it's because these companies are stupid about their security. They continue to do stupid things and their customers pay the price. But don't bother going elsewhere. There is no real competition for less stupidity in corporate security. It's a race to the bottom. Slower, worse, and costlier, that's what stupid security gets you, along with customer dissatisfaction.