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Leave the Cookies for Santa, Not Your IT Staff, Warns Pearl Software

Workplace Shopping Increases Low Office Productivity During the Holidays

Pearl Software Issues Third Annual Scrooge Report

Philadelphia, PA — December 10, 2003 — When your employees hit the cybermalls, they may be returning with more than just gifts. According to Pearl Software, a Philadelphia based software company, employees who shop from work are putting corporate networks at risk and are saddling already overworked IT professionals with an additional holiday task – ridding the network of malicious code picked up while shopping online.

This marks the third year Pearl Software has issued its "Annual Scrooge Report," measuring lost productivity and other IT nuisances resulting from employees who shop online for holiday gifts. According to "Holidays Online – 2002," an online shopping round-up released by Pew Internet & American Life Project in January 2003, a third of wired shoppers made gift purchases from office workstations last year.

"Employees who shop 'til they drop often bring back nasty scripts and spybots, creating the potential for a security breach," said David A. Fertell, CEO of Pearl Software. "Next thing you know, employees are calling the IT Help Desk complaining about an inexplicable barrage of spam and annoying pop-up ads."

Increasingly, companies are using Internet monitoring and filtering software to ensure "safe shopping." Pearl Software's flagship product, Pearl Echo® Global Internet Management Software, is used to guard the corporate network and ensure that workers only purchase from reputable e-commerce sites, decreasing the chance of spam and virus activity. Internet monitoring software like Pearl Echo also helps companies maintain productivity – especially during the holidays when productivity typically plummets.

According to Arlan Tanner of Kit Carson Memorial Hospital, "Our network has been hit repeatedly by open spam relays and viruses. Pearl Echo helps us identify where the files are

coming from, so we can stop individuals from downloading files with dangerous attachments." Tanner says Pearl Echo saves him the time and expense required to constantly repair his virus-stricken network and delete the spybots that are bringing in the spam.

"Many companies allow employees to use the Web for personal use such as shopping or sending e-cards; however, they want some control over how much time is being spent and where employees surf," said David Fertell. "If your staff wants to max out their credit cards, that's their business but maxing out corporate bandwidth is another matter. A few hours of controlled Internet shopping during lunchtime is a win-win for everyone."

IT staff use software tools like Pearl Echo to manage online shopping and other forms of employee Internet use. In a marketplace where downsizing is the norm and IT workers are often overworked, Internet monitoring tools offer an affordable, time-saving way to keep online shoppers in-check and ensure that the IT department has time to attend the holiday office party. Thanks to advanced reporting features available in the latest release of Pearl Echo, IT workers can schedule reports to be automatically generated and distributed via e-mail using Pearl Echo's built-in e-mailer.

"I'm not playing Grinch this year," commented Arlan Tanner of Kit Carson Memorial Hospital. "I set up the software to run automatically and reports are sent on to department managers. If employees are spending too much time on Amazon.com or eToys, their managers will deal with it themselves."

Pearl Software strongly urges companies that purchase Pearl Echo to put an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in place, outlining to employees which non-work-related Internet activities are permissible during work hours. "Just as a company adopts a policy on dress code and behavior, companies need guidelines for acceptable Internet use. Pearl Echo provides an easy way for IT staff to enforce the AUP," said Fertell.

About Pearl Software

David Fertell and Joe Field founded Pearl Software, Inc. in 1996. The company provides network-enabled products to the growing Internet user community. Pearl Software's key, patent-pending products include Pearl Echo and Cyber Snoop® Desktop, which allows parents and educators to monitor children's online activity. The company also offers browser control software, TakeMeHome™, and is commercializing a law enforcement Internet monitoring and control solution. More information about Pearl Software is available at www.pearlsw.com

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