

Pay Now or Pay Later: Obtaining ROI from Security Solutions

Credit union IT managers looking to increase their security spending would be well advised to bring in their C-level management team early in the planning process. This way they will have a better frame of reference and the right background. With limited budgets, senior managers want to know what the security plan covers and how it benefits the credit union.

To win those budgets, the IT Department must make sure that they are addressing real business problems. This means clearly identifying the greatest risks to the credit union and their members, and having well defined processes in place to mitigate these critical threats. Sometimes the latest and greatest defense is not what is needed, but rather a more focused application of technology and human resources. The security and technology side of the credit union must become more involved with the business side so that everyone is working together to protect the right assets.

Follow-up reporting is also very important – IT managers should be able to show how they allocated their previous year's budget and what it did to help keep the credit union secure. Hard numbers really help make the business case, so IT staffers should document where their time goes which will help them justify new systems that can save them time in their daily jobs. In most cases, security outsourcing will prove to save money for the credit union and free up time for internal staff to work on other projects.

At Integrated Computer Solutions, we bring military grade security to commercial environments. We utilize NIST guidelines when delivering risk assessments so that we can clearly identify and measure risk for our clients. Working with the credit union as a partner, we facilitate the prioritization of the risks and the responses. The goal is to clearly delineate what could – and should – be done to enhance security. It is a common sense approach that often relies on the well known 80/20 principle to put the limited security dollars in the best place.

IT resources are usually stretched thin at the credit union. It is our goal to enhance and augment, rather than replace, credit union staff at a very affordable price point. Very few credit unions can afford to keep top quality security experts on staff, or maintain the breadth and depth of security expertise that is needed today, and so we offer a "virtual team" to our clients, making available subject matter experts with various specializations on an as-needed basis. We have certified experts on staff that cover every common system and application platform including Windows, UNIX, Microsoft Exchange, Cisco products, databases, and others. We also have a deep understanding of ISO 17799 standards, Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA), Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX), National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) guidance, and the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Councils recommended guidance. The fact is that you receive enterprise quality support at much lower cost with our consulting and managed security services. Whether it is inside the data center or at the perimeter, ICS has the skill sets onboard that can help credit unions of any size stay secure.



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Faron Golden is Chief Operating Officer of Integrated Computer Solutions, Inc. (ICS), an Information Security Consulting firm founded in 1997 and headquartered in Montgomery, AL. Faron has an extensive background in Information Systems and Intelligence Analysis. He has worked in the telecommunications and information systems arena with organizations including the United States Army Information Systems Command, Telecommunications Division with a Temporary Civil Service appointment; the United States Air Force Network Operations Center as a contractor; and United States Cellular Corporation as a Market Manager. Faron has also been a Senior Security Consultant with the Operations Systems Risk Management practice of PricewaterhouseCoopers.

