



SURVEY INDICATES ORGANIZATIONS UNDERESTIMATE POTENTIAL SECURITY RISK OF COPIER/PRINTERS

IT Pros Often Unaware of Hard Drive's Vulnerability to Intruders

MAHWAH, NJ, August 6, 2001 -- Information technology professionals are largely unaware or uncertain of the potential security risks posed by the theft of documents from digital copier/printers, a survey sponsored by Sharp Electronics Corporation has revealed.

The results of the study underscore that the convergence of several trends – increased use of more sophisticated, high-performance digital copier/printers and the shift in purchase and management of these devices to IT departments among them – has likely left many organizations unprepared to protect some potentially sensitive document data. While the number of actual incidents is low, there is evidence suggesting that this number will rise without further prevention measures, the survey indicated.

The survey was conducted by an independent research company between Monday, May 14 and Wednesday, May 16, 2001. Results were compiled from a total of more than 1,100 on-line respondents who had identified themselves as information technology professionals. Respondents to the survey had such job titles as information technology manager, network manager and systems analyst, and work in such industries as banking/finance/financial services, education, energy/transportation, government/defense, healthcare, insurance, manufacturing, professional/technology services, and telecommunications.

The most common threats to digital copier/printers come from intruders who either steal the hard drives containing confidential or sensitive document data, or who reprint documents directly from the machine after an earlier print command has been canceled. While the focus of the survey was hard drive security, copier/printers can also be at risk from hackers because the machines are increasingly connected to networks. In fact, 88% of survey respondents expected the rate of copier/printer connectivity to grow.

Survey highlights include:

- 47% believed that their copier/printers did not contain a hard drive
- An additional 30% said they didn't know whether the device contained a hard drive
- 54% had some, major or lead responsibility for data security
- 65% said copier/printers presented little or no risk to data security
- Only 5% of survey respondents were aware of any data security breach in copier/printers

"The survey showed a surprising lack of knowledge among IT professionals about digital imaging security," said Richard Boomsma, Vice President, Document & Network Solutions Group (DNSG), Sharp Electronics Corporation. "Sharp plans to be very aggressive in addressing the vulnerability of digital copier/printer systems with both useful information and a full line of security solutions."

National Information Assurance Partnership (NIAP), a joint program of the National Security Agency and National Institute of Standards and Technology, recently awarded its first-ever

"Common Criteria" validation certificate to Sharp Electronics Corp. for a product that erases data from the hard drive in several of its copier/printers. "Common Criteria" is the emerging global standard for information technology security evaluations.

© 2003 Sharp Electronics Corp.