



The case of the disappearing laptop

For most of the history of asset management, security has seldom been a driving force for system implementation. After all, they're fixed assets and don't move much. But in the last 18 months, we have seen a surprising number of organizations that have sustained sizeable losses when their assets were stolen.

In most cases, the scam is similar and simple. An employee responsible either for purchase or control of fixed assets exploits a surplus of IT assets. The surplus is important because it does not effect day-to-day operations and the absence of the assets is not missed. Often, the need for extra computers may be completely legitimate – an office closing or downsizing may occur, an upgrade process may require a temporary purchase of several dozen computers or specialized equipment may be used only occasionally. In other cases, it may not – purchase documents are padded with extra units and approved in the normal course of business. In either case, assets disappear from the organization and reappear on an on-line auction site. A crime unnoticed unless adequate controls are in place and maintained.

The weakness that is exploited is that many organizations do not have adequate safeguards or those that are in place are not properly maintained. Coupled little or no ability to quickly audit the asset database, these organizations are hard pressed to determine the existence or the magnitude of the defalcation. Indeed, in some cases, the enormous effort needed to confirm the loss gave the perpetrators ample notice and time to disappear as well.

While we cannot guarantee that an automated asset management system will prevent theft, we can immeasurably improve the odds. Any system, automated or not, relies on proper maintenance but using scanning technology rather than manual forms allows tasks to be performed quickly and accurately. Moreover, proper tagging of assets makes audits quick and accurate.

At Asset Systems, we have over 20 years of experience creating client driven solutions for reliable asset controls. While in many cases security is an ancillary benefit, perhaps it is the driving force for you. Whatever the case, we will provide the experience of hundreds of system implementations as part of your installation of AssetWIN. Give us a call and see how we can help you.

Now, where was that laptop?

Alden Snyder
President
Asset Systems, Inc.

Tales from the Front is a periodic publication of Asset Systems, Inc. that is designed to provide users and prospective implementers insight and perspective on current trends and issues in asset management.