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News Fact Sheet

Study Points Out Staggering Costs and Little Protection for Missing Laptops

December 2, 2010 – The “Billion Dollar Lost Laptop Problem” study, conducted by Intel and the Ponemon Institute, found that more than 300 businesses and other participating organizations collectively lost more than 86,000 laptops worth a staggering \$2.1 billion. Even though roughly half of those systems contained confidential information, two-thirds of these lacked even basic security practices.



Key findings:

- According to the study, 329 businesses and other organizations lost 86,455 laptops worth a staggering \$2.1 billion.
- Even though 46 percent of the systems contained confidential data, 70 percent lacked basic precautions, such as encryption, back-up and anti-theft technologies.
- Transportation venues, such as airports and train stations, are not the riskiest places; seemingly safe “off-site” locations, such as homes, other companies’ offices and hotel rooms, account for 43 percent of laptop disappearances.
- Average annual loss among participants: 262 laptops worth \$6.4 million.
- On the average, there is a 7.12 percent chance that a laptop will be lost or stolen during its normal lifespan (3.1 years).
- Only 5 percent of laptops were recovered.
- Laptop loss is related to organization size.
 - Midsize organizations (10,001 to 25,000) employees had the most losses – 7.5-8.25 percent.
- Workers face up to a 10 percent chance of losing their laptops, depending on the industry they work in:
 - Education and research: 10.85%
 - Health and pharmaceuticals: 10.1%
 - Public sector: 9.1%
 - Transportation: 7.0%
 - Communications: 6.5%
 - Retail: 6.0%
 - Consumer: 5.8%
 - Industrial: 5.8%
 - Technology and software: 5.7%
 - Services: 5.6%
 - Financial services: 5.2%

- Stolen versus Missing:
 - 25 percent were known stolen (21,812)
 - 14 percent were likely stolen (12,474)
 - 60 percent, were classified as missing (52,169)
- Where were laptops lost?
 - 43 percent off-site (for example, working from a hotel room or home)
 - 33 percent in transportation venues (for example, airports, trains or taxis)
 - 12 percent at owners' workplaces
 - 12 percent unknown

Recommendations:

The study recommends broader use of encryption and anti-theft technologies. It also recommends increased training and awareness programs for employees who have laptops.

Interesting comparisons to the 1 in 10 chance of losing a laptop (from "Book of Odds"):

- Odds a woman considers "Frosty the Snowman" to be her favorite animated holiday TV special (1 in 10)
- Odds a person will spend \$76-\$100 on gift cards during the holidays (1 in 9.79)
- Odds a person is left-handed (1 in 10)
- Odds New York City will have a white Christmas (1 in 10)

Terms:

Lost laptop: Laptop that is recorded by business as missing, but not stolen

Laptop theft: Laptop that is officially determined stolen by security or IT

Quartile: The entire theft range index, from lowest to highest, broken up into quarters with each quartile representing a group of theft rate

In-transit: In a transportation venue (airport, train station, taxi) or in vehicle

Off-site: Working in home, another company's office, hotel room, but not transportation venues.

More information:

More information is available in "[The Billion Dollar Lost Laptop Study.](#)"

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