Punching Holes in Paper Security Risks

More Than Print

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The Truth About Paper

Nobody wants to admit it, but everyone's still got paper. Pay stubs, invoices, bills of lading, medical forms, checks, receipts, business cards… the list goes on. As much progress as digital transformation has made over the past decade, the reality in business is that manual and paper-based processes persist. To ignore their impact on data security is tantamount to dead-bolting the front door, while leaving the back door wide open.

The typical employee spends **30-40% of their time looking for information in filing cabinets**.

The average office worker uses **10,000 sheets of copy paper each year**.*

Source
recordnations.com/2016/02/how-much-paper-is-used-in-one-day/

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The Risks

The dirty secret everyone in security knows is that any system is only as secure as its weakest link. Your network is locked down tight, your data is encrypted with 256-bit Advanced Encryption Standard (AES), and you've got fine-grained access control to make sure only the right people can see your most valuable information — but when the office mail drops a paper invoice into a tray, what happens next? What if it slips behind a cabinet, is picked up by a random passerby, or shuffled into the wrong pile? Even scanning doesn't eliminate the problem: the document can end up being sent to the wrong email address, mis-forwarded, mislabeled, left exposed on an insecure device, or lost on a disorganized server.

According to a joint research study by IBM Security and Ponemon Institute, the risk of a data breach within the next 2 years has climbed to an average of 29.6% for any given company, and with each one costing millions. While the largest single root cause (51%) of data breaches is malicious behavior, the remainder are split between system glitches at 25% (including IT and business process failures), and human error at a whopping 24%. The consistent use of encryption, formal data classification, artificial intelligence, and employee training all mitigate the probability and cost of a data breach, while system complexity and reliance on physical device document storage increase risk and cost.

29.6% chance that your business will be **breached in the next 24 months**

49% of breaches track back to **avoidable systems glitches or human error**

Reliance on physical storage increases risk and **cost of breaches**

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Tools to Protect

If paper isn't disappearing any time soon, the imperative is to secure its handling and processing as much as possible. There are best practices for handling documents, but people still make mistakes, or don't consistently follow those practices when they're onerous and complicated. We can blame ourselves, or we can accept the reality that human beings are fallible, and invest in solutions that ease and incentivize secure behavior.

Enter the intelligent multifunction printer/scanner:

By making the best and most secure process easy and automatic, the right digital bridge device can dramatically reduce the risk of exposure while making your team more productive and simplifying regulatory compliance and breach detection.

Today's intelligent document scanner doesn't just digitize: it understands and automatically processes documents, ensuring that they are securely stored in the right place, routed to the people and departments who need access, and are instantly accessible from any authorized device for secure sharing and printing. An employee or authorized guest authenticates right on the device, simply by entering a private PIN, and scans in their document. An invoice, for example, is automatically interpreted using Optical Character Recognition (OCR), allowing it to be instantly classified, and for key information (like customer name and address, invoice number, amount, and more) to be extracted and recorded. That's multiple slow, manual steps taken off the shoulders of an overburdened employee.

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How to Reduce Risk

Not only does automation save time and effort, the system is then able to keep track of who scanned the document in, and knows how to name the digital file properly, where to store it (either on local drives or, ideally, secure cloud storage), and even who needs access. No mistyped email addresses, no clumsy forward chains, no lost or misplaced paper, no sensitive information sitting openly visible on shared drives.

An intelligent, multifunction printer/scanner combines modern high-speed hardware with fully integrated document management software—and the best of them will even integrate with content management systems such as SharePoint. You'll want to make sure the device you choose has secure, automatic software updates over the network, so that you can be sure your devices are running the latest versions of their software. Regular updates, strong encryption, less reliance on physical storage, and consistent use of document classification all reduce your exposure to newly emerging threats, and keep your business more secure.

Things that reduce breach risk and/or cost:
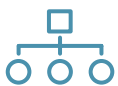
automatic document classification

consistent use of encryption

up-to-date system software

centralized access logging

proper employee training

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The Benefit to You

By automating best practices for paper-originated manual processes, modern intelligent multifunctional printers (MFPs) make handling sensitive information easier, faster, more accurate, and wildly more secure. Automation of rote tasks not only frees up employees to be more productive and responsive, but also leads to higher employee engagement — and today's most competitive organizations know the key to delivering engaging customer experiences lies first and foremost in delivering an engaging environment for their employees. As intelligent systems take over repetitive and error-prone activities, we are able to apply the best security and auditing processes by default, which makes it easier to comply with record keeping and data handling regulations and meaningfully reduces the risk of data exposure or breach.

As we face an inflection point in the digitization of documents and data, businesses that take security and compliance seriously should pay close attention to the risks posed by paper-based processes, and work to mitigate them.

Paper, even in the digital age, shows no sign of going away any time soon. **Don't leave the back door open**.

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