

**What a company does not
know about their important
data may hurt them!**

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Companies Live By Their Inventory

- Inventory is a tangible asset.
- It can be seen, counted, tracked and lost!
- Reduction in inventory can negatively affect a business ability to deliver.
- Reduction in inventory can affect the bottom line.
- Reduction in inventory can be noticed by corporate executives.

Why is information not seen as an asset has a similar effect?

- Is it because executives know more about physical assets than electronic assets?
- Do they need to know everything about electronic assets?
- Is a trade secret or a new merger plan something that needs explanation for protection?
- Or is it that electronic assets are IT responsibility to protect?

Is IT doing its job in protecting electronic assets?

- In many companies IT is responsible for implementing sound controls.
- IT is audited to ensure the proper levels of control are implemented.
- However, is IT the most relevant group to establish and implement these controls.
- Is another business function better equipped to make these decisions?
- Is that group absconding on its role?

Its Obvious Isn't It?

- Data that needs protection is obvious!
- Accounting data, payroll data, personnel data or sales data are all important.
- IT should be able to implement generic controls to protect critical data.
- How does a company protect the less obvious data?

Even obvious data can leave the organization!

- Organizations are now connected to more networks and entities than ever.
- Internet, suppliers & third parties are open gateways to private domains
- Data flows through these gateways
- What prevents the wrong data from flowing outward or leaving a company?
 - Luck, Manual Efforts

Isn't Audit the Gate Keeper?

- Shouldn't corporate audit be the one to ensure the company is not losing critical assets?
- Or are they responsible for identifying the flaws in controls?
- Or the potential for lost assets?
- If they are not the gate keeper or protector of electronic assets then who is?
How?

What about an OBVIOUS first step?

- A CEO or business executive could ask:
 - What data do we not want to lose?
 - What data do we want to stop from entering the public domain?
 - Then, what data is IT protecting and how is it restricted from leaving their domain?
- Is there any inconsistency with what they are protecting (& how) and what executives think is important?

Is IT at Fault in Anyway?

- IT is a data custodian, as such they have a role in protecting data.
- Data Owners are the business user that create and deem data as important.
- If it were a physical asset would building management be blamed if it were lost? If so, would it necessarily be correct?
- Who needs to ensure critical assets are protected?

Surprise!

- Data is walking out of companies every day.
 - Through the Internet
 - On Contractor PCs
 - On CD and storage devices
 - Into some else's profit bottom line
- And no one even knows its gone!

