



Issue 91 Table Of Contents

- Companies Don't Fail Over IT Security - Greg Ferro
- Sponsor: Cisco FutureWAN'18
- Of Two Minds About Certs - Ethan Banks
- Sponsor: VMware Virtual Cloud Network Deep Dive
- Packet Pushers News Bits
- Internets Of Interest

Companies Don't Fail Over IT Security

By Greg Ferro

Surviving failure is normal for businesses. A bad project, product delays, board infighting, or management scandals are common events. But these things don't make companies fail.

An IT security failure isn't going to kill your company either--not even a huge one.

How many companies have been forced out of business over the last decade because of a security breach? Did they suffer long term loss of value? Facebook has had a string of data breaches. Equifax, Heartland Payment Systems, and British Airways are major companies with huge security failures and zero long-term impact.

Consider the Equifax hack:

- A company that manages sensitive consumer financial data should have world class security
- It suffered a series of [security failures](#) in 2016-2017 across multiple systems in many countries
- Was breached using a well-known and fixable vulnerability in its core business application
- Equifax knew about this for nine months
- IT security process were shown to be [laughably](#) poor following audits
- Equifax responded to the security incident with false statements, exaggerated claims, and even [insider trading](#)

A few people lost their jobs (some with [handsome packages](#)) but Equifax has suffered zero long-term damage. It continues to operate credit services for profit.

Security Has to Be Cheaper

If the business impact of IT security failure is so low, then we must focus on reducing the absolute cost of security. Here are some guidelines:

- Security must be cheap because the cost of failure is low
- Security must be easy to manage like cleaning toilets
- Security professionals need to understand they have limited value or importance to the company
- It must not impede core business functions and cause lost profits, lost productivity, or lost opportunity. Security comes last because no profit means no need for security
- Companies must prepare for security failures as they do for any other failure. Maybe that means no preparation at all, just hope it doesn't happen.

The Security Tradeoff

Security is about protecting items of value. For example, we live in houses to keep the weather out, but also to protect us from bad actors. We weaken the security of solid walls by adding doors and windows because we balance protection against access, a nice view, and fresh air.

IT security is about protecting business operations for a cost. Security doesn't add value to the business by improving profits or sales, so its cost should be as low as possible. IT security has the same priority as cleaning office toilets: necessary but not important.

Sponsor: Cisco FutureWAN'18

The SD-WAN Virtual Summit, Nov. 7 - 8

Got questions about SD-WAN? [Sign up](#) for a free online summit November 7th and 8th to learn about how to deploy branches more quickly, improve user experience, bolster security, and more.

This two-day event brings together IT practitioners, analysts, and vendors to share insights and technical presentations on SD-WAN.

The Summit includes a one-hour presentation by Ethan Banks and Drew Conry-Murray that will review key SD-WAN and security integrations including network virtualization, service chaining, branch-in-a-box, APIs, and the perimeter.

Plus you can see live demos, learn from expert panels, ask questions, and get everything you need to know about SD-WAN. [Register here](#) to browse the full agenda and then mark your calendar for this free online event.



Of Two Minds About Certs

By Ethan Banks

Certificates are a long-running topic in technologists' circles. Do I get one or not? If I do, which ones should I go after?

I used to have lots of certs, none of which I maintain anymore. That's why I'm of two minds about certs.

Why Bother With Certs?

1. Technology certifications are primarily used for vendors to train you how to effectively implement and operate their solutions. Therefore, being certified in technology that has been widely adopted or is rapidly growing might make you more employable.
2. Even though technology certifications tend to be vendor-oriented, you will learn vendor-agnostic technology details that make you a more well-rounded practitioner. You'll learn things you didn't know were things, and that will give you more tools in your toolbox when facing business problems demanding technology solutions.
3. In environments such as VARs, a certification might be highly desirable, or even required, for the position.

I view certifications as a great way to rapidly advance your career when you are new to IT. You'll learn a lot. You'll demonstrate a base level of competency by having passed the exams. Certifications can help make up an experience gap.

Certs are like a good coach preparing you for the game. Coaching alone won't win the game for you. You have to spend time playing the game to become truly proficient. Even so, I'll take a good coach over no coach.

Why Ignore Certifications?

1. Experience speaks louder than certs. When reviewing resumes, I prioritize experience over certifications. If I can afford a well-seasoned IT veteran, I'll choose that person. If you're appropriately experienced for the position, I don't care whether or not your certified.
2. Certs are sometimes expensive and usually stressful. Vendors often view their training & education programs as a profit center. Materials, tests, and training are expensive. Vendor programs aren't there for you to pass the test, but rather to take the test, probably repeatedly. Due in part to braindumping, vendors examine pass rates, and make exams more difficult if they feel too many folks are passing.
3. Certs tend to be vendor specific. Do you want to learn technology, or do you want to learn how this vendor does technology? Maybe you can earn a living learning how to implement a specific vendor's solution. I made money early in my career leveraging Novell, Microsoft, and Cisco certifications. There's nothing wrong with this, but if what you really want to understand is technology more broadly, you can learn via other avenues.
4. Certs must be maintained. Unlike a degree, your certification isn't valid forever. Vendors take them away from you after two or three years unless you recertify. This makes sense-- technology goes stale. However, recertification is a burden, especially when you're a busy professional who has, in fact, been keeping up.

If You're Going To Get Certified

Choosing what certification to invest your time into is a risky proposition. I'm going to assume your goals are financial. That is, you want your shiny new cert to help you earn more money.

With that in mind, you might choose a cert for a rapidly growing technology. Rapidly growing tech tends to create a vacuum of talent, where the adoption curve outpaces professionals who are competent with the tech. Getting certified might help you fill the vacuum, while also pitting you against fewer competitors for a job.

For example, public cloud adoption is on the rise. So is hybrid cloud. So is HCI. What certs are in those technology areas that might match you to a job opening?

Also consider certifications for technology that has been widely deployed. For example, almost all companies use tech from Cisco and Microsoft. If we stop with those two vendors, what certifications might you obtain to increase your appeal to the technology job market?

The downside of certifying in popular tech is that there are probably many competent folks in the field already, making it harder to stand out.

Your Certs Are About You

There is no right answer for whether you should pursue a certification. Don't listen to those who decry them as a waste of time. Some of those folks are justifying their own laziness by shouting certs down.

On the other hand, don't buy into the lie that a certification will raise you to new heights of financial glory that will put a new sports car in the garage of your palatial estate. Not even the top tier certs by themselves are likely to pull that off for you.

You need to figure out what you want from a certification program, and then select and pursue appropriately. It's really about you.

Sponsor: VMware Virtual Cloud Network Deep Dive

Virtual Cloud Network Deep Dive Event coming to a city near you -

Immerse Yourself in the Future of Networking Tech

Data and applications are increasingly running at the edges of the network or migrating to the cloud. This hyper-distribution places new demands on enterprise networks--and on their underlying physical infrastructure. Networking and security teams need to rethink how they connect and protect their businesses in this new multi-cloud era, and they need every advantage they can get to stay ahead (or keep up).

Join us at the [Virtual Cloud Network Deep Dive](#) and hear from our VMware NSX® product experts on how you can grow your skills to create an agile, programmable network infrastructure that can meet the business and security demands of the multi-cloud world.

During this half-day interactive session, you'll learn how a Virtual Cloud Network delivers:

- A software-defined networking and security architecture deployed on any switch fabric, including Cisco ACI
- Contextual, application-level security via micro-segmentation
- New levels of network visibility and real-time analytics without re-architecting
- Automation to reduce application and network deployment times

- Workload mobility across physical sites or the public cloud

We'll cover these topics through technical sessions, product demos, and 1-on-1 time with our VMware NSX experts.

[Click here](#) to learn more and register for the deep dive closest to you.

vmware®

Virtual Cloud Network Deep Dive

Immerse Yourself in the
Future of Networking Tech

Register Now



Packet Pushers News Bits

We generate a lot of content besides the long-form podcasts: short podcasts, blogs, news briefs, even video. These are a few recent items.

Virtual Design Clinic Videos Now Available

Ignition members can now access every video from Virtual Design Clinic 2, including three technical presentations and all the Ask Me Anything questions and answers.

Presentations include

- Creating Virtual Networks With Terraform
- Using Puppet For Network Automation
- Understanding ASICs & Switch Internals

Go to ignition.packetpushers.net/videos and dive in

Response: DOH! DNS Over HTTPS Explained - APNIC Blog

Geoff Huston provides a fine overview on progress on DNS over HTTPS. To my thinking, its a matter of time until this becomes a standard followed a decade or two of gradual implementation. I'm thinking the rollout will happen at "IPv6 speed". We don't **have to have it** but we do need it over time.

[LINK](#)

Juniper Sees Multicloud Disruption As An Opportunity To Snatch Billions From Competitors

Juniper Networks believes the transition to a multicloud world will create a massive opportunity to take enterprise market share and revenue from competitors such as Cisco. That was the message from CEO Rami Rahim and CTO Bikash Koley during their keynotes at NXTWORK 2018, Juniper's partner and customer conference.

[LINK](#)

Internets Of Interest

Links, stories, and research from around the Web

Research Paper: The Sorry State of TLS Security in Enterprise

Interception Appliances

Greg Ferro [blogged recently](#) about a research paper that looks at how middleboxes and proxies could weaken the security benefits of encryption by enabling man-in-the-middle attacks.

[Link: The Sorry State of TLS Security in Enterprise Interception Appliances Louis Waked, Mohammad Mannan, and Amr Youssef \(PDF\)](#)

The Average User Checks Email 5.6 Hours Per Weekday. This Is Not Good - Cal Newport

Cal Newport, who writes the Study Hacks blog, cites results from an Adobe survey that says consumers check work and personal email, on average, for a combined 5.6 hours per weekday.

While it's an eye-catching number, it doesn't seem right to me. Almost six hours on email? If the survey also included time on social media, or on other messaging/collaboration apps such as Slack, then those numbers would sound a little more plausible.

Newport links to the original survey results if you want to click through and look at the numbers yourself, and maybe email it around the office to start a discussion chain (kidding!).

In any case, he uses this statistic to bolster his favorite argument: that modern communications systems, as well as corporate expectations around responsiveness, are not at all conducive to deep work--that is, work that requires sustained concentration. In that respect, I think he's on to something.

[LINK](#)

Panasonic Designed Human Blinders To Block Out Open Plan Office Distraction - Curbed

In keeping with the theme of productivity and deep work, the Web site Curbed reports on new headwear from Panasonic that "...wraps around the back of the head and covers the side of the eyes, blocking up to 60 percent of a wearer's peripheral vision."

The goal of the headwear is to reduce distraction in open-plan offices where privacy and quiet are at a premium, and also to serve as a signal to coworkers that the wearer is in "Do Not Disturb" mode.

If that's really where we're headed, why not just go full Daft Punk?

[LINK](#)



The End Bit

Sponsorship and Advertising - Send an email to humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net for more information. You could reach more than 6,000 subscribers.

Human Infrastructure is bi-weekly newsletter with view, perspectives, and opinions. It is edited and published by Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray from PacketPushers.net. If you'd like to contribute, email Drew at drew.conrymurray@packetpushers.net.

We don't give away your email address or personal details because that would suck.

Copyright © 2018 Packet Pushers Interactive LLC, All rights reserved BUT feel free to share this email with ALL YOUR FRIENDS. They would love it, right? Just don't change it. Send it because it's beautiful.

[Unsubscribe From This List](#) | 95 Hidden Lane, Northfield, NH 03276