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Business

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HACKERS HALTED



Oasis Technology employee Myles Bradford (right) works to update a client's server recently at the company's offices in Camarillo.

PHOTOS BY TROY HARVEY/THE STAR



George Baldonado of Oasis technology holds a Titan Cyber Security System, which his company had developed. The system is used to reduce hacking attempts on a company's servers.

■ IT firm's new product stops cyber criminals in their tracks

By Allison Bruce
Special to The Star

In an effort to curb hacking attempts on its own system, a Camarillo information technology firm created a product that helps companies and government agencies add an extra layer of security to their networks. Several of Oasis Technology Inc.'s clients are trying the new Oasis Titan Cyber Security System, a black box that attaches to the front end of a network to thwart hacking attempts before they reach the firewall. Once the quick installation is completed, the device works quietly

to turn away hackers without putting strain on the network — and often resulting in faster speeds, clients said. BNK Petroleum, an international company headquartered in Camarillo, has been using Titan for about a month. "We actually had a lot more people trying to get into our system than we would have imagined," said Wolf Regener, BNK Petroleum president and chief executive officer. Regener said the Internet is faster since Titan was installed, and it's easy to see the number of hack attempts. "It would be hard to notice

OASIS TECHNOLOGY

Founded: 1979
Headquarters: Camarillo
Employees: 16
Annual revenue: In the millions

that unless you knew how to dig into your own network," he said. "The normal user wouldn't have a clue." Oasis has been handling information technology services for BNK Petroleum for more than a decade, Regener said. Clients repeatedly describe the company's employees as responsive, skilled and reliable. "Nowadays, without computers, businesses are dead," said Oasis Technology CEO George

Baldonado. "Even though lives are not at stake, you would think so sometimes when people call us up." Oasis Technology created Titan after a case of mistaken identity. Everything had been working fine at the office, but when employees tried working from home, they found response times were really slow, Baldonado said. Some sleuthing revealed the company was being hit by thousands of hacking attempts an hour because some hackers thought the company was a now-defunct Canadian financial firm by a similar name. The release of Titan became one more way for Oasis Technology to adapt to the changing information technology landscape.



"When you are in business so long, you try to turn adversity into an opportunity," Baldonado said. Titan can recognize a distinctive element, or "fingerprint," to send away hackers. So even if the hackers change things up, the program quickly figures out the switch and starts blocking them again. The approach, protected by patents and some secrecy, as well as a black box

See OASIS, 6E

OASIS from 1E

that will short out the components if someone tries to open it, can distinguish a hacking attempt from legitimate use. "When hackers send a signal out to your server, they expect to get an answer back," Baldonado said. Titan, however, asks the hacker to resend, which puts the burden on the hacking computer and overloads it, he said. Clients pay a monthly rental fee, which starts at \$149 for a company with one to five IP addresses. An Internet Protocol (IP) address helps to identify and route Internet traffic to the proper location. Oasis Technology is targeting companies with at least 20 computers or more, Baldonado said. Plans include a license agreement for small home office users. "Our focus is companies that really have a vested interest in protecting their

data," he said. The city of Camarillo has been evaluating the device for a couple months, believes it is working well and has decided to keep it long-term, said Richard Petropoulos, director of general services for the city. "Security is, for any business, government agency or even home PC user, a huge concern," Petropoulos said. "Anything that we can do to make the city's computer environment safer and more protected, we're interested in taking a look at." He said the city has a multilayered approach to security and, while there haven't been successful attacks on its network, there are always the bots, viruses and worms that could cause problems. Regener said BNK Petroleum's network hasn't been directly hacked into, but a couple years ago there were so many hack attempts it took down a router. Oasis increased the company's security

after that, but Titan adds another layer. "Everybody has a different flavor of hackers," Baldonado said. "Denial-of-service" attacks, where the network is overloaded by attempts and unable to function properly, are only one way systems are affected by hackers, he said. Some publicly traded companies get hack attempts from Wall Street seeking inside information, he said. Hack attempts out of China and Eastern Europe mine credit card data or information for identity theft. Others take over a computer to send spam or launch other hacking attempts, he said. This story is part of an occasional series on how Ventura County technology companies are impacting people. If your company fits that profile and you would like to be part of the series send information about your company and a contact number to DeAnn Justesen at dajustesen@vcstar.com.

OASIS from IE

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