

All.Net Analyst Report and Newsletter

Welcome to our Analyst Report and Newsletter

Three emerging technologies

One of the reasons I like to go to the RSA show each year is to see what the little companies are coming up with. And they don't disappoint. My three best-of-show this year were...

Lok-it

I almost never mention a company in my articles, but in this case, I made an exception. It's so simple it's usable and so obvious you know other companies are kicking themselves. A FIPS 140-2 level 3 certified USB storage device with embedded numeric keypad. The content is encrypted and you can't use it without entering the key. You get 10 tries after which the content is erased and you can reuse the device by entering a new key. The point being, you really risk losing only access to the content and the price of the device if the device is lost or stolen. You can boot from it, it works on any computer or OS. If I want to send you a secret, I can mail the USB to you, and when you get it, call me up for the password. You cannot do that with a thumb print. Who said passwords are dead? Alive and well.

Virtualization-based protection

At least 5 companies showed up with virtualization solutions that work. I use a similar scheme in my systems and networks. In essence, every time you open a browser, email client, editor, whatever, it runs in an isolated VM. When closed, the VM is wiped out so there is no residual. To store files you save them in or retrieve them from a network mounted file system which persists. While it's not perfect, it does kill everything but file-based malware and restricts information flow. The companies in his space include high surety VM separators, desktop VM interfaces, and (choke) cloud providers. I'd stay away from the cloud versions if security is the driving force – mostly they say “you can trust me.”

Security as a Service models for authentication

Finally, someone figured out that additional authentication can be cheap in small numbers. You can now buy a credit card-sized – actually thinner and more flexible – time variant access code generator for \$15 in quantity 1. And the back end that drives it is available as a cloud service for pennies per month per device. And the interface to your Web browser takes about 2 minutes to add. All of this makes the security token authentication technology truly usable for even the smallest business. It doesn't matter if it's perfect – it's cheap and far better than the previous alternatives for the vast majority of users and small companies.

Conclusions:

Innovation is alive and well. The old ideas that work are being applied today in new ways at dropping price points, industrial scale, and in quantity one. Efficiency in the markets is driving cost to enter and per user per year cost down, convenience up, and, in the net, security up for anyone interested in having it. While there is nothing new in terms of the fundamental ideas and approaches, the really small companies are innovating in its application, and the results is that 5-12 person start-ups are breaking through by force of ideas applied.