

The Farfel Theory – Protecting Your Infrastructure From Hackers.

A very brief 30,000 feet overview.

I – The Farfel Theory

In a nutshell. Long ago our six month old puppy, Farfel, was at home with a guest – a very bright college professor. As I left for work that morning, I said to my friend, the professor, “don’t let the dog out.” You probably can anticipate how this story ended. When I got to work there was a message on my phone (this was long before cell phones) – Farfel had gotten out.

So how did a six month old puppy outsmart an august college professor – CONCENTRATION and FOCUS! Farfel was thinking of only one thing, the outdoors. My college professor friend had many things on his mind, least of which my dog.

II – An old example – people ripping off the government.

This seems to be the pattern with events such as the above – a few people concentrating on getting money from the government – and the government folks being too busy doing anything and everything EXCEPT watching the money.

III – Today’s problem – Hackers!

Not to insult Farfel – but hackers are like Farfel – in that they are focused. Beyond platitudes such as “pay attention” – the basic answer is maintain separate systems. This is not an 100% solution and it’s not as simple as it may sound. Maintain physically and logically separate systems for running your critical infrastructure and for everything else. Your process control systems or you money-moving systems should have no connectivity with any other systems. Not even an A-B switch to go from one system to another. I learned this in the 1980’s when I worked as a contractor on a “black” project. (“Black” projects are highly secret government projects that we don’t talk about.) There our computer systems had **NO** connectivity with the outside world. Yes, it costs money and some inconvenience – but “pay me now, or pay me later.”

Some of you may feel that you are be clever enough to simulate separate logical systems without using physical separation. Do so at your own risk. **ISOLATE YOUR “RUN THE BUSINESS” APPLICATIONS.**

Farfel



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