

Don't let your data be a parting gift to departing staff

Your top salesperson quits. You discover that computers used by the person are missing key sales data, pricing information and customer-contact files. The salesperson also walked off with the company laptop that holds similar material and begins contacting customers that yesterday were safely yours. Now what do you do?

In an era in which a company's information is its most prized possession, employee destruction or theft of records is a growing problem. Here are some of the data-related issues that businesses need to consider:

Destroying computer information. A recent series of federal appellate court decisions has given employers a new weapon. The federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA) was adopted to combat deliberate computer viruses and hackers.

The law makes it a federal crime and enables employers to sue anyone who transmits a program, information, code or command into the person's computer and causes damage.

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