

Target Hack Boosting Local Technology Firm

Technology: Oasis sells hardware it boasts strengthens firewalls. By **MARK MADLER** Monday, February 10, 2014

Cyber security has been in the news the past few months with Target Corp. and other national retail chains being victims of hackers who stole customer credit card information.

That has caught the attention of George Baldonado, founder and chief executive at Oasis Technology Inc. in Camarillo. Last year he started offering the Titan cyber security service – a sealed box that takes all of five minutes to install on a network and protects the firewall to keep hackers out.

Large-scale hacks, such as occurred at Target, are often preceded by feelers, or pre-attacks, to figure out the best way to get past a firewall. These feelers can go on for weeks or months before the big attack, Baldonado said.

“What our Titan product can do is identify the pre-attacks and see where it is coming from,” he said.

Oasis, founded in 1979, provides information technology services, consulting and support for software used by government agencies to track constituent issues. The company has 60 employees.

Since mid-December, when the widespread hacking at Target became public, Oasis has received more calls from businesses interested in knowing about the protection that Titan offers, Baldonado said.

Oasis offers a 30-day free trial for businesses to give Titan a test drive. The cost for the service ranges from \$199 a month to \$900 a month depending on how many computer addresses are protected.

Baldonado declined to say how much he invested in Titan, only to say it was in “the millions.”

What perplexes Baldonado is that even with all the publicity given to hacking and cyber security, he doesn't think business owners are still taking the necessary steps to prevent those issues.

A survey released last year by financial services firm Ernst & Young, headquartered in London, speaks to the attitudes of executives toward protecting their IT systems.

Thirty-eight percent of the respondents put cyber risks and threats as a top priority over the next 12 months. Another 24 percent put those threats near the top as a priority.

The survey found that many businesses have made strides in the right direction when it comes to security operations, there is room for improvement.

“Many organizations are increasing investment in information security, yet many information security professionals continue to feel that their budgets are insufficient to address mounting cyber risks,” the survey report said.

Oasis clients in need of Titan are banks and other financial institutions, accountants, attorneys or any company that has sensitive information on computers or that processes credit card transactions.

When BNK Petroleum Inc. in Camarillo saw a slowdown with its Internet connection, it had Oasis, its IT provider, look at the problem. It found that multiple hacking attempts were affecting the connection speed, said President and Chief Executive Wolf Regener.

He was amazed that once the Oasis box was installed, it showed a high number of hacker attempts to get into the network, Regener said.

“It is the only thing I am aware of that shows how much activity is going on with the attempts,” he added.

Camarillo city government has been working with Oasis for almost a dozen years. Adding Titan was another layer of protection to go along with the firewalls and content filters, said Norm Henri, the information services administrator for the city.

Multiple lines of defense for the city’s servers are important ever since the city started taking online bill payments, Henri said.

“Everything is getting worse and worse with hacks,” he said. “We thought, ‘Why not protect ourselves as much as we can?’”

Oasis developed Titan because it, too, was the victim of hacking attempts, Baldonado said.

Sluggish bandwidth and back-and-forth calls with Verizon determined that it was caused by a lot of traffic coming into the network.

“We realized these were hacking attempts because the company name (Oasis) has the same name with a Canadian company that does credit card processing,” Baldonado said.

Management Cuts?

The Camarillo headquarters of Semtech Corp. will likely not be spared recently announced layoffs.

The semiconductor manufacturer announced Jan. 28 it was cutting 6 percent of its workforce due to softer demand for its chips used in smartphones and other devices.

Since the cuts will be companywide, the Ventura County headquarters will be among locations affected, said Sandy Harrison, director of investor relations.

“There will be some impact in Camarillo but we think it will be pretty minimal,” Harrison said.

The Camarillo location houses a broad range of functions including senior management, sales and marketing.

Semtech is expected to save \$35 million annually following the restructuring. The company had 1,433 employees as of January 2013, according to its annual report. A 6 percent reduction would amount to about 85 workers.

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