

# Aura Advanced Technologies removes security threats haunting businesses

Aura's experts can also help you meet new disclosure regulations

If you think your organization and its Information Technology is safe from hackers, high-tech con artists and other security threats, pay attention to some alarming statistics.

According to Gartner research, security forecasts predict that 20 per cent of enterprises will experience a serious Internet security incident through 2005.

By then, 60 per cent of security breach incident costs incurred by business will be financially or politically motivated – and most of the losses will be caused by insiders working either alone or with outsiders, adds the Gartner report.

If you think your company is at risk of being part of these alarming statistics, you may need to think carefully about the serious nature of an IT security breach and the critical need for safeguarding IT security systems.

As accounting firm Price Waterhouse Coopers states, "not having an external independent third party review your security posture is like not having an independent audit firm review your financials."

One company that specializes in complete IT security solutions is Aura Advanced Technologies. You'd be hard pressed to find people with more expertise and experience in security issues than the team of pros at Aura.

It is a seasoned Calgary consulting firm that provides a vast array of IT solutions through a crack team of professional business gurus and IT experts certified by Microsoft. Aura has been in business for 22 years with consultants through Canada and the U.S.



**Kerry Litschke, president of Aura Advanced Technologies, says it's critical for directors to know what is going on at their companies.**

Jim Balkwill, Aura's Chief Security Officer, underscores the critical nature of IT security by brandishing one of his firm's investigative reports.

"This is a company that does over \$125 million in business and, needless to say, it wouldn't take much to pull this company down," says Balkwill, shaking his head over his 60-page report.

"We routinely find security issues that the companies had no idea about," says Balkwill.

What separates Aura from other IT security consulting firms is its depth of knowledge, wealth of contacts in the security industry and unique approach to understanding a company's environment.

"We will start by learning your environment and, once we understand your environment, then we will help mitigate the risk of your company appropriately. Our approach is to concentrate our efforts on the business perspective so what we do

is really a business-to-IT focus. We're here to educate people of the risk that they have and show them how to mitigate that risk."

Aura provides solutions in all five security domains: preventative services, assessment services, post-incident services, training and managed-security solutions.

"In providing a risk mitigation audit of a company, we first kick the tires of the external environment to find out if there are any weaknesses from outside the company," Balkwill explains. "The next day, we interview members of the senior management team and the technical team and then do a physical audit of their system. Finally, we do an internal assessment and develop a detailed report. Then, we meet with the company to explain their issues and provide step-by-step processes on how to lock down their environment."

More often than not, organizations are surprised

by just how vulnerable they are to security breaches.

"But we're not there to terrify anyone with these briefings. We're there to say: 'Hey listen, we've identified these challenges and here's the methodology we can use to deal with the problems.'"

If you think your company is safe from a security perspective, think again. **Aura has yet to find a clean bill of health at any of the companies for which they've done security risk audits.**

"We're looking forward to the day when we actually do an assessment where we find a clean environment, but we haven't even come close to that," says Balkwill.

Aura also meets with financial department heads to fully explain critical regulations such as PIPEDA, Canada's Personal Information Protection Electronic Document Act, which was established to recognize privacy rights of individuals with respect to collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal information.

Aura, which has access to authorities at law enforcement agencies such as the FBI and RCMP, will also help executives get their heads around other complex regulations such as the Sarbanes-Oxley regulations for public companies that trade in the U.S.

"In most cases, companies just aren't sure how to satisfy those regulations and, if that's the case, they're living vulnerably," explains Balkwill. "Some of these fines can be up to \$25 million and you could be doing some pretty good jail time by not satisfying the regulations."

Kerry Litschke, president of Aura, emphasizes the issue of company disclosure and the critical need to abide by regulations.

"Company directors who have fiduciary duties need to know what's going on at their companies or they can be sued for not having the proper precautions in place," says Litschke.

Litschke and Balkwill stress the need for education of security issues. To that end, Aura provides security training to employees, including specific executive briefings to senior managers to bring them up to speed on how IT security management can protect their organizations and enable new business opportunities.

"We produce seminars to help senior executives know how to understand their IT systems without actually understanding the verbiage," says Balkwill. "Basically, we strive to educate them in a manner so that they can actually understand what the heck their technical teams are talking about."

Aura also boasts a team of IT professionals called Tiger Teams that pride themselves in their ability to restore downed systems at breakneck speeds.

"We can actually bring systems back up in times that even Microsoft can't believe," says Balkwill. "If you view your system as being vulnerable or you've been hacked, our Tiger Teams will come in and help you work through your challenges."

Another one of Aura's specialized services is in devising a disaster-recovery plan.

"If there's a fire, many companies aren't prepared and that can be devastating," says Balkwill, citing a statistic that shows that 30 per cent of businesses that have a disaster and don't have a disaster-recovery plan don't open their doors again.

Besides its security services, Aura also specializes in providing services for network design, installation and support, business continuity planning, telephone systems, Voice Over IP, business hosting and document management portals.

For information on all of the services offered by Aura Advanced Technologies, call 403-269-6123 or visit the website at [www.auraadvanced.com](http://www.auraadvanced.com).