

Ribb "IT" Review

Happy 4th
of July!

We want to wish everyone a safe and fun Fourth of July this year from the Frogworks team! Have a wonderful time celebrating our nation and its independence!

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Alex Bleam, Owner of Frogworks

"As a business owner, you don't have time to waste on technical and operational issues. That's where we shine! Call us and put an end to your IT problems finally and forever!"

- Alex Bleam, Frogworks

Hackers and the DARK Web:

What Business Owners Need to Know

The one constant in the IT world is change. So it should come as no surprise that a new threat has emerged in recent years to compromise your business's security, steal your sensitive data, or even put you out of business.

No, this isn't a new virus or malware threat. It's an entire network of websites where identities, passwords, credit card information and corporate secrets are sold to the highest bidder. It's the home of hackers, thieves and criminals seeking privacy for illicit activity. It's called the Dark Web.

Whether you're aware of its presence or not, the Dark Web poses a grave threat to every business. Here's what you need to know to minimize your risks and avoid becoming the next Dark Web statistic.

What Is the Dark Web & How Does It Work?

The Dark Web, also known as the darknet, is a network of websites that contain encrypted content. This network of sites is only accessible through the use of secure browsing tools, like Tor.

Tor stands for The Onion Router, a package of open-source security applications that were created to work with a customized version of the



Mozilla Firefox browser. Tor is compatible with all major operating systems including Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux.

The main function of the software is to encrypt user traffic and pass the IP address of the user through a complex set of nodes or layers. These onion-like layers serve to protect a user's anonymity.

Sites on the Dark Web range from informative, wiki-like pages and forums to blogs and even e-commerce sites. These sites function much like sites found on the traditional internet (also called the clearnet), with one crucial exception. Everything on the Dark Web is almost completely anonymous and not governed by any central authority.

Unfortunately, the encrypted, anonymous environment of the Dark Web encourages criminal activity. Made up of approximately 100,000 websites at any given time, the Dark Web has become one of the world's largest black

markets where anything from human organs and guns, to illegal drugs and stolen credit card information is for sale to the highest bidder.

Who Uses the Dark Web and Why?

While the Dark Web has a well-earned reputation for scams and illicit activity, criminals are not the only users of this encrypted network.

Journalists use the Dark Web to share information or receive tips from anonymous whistle blowers. The anonymous nature of the Dark Web makes it possible for many who are in danger to tell their stories or provide vital information that can help investigators solve a crime or journalists to break a story.

According to Lifewire, "The New York Times has a secure lockbox on the Dark Web that people can send files to anonymously. It's [the dark web] becoming a haven for those who need to share information safely."

The Dark Web is also home to those who value privacy. So much of the traditional internet is tracked and monitored by advertisers, that many use the Dark Web to escape the endless deluge of ads and tracking cookies. In fact, Facebook's Dark Web site receives over 1,000,000 visits each month from users who are concerned about privacy.

The FBI and other government agencies use the Dark Web to monitor illicit activity. In fact, the most famous Dark Web market, Silk Road, was brought down by the FBI in 2013. Silk Road was a haven for criminals, where buyers and sellers met to conduct anonymous transactions for drugs, guns, human beings, stolen identities, credit card information, and malicious software. Since the demise of Silk Road, many other illicit vendors have popped up on the Dark Web to take their place.

To learn more about **Why the Dark Web Puts Businesses at Risk** and **How Businesses Can Limit Risk from the Dark Web** visit our website at: <https://www.getfrogworks.com/darkweb>

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WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS FROM A RANSOMWARE ATTACK!



1 in 5

SMALL BUSINESSES WILL SUFFER A CYBER BREACH THIS YEAR.

1. ADVANCED ENDPOINT SECURITY

Protect your computers and data from malware, viruses, and cyber attacks with advanced endpoint security. Today's latest technology protects against file-less and script based threats and can even rollback a ransomware attack.

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How to Turn Visitors to Your Website into Customers

When it comes to your traffic, there are many tools – such as Google Analytics – that can help you track how many people come to your website and how long they hang around before taking off to do something else on the Internet. Unfortunately, not so many of them stick around long enough to actually buy something, and because of this you don't get the kind of business your hits reflect. But like all things in the business world, sometimes it just means you have to kick up your creativity and really start to rock your website in the right way to attract customers and keep them.



Know Your Audience – Really

When people say you should know your audience, you should stop a second and think about the double meaning there. Yes, you should know what your audience wants and what would appeal to them because that's one of the most important parts of finding your place in a world packed with competitors, but knowing goes beyond that – you should know which audience you're targeting. What audience do YOU want to buy your product? If you sell makeup to teenagers, ads with older women in them don't really appeal to kids. You want fun and funky. And furthermore, is your audience defined well? Do you know which teens wear the makeup you're trying to sell? Not every teen wears every type of makeup. Double check to make sure you've defined the audience you wish to sell product to very well.

Focus on Giving your Customers a Positive Experience

SEO is good – it's an excellent tool in bringing people to your website. Strategically placing your call to action so that is both visible and unintrusive in the user's experience is also important. Both contribute to a positive user experience, yet what really contributes to an exceptional experience is content and relevance. People like to read about stuff that can help them, and they want to be accurate, proofread, and useful. Doing this in an entertaining but meaningful manner can bring a whole slew of new buyers onto your website so you can start fostering a positive relationship with them.

Oh, and please – be honest! Present exactly what you have and are willing to offer. Don't try to overpromise because the second you do, your customer will be disappointed which will just lead to bad reviews and ticked customers. Just tell 'em how it is.

Internet Writing Does Not Equal Book Writing

The switch to internet-based reading has really changed the market when it comes to what kind of content you provide. There is a huge and fundamental difference between a book and a webpage. With a book, you expect people to read it front to back. With a website, if something doesn't get clicked on, it just doesn't get seen. Your website is something called "non-linear media," which means users get to construct their own experience (think the 'choose your own ending' books that were popular in the 90's).

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How to Save Time When Managing Social Media

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter. Since they're all separate sites, they all require separate updates and in some cases, separate content. Sometimes all of the updating can get overwhelming, especially since two to three posts per day is ideal on any social media platform. So how can someone who's busy doing a lot of different things for their company manage social media, too?

Since dropping social media isn't usually a good solution, here are a few other ideas that can help you save time when managing all of your social media platforms.

Use Combination Tools

Seismic Ping is a program that allows you to update multiple statuses at the same time. As long as all of your accounts are registered to Seismic Ping, they all receive the update. You can even choose to update one or two of your accounts with a specific status instead of all of them. The only place where this tool fails to be perfect is when it comes to posting articles, pictures, or other forms of media; Seismic Ping doesn't have any way to do that yet.

Alternatively, you can use programs like SocialOomph, which lets you manage multiple Twitter accounts. You can track keywords and even schedule tweets with this program, which means you can post content weeks ahead of time if you need to.

Hire Someone Else to Do It

It takes a lot of effort to become someone who can manage social media correctly. There's always something new to know, and knowing it takes time and research. When it comes right down to it, the best option for a busy company owner is often to hire someone else to do the work for them. Even better than hiring just anyone is hiring a professional. That way they can not only manage all of your social media for you, but they can make sure they optimize it as well to get the most use out of it. Plus, if you pay on commission or hourly instead of salary, it doesn't have to be all that expensive.

Designate Time, Then Move On

If you still want to do social media yourself, don't spend too much time on it. Designate an hour or so in the morning to post and update all of your accounts, and an hour or so at night or midday as well. This way, you have posts that a wider audience will see – some people use Facebook earlier in the day and some don't – and you'll have made sure you kept the time you spent at a reasonable amount.

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That's why all the information you want someone to read should be in the header, subheader, and bold paragraphs. Otherwise it's likely people will skip over it, and you want the highest chance of grabbing attention that you can possibly get. You can also place links to other information that would be useful in the bodies of text on your website.

Test, Test, Test, Adjust, Rinse and Repeat

Even if you think something is awesome, your audience may not agree with you. That's why it's important to test a whole lot and make sure you have everything on straight. Start with creating two different web pages and send them both out randomly to people so some folks get one page and the others get the other page. Make sure you include a survey and some questions about the website in your e-mail (maybe including a small motivational prize will help you get responses) so that people can tell you why they liked – or disliked – the page they were sent.

Stay Small, or Get Big?

Traditionally, a small business has under 25 employees and does something like a few million bucks in business in a year. This relatively small revenue has a number of benefits: it's easy to control, you usually make a profit, your customers *know* and *loveyou*, and you can kind of work whenever you want. Seriously, what's not to love about that lifestyle?



Everyone's reasons are different, but sometimes a small business owner gets sick and tired of playing the small business game. Sometimes this leads to the sale of a company – and sometimes it leads to making a bigger, more powerful venture the next project.

Some people grab a different company and launch it off the ground, and some take their existing company and explode the business. Either way, life gets much more exciting. More levels are added to your business, you don't have to make every single decision, and sometimes you don't even have to be on call. It's nothing like a small business lifestyle, but it's much more *exciting*.

Someday, all small business owners have to make that same decision, but not all are truly capable of making that leap. According to the people at the Census Bureau, some 1.7 million "small" businesses exist, and only 300,000 "middle market" businesses exist. That should tell you just how hard the leap from small to medium is; expect even more work in the transition from medium to large.

Remember that you'll need access to more capital. This usually involves developing stable, complicated systems that will be essential in scaling your operation. It means you'll need a bigger system for managing sales (no, you can't use PayPal forever). It also means you will need to watch your overhead carefully, and know when adding more to the top would be a bad idea.

Keep in mind you'll also have a lot of competition in pricing. Large competitors have deeper pockets – it's honestly that simple. You can beat yourself up and leave yourself a small sliver of profit and still not understand how the big guys get their prices that low. And in the end, the big businesses are going to win the monetary fight. However, you have a special sauce on top as a medium business – you get to know your customers, and shake hands with them. That's worth the premium to a lot of people. How many times have you heard someone say "and I got to talk to a real person!" in an excited voice when referencing their huge cell phone company? That's because it's a rarity.

You also have to become much more efficient at defining your niche. No more are the days of appealing to everyone. You will need to zoom in on the type of customer you can serve, but pick your niche carefully. Picking the wrong one may mean smaller profits for you and your own. Picking a niche that can bring your business more cash means bigger expansion possibilities.

Make your choice wisely, and remember to enjoy the journey.

Have you already taken the plunge? What did it take to make it to the next level?