



# Technology

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**T**ODAY'S THREATS TO world peace don't just come in the form of guns and bombs. Cyber attacks can cripple companies' mainframe systems – and possibly a country's economy. Enter people like Michael Gazeley, the chairman and director of Hong Kong-based Network Box, a managed security company with teams both in Hong Kong and overseas working round the clock to fight battles in cyberspace.

“There is a huge security challenge facing organizations. These challenges started about 12 years ago when more and more companies started getting on the internet using high-speed connections that were online all the time,” Gazeley said.

“At the time, people didn't think: ‘When I connect to the internet, the internet is also connecting back to me.’ The companies set up their own e-mail, web server and database system thinking all these bad guys out there wouldn't get them. But when you plug into the world, the world also plugs into you.”

To combat this threat, Gazeley, 43, set up Network Box in 2000 with Mark Webb-Johnson, the company's chief technology officer. It specializes in unified threat management, or UTM, systems, an umbrella solution to network security.

It has also invented a Z-Scan anti-virus engine, which can obtain malware samples and produce anti-malware signatures within three seconds, instead of the usual several hours. The system is proactive, sending out 150,000 “in-the-cloud” virus traps instead of waiting for the attacks to come.

Customers can also preset a confidence level on their box and, once that level is breached, suspicious

data is sent to the company's security teams for analysis and signature release.

The company monitors real-time updates and found the number of security updates required each day is growing at an alarming rate – from 512 in 2008, 817 in 2009 to 1,044 last year.

These updates are critical as cyber threats don't stop when the computer is shut down. “Though you are not connected to the internet, somebody can still try to grab your private data, lock your transactions, get your new designs, clients' data or accounts.”

Apart from regular threats from hackers that the public is familiar with, there are also threats from spyware, ID theft, open proxies, pornware, and those who plot to steal credit card or banking data.

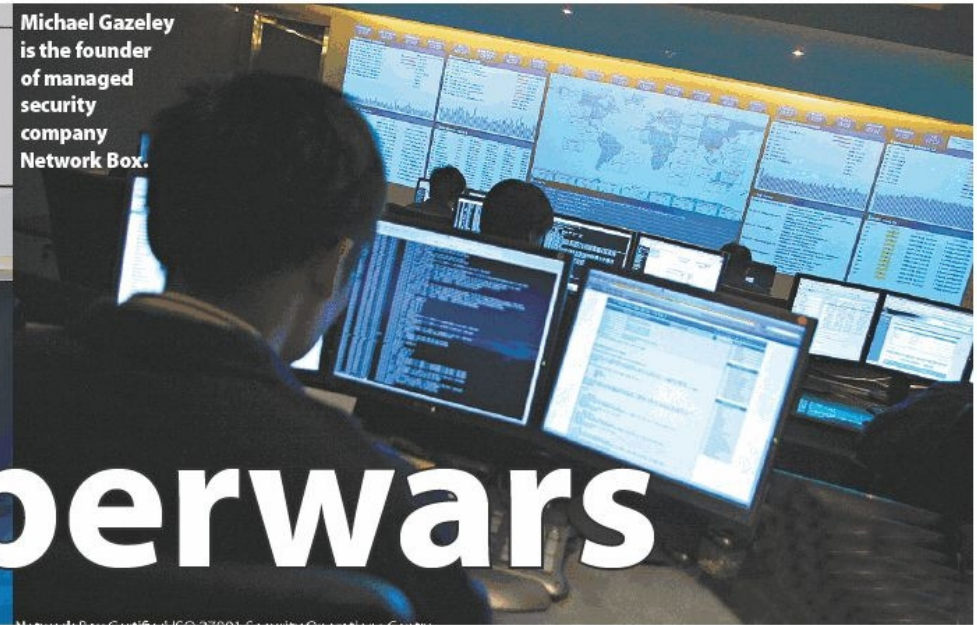
“The sad fact is, the internet is populated with criminals, hackers and spyware. You've got attacks coming in every few seconds,” Gazeley said.

“It is equivalent to somebody trying your front door to see if it is locked. Even if you have locked it, they still have the skeleton key that can open the lock, unless you have updated the technology.”

Network Box's current clients are enterprise class organizations, willing to spend the money and allocate the time and the effort. “But that's just 2 percent of the market,” Gazeley noted.



Michael Gazeley is the founder of managed security company Network Box.



# Cyberwars

It's the small and medium-sized enterprises that don't think they need cyber protection and prefer to spend their money elsewhere. This is false economy, Gazeley argued. “We try to get Hong Kong bosses to wake up and smell the coffee. The vast majority of the small to medium-sized businesses that we talk to have already become victims.

“If you are a toy manufacturer and you've got next Christmas' hot toy all designed out, and have spent millions of dollars on it, the last thing you want is somebody coming and stealing your design.

“Many of those managers, when you talk to them, they're like: ‘Oh, I don't understand all this stuff. Don't talk to me, I don't want to know.’ Finally, when they get hit, when their design gets stolen, it's gone. You can't really get it back.”

Gazeley is surprised by the lackadaisical attitude that bosses of many SMEs have toward cybersecurity. “To secure your building, you never just say: ‘I will hire a bunch of guys, get them promoting security around the place, set up video cameras.’ You call up security

specialists and ask: ‘How much a month to secure my building?’ They do all the work. You don't get involved because it's not your field.”

The problem is not affordability, Gazeley believes. Network Box has packages to suit different-sized companies – from about HK\$800 a month if the company has 10 users, HK\$1,800 for 25, HK\$2,800 for 50 and so on. “The issue is to get the attention of the boss, and make him realize what is important.”

Gazeley admits that IT is not easy to understand. “People are happy to call themselves ‘stupid’ or ‘dumb’ when it comes to IT. But even if you are proud to be dumb at the workplace, what you don't know can still hurt you.”

It is this 98 percent of the market that Gazeley hopes to be able to educate.

“This is a passion with me. I really like what we do. We protect people. We stop the bad guys from hurting the company. We stop people from stealing their designs. I feel quite proud of what we do.”  
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