

CREDIT CARD CORNER

Greetings and Happy Holidays.

We hope you have had a wonderful and prosperous 2007. A recent and significant issue that has occurred in merchant processing is the occurrence of PCI compliance. Many of you may know what this is and many of you may be unaware, but securing your customers credit card information and protecting it from compromise has become a very important issue for us all. PCI stands for Payment Card Industry regarding Visa and on the Master Card side, it is referred to as DSS or Data Security Standard. Whatever it is called, we are all affected by the potential of loss either of data or money. I think you will agree that the time and energy required in recovering from the carnage left behind from a hacker or compromise of our own data or that of our customers is worth devoting at least some time to heighten awareness.

Following is simply a list of items you can do to help protect yourself and the information of you customers from compromise copied from the September issue of GSQ:

1. Be protected with Firewalls
2. Don't use vendor supplied default passwords
3. If you store it, protect it
4. Encrypt all numbers in transit
5. Use antivirus software
6. Keep up with security patches
7. Keep data away from wandering eyes
8. Require and assign unique user IDs
9. Keep a tight lock on card systems
10. Keep tabs on everything and everyone
11. Test everything regularly
12. Make data security job one

These twelve items are merely the basics of protecting yourself and your data, but hopefully will help you become aware of the seriousness of the issue. If you are interested in learning more, you may want to review the September issue of GSQ which is a supplement to our industry's technical publication called "The Green Sheet". Go to www.thegreensheet.com, click on "Publications" and then click "GSQ-Current Issue" and you will find several articles with some terrific information about PCI/DSS Compliance including the article that these twelve items came from. As always, please feel free to go to www.merchantconsultingservice.com or call us and we will be happy to assist you.



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