Firewalls: An Essential Part of Business Security

Why a Firewall would be beneficial for my business. Would it protect me from hackers?

Your office keeps doors locked except when there's a reason to unlock them. It leaves fewer ways for people to get in, and you can watch them. A firewall does the same thing for your office's network.

Without a firewall, a desktop computer is open to a lot of attacks. It could be running services that you don't know about and never intended to use, yet are reachable from the Internet. If you never configured a service and didn't set a password, it could be an easy target for an attacker. It might let a remote user read or write files on your computer. Another risk is that a service could let your computer become a relay point for spam or denial-of-service attacks.

A firewall protects you by controlling which services are reachable. Usually just a few have to be, such as Web access and email. If you don't need FTP and Telnet, you're safer not letting anyone get into your computers with them. If you don't know what they are, you almost certainly don't need them.

Nearly all routers come with a firewall capability. It provides a basic set of options for allowing or blocking access. If you want more power and control, you can get a separate firewall device. It lets you block known hostile sources, and many models provide logging and alerts. A router's firewall in a heavily used network might slow down traffic; a good firewall device has more computing power and won't limit the bandwidth as much.

A firewall by itself doesn't make your network safe, but it narrows the risk. The best defense is a layered defense. All your computers should have security software. The services they run need strong passwords. Spam filters need to keep spam email from delivering harmful attachments and links. No one defense stops everything, so you want protection at all levels. A firewall limits the number of places an attack can start, making it easier to guard the rest.

Combined Systems Technology offers a broad range of IT services, including security management. Please contact us **[515-270-5300]** to learn how we can help your business.