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About Us

Parallax Solutions is an information technology consulting firm located in the Waterloo/Cedar Falls area. What we are trying to bring to the table is a clear understanding of how offices can utilize hardware and software to effectively manage their electronic information.

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I hope you have enjoyed this issue of our newsletter. If you are concerned that your network isn't living up to its potential, give us a call.

Sincerely,

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Featured Products

[IronPort Security](#)

Issue: # 10

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Welcome to the latest newsletter from Parallax Solutions. In this issue, I will be discussing secure e-mail and how it might be used within an organization. These days, it is more important than ever to ensure that your e-mail is safe and secure as it passes through the nebulous Internet. Healthcare providers need to be especially vigilant.

Be very careful about what you send in an e-mail, taking care not to include identifiable patient information, credit card numbers, social security numbers, etc. Quite simply, an e-mail is comparable to a postcard ... easily read by anyone who has access to it.



Secure e-mail options for your business

The most common and cost effective way to ensure that e-mail is encrypted as it is sent from your organization to another is by using TLS/SSL encryption. Provided you have your own Exchange server, you can purchase a certificate from a trusted CA (such as Verisign, GoDaddy, etc) and install it on your Exchange server. After contacting the recipient company's IT dept and performing a few configuration steps, a secure connection is established between your mail server and the recipient's mail server. The purpose of the certificate is to prove that your mail server is a genuine sender as well as allowing the e-mail itself to be encrypted in transmission. The only downside to using this method is that each place you want to send encrypted e-mail to must be contacted so that the IT dept can coordinate the connection.

Organizations who have MANY clients they need to converse with securely go to third party secure e-mail providers. Ironport (formerly Cisco Secure Envelope) is one example of this hosted service. Typically, you can send a secure e-mail through the service, which hosts the e-mail and then forwards a message to the recipient stating that they have a secure e-mail to pick up. The recipient clicks on an Ironport supplied link in the e-mail and they are taken to the Ironport site where they must supply a username and password to read the e-mail.

How much does a hosted secure e-mail provider cost? In a recent chat with a rep from [MessageGuard](#) (part of Network Solutions and another excellent provider), I was able to find out that it ends up being about \$9 per mailbox per month. As the number of mailboxes grows, you receive volume discounts. The nice thing about MessageGuard is its ease of

use. If you are a Microsoft Outlook user, the software simply adds a button to Outlook that allows you to "send secure" so that your e-mail is encrypted and sent securely to anyone.

Aside from encryption concerns, can you always guarantee that e-mails leaving your facility don't contain protected personal information? In short, no. However, many third party e-mail filters can scan e-mail before it leaves the facility to ensure that things like credit card numbers, social security numbers, patient id's etc are not being sent via e-mail. I always recommend that you have an **Acceptable Use Policy** for your network so that you can clearly define what can and can't be done with your system. You might think that you are being iron fisted by having such a policy, but many employees appreciate knowing what is acceptable. Don't leave anything in question.

If you are interested in secure e-mail alternatives, give us a call.

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