Information Technology is All about the People

Kevin Lee Elder
Your information systems (IS) are made up of your information technology (IT) along with the 3 P's — processes, people, and policies.

If there is a problem with your IS, we usually focus on the IT. New IS will fix it. IT usually doesn't. IT might have a new fancier interface or IT might make it faster, but you usually still have the same problems.

The most important part of an IS has always been the people, and they will never be replaced with IT. In movies as early as 2001 A Space Odyssey and others, we used to see IT trying to take over the world all the time. We don't see that in movies anymore, which I think is too bad, but we still don't know why.

I think the reason is without people, the IT has little or no value, but people should always have value with or without IT. The problems with most systems and the solutions to problems with most systems usually lies in the 3 P's.

In honor of our new basketball coach here at Georgia Southern, who really focuses on developing his young players into men, let's look at the most important P (People) today.

When a virus infects our system, we blame the virus protection software and get our IT personnel to 'fix' IT.

While people usually make the majority of our systems, they rarely get the attention they need to solve the real problems with our systems. More often than not, the problem lies with the person using the IT not the IT itself.

In the example of the virus problem, if you don't update the virus protection software, you might as well not install it. IT by itself can't do much of anything. The updates to virus protection software are vital for the IT to keep up with the latest viruses. Hackers have nearly as much time as most of us, so we have to keep up to date with our virus protection software routinely or we will get 'sick.'

Therefore, people need to be educated and trained with what to do and how to prevent getting 'sick'. IT is all about the people.

Even with education and training, if the people using the system don't act responsibly, it won't keep the IT safe either. Most viruses can be avoided if users know what type of websites to avoid and what type of attachments not to open.

But even if they know better, if they have bad habits, we need to break them. The best IT can't overcome the worst habits of people. We are all on the same networks and systems. People don't realize if they allow viruses and hackers into their computer and system, it is allowed onto mine, too.

Six degrees of separation is all there is among all of us. If one person gets a virus through his or her e-mail or websites they frequently visit, you or I could come along within six steps, six nodes of the network or six web pages across.

Identity theft and hacking is usually not about the IT, IT is all about the people. Think about a car being stolen from the parking lot. The thief won't likely steal your car if you have good habits.

Roll up your windows, lock the doors and don't leave valuables in sight. There are plenty of cars with the windows down, valuables on the seat and probably one or two with the keys left in them if not in the ignition (take a look around at the parking lot at work).

If the people have good habits along with proper training and education, you can avoid many bad outcomes and problems. The same thing applies to our information systems. IT is all about the users. IT is all about the people, so invest in them first.

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### Theft Prevention Tips

1. **Roll up your windows and lock your doors.**
2. **Never leave valuables visible or in plain sight.**
3. **Use a mutually agreed upon pin pad for combinations on keyless entry systems.**
4. **Keep a list of emergency contact information readily available.**
5. **Consider installing a GPS tracking system.**

### Resources

- [Georgia Southern University Police Department](https://www.gsu.edu/police/)
- [Georgia Southern University Safety and Security](https://www.gsu.edu/safety/)
- [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](https://www.nhtsa.gov/)
- [Consumer Reports Auto](https://www.consumerreports.org/auto/)

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