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Tech Toys

Security, golf, and talking handhelds-who could ask for more?

by Jim Hughes

Increased security is on everyone's mind these days, and notebook computers still are a p for thieves interested in your data. According to Safeware, Inc., the largest U.S. insurer of projected 387,000 laptop computers were stolen in the U.S. in 2000, up 21% from 1999. A they're stolen, they can be extremely difficult to recover-unless you have the right antithef

A recent story floating around the Internet tells of Mac user R.D. Bridges's attempts to recce stolen from his sister's home earlier this year. Using two pieces of software installed on the computer, Bridges was able to log onto his sister's notebook when the thief went online. Af remotely personal information, Bridges reset the stolen machine's modem dialing numbers to his home phone. The thief called a dozen times, and Bridges used caller ID to pass the to the police. Through his efforts-using persistence, remote-user software and a homegrow "death script"-Bridges was able to recover the computer.

But it doesn't have to be that hard. Several new solutions have arrived that make it easier your laptop and data-without having to be a regular reader of Slashdot.

Lockdown with an antitheft card

New from Caveo is Caveo Anti-Theft, a PC card that offers both theft deterrence and data protection. Insert Caveo's card into your notebook, set a perimeter distance for movement and choose whether or not you want an audible alarm. If an armed notebook is moved, the device sounds the alarm. If the notebook is moved past the set perimeter, the card assumes theft and begins strong security responses, including shutting down the computer, preventing access to the operating system, and encrypting the information on the hard drive to prevent use without the master password. Caveo Anti-Theft is \$99, available directly from www.caveo.com and other online sources.



Let your fingers set the password

For those with James Bondian sensibilities, Targus Corporation has DEFCON Authenticator, which uses biometrics to secure your comput DEFCON Authenticator into your notebook or desktop PC's USB port, subsurface fingerprint sensors to read the "live layer" of skin to det credentials for password protected areas. Unauthorized persons are from logging on and accessing sensitive information. The DEFCON A includes a two-port USB hub and retails for \$119. More details at www.targus.com.

Have your stolen PC call home

Looking for something that will protect your data and give you a fighting chance to recover notebook after it's been lifted? Then check out MobileSecure from Lucira Technologies (www.lucira.com).

First, install the nearly invisible MobileSecure Agent that is nearly impossible to remove fro laptop. Then wait for your machine to be stolen. If it is, the MobileSecure Manager system communicates with your stolen machine, determines its location, and automatically faxes t police department. Simultaneously, the MobileSecure Agent quietly secures your sensitive year subscription to the service is available through the company's Web site for \$49. The c makes an enterprise edition for business use.

Locate your emergency with GPS

According to Motorola, up to 70% of 911 calls originate from cellular phones. Of the estima deaths per year due to traffic accidents, almost half could be prevented if emergency resp get to the victims sooner.

Enter the MobilePAL+GPS cell phone. The Magnavox MobilePAL+GPS is claimed to be the fi emergency cell phone and service in the country with built-in nationwide global positioning technology.

In case of emergency, callers push one large red button-and are instantly connected to an call center. The operator who takes the call can immediately start tracking the call using orl satellites, identifying the caller's location to within 30 feet. Once the caller's location is dete operator notifies the closest emergency responder (police, ambulance, or roadside assista phone uses alkaline batteries and includes a built-in 95-decibel siren with speakerphone.

The MobilePAL+GPS is available for \$199.95 (plus activation and shipping) with a one-year to either of two pricing plans; an additional introductory annual subscription offers the phor (plus activation and shipping) with the purchase of product replacement service. Service pla \$9.95 a month. More information is available at www.remotemdx.com.

Turn your PDA into a scorekeeper

Do you golf? Have a PDA? If so, put your handheld to work on the links with Karrier Communications's IntelliGolf score card software. Using IntelliGolf on your PDA gives you wireless access to more than 10,000 Internet-based golf course score cards worldwide. You can beam scores and statistics between handhelds, and display performance graphs in 16-bit color. You can also automate scoring, gather game-improving statistics, tabulate sidegame wagers, track shots for every club, and share information between handhelds.

IntelliGolf is compatible with all Palm, Visor, and Windows-based pocket PCs. Two versions are available; download either the Birdie edition for \$39.95 or the Tournament edition for \$49.95 directly from the company at www.intelligolf.com.

| Results | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| \$ | Games Leaders |
| Player | gross |
| Mike Hemphill | 78 |
| Bruce Smith | 87 |
| Richard Schmidt | 103 |
| Sharon Drummey | 78 |
| Terry Hall | 85 |
| Doug Mack | 90 |
| Joe Buchberger | 79 |
| Mike Patterson | 97 |
| Gross | Net |

Talk to your pocket PC, and it talks back

Fonix Commander is a new speech-recognition application that allows iPAQ, Jornada, and PC users to launch applications or initiate tasks using natural voice commands, without hav through menus with a stylus.

Fonix Commander comes bundled with TimeTalk Alert, which reads calendar and task appc out loud using Fonix's computer-synthesized voices. TimeTalk Alert also provides a digital that reads out the current time in quarter-, half-, or one-hour increments.

The Fonix Commander and TimeTalk Alert bundle is available for \$29.95. Fonix Command be purchased separately for \$19.95 from www.fonix.com.