Hello, I’m Roger Safian. Today is Thursday, February 23, and you’re listening to the Information Security News podcast, brought to you by Northwestern University Information Technology.

Our first story for this week is about the Internet site YouPorn and basically they've had a compromise there and it looks like—or at least it's been claimed—that 1 million users’ credentials have been stolen from the site. Some of these of have already appeared online in various archives and it's pretty clear to see that they contain first name, last name, passwords. If you have used this site in the past, I think it would be a good idea to make sure that the password that you're using there is not being used anywhere else because, especially if your username is very similar to your full name, it's going to be easy for people to figure out who you are.

Now we’ve got a story about Symantec pcAnywhere and you may recall that there were several issues about this, we’ve talked about this in the past, Symantec had to—basically for a while they told people “Don't run it anymore, we have updates that need to be made.” some of those updates were made and it looks like there are still problems. At least it's been claimed that a fully patched version of Symantec pcAnywhere can be attacked and basically crashed. So it's obviously not perfect, hopefully Symantec is going to be working on this. If you are a pcAnywhere user, you may want to think about just running it when you absolutely need to. But hopefully this can be resolved soon and I know Symantec is devoted quite a bit of effort to it.

We have an interesting story coming out of Google about Chrome and this is for a password generator. basically you've probably seen some of these in the past—a way to manage passwords—and the idea here is when you go to website that needs a password, Google will create a password for you that is very complicated, a password that so complicated you can't remember it, but Google will remember that password for you. Then as long as you protect your access to Google or perhaps chrome in this case you will be able to recall that password when you need to. Now it's got some advantages and disadvantage. the advantage of course is really good passwords: if a website gets cracked and they're just not going to be able to crack these passwords with the current tools out there—if you got a 15 or 20 character password it's going to take a lot of computing power to crack something like that. So it just really becomes unlikely that that's could be it an issue so that's great. On the other hand if somebody gets a hold your Google credentials potentially they get a hold of everything you got so that's bad too. This is a two-handed sword—or a two-edged sword I guess is what the proper terminology should be—and I'm all excited about. if it comes out I'll certainly try it, but you know you really need to make absolutely certain if you're doing something like this that you really protect the key that’s gonna open up everything.

Then I read an interesting story, and this is about Barclays bank, primarily they’re in the UK, and they are going to be launching an app shortly that is going to allow people to
transfer money between two phones. And the idea being you set up information on your phone, I set up information on my phone, and if I need to send you some money—let’s say we go out for lunch and I don’t have any money you paid for on your credit card, I owe you 10 bucks—I just put your phone number into this app and they send you the 10 bucks, basically the transfer just happens. And that could be great; I really think that technology like this people will take advantage of it. I mean there’s lots of times where I know myself, I go out for lunch with a group people pretty regularly and you know it’d be kind of nice to be able to do something like this and it’d be a great way. on the other hand this is just one more reason why I think people need to be absolutely secure with their cellular phones: make sure that you got things like remote wipe put on that phone, make sure that you got a good strong password on the phone because as more and more of this technology gets out there, your phone is increasingly going to become a way where somebody can tap your financial assets and you definitely want to make sure that you protect that.

There is another Google story here and basically this is Google announced—you might recall we talked about this a few weeks ago—they’re gonna have a reputation check on their app store and now it looks like they’re also going to have the same type of the technology available on TrendMicro. And that's great. I love the idea that more than one person is gonna have a say in “This app is okay and this app is not.” I don’t wanna pick on Apple's model too much but I don’t—I’m not a huge fan of everything is being run by one corporation. There’s just reasons to be concerned about things that at least for me. And so I kinda like the idea of a reputation check or that's gonna have several. Maybe you want to get three of them and take the best two out of three. Two people say this is okay, one says it's not at all; I'll go with the majority rule. Anyway just really like the idea that there could be multiple app systems out there and I hope that others come up with the same sort of thing.

Then I read a really interesting article that I really encourage you to read this. I know always say that it but here's an article you're really have to read. and basically it's a father gets a message at home, like a postcard or something like this from Target, and the postcard is like “Hey, we think you might be pregnant and if that's the case here’s some things that you may want to buy and here’s some coupons to get them.” And so the father was just outraged about this and went to Target to complain and you know you do what father would do in these cases right? Well it turned out his daughter was pregnant. Target knew that his daughter was pregnant before he knew. Now how did they know? Because of her shopping techniques. And now we've talked an awful lot about privacy issues about what people know about you when you have the little card that deal keeps track of what you're buying at the grocery store or the rewards card for the restaurant that you go to all the time. All of that data is available about you and here's a great article about how they mine it and figure out exactly the kind of customer that they're looking for. In this case it was pregnant women. And you know this was a real eye-opening article to me because they really spelled everything out. so I’ll post the link for this in the show notes for today's show but I really encourage you to give this article read it was just I thought was fabulous.
And I know we’ve talked a bit about Apple and there is the privacy issues about whether or not certain application should have access to your address book. And it looks like right now Apple is working on changing the way they do that so that applications are going to need some sort of explicit approval. And basically what I assume that means is they’re going to need you to say okay before you install this. That’s potentially great, android has this. You know my concern is I don't necessarily think that the users of these applications are in the best position to know what’s safe and what's not. You get an application and you already kind have an idea what it’ll do ‘cause maybe you heard from a friend so my guess is you’re likely to just click okay and not necessarily pay as much attention as you should to those buttons. Don’t get me wrong, I like the change, I just do wish that more was happening there. And I’ve got another story later so there might actually be more happening there.

I also got a story here from the IRS. It’s tax time I just did my taxes this weekend, lot of you are probably doing your taxes soon. Basically it's from the IRS the dirty dozen tax scams. It’s interesting how the scams for the IRS match up very well with some of the things that we've been talking about. so identity theft is number one, phishing is number two, frauds and claiming exemptions that you're not entitled to fall into there for most of the rest of them. What’s interesting, the number one and things that the IRS is concerned about are the very things that we been talking about for an awful long time. So again I’ll post a link to this, you can take a look at it.

And then there’s a new thing that apple is coming out with, it's called gatekeeper. Basically what gatekeeper is going to do—I should start by saying up front this is gonna be for the new version of the OS Mountain Lion and it's also been for the iOS, so for your phones and your iPads and things like that. How soon it's going to be available, on am not sure, they don’t always give that release date, but my guess is you might see this by the summer, that’s strictly a guess on my part. And basically what it's going to do is just deny application downloads unless they meet certain criteria—anti-malware or privacy conditions you know things of this nature—unless they meet this criteria it’ll just deny, you won't be able install this kind of stuff on your machine. I think it's great but my concern about this is that again there's an override and I’m not always convinced that users understand what it means when they click okay to those things so I really hope this works. Apple's got a very closed environment, their users are much more contained and much more used to only getting stuff from the iPhones or the iTunes or the App Store for Apple—unlike say Android or Windows users which are much more likely to get stuff from all over the place. So I do encourage this here, I do have some concerns. There’s an interesting article written by Ken Van Wyk and Ken is somebody that I happen to like and know and we’ve talked about his articles before. And he just wrote an article about this as well and so I encourage you to give us a check on that. The article is that, with gatekeeper, is Apple Big Brother or is it practitioner of safer computing, so you can make up your own mind right then and there.

I’m gonna end with a quick programming note here, the podcast will be taking a vacation and will return on March 15. Thanks for listening, if you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to send them to r-safian@northwestern.edu, and as always
you’ll find additional security information as well as the notes that contain the links for today’s podcast at our website www.it.northwestern.edu/security/.