Network Security for Dummies

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As I mentioned in a column a few weeks ago, my friend and colleague Chey Cobb, CISSP has just published a new book, _Network Security for Dummies_. Chey has a long career in information security and is also notorious for driving race cars in cross-country races through the Australian outback (see http://www.cheycobb.com/australia.html).

The text follows the familiar pattern of the “Dummies” series: clear writing, emphasis on fundamentals, and specific recommendations. It’s int

Part I, “The Path to Network Security,” starts with some background information on threats and vulnerabilities, assessment tools and methods, and characteristics of network attackers. Chey’s eight preliminary principles of security are a good start (p. 30):
* Use strong passwords;
* Always use anti-virus software;
* Always change default configurations;
* Don’t run services that you don’t need;
* Back up early and often;
* Protect against surges and losses;
* Know whom you can trust.


Part III discusses anti-virus software, firewalls, intrusion detection systems and access controls. Part IV looks at operating-system specific security, with chapters about Unix, Windows, and Macintosh systems. It continues with procedures for software configuration controls (patching), wireless networks and e-commerce considerations.

Part V continues the life-cycle approach to security logically with coverage of emergency response teams, disaster recovery planning, and computer forensics.

Part VI, “The Part of Tens,” summarizes the rest of the book with ten-point checklists (that sometimes have more than ten points). These lists serve as convenient reminders and can help organizations perform regular quality-control security audits.

All in all, I like Chey’s book, and I think my opinion is only marginally swayed by my long friendship with her and her equally talented husband Stephen. Way to go, Chey!

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For more information about Chey Cobb, see her Web site at <http://www.cheycobb.com>.

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