



Foreword

Security is a goal, a state of nature to aspire to. Security technology and security practice are means, not ends. The apparent tension between these two claims is what this booklet is about. It is what an educated consumer of security claims needs to understand.

Clearly, something big is happening in the world of information technology (IT). This booklet is aimed at IT management, specifically, the part of IT management where computing seems less well definable with every passing day. As of now, your business so thoroughly runs on information it would die hard without IT. The computing you do is increasingly volatile, a mix of Internet and intranet for which the margin for error seems ever thinner.

Outsiders know this, and they probe you. Insiders know this, and they evade you. Yet never before has security technology so truly been an enabling technology. With the right security, the global marketplace is waiting. With the right security, you can use the Web for a fresh round of automation that puts real dollars on the bottom line by making your information work for you at much lower costs. With the right security, you are more free, not more boxed in.

Security is, more than anything else, a way of thinking. You need to know how to think the “security way” if you want to know when to use what tool or how to sagely evaluate the claims of vendors. You need to think clearly about security if you are to “keep your head when those about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you.” You need to be able to teach others if you are to use security to leapfrog your most serious competition, viz., ignorance and inertia.

We hope you’ll read this booklet with a mindset about what can be. We will have succeeded if we have done nothing more than whet your appetite.

Dan Geer
January 1997