Australiaâ€™s SMBs Using Social Networking as a Strategic Business Tool Must Defend Their Brands from Cyber Crime

Findings of AVGâ€™s 2011 SMB Market Landscape Report reveal SMBs open to costly security breaches and information theft.

Australia’s small- and medium-size businesses are exploring the marketing opportunities provided by social networking sites (primarily Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) in unprecedented numbers but too few are prepared for the associated risks to their security and reputations. AVG (AU/NZ) Pty Ltd, the distributor of the award-winning AVG Internet and mobile security software in Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific, warns of the glaring gap between the ready adoption of these new technologies without the corresponding adoption of higher level protection mechanisms to counter infiltration by cyber criminals or disgruntled employees.Michael McKinnon, security advisor at AVG (AU/NZ), said: “While everyone may be talking about the wonders of social networking as the latest cost-effective tool to attract new customers, partners and staff, too few are completing the picture with robust security as part of their business strategy.”An Officing Today study in July 2010 quantified the extent to which Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have become mainstream business tools in Australia. It revealed that 43 percent of our small businesses have set up accounts with these sites and 26 percent had a specific budget allocation for social networking activities. By comparison, 35 percent of SMBs in the US market were moving to these new opportunities. McKinnon said: “The potential for damage to business finances and reputations by hacking and malware attacks is increasing. All organisations must equate online security with corporate governance and brand protection.”AVG’s SMB Market Landscape Report confirms how widely SMBs are using their social networking accounts. They are most frequently using them to engage with their customers (72 percent) and to disseminate company and product information (67 percent). More than a quarter of respondents used these connections to research trends and gain consumer insights, with 25 percent using them for sales and 19 percent for customer support.The Report’s findings highlighted that while SMBs are becoming aware of new ways in which their organisational security can be compromised, including theft of information and social engineering, the majority of respondents remained focussed on countering the more traditional e-mail and web based malware attacks. And SMBs often only realised the true cost of an IT security breach after experiencing one along with the longer-term impacts such as a loss of sales and revenue opportunities, and the man hours required to react to it.Protecting Facebook Pages and accounts: Take the initiative to be aware of the Privacy and Application settings inside Facebook, and understand how the various settings can be applied, especially around the permissions of third-party apps. Business Pages within Facebook have assigned Administrators, and these must be reviewed regularly to ensure that only trusted people are listed; ex-employees should be removed immediately As all interactions within Facebook occur through a personal account, never provide your personal Facebook password to other colleagues under any circumstances; simply add them as Admins on Pages if required.Protecting Twitter accounts: SMBs should be ensuring that the password they use for Twitter is on a need to know basis within the company, and it should be changed if this is not the case. Twitter provides the ability to revoke access to third-party applications, and this should be reviewed on a regular basis ensuring that only applications that are used are allowed. With as many as 1 in every 100 tweets containing potentially malicious links, ensuring that computers and mobile devices are protected with a link scanning technology such as AVG Link Scanner is vital to avoid link poisoning attacks.The release in October of AVG’s Internet Security Business Edition 2012 strengthens its position as the champion of SMB security. This suite is the answer for today’s ‘Internet active’ SMBs. It addresses the potential impacts of cyber crime while being resource-light and affordable.AVG SMB Market Landscape Report 2011This annual report, commissioned by AVG and undertaken by GfK NOP, collated the online responses from 1,000 ICT managers in the USA and the UK during August 2011. Further reading: AVG SMB Market Landscape Report 2011 (16 pages, 1.4 Mb, PDF)AVG (AU/NZ) has a comprehensive range of security tips on its web site at http://www.avg.com.au/resources/security-tips/. For video tips from AVG (AU/NZ), see http://www.youtube.com/user/avgaunz.Keep in touch with AVG (AU/NZ)For breaking news, follow AVG (AU/NZ) on Twitter at twitter.com/avgaunzJoin our Facebook community at www.facebook.com/avgaunzFor security trends, analysis, follow the AVG (AU/NZ) blog at resources.avg.com.au### ENDS ###About AVG (AU/NZ) Pty Ltd — www.avg.com.auBased in Melbourne, AVG (AU/NZ) Pty Ltd distributes the AVG range of anti-virus and Internet Security products in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. AVG software solutions provide real-time protection against the malware, viruses, spam, spyware, adware, worms, Trojans, phishing and exploits used by cyber-criminals, hackers, scammers and identity thieves. AVG protects everything important and personal inside computers — documents, account details and passwords, music, photos and more — all while allowing users to work, bank, shop and play games online in safety. AVG provides outstanding technical solutions and exceptional value for consumers, small to medium business and enterprise clients. AVG delivers real-time protection across desktop, and notebook PCs, plus file and e-mail servers in the home and at work in SMBs, corporations, government agencies and educational institutions. Talk to UsMedia Contacts:Michael McKinnon AVG (AU/NZ) 03 9581 0845 mmckinnon@avg.com.au Shuna BoydBoydPR02 9418 8100 shuna@boydpr.com.au AVG Technologies – Investor RelationsSiobhan

MacDermott E-mail: siobhan.macdermott@avg.com US Mobile: +1 415 299 2945CZ Mobile: +420 725 695 132Media resources, including logos, box shots, screen shots etc., are available online at: http://www.avg.com.au/media/ Join the AVG Community for information, video content and pictures: http://www.flickr.com/photos/officialavg/sets/