

Impatience Is A Virtue

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Sometimes you can't help but wonder if one seemingly insignificant bother, left untreated, could develop into a major hurdle.

If there is one trait I'm not known for it is patience in the face of mild inconveniences. I can navigate the major roadblocks life throws my way with a grin-and-bear-it or a glass-is-half-full attitude, but there is something about the small stuff that goes wrong that makes me sweat these trivial problems in a big way.

I manage to keep things in perspective most of the time. But sometimes you can't help but wonder if *this* one seemingly insignificant bother, left untreated, could develop into a major hurdle.

So it was with abject horror that I read [a recent Associated Press article](#) [1] about how hundreds of thousands of individuals may lose access to the Internet this July, simply because they made a few ill-advised clicks of the computer mouse. According to the article, their problem began when international hackers ran an online advertising scam to take control of infected computers around the world.

Initially, this was a problem with limited consequences: the computers were infected and needed to be fixed to avoid slow web surfing and disabled antivirus software. But in a highly unusual response, the FBI set up a safety net months ago using government computers to prevent Internet disruptions for those infected users. But that system is to be shut down. So....yeah, that's a problem.

Their reasoning behind the impending shutdown is legitimate. Last November, the FBI and other authorities were preparing to take down a hacker ring that had been running an Internet ad scam on a massive network of infected computers. If they had shut down the criminal infrastructure and thrown everybody in jail, the victims of the hack would have been without Internet service. So the federal government has kept the rogue servers online and is trying to alert the public that affected users (who may or may not actually be aware of the fact that their computers are affected) will lose internet access when they are finally shut down in July.

This begs the following question: Are there small or seemingly insignificant issues in your place of work that have the potential to evolve into potentially serious, or even catastrophic, problems? Whether its data management, energy efficiency, or another area, it seems every company could point to something where one or two wrong moves has created a small issue that could eventually make a significant impact on the overall bottom line. In the case of the thwarted advertising scam, the authorities have been able to delay the inevitable consequences for those affected for some time. But for many business enterprises, nothing and no one stands in the way of the problem taking a turn for the worse.

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It is stories like the one outlined in the aforementioned *AP* article that make me wonder why individuals and organizations don't sweat the small stuff a little more often. After all, it takes some combination of a little bit of money and a little bit of effort to ensure a small enterprise problem doesn't get out of hand. Yes, I'm known in some circles for my lack of patience in the face of bothersome impediments, but I feel like there have many occasions when this sort of attitude has served me well. And while I try to identify the difference between the mountains and mole hills life puts before me and alter my approach to scaling them accordingly, there is a part of me that will always remember how much damage a few simple clicks of a computer mouse can do.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.freep.com/article/20120425/NEWS09/120425012/Infected-PCs-may-lose-Internet-in-July>