AutoIMS News

Security and AutoIMS

By now, most of us have been using the internet for ten years or more. You might expect that some of the early problems of online security like identity theft, viruses, malware, and spam would have been fixed by now. Unfortunately, the internet is more potentially dangerous now than ever. In the beginning, the bad guys were more likely to be youthful amateur hackers working out of their parent's basement, with no real plan to steal anything of value. These days, the online criminals are professionals, with offices, bosses, and big dollar resources behind them. They target individual computer users, giant financial institutions, and everything in between. They herd giant "botnets", which are collections of ordinary computers owned by normal people and legitimate businesses. For the most part, the people and companies whose computers are used to commit crime are unaware that their computers are under the control of criminals.

Everyone wishes for a silver bullet that could magically make these threats go away. Unfortunately, experience has shown that there is no single, technological tool that can be used to protect against these threats. At AutoIMS, we follow the industry best practices of using layered approaches to security. The idea is to place high-quality barriers to entry at every potential point of access. So, for example, we use an enterprise-grade firewall to protect the perimeter of all our network environments. Firewalls are great at blocking specific identifiable types of network traffic, but they don't have the ability to watch an extended chain of behavior that might indicate someone is doing something harmful. To address that problem, we employ Intrusion Prevention Systems, which can monitor and block sophisticated attacks that the firewall would not be able to detect. This principle of using multiple layers of security is employed throughout our environments.

Finally, the most often overlooked aspect of IT security is the human behavioral side. There are documented instances in 2011 of highly-regarded US corporations being hacked, not by smart technical means, but merely by fooling employees into handing over valuable usernames, passwords, or detailed information about the local networking environment. The best way to deal with this issue is to have regular training of all employees to make them aware of these risks, and to teach them how to respond to them. AutoIMS has mandatory training of all new employees on the acceptable use of AutoIMS systems and gear. This training includes introducing them to the need to be very conscious of how information is shared and who is allowed access. Additionally, AutoIMS has mandatory training each year of all employees, both to inform them of emerging threats, and to reiterate our own practices and procedures.

AutoIMS trains employees never to ask for passwords. You should never give out your password for AutoIMS or any other system, even if someone gives a plausible reason for needing it. If you do ever accidentally reveal your password, change it as soon as possible. Security conscious users can be one of our most important security "layers".

AutoIMS Help

Help is here, and it's not just a Beatles song anymore! Accessible by all users from a link at the top of any AutoIMS page, the new Help system was designed by the Customer Service team and answers many of the common questions our users ask us every day. Whether trying to manage your inventory or troubleshoot an issue, AutoIMS Help gives step-by-step, illustrated instructions for all topics covered. It's easy to use, so dive right in!

What's Inside?

- Mobile App & Survey
- AutoIMS University
- Herb Daniel
- AutoIMS HUB

AutoIMS University Visits Auctions

AutoIMS crew at NAAA Conference

Recent weeks provided a number of great opportunities for AutoIMS to visit member auctions, providing users a newly updated curriculum of training. Topics are always wide-ranging, and every auction visit uncovers unique challenges and opportunities on which to focus. Some of the most widely requested areas for training include:

- Electronic Data Interchange – how auction systems (successfully) exchange data automatically with AutoIMS, and how to prevent errors

- Advanced Inventory Management – using reports to manage exceptions and make things easier

- Transportation – Tips and tricks for transportation managers

- Administration – setting up users, e-mail notifications, and more

"Too often I hear Fleet and Commercial Account Managers and other auction leaders say how much they like AutoIMS, but feel that it is underutilized at their auction. We are always available for impromptu training or help, but usually users wait until there is a problem to call. The idea behind AutoIMS University is to sit down face-to-face with a group of users for a couple of hours for frank discussion and training tailored especially to their auction, to prevent the problems altogether," said AutoIMS Director of Customer Service, Joe Miller.

Joe Miller, Roger Baldwin, Cynthia Mitchell and Nick Pirovolidis at BSC America's Bel Air Auto Auction.

Alleviating Fears About Reports

LiveReports is the powerful engine behind AutoIMS, but is also the source of greatest trepidation for auction users. The sheer volume of data and sensitivity of users trying to avoid causing an error often stops users in their tracks. But the trick is to just jump in.

Customer Service Manager, Roger Baldwin added, "Auction users need to realize that creating and running a report is not only easy, it's completely harmless to the actual data.

Reports are not just for data junkies or tech heads any more. They are about slicing and dicing your inventory very specifically so that you can make your life easier."

One way users can become very comfortable running and manipulating reports is to use the Report Templates. These templates were recently overhauled to be even simpler, but more effective.

Special Thanks from the Dean of A.U.

Hosting an AutoIMS University session takes effort and time from all parties, but is inevitably a win-win situation. Most recently, various members of the AutoIMS Customer Service team had the good fortune to meet with America's Auto Auction of Greenville, Carolina Auto Auction, Greensboro Auto Auction, ADESA Atlanta, ADESA Las Vegas, Manheim Nevada, ADESA Charlotte, Tidewater Auto Auction, and of course the annual NAAA conference.

Michael Greene, Michael Vaughan, Balaji Sampath and Akin Bolarinwa at ADESA Atlanta.

"We think it's important for users to get off the proverbial treadmill in order to evaluate how they can better use our tools to their advantage. It's also very valuable for AutoIMS to meet with the people who rely on our program, hear their questions, concerns, and watch how their processes integrate with AutoIMS. We are always grateful when an auction opens their doors to us, and encourages their people to dedicate some time and attention to learning," continued Miller.

For more information about training for your auction, call Customer Service (888) 683-2272 or email customer.service@autoims.com.

New Auction Report Templates

- **Pending Assignments – Easily access and acknowledge assignments.**

- **Title Status – Avoid selling cars without a title.**

- **Block – Be sure everything is actually for sale, before the sale.**

- **Notes – Use open fields to your advantage in AutoIMS.**

- **Charges – Billing 101: Eliminate erroneous fees; charge for everything that's valid.**

- **Repair Estimate Document – Get even further ahead of repairs.**

Online Multi-Listing Vehicle Sale

AutoIMS Hub

As more clients look for ways to expose their inventory to multiple venues, AutoIMS is poised to complete final Beta testing on a new feature called the AutoIMS Hub. This new functionality will provide an easy way to view and transition vehicles between online and physical auction selling venues.

Users can drill down into a new menu called Hub Listings, enabling them to quickly glance at what is active, what is pending, what has expired and what has sold, along with other key items. The client will have the option to manage listings themselves, but can also easily authorize the auctions to do so on their behalf so vehicles can be moved quickly back and forth between venues if they do not sell. Most important to our users is the online sales and bidding data that will now flow into AutoIMS. No longer will users have to go to as many websites to put together comprehensive sales data.

AutoIMS will provide a number of preformatted reports, created with the input from our Beta clients. These reports can be downloaded and customized to suit each client's needs.

NADA Now Available

AutoIMS and NADA have partnered to offer AutoIMS clients a low-cost subscription to real-time guidebook pricing that feeds directly into Auto-IMS. Available to subscribers on the Pricing tab or as part of LivePricing, AutoIMS users can review the equipment options indicated by the auction along with other available equipment options, then obtain a price sourced directly through NADA. The display returned includes the Retail, Trade-In and Loan value. Save it and retrieve it anytime at no extra cost. Use it also as part of LivePricing and simplify your floor pricing process by considering it in conjunction with other Guide Book offerings, customizable formulas and detailed vehicle data, including images. LivePricing collects all the historical data on how many times a vehicle runs, with floor prices and more. Analyze the data to see how efficiently vehicles are priced each week or use it to uncover valuable information such as market cycles.

If you aren't taking advantage of our time saving Guide Book options or would like a demo of how LivePricing works with NADA, please contact Customer Service. You may also qualify for a 2 week free trial with NADA.

SunTrust's Herb Daniel

Herb Daniel has been in the remarketing business in one form or another for over 30 years. Now a Remarketing Manager for SunTrust Bank in Richmond, Virginia, Daniel is the "go-to" man for getting a vehicle to the right auction and into shape to fetch the best price. Daniel uses his work experience at ADT and Manheim Auto Auctions to make full use of auction resources, while still always considering how to make their life easier.

A relatively new client, Sun-Trust has been using AutoIMS since April this year. Daniel was exposed to AutoIMS when he worked at Baltimore-Washington Auto Exchange. "We are very much committed to seeking the best way to assist our associates in increasing productivity with upgraded systems," says Daniel, "and AutoIMS has had a major positive impact on our productivity." Daniel reports to Stephanie Williams, who came from a technological background and was a major force in bringing AutoIMS to SunTrust. Some of the functionalities Daniel finds most useful are the ease of consigning, tracking vehicles through the preparation for sale process, and viewing CRs and photos in order to determine which repairs to make. "There is nothing we do that is not better because of AutoIMS," says Daniel.

As a regional company, SunTrust maintains a close relationship with their auction partners. "Watching the dynamic between buyers and auction employees never gets old," says Daniel. "There is always something new no matter how long you've done this." Having met some of the giants of the remarketing industry including Tony Moorby, Bob McDevitt, Nick Peluso, and Tom Cunningham, Daniels appreciates the many friendships he's made in remarketing over the years and enjoys passing along what he has learned to his staff at SunTrust.

An all-conference distance runner in college, Daniel is a Viet Nam veteran, and loves spending time with his wife, dog, and grandkids. His favorite movie is "The Electric Horseman" and he enjoys reading books by Robert Parker, creator of the Spenser for Hire character.

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AutoIMS Announces Survey Results, Reveals Mobile Strategy

AutoIMS recently announced its intentions to offer dedicated mobile applications on the Android platform, and increased functionality for the most popular mobile web browsers.

"Whether you are a consignor in the field who needs to review damages, enter floor prices, or simply check a vehicle status; or an auction user looking for a better way to write a condition report, the AutoIMS functionality you rely on will soon be available on leading smartphones and tablets," says Don Meadows, President of AutoIMS.
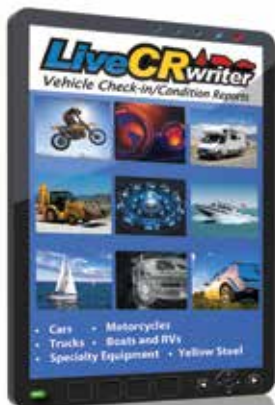
The Android platform will be home to the first official AutoIMS apps, though we continue to test and evaluate the functionality, security, and practicality of all the hottest mobile gadgets, including Apple's iPhone and iPad.

A recent survey of 6,000 active AutoIMS users revealed which devices are most commonly used. At 25% of the user base, BlackBerry is still the most-deployed smartphone. iPhone and Android users tied at 15% each. Combined with recent research showing Android adoption significantly out-pacing the iPhone and BlackBerry products, word of mouth feedback, and in-house development skills, AutoIMS opted to develop on the Android platform.

"We have been very impressed with the quality and selection of Android devices, the open-source nature of the development environment, and the feedback we are receiving about adoption of the Android platform from our clients," says AutoIMS Lead Mobile Developer, Steve Whitney.

Very soon, auction personnel will be able to access the popular LiveCRwriter application on an Android device to write or amend condition reports for cars, trucks, and a wide array of specialty equipment. "Considering the low cost of Android devices compared with tablet computers, this will represent huge savings on hardware costs, as well as added convenience and efficiency for CR writers, as the Android app will sync with AutoIMS in real time," added AutoIMS CIO, Venkat Krishnamoorthy.