By Bogdan Popa, Hardware Editor

British Startup to Offer Self-Destructing Laptops

You steal it, you may get a bunch of useless metal and plastic

A small British startup has announced an innovative security technology that will give thieves a hard time. The built-in security device can block access to the computer, or even destroy all the stored data should the notebook be moved from its initial location.Virtuity is a small company that has not produced anything worth mentioning until now. Their technology, called Backstopp (don't ask about the double "p" in the name) is constantly probing for the unit's spatial location. Should the laptop be moved outside an acceptable perimeter, it is automatically labeled as "missing" and the built-in software solution proceeds to systematically erase sensitive data. This protection solution is designed to complement a software application to take care of data encryption, that will facilitate the access to data for authorized personnel, but at the same time, it will provide the necessary security for the stored data in case the laptop goes missing. The stolen laptops can be triangulated and accurately located via any wireless method, including Wi-Fi or WiMax. Identification can be further improved by using RFID chips that will allow the control center to keep them under surveillance even when the notebooks are powered off. This feature would be extremely useful for the companies that would restrict the laptop to a specific space, such as a single desk, a single building floor or a single building. When the laptop gets stolen, the built-in geo-location hardware device will inform the control center that it has been taken out of the restricted perimeter. The control center will be able to broadcast the self-destruct command. "There are millions of laptops out there that contain valuable data," commented Dean Bates, CTO of Virtuity. "The vast majority are not stolen for their data, but the ultimate recipient will often come across the data and use it for criminal purposes. This solution prevents that illicit use."The new service is based on a monthly subscription. For £10 a laptop per month, the laptop gets monitored and the data rests safe. The service can be regarded as a security addition that fits best government and large corporations.

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