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Why I Use a Chromebook (a Cybersecurity Article) ...

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I use a Chromebook for 99.9% of my email and Web surfing activity. This approach is driven by cybersecurity concerns, and I'll explain how a Chromebook addresses those concerns in this article.

As with my other articles, I've skipped or oversimplified a number of technical details in what's below; they're not crucial to get the feel for why I've chosen a Chromebook.

Concern #1: Defending Against Malware

Malware is currently the largest threat people face in their day-to-day computer use. It's delivered mainly via email and Web sites: open a malicious attachment, or click on the wrong link, and the device you're using gets infected. Such an infection can cause all manner of unpleasantness: your files being held for ransom, theft of your bank account passwords, remote-control of your device, and on and on.

Well, a given piece of malware must be designed to run in a specific environment. In order to target the most devices, malware authors design their product for the most ubiquitous environments - currently Android, Windows,



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Further, for malware to do damage, it must *run* on the device. Chromebooks won't run just any old program or app like other devices; in simple terms, it will only run its built-in Web browser. This means that, should malware find its way onto my Chromebook, it's highly unlikely it would ever run - and thus do damage.

Concern #2: Protecting My Mobile Office

Do you tote around a laptop that contains the "keys to your kingdom"? I do. Losing physical possession of that laptop, either through theft or forgetfulness, places those "keys" at great risk. Through my work as a computer forensic examiner, I know how shockingly easy it is for someone with physical access to a computer to gain access to its contents.

For all intents and purposes, a Chromebook is a dead-end for computer forensic examiners. Gaining access to its internal storage, such that the user's information can be extracted, is incredibly difficult, and attempts to do so can wipe the storage. If you do gain access, the contents are encrypted. Finally, there's relatively little user information stored on the Chromebook itself ... it's almost all in the (Google) cloud.

So, if I lose my Chromebook, I'm confident my business and personal "kingdom keys" would not be at risk.

Conclusion



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back-and-forth from the Chromebook. That said, security and convenience are always in tension -- you can't have them both.

Finally, while Chromebook usage mitigates what I believe are my largest cybersecurity risks, it doesn't address them all. The best cybersecurity is based on layered defenses, and my Chromebook is just one such layer.

-- My company, [Scout Computer Forensics, Inc.](#), helps attorneys and investigators collect, understand, and leverage digital evidence.

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