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Larry Ellison wants everyone to have them. Scott McNealy says they need to work for Java. Bill Gates wants to put Windows on them. American Express distributed 3,000,000 of them, and Visa distributed a couple of million more. So what's so cool about smart cards, and how can they be used for you? Smart cards (more generally called security tokens) are security. Whether it's terrorists with a vendetta, or scripted toddlers are nothing better to do, the Internet is under attack from all sides. As a programmer, you are in the middle of this turmoil. Today you need not only to deliver your development project on time and within budget, you have to make it safe from a malicious attack. Smart cards are a useful tool that you can use to enhance the security of your mission of critical software to a minimum level of pain. The good news for programmers is that security knowledge is in high demand and low supply; See Hiring Security Professionals and Wanted: More Schools for Safety Pros. I can't promise that if you read this article your salary will increase by 50 percent, but if it does, I'd be happy to take some of the credit... Don't tune in if the project budget simply can't accommodate hardware security tokens. Even if you can't deploy hardware tokens, you can still improve your security by emulating software tokens. Not only will you be safer now, without tokens, you will be ready to seamlessly switch to safety equipment in the future. To download our sample app now, click here. As long as we talk the details, let's take a look at smartphone hardware. Some smartphones run on processors. Along with processors, smartphones also have computer chips that provide functionality. Phones with cameras have high-resolution image sensors, as do digital cameras. Other chips support complex features such as browsing the Internet, sharing multimedia files, or playing music without putting too much demand on your phone's battery. Some manufacturers are developing chips that integrate multiple functions to help reduce the overall cost (less chips produced on the phone helps offset production costs). Advertising You can visualize the software for smartphones as a stack of software. The stack consists of the following levels: core - process management systems and drivers for hardware programs - software libraries that allow smartphone applications (such as security, web browsing and messaging) application execution environment (AEE) - application programming interfaces that allow create their own user interface programs - graphics and layouts viewed on a set of apps on the screen - major apps that users regularly access, such as menu screens, calendars and message mailboxes, Digidesign does not sell any of its products directly from their website. Instead, you can use a convenient online online tool to find a Digidesign authorized dealer near you. Or you can buy online from any number of national retailers like Sweetwater or Guitar Center. The key to buying Pro Tools is to accurately assess your needs. If you're a one-man home recording studio and you're only looking to plug in your vocal microphone and keyboard, then you only need an audio interface with one microphone pre-OD and a MIDI connector. If you work full professional recording studio, sometimes with over 20 instruments at a time, then you need a more sophisticated system. Advertising for home studio installations, the best choice is pro Tools LE or M-Powered system. M-Powered audio interfaces are a little cheaper than LE interfaces because the hardware is manufactured by a third-party company called M-Audio. For as little as \$100, you can get a Pro Tools-compatible M-Audio internal PCI card with MIDI and analog input/output. But then you have to buy Pro Tools M-Powered software separately, which runs for about \$250. Pro Tools LE audio interfaces actually come with the software included. If you shop around, you may find lower models that cost less than M-Audio options when you include the price of the software. For example, Sweetwater sells the Mbox 2 Mini audio interface - with one microphone and two analog inputs/exits - with free Pro Tools LE software for as little as \$300. At the high end of the spectrum, you can easily spend \$30,000 on a professional Pro Tools system. Pro Tools HD 3 Accel sells for \$14,000. The C 24 surface control only makes \$10,000. Then you want extra entrance/weekend boxes for all those microphones and analog cables, each costing \$2,000. This doesn't even include high-end studio monitors, LCD video screens, and of course your computer. If you fall somewhere between the highest and lowest end, many retailers are selling Pro Tools launch bundles that include software, an appropriate-sized audio interface, a studio microphone and a pair of monitors. The mini-complete systems start at about \$400, but prices can get up to \$4,000 when you throw in a small control surface, keyboard, higher-end microphones and extra cables. Before you buy anything, make sure your computer has a minimum system requirement to run the desired version of the software. Pro Tools doesn't work with Windows Vista, for example. And if you're going to record a lot of music, you'll want to invest in some extra external hard drives to store all the raw and finished audio files. For lots more information on Pro Tools, audio post production and related topics, links on the next page. Page 2 With the right equipment and a surprisingly small amount of money you can build a professional quality recording studio in your own home. Here are five basic tools that every home studio needs: Advertising for perfectly good digital digital device, look no further than your computer. Your built-in sound card will probably work fine, but if you're serious about home recording, you should consider investing in a sound card made solely for this purpose, with a high-quality digital audio converter (DAC), microphone pre-amps and MIDI input/output. You'll also need sequencing software to record music on your computer. It is software that records either analog sound from a microphone or MIDI data with electronic instruments. Sequencing software makes it easy to edit and mix multiple tracks, add effects, export audio files to a CD. The industry standard for professional sound sequencing is Pro Tools (comes with its own sound card), but there are options for each budget. Computers are so versatile and powerful home recording devices that almost everyone chooses this option. However, if you firmly believe that computers and music don't mix, you can buy a multi-track digital recording device that records on a Flash CD or even burns directly on a CD. 2. Good microphone Don't skimp on the microphone. Even with all the magic of digital editing and effects, you can't do much with a bad source recording. The best microphone for recording solo acoustic instruments and vocals is a condenser microphone. For vocals, you also want a pop filter, an inexpensive piece of material that protects the microphone from hard p and sharp S sounds. To record a full rock band, you need to microphone all the instruments separately using small dynamic microphones. You should be able to find good condenser microphones for less than \$200 and dynamic microphones for less than \$100. 3. Speaker monitor and headphone monitor speakers are different from conventional stereo speakers. They are important in the recording studio environment because they broadcast audio exactly the way it is recorded, without colouring or sweetening the sound source: BBC. This is the best way to make sure your record will sound exactly as it was when you played it. It's common to record songs in multi-thread format, record each track one at a time (drums first, bass second, keyboard third, and so on). The best way to do this is to use a pair of headphones to listen to previously recorded tracks as you fold a new one. Good headphones keep the sound, so the only thing recorded is the new track. 4. A MIDI controller or synth synth is usually an electronic keyboard that can be programmed to play different kinds of sounds. But synthesizers come in different shapes and sizes, such as guitar synthesizers, wind synths and drum machines. The MIDI controller is similar to a synthesizer, but doesn't actually produce any sounds on its own. The tool is literally a controller, like a joystick for a computer game. The MIDI controller produces MIDI data that can be used for hardware or software-based. For example, you can use the MIDI controller to play an electronic keyboard plug-in like ProTools. Or use one MIDI controller to play a whole network of interconnected synths and drum machines. 5. Audio interface Audio interface is like an external sound card. Instead of connecting microphones and digital tools directly to your computer, you connect them to this outer box that connects to a computer with a single cord, either USB or Firewire. The interface processes the conversion of analogue to digital, swiping the pressure from the computing power of the computer. This is especially useful for laptops that don't have room for additional internal PCI cards and tend to have slower processors. Audio interfaces, also known as breakout boxes, come with a certain number of microphone pre-amps (two to a dozen) and pens to control the recording level of each microphone. Typically, each instrument and vocal needs its own microphone (drums need at least 3 separate microphones), so look for an interface with enough pre-amps to cover your needs. For more information on home writing and related topics, check out the links on the next page. Sean McClain For the common man, all the data that is stored on the computer drive is encrypted, as it is just a bunch of letters and numbers. An experienced hacker, however, can use the same data to see what is on the computer. To combat this vulnerability, this data can be encrypted in one of two ways, either by allowing computer software to encrypt data as it puts it on a disk or with dedicated encryption equipment stored on the disk itself. All encryption methods use an encryption key, a string of generated numbers, to scramble data before it is stored on a disk. Anyone who gets access to data without a key will only see useless numbers because the only way to decrypt the data is to use the exact same key that was used to scramble it. Software encryption uses your computer's resources to encrypt data and perform other cryptographic operations. Encryption software often uses a user's password as an encryption key that scrambles data. Hardware encryption uses a special processor that is physically on an encrypted disk instead of a computer processor. This encryption processor also often contains a random number generator to create an encryption key that the user's password will unlock. Because software encryption exists in machine software, it must be reinstalled if the operating system is changed. encryption is outside of computer software and will remain in place no matter what happens to the computer's software. You can update the encryption software to fix bugs and improve performance. Encryption software can also be copied for drives or computers if there is a need to expand security to other machines. Because hardware encryption is stored on a microchip on the storage device itself, it may be difficult or impossible to change any part of the hardware encryption. Hardware encryption only covers one drive at a time, so if there is a need for increased security, you should purchase additional drives with hardware encryption. Software encryption uses a computer processor to process data encryption. Because the processor has to handle both normal computer operations and data encryption, this can slow down the entire system. Hardware encryption works on its own hardware and does not affect the overall performance of the system. The brute force attack, the most common attack on encrypted data, is to re-guess the password or encryption key. Software-based encryption schemes will try to limit the number of attempts to decrypt or log in, but since they use computer resources, hackers can gain access to the computer's memory and reset the attempt counter, essentially giving them unlimited time to guess the password or key. Hardware encryption does its processing on a special chip that may not be access to the computer, so this method of brute force attack will not work. Software encryption is as secure as the computer it works for. If hackers can get malicious code on their computer, they can change or disable encryption, allowing the disk to store unsecured data. Hardware encryption works independently of the operating system, so it's not exposed to these types of security flaws. Disadvantages.

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