Clouding judgement: Businesses fear the Dark Web

When it comes to what keeps IT decision-makers in businesses awake at night, one of the biggest fears is losing data to the Dark Web.

A study of 100 IT decision-makers in Irish businesses found that the biggest cloud security concerns are data breaches, human error and permanent data loss.

The research found that almost a quarter (24pc) are concerned about losing data to the Dark Web. The quintessential issue is data loss and a separate study from last year found that almost a quarter of Gen Z workers in Ireland have accessed the Dark Web from their workplace.

The Dark Web is the part of the World Wide Web that isn't visible to search engines and exists on darknets that require specific software such as TOR (The Onion Router) to access. While many may use it to access content like movies, TV shows or music, it has gained notoriety as an illicit part of the internet where everything from data to drugs and arms are also traded by nefarious interests. In most cases stolen passwords and databases from compromised businesses and websites are actively traded on the Dark Web.

The most recent study, carried out in January by TechPro on behalf of Logicalis in Ireland found that fear is a real factor when it comes to cloud adoption.

It revealed that the three biggest concerns in relation to cloud security are data breaches (70pc), human error (60pc) and permanent data loss (44pc). Furthermore, almost three quarters of respondents are more worried about cloud security threats in 2020.

Security was found to be the leading barrier to cloud adoption with 56pc of IT decision-makers citing it. Other top barriers are lack of in-house knowledge and skills (38pc), budget constraints (37pc), data compliancy concerns (35pc) and lack of visibility of workloads/applications in the cloud (32pc).

Public cloud (38pc) is perceived as the IT environment that poses the greatest risk to security, followed by on-premises infrastructure (31pc). Meanwhile, private cloud is considered the lowest risk (6pc) among IT decision-makers.

Unprepared for inevitable attacks

Despite their concerns, over half (55pc) of Irish businesses do not have an integrated cloud security plan in place. Furthermore, 13pc admitted their organisations have no response plans in

place for security incidents, with a further 26pc only acting reactively as and when incidents arise.

"Of course IT decision-makers should be worried about incidents which could result in data breaches and data loss – it's good that they are because data has huge value and threats are evolving as quickly as technology is," said Loman McCaffrey, sales manager with Logicalis Ireland.

"However, Irish businesses shouldn't let these security concerns and other challenges – such as lack of visibility, rising costs and lack of in-house resources – delay their adoption of cloud and hinder the potential growth of their company. It comes down to choosing the right solution.

"As well as maximising security, organisations need to consider platforms that also help to keep costs under control, support staff productivity and enable better management of data, regardless of the cloud environment they're using.

"Furthermore, as more organisations move their workloads into the cloud, it's vital they have a clearly defined and continually evolving security strategy that covers all aspects of the business, including staff training to reduce the risk of falling victim to cybersecurity attacks. Otherwise their fears could be realised," McCaffrey said.

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