



IT SECURITY IN THE UK & IRELAND: 2018 BUSINESS SURVEY

Conducted by: Osterman Research

Sponsored by: Cyren

Survey conducted: May 2018

Surveyed: IT and security managers at 104 companies in the UK and Ireland with 100-3000 employees. The survey was conducted via in-depth telephone interviews.

Some key takeaways:

Phishing is on the Rise and Getting Past Defenses

- Compared to the 2017 Cyren-Osterman Research UKI survey, **phishing has surged past ransomware and targeted attacks to second place** among the cybersecurity issues which most concern security-focused decision makers and influencers in the UK and Ireland, trailing only data breaches.
- **Security failures continue to be widespread, with over half (59%) of organisations in the survey reporting one or more malware infections or security breaches during the prior 12 months.** A successful phishing attack and Virus/Worms/Spyware infections were the two most reported occurrences, affecting 28% of firms each, followed by 20% reporting having suffered a successful ransomware attack.
- **The majority of organisations report that their security was increasingly failing to block phishing emails during the past year.** 62% of IT and security managers say that the number of phishing emails getting through their existing security and reaching end users has increased 29% during the past 12 months. Over half also report that the number of spearphishing emails reaching executives or other key personnel have increased an estimated average 18% over the past year.
- **Most IT managers give their current security low marks.** Across a lengthy list of threats, only a minority of organisations believe that their current security infrastructure is protecting them “well” or “extremely well”. Defenses from general phishing attacks were thought to be good by 43% of respondents; however, current protection from targeted phishing emails was rated highly by only 23%.
- **75% of organisations give their employees some kind of phishing awareness training;** however, one-third of these do so only when the employee joins the company. Opinions are favorable; 43% consider the training to be highly effective.

Rising Spending in Search of Security Effectiveness

- **“Security effectiveness” is far and away the most important criterion** cited by IT and security managers in evaluating a web or email security solution, with 90% rating it high or highest importance, more than 20 points ahead of the second highest consideration. Speed of defenses, ease of ongoing management, and lowest TCO were the next highest rated considerations.

- **IT security spending in the UK and Ireland continues to rise rapidly**, with 61% reporting increased security-related costs by an average 10.5% for the 12 months ended May 2018.
- **A majority of respondents indicated an interest in new solutions**, replying with the highest level of interest in deploying extra layers of security from specialized new services which might provide significant improvement in phishing (63%) and ransomware (68%) protection, as well as improved sandboxing protection from evasive malware (60%).

Market Shift to Cloud-based Security

- Survey respondents indicated a continued shift in preference to cloud-based security services and **the UKI market is now split evenly between those who prefer cloud-based security (37%) and those who prefer on-premises solutions (37%)**, while 28% claimed themselves agnostic between the two. In the 2017 survey, 30% had indicated a preference for cloud-based security services.
- **Many organisations indicate they have already moved their security to the cloud.** Thirty percent of IT managers say they have deployed cloud-based SaaS from a security provider; 55% report that their email security comes via SaaS, considering those who have subscribed to specific email gateway security (33%) and those who rely on the security included in their hosted email service (22%).
- **48% of businesses in the UK and Ireland use Office 365**, Google Gmail, or another cloud-based email platform, surpassing the 38% utilizing on-premises Exchange or another on-premises email platform.

Quotation from Osterman Research:

“The survey told us unequivocally that phishing has risen to the top during the past year as a security concern for IT managers in the UK and Ireland, surpassing ransomware. Twenty-eight percent of organisations told us they had suffered one or more successful phishing attacks, and the majority of IT managers also reported that their current defenses are increasingly failing at the task of blocking phishing attacks. Their day-to-day experience tells them that the volume of phishing emails managing to evade detection and reach their users has jumped considerably in the past 12 months, on average estimating a 29 percent increase.

“Another key market dynamic we studied was the rate of preference for and adoption of SaaS security solutions, and we found that the market is now essentially evenly split between those who prefer cloud-based security and those who still prefer on-premises solutions, 38 percent and 37 percent, respectively. We learned that 30 percent of organisations have already deployed some form of cloud-based security.

“Business IT decision makers clearly need to take a fresh look at their security in order to combat the rising tide of phishing.”

-- Michael Osterman, Principal Analyst of Osterman Research

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