TECH
LONDON
ADVOCATES

Hybrid Cloud Security – What keeps you up at night?

Tech London Advocates & Gigamon

September 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Since the COVID-19 crisis, the cloud computing market has experienced a rapid upward trajectory when it comes to cloud adoption, infrastructure, spending and development. But with increased dependence on the cloud, the security risk for businesses has heightened accordingly.

Indeed, security concerns surrounding data held in the cloud have been brought firmly into the public consciousness in recent months. Perhaps the most high profile case this year was the Microsoft breach in early July, with victims including the U.S. Commerce Secretary and other State Department Officials. When it comes to securing data in multicloud environments, encryption is a vital security control for businesses. However, many UK IT and security leaders fear their organisations do not possess adequate visibility into encrypted traffic. While 93% of malware hides behind encryption, Gigamon's Hybrid Cloud Survey found that only one in three victims of cyberattacks understood how they were attacked - clearly, the obscurity of threats within encrypted traffic is a key contributor to this lack of awareness.

PURPOSE

In September 2023, Tech London Advocates and Gigamon convened a roundtable to discuss the cloud, specifically the need to ensure data that is held within it is secure and carefully monitored.

The roundtable was composed of representatives from the UK and international organisations across a variety of sectors to openly discuss the challenges and issues of hybrid cloud security.. Speakers shared insights around the challenges and issues of cloud migration, adoption and maintenance, the types of platforms their businesses used and examples of best practice.

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GET DEEP OBSERVABILITY ACROSS THE HYBRID CLOUD
Improve security posture
Eliminate blind spots
Network-derived intelligence
Streamline operations

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KEY FINDINGS

Cloud computing security is a field experiencing an acute skills shortage of subject matter experts - making this a blind spot in its own right. According to a cyber security skills report compiled by the UK's Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport there are more than 6,000 new job vacancies in the field - leaving many businesses exposed.

Panellists at the roundtable agreed that for the most part, cyber skills recruiting at their companies was based on potential, with skills then trained afterwards.

And while the distinction between the different types of data organisations seek to protect was made clear, it was agreed that the entire IT environment must be secured to the same level against external threats. Standards for backing up less mission-critical data might be less rigorous than high value data, but this must not extend to relaxing the security approach to the servers and applications handling it. Ultimately, a business' security capability is only as strong as its weakest link - without appropriate defences, a hacker compromising one less secure environment could then move laterally into other places where data is more critical and sensitive.

LEARNINGS

Regardless of which sector a company operates in, there should be no room for complacency and businesses need to be on their guard. No organisation should ever feel entirely secure or confident - as arrogance all too often leaves an open door.

The group agreed that businesses have adopted a "lift and shift" mentality to cloud migration. Too often, data in the cloud is handled and stored in the same way it would have historically been held in data centres. Such an approach fails to take advantage of the scale and agility cloud storage offers.

SOLUTIONS

Data privacy and cloud security can be a minefield to navigate for businesses. There are critical choices to make and safety blankets which businesses can deploy to optimise their cloud security. Here are some tips shared by the group that can be adopted:

01

Hire an ethical hacker: Hiring an ethical hacker keeps the workforce on its toes and encourages continual learning and improvement.

02

Insurance is your first line of defence: When a crisis hits - speak to your insurer. One of the common phrases insurers hear is: "We have nothing to worry about." Don't be complacent with threats.

03

Identify blindspots: Complete visibility across networks holds the key to predicting, monitoring, and rapidly addressing breaches - organisations must ensure they have full sight of data moving in, out and around their cloud environments.

04

Diversify your cloud storage: Having more than one supplier is critical. The Silicon Valley Bank crisis taught us all that diversification is essential. You must have contingency in place.

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KEY QUOTES

MARK JOW, EMEA TECHNICAL EVANGELIST AT GIGAMON

"Encryption is a paradox - what was designed to make us more secure is now making us more vulnerable."

LEE STEPHENS, HEAD OF SECURITY ADVISORY SERVICES AT BT

"The biggest problems are fundamentals. In the insurance world, there's a role for underwriters here to drive best practice and solve this from a systematic perspective."

ROB GLENNON, VP INSIGHTS AT INMARSAT

"It's not just about risk management, it's also about the early detection of risk."

SABA SHAUKAT, GROUP DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES AND OFFERINGS AT QINETIQ

"We need to be horizon scanning now for the impact of super computers and quantum computers - that will completely change the landscape, and we need to make sure we do it before our adversaries do."

JULIET ROGAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, INVESTOR COVERAGE AT HSBC INNOVATION BANKING

"There isn't industry-wide acknowledgement of the real challenges and threats that are faced in the cloud. The impact of generative AI will touch us all. How can you verify someone anymore?"

NICK AMIN, LEAD CLOUD ARCHITECT, CLOUD TRANSFORMATION AT KPMG

"Cost should not be a key factor for cloud - there are many other benefits. Many businesses are treating the cloud as another data centre, which is not the way to get the most out of it."

DAN HURN, TECHNOLOGY UNDERWRITER AT HISCOX

"Size isn't always a determining factor when it comes to good governance - it's more about the maturity of a business."

JONNY WARD, PRODUCER AT GALLAGHER

"Insurance is a last line of defence and always should be. What's important is what you can do to prevent attacks in the first instance."