Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

Cyber Security Posture of Managed Service Providers

9th January 2019

Overview

In a recent Cyber Threat Intelligence focus group held on the 9th January 2019, with representatives from Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and Digital Service Providers (DSPs), it was highlighted that many DSPs rely on ICT Managed Service Providers (MSPs) to provide core ICT infrastructure, and cyber security services supporting DSP environments.

Late last year the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) released advice[1] for MSPs in regards to a global cyber security compromise. It was highlighted that supply chain attacks and associated vulnerabilities are important for government agencies and businesses to take seriously.   The ACSC encourages all organisations using MSPs to discuss[2] this identified cyber security compromise with their MSP; of concern, MSPs with direct or remote access to an organisation's environment.

Key Points

- The ACSC is providing assistance to MSPs in the wake of the global cyber security compromise confirmed by the Australian Government

- Contracts with MSPs and other vendors are recommended to include notification in the event of a cyber security incident. This will allow organisations to understand their risk and to take appropriate actions

- This event should be a catalyst for all Australian businesses to engage in direct conversations with their MSPs to understand what cyber security protections are in place, and to better understand what their risk and exposure is

- Recommend implementation of the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) essential 8 mitigation strategies for both DSPs and MSPs

- The National Security Advisor, Alistair MacGibbon, recently stated that while a business may not be directly involved in the recent attack on MSPs, the threat is real and ongoing for everyone, and all Australian business should remain vigilant to cyber threats

The ATO would like to thank the DSPs for their interest and contribution in addressing cyber security threats.

Reference Articles

MSP Complacency

https://cyber.gov.au/about-this-site/media-newsroom/msp-complacency/

MSP Best Practice Principals

https://cyber.gov.au/infrastructure/publications/msp-better-practice principles/Managed_Service_Provider_Better_Practice_Principles.pdf

MSP Investigation Report

https://cyber.gov.au/government/publications/msp-investigation-report/MSP_Investigation_Report.pdf

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[1] https://cyber.gov.au/government/news/advice-for-msps/
[2] https://cyber.gov.au/government/publications/msp-questions-for-msps/