Certain verticals reluctant to virtualise

Kaspersky Lab's IT Security Risks Survey 2014 has revealed that there are certain verticals that are still reluctant to virtualise because of sensitive user data.

Andrew Potgieter

Of 3900 IT professionals worldwide, financial services and healthcare are the two business sectors most likely to see security concerns as a barrier to implementing IT virtualisation technology.

"According to the survey 50% of financial services respondents agreed that security concerns were hindering their adoption of virtualisation technologies, followed closely by 49% of the healthcare industry respondents," says Andrew Potgieter, business practice director at Westcon Security Solutions Southern Africa.

Sensitivity of data

"Due to the intense sensitivity of the data in these verticals it is understandable that respondents felt this way, but their security needs can be met by choosing robust security solutions that are specifically suited to their needs, like the solutions that Kaspersky themselves provide."

It is important to note that both of these sectors are bound by strict compliance laws governing the protection and access of their corporate data. The survey report highlights that financial services and healthcare verticals are also ranked the highest in being overwhelmed by compliance requirements. What this data suggests is that concerns over potential compliance issues could be fuelling the perceived 'security concerns' that the survey found to be associated with new virtualisation technology.

Virtualisation knowledge gap

Potgieter says that there is a virtualisation knowledge gap. The report showed that these two sectors, which seem so reluctant to implement new virtualisation technologies, don't seem fussed about securing the virtual machines they already have. What this shows is a lack of understanding of virtualisation technologies.

Kaspersky's survey also found that at least one-quarter of all IT professionals had no understanding or a weak understanding of their virtualisation security options and the vast majority of existing virtualised infrastructure was being protected by traditional agent-based security. This form of security is the same style as the security used to protect physical endpoints, but can result in performance issues and security gaps when applied to virtual machines.

"The reality is that virtualisation can be safe if the right security solutions are used in the process. IT departments in these verticals aren't reaping the potential benefits that virtualised infrastructure can bring to their networks based on a fear of unfamiliar security creating compliance issues and other risk factors. This is an opportunity for IT and business to solve problems collaboratively and we, at Westcon, together with our vendor partner Kaspersky are willing to help," ends Potgieter.

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