

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND SUPPLEMENT

Ransomware Holiday Risk Report

Expert guidance for strengthening ransomware defence, especially during high-risk periods such as holidays, weekends, and corporate transitions

Insights into ransomware attack patterns revealing that many organisations lack adequate defences against attacks that strike during times of distraction

New evidence that organisations routinely overestimate their ability to defend against identity-based attacks



"Companies should not lower their guard against cyberattacks during holidays and weekends. Instead, they should bolster their defences against ransomware attacks during these times. The most effective protection against threats during the holidays is maintaining awareness and having a robust backup and recovery plan ready to deploy when needed. "

Malcolm Turnbull

Strategic Advisor, Semperis Former Australian Prime Minister

Understanding the Ransomware Risk

Ransomware attacks don't observe business hours, and attacks often move too quickly for human intervention alone. Therefore, automated identity playbooks are required to mitigate risk.

Threat actors strike during periods of absence or distraction, such as holidays, weekends, and corporate events, including mergers and acquisitions.

Organisations across the globe are locked in a battle against ransomware and cyberattacks. As the stakes increase, so does the evidence that Microsoft Active Directory is a top target for threat actors and that identity threat detection and response (ITDR) is a key aspect of both cyber and operational resilience.

To examine trends in ransomware's frequency, severity, and impact, Semperis partnered with international research firm Censuswide to conduct a comprehensive study spanning multiple industries across the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. The first report of our findings—<u>2024 Ransomware Risk Report</u>—revealed that ransomware attacks are incessant and costly. A second report—2024 <u>Ransomware Holiday Risk Report</u>—examined the timing of attacks that occur during periods of corporate distraction (including holidays, weekends, and material events such as mergers, IPOs, and Iayoffs) and potential gaps in organisations' cybersecurity defences.

This supplement expands our research. We asked 250 organisations in Australia and New Zealand to respond to a subset of our study questions to determine their experience with the topics discussed in the previous reports.

CONTRIBUTING EXPERTS

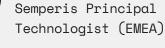


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Malcolm Turnbull Semperis Strategic Advisor, former Australian Prime Minister





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Attackers Don't Take Holidays



"When attackers get inside a company's systems, especially if it's on a holiday weekend when staff is diminished, they may not be noticed right away. **Companies are less** careful and more vulnerable during those periods, and attackers know that."

Guido Grillenmeier Principal Technologist (EMEA), Semperis

of organisations that were targeted by ransomware were attacked on a weekend or holiday

%









((<u>0</u>)) IT/TELECOM 72%

44%

MANUFACTURING





TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION 100%

Attackers Strike When SOC Staffing Is Reduced

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	ALL	EDUCATION	FINANCE	YE YE HEALTHCARE	S MANUFACTURING	IT/TELECOM	TRAVEL/ TRANSPORTATION
Yes (total)*	ALL 99%	EDUCATION 100%	FINANCE 100%			it/telecom 99 %	
Yes (total)* Yes 'outsource/hybrid)				HEALTHCARE	MANUFACTURING		TRANSPORTATION

Do you reduce SOC staffing on weekends and holidays, and if so, by how much?

78%

of respondents reduced their staffing by **as** much as 50%

Organisations in the healthcare industry were most likely to maintain staffing of





Attacks Occur During Times of Corporate Distraction



"I am not at all surprised by the percentage of organisations that are attacked after a corporate event. ... During material events, the business priority is to complete the eventnot security."

Simon Hodgkinson Strategic Advisor, Semperis former bp CISO

%

of companies were victimised by a ransomware attack after a material corporate event



EDUCATION 50%



MANUFACTURING 30%



FINANCE 43%





IT/TELECOM 54%



HEALTHCARE 29%

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Identity Protection Is Pivotal to Business Resilience

"Attackers often bypass endpoint defences and target the identity system-the backbone of your network. Breach it, and they control your entire infrastructure. Without a resilient identity system, all other defences fail."

Malcolm Turnbull Strategic Advisor, Semperis former Australian Prime Minister



83%

HAVE BUDGET SPECIFICALLY FOR THE DEFENCE OF CORE IDENTITY SYSTEMS SUCH AS ACTIVE DIRECTORY



How long did companies take to recover minimal IT functionality?

18% UNDER 5 HOURS

30% 1-7 HOURS

49% 5 HOURS - 1 DAY



8

of respondents say they had an identity recovery plan in place



EDUCATION 50%



FINANCE 100%



HEALTHCARE 86%



MANUFACTURING 78%



IT/TELECOM 84%



TRAVEL/ TRANSPORTATION 67%

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Aligning Business Priorities

Ransomware attacks can, and do, strike when least expected. No company—regardless of region, sector, or SOC status—should underestimate the need for constant vigilance. Furthermore, successful ransomware defence efforts must include a clear plan to defend and recover Active Directory. So, what steps can business, technology, and security leaders take to reduce the likelihood of a successful ransomware attack and increase their ability to say "no" to threat actors? Our experts suggest three initial actions.



STEP1

C-level leadership must acknowledge ransomware defence and identity security as business priorities.



STEP 2

Robust ITDR solutions and expert partners can help security leaders offset staffing challenges.



STEP 3

Active Directory security should be a core aspect of every merger or acquisition.



"Understanding of the critical role that identity plays within the security story has increased significantly over the past few years. While ITDR is finally getting the attention that it deserves, there is still a lot to do for the protection and security of identity systems."

Mickey Bresman CEO, Semperis

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METHODOLOGY

To conduct this study, we partnered with experts at Censuswide, an international market research consultancy headquartered in London. Censuswide surveyed 250 IT and security professionals in Australia and New Zealand, across the education, finance, healthcare, manufacturing and utilities, IT and telecommunications, and travel and transportation industries.

HOW TO CITE INFORMATION IN THIS REPORT

The data in this report are provided as an information source for the cybersecurity community and the organisations it serves. Semperis encourages you to share our findings. To cite statistics or insights, reference *Semperis 2024 Ransomware Holiday Report: Australia/New Zealand Supplement* and link to the full report, downloadable at https://www.semperis.com/resources/australia-new-zealand-ransomware-risk. To interview Semperis experts, contact Bill Keeler at billk@semperis.com. Lastly, we'd love to hear your questions or thoughts on the topic of ransomware and resilience. Find Semperis on LinkedIn.

ABOUT SEMPERIS

For security teams charged with defending hybrid and multi-cloud environments, Semperis ensures the integrity and availability of critical enterprise directory services at every step in the cyber kill chain and cuts recovery time by 90%. Purpose-built for securing hybrid identity environments—including Active Directory, Entra ID, and Okta—Semperis' patented technology protects over 100 million identities from cyberattacks, data breaches, and operational errors. The world's leading organisations trust Semperis to spot directory vulnerabilities, intercept cyberattacks in progress, and quickly recover from ransomware and other data integrity emergencies. Semperis is headquartered in Hoboken, New Jersey, and operates internationally, with its research and development team distributed throughout the United States, Canada, and Israel.

Semperis hosts the <u>award-winning Hybrid Identity Protection conference and podcast series</u> and built the community hybrid Active Directory cyber defender tools, <u>Purple Knight</u> and <u>Forest</u> <u>Druid</u>. The company has received the highest level of industry accolades, recently named to Inc. Magazine's list of best workplaces for 2024 and ranked the fastest-growing cybersecurity company in America by the Financial Times. Semperis is a Microsoft Enterprise Cloud Alliance and Co-Sell partner and is a member of the Microsoft Intelligent Security Association (MISA).

Learn more: https://www.semperis.com



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