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TWO THIRDS OF FEDERAL DATA CENTER DECISION MAKERS EXPERIENCE CYBER SECURITY CHEST PAINS IN DATA CENTER MODERNIZATION

Study shows ATAs/APTs/zero-day attacks, malware, and network viruses are top threats

Alexandria, Va., February 2, 2015 – [MeriTalk](#), a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT, today announced the results of its new report, “[Heart of the Network: Data Center Defense](#).” The study, underwritten by [Palo Alto Networks](#), looks at cyber security health at the heart of U.S. Federal IT infrastructure – the data centers – and reveals that 67 percent of U.S. Feds are concerned with cyber security as they modernize data centers. Overall, nearly half (49 percent) of Feds agree that cyber security becomes more challenging due to the data center modernization process.

Since 2009, the number of reported breaches on U.S. Federal computer networks has nearly doubled. U.S. Feds report their top data center security concerns as Advanced Targeted Attacks (ATAs)/Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs)/zero-day attacks (58 percent), malware on host servers (55 percent), network viruses (49 percent), unauthorized device access (47 percent), and Denial-of-Service attacks (DoS) (37 percent).

Although 72 percent of U.S. Feds give their agency a grade of “A” or “B” for efforts to maintain security throughout the modernization process, more than half of respondents say they’re missing key security measures like automation, mobile device management, and endpoint security management.

“Many agencies have focused security efforts at the perimeter,” says Steve Hoffman, vice president, regional sales, Federal, Palo Alto Networks. “But, as we consider increasingly sophisticated cyber security attacks, all government agencies need a platform approach to protect the heart of their network – the data center – while safely enabling business applications. They need to

be able to correlate known and new threats and take preventative action, not just detect and remediate.”

As U.S. Feds work to meet Federal Data Center Consolidation Initiative (FDCCI) goals and complete the modernization process, 41 percent believe integration will prove to be the top cyber security challenge. When considering improvement areas, 70 percent of U.S. Feds have doubts about their data centers’ security within the data center fabric.

While ATAs and APTs are top concerns in every phase of the data center modernization process, secondary threats vary per stage: Malware (consolidation phase), DoS attacks (virtualization phase), and unauthorized device access (cloud migration phase).

“This study provides an FDCCI cyber security EKG,” says Steve O’Keeffe, founder, MeriTalk. “Clearly cyber threats continue to give agencies heart palpitations in their data centers.”

Looking toward the future, 43 percent of U.S. Feds feel their agency needs to establish or enhance security policies and best practices, specifically: Invest further in security measures (46 percent), improve education (43 percent), share best practices among agencies (41 percent), and improve compliance with Federal regulations (39 percent).

The “Heart of the Network: Data Center Defense” report is based on an online survey of 300 U.S. Federal IT managers in November 2014. The report has a margin of error of +/- 5.62 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. To download the full study, please visit:

<http://www.meritalk.com/heart-of-network.php>.

About MeriTalk

The voice of tomorrow’s government today, MeriTalk is a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT. Focusing on government’s hot-button issues, MeriTalk hosts [Big Data Exchange](#), [Cloud Computing Exchange](#), [Cyber Security Exchange](#), and [Data Center Exchange](#) – platforms dedicated to supporting public-private dialogue and collaboration. MeriTalk connects with an audience of 85,000 government community contacts. For more information, visit www.meritalk.com or follow us on Twitter, @meritalk. MeriTalk is a [300Brand organization](#).