New Research: 85 Percent of Cyber Leaders Say Cross-Sector Collaboration is Essential, But Just 35 Percent Say it's Working

Inconsistent Partnerships, AI Readiness Gaps, and Third-Party Risks Undermine Collective Cyber Resilience

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – April 14, 2025 – Collective cyber resilience is now a national imperative, with 85 percent of cybersecurity decision-makers surveyed agreeing that cross-organizational collaboration is essential to their cyber defense strategy. Despite that, just 35 percent rate current strategies as highly effective, according to new research from MeriTalk, government IT's top digital platform, and RSAC, host of the largest and most influential conference in the cybersecurity industry.

The 2025 *Collective Cyber Resilience Index* examines how U.S. Federal government and private sector organizations are coordinating across sectors to respond to cyber threats, harden defenses, and recover from attacks. The findings reveal a shared commitment to collaboration – 79 percent of participants say they've increased engagement with external partners over the past three years – but a stark divide in execution.

While more than half of cybersecurity leaders surveyed (53 percent) take part in government-led information-sharing programs, just 31 percent engage in joint threat-hunting efforts. And despite near-universal automation in at least some portion of their vulnerability management processes, only one-third feel their organization is well prepared to defend against AI-driven attacks – the lowest-rated readiness area in the index.

"Cyber resilience today hinges on collective action," said Nicole Burdette, principal at MeriTalk. "But intent without infrastructure won't cut it. As threats accelerate, organizations need real-time intel exchanges, standardized protocols, and deep trust across sectors to deliver impact."

The index, which scores overall collective cyber resilience at a moderate 6.7 out of 10, finds that high-performing organizations operate differently. Participating cyber leaders who rate their organization's resilience as "excellent" are five times more likely to share threat intelligence daily (40 percent vs. 8 percent) and nearly twice as likely to have formal incident response coordination with all key partners (77 percent vs. 44 percent). They're also leading in zero trust implementation, automation, and third-party risk visibility.

Still, the broader community faces hurdles. Seventy-five percent of participants say overreliance on key technology providers is a growing concern, and 72 percent believe inconsistent partner security practices may pose a greater threat than cyber adversaries themselves.

"Collaboration is easy to endorse, but hard to operationalize," said Britta Glade, senior vice president, content & communities, RSAC. "This study highlights where progress is happening and what still needs to be built – from cross-cloud security standards to legal guardrails for sharing intel in real time."

To accelerate progress, the report recommends organizations establish real-time threat intelligence sharing frameworks, improve supply chain visibility, conduct joint incident simulations, align on AI and cloud security standards, and build a culture of collective cyber responsibility.

MeriTalk, in collaboration with RSAC, surveyed 100 U.S. Federal and 100 U.S. private sector cybersecurity decision-makers in January and February 2025. The Federal sample has a margin of error of ±9.7 percent at a 95 percent confidence level, and the private sector sample has a margin of error of ±9.8 percent.

To view the full findings, visit: https://www.meritalk.com/study/the-2025-collective-cyber-resilience-index/

About MeriTalk

The voice of tomorrow's government today, MeriTalk is a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT. Our award-winning editorial team and world-class events and research staff produce unmatched news, analysis, and insight. The goal: a more efficient,

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About RSAC

As the cybersecurity industry's convening authority, RSAC brings together diverse minds to exchange perspectives, knowledge, and ideas. RSAC provides the world's leading platform for uniting and advancing the cybersecurity community to create a safer society. RSAC is at the cutting edge of cybersecurity innovation and education. The company's flagship event, RSAC™ Conference, is the largest and most influential global gathering in cybersecurity. RSAC gives cybersecurity professionals a platform to connect and grow. To learn more, visit www.OneRSAC.com.