Coverage, Completeness, and Clarity of Cyber Security Guidance for SMEs

CyCOS
CYBER SECURITY COMMUNITIES OF SUPPORT

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What is the problem?

£ Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent 99.2% of UK businesses[1]

Are often viewed as easy targets by attackers[2]

? Do SMEs recognise and utilise cyber security support and consider it to be sufficient and effective?

Very little is known about SME cyber security strategies and challenges.

From the perspective of those that provide cyber security guidance and support, what are the challenges in capability[3] and capacity?

What is our approach?

Investigate the *coverage*, *clarity* and *completeness* of materials created to support SMEs' cyber security.

Comparative assessment of SME-facing online advisory sources provided insights into what SMEs could find:

- 72 unique providers identified
- 31 providers shortlisted for assessment
- Encompassed official sources, cyber sector vendors, ISPs, insurers, banks and SME-focused bodies
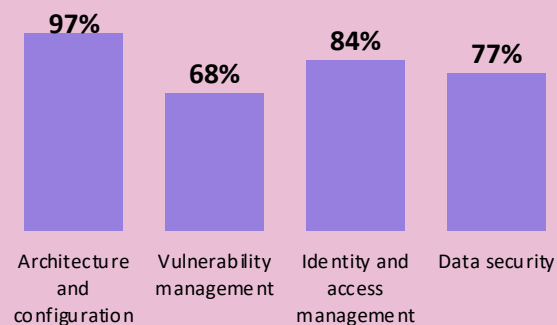
What did we find?

Coverage:
- Varies significantly depending on the provider
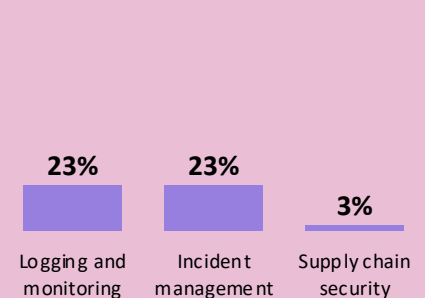- Certain topics receive repeated coverage while others are neglected
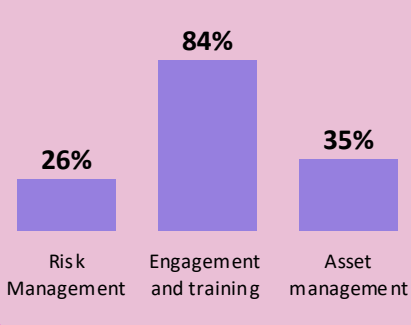
Clarity:
- Majority did not define 'cyber security'
- Half provided steps that were difficult to follow
- Vast majority provided focused guidance, written in lay person terms

Completeness:
- Most guides lacked sufficient depth
- Length varied considerably
- Majority provided <10 links out to other resources

Risk Management	Engagement and training	Asset management	Architecture and configuration	Vulnerability management	Identity and access management	Data security	Logging and monitoring	Incident management	Supply chain security
26%	84%	35%	97%	68%	84%	77%	23%	23%	3%

Conclusions

- There is a significant disparity in coverage, completeness and clarity of SME-facing guidance
- Further research should explore provider experiences of providing SMEs with support

References

[1] FSB (2021) UK Small Business Statistics.
[2] ENISA (2021) Cybersecurity for SMEs.
[3] Koshnaw & Furnell (2022). Assessing cyber security consumer support from technology retailers
[4] Muller, M. J., & Kogan, S. (2010). Grounded theory method in HCI and CSCW. Cambridge: IBM Center for Social Software, 28(2), 1-46

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RISCS — Research Institute for Sociotechnical Cyber Security