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New Sydney office anchors iSIGHT's Australian threat-intelligence expansion

David Braue (CSO Online) on 25 September, 2015 11:42

Threat-intelligence firm iSIGHT Partners expects to double its Australian headcount within six months after opening its first Australian office this month.

The company signed its first Australian customer a year ago and, in the interim, has seen strong demand from "some really amazing anchor clients" and deeper relationships with local partners, senior vice president Tiffany Jones told CSO Australia.

The US-based company – which offers detailed threat intelligence information through its subscription-based ThreatScape product and a range of associated ThreatService offerings including threat diagnostics and penetration testing – has been bolstering its capabilities in the APAC region after securing $US30m in capital from Bessemer Venture Partners in January.

ISIGHT offers a range of API-based services that allow third parties to integrate its intelligence – which is currently tracking over 70,000 threat actors in 17 languages using "signals intelligence, open-source intelligence collection and feet on the street" – with other tools across the security spectrum.

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"We're not just reporting on bad IP addresses or URLs with no context; we are connected to the playbooks of the adversaries," said Jones, who sees the company helping bring threat-intelligence capabilities onto the radar for companies that lack the infrastructure or capabilities to tap into them on their own.

"Cyberthreat intelligence is fantastic but if they're not actioning that intelligence in their security operations, it's of no value," she explained, noting that the sheer volume of security threat information was proving overwhelming for many organisations.

"They're beginning to recognise that there are some limitations in terms of what can actually be consumed," she said. "We're really helping shape the industry a little more aggressively and thinking proactively about what is important for customers."

Partnerships will weigh heavily on the 300-strong company's business model here as it has abroad: a recently signed partnership with consulting giant EY, for example, will bring iSIGHT's solutions to customers of that company – which in July honoured iSIGHT Partners CEO John Watters with an EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award.
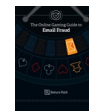
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"In the VAR space, boutique firms have a lot of those tight relationships with clients and are giving them advice on security programs and countermeasures," Jones said.

"What's lacking has been that they are not able to successfully answer the risk occasion. They're so focused on vulnerabilities and countermeasures without effectively taking into account their threat profiles."

Those profiles were still often poorly understood, she said, with many executives only starting to ask CSOs the right questions about their security exposure – for example, how confident they are in their countermeasure programs and threat-based actions.

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"They don't necessarily have to be technical gurus," she said, "but they do have to be asking the right questions."

iSIGHT currently has 10 employees on the ground and will be swelling its ranks quickly as it brings on research, analytical, sales support, channel management, and other positions.

"There's a lot of value we can bring to our clients in this region," Jones said. "We're super excited to be here."

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Many Australian customers will be equally excited to have access to more directly focused threat intelligence, regional sales director Paul Cooper said, noting that Australians "in general are early adopters of proven technology."

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"I'm seeing a level of acceptance to listen to software intelligence, and in the top end of town we're starting to see collaboration between organisations at the top end. The cyber-intelligence that we bring is something that literally just existed in government in the past, but it's not classified and bound by the secrets that they have to adhere to. This is true threat intelligence, and it's making a big difference in the conversation."

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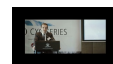
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
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