



Business Case

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1 Executive Summary

MYWARP is a Warning, Advice and Reporting Point serving the small to medium enterprise sector and Local Government in the mid-Yorkshire region. WARPs are part of the National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre's information sharing strategy to help combat the increasing risk of electronic attack on information systems. Taking in security information from a large range of trusted sources, **MYWARP** uses sophisticated software to filter the data, and passes on to members only the warnings and advice which are relevant to their situation. This is a not-for-profit service, but there is a subscription charge to cover operating costs.

Businesses should be safeguarding their information assets carefully, but few in the SME sector have the time or in-house expertise available to facilitate appropriate vigilance. The **MYWARP** service is designed to help alleviate this situation, in a timely and cost effective way.

2 Background

It is a fact of modern life that enterprises of all sizes are increasingly dependent on electronically stored and processed information. At the same time, rapidly increasing numbers of enterprises have and use either stand-alone or networked computers which have permanent connection to the Internet. Many enterprises are involved in some form of electronic commerce, either buying or selling using the Internet.

This proliferation of 'connected' computers represents a huge target for malicious or fraudulent attacks. In fact even computers which are not connected to the internet can be vulnerable. A victim may find vital accounting information missing or corrupted, a customer list stolen then deleted, personal information copied and used for identity fraud. They may find themselves unwittingly used as a 'virtual' origin of illegal mass e-mailings.

Some enterprises may be surprised to discover that by leaving themselves potentially vulnerable or insecure, they are not only taking dangerous commercial risks, but may also be in breach of contractual and legal requirements to process certain classes of data in a safe and secure environment.

In the last five years there has been a massive increase in the number of recorded 'security incidents'. A security incident is, put simply, a threat to the integrity of a computer system. It may arise in the form of an attack by a 'hacker', infection by a virus, data theft by 'phishing', deliberate or negligent physical damage, data theft or corruption, deliberate or accidental, by internal or external users, and a number of other ways.

As the frequency and complexity of threats increases, so does the need for vigilant and practical information security. Securing electronically processed information requires a methodical approach which identifies and quantifies risks and vulnerabilities, and defines an appropriate security response.

3 The MYWARP Service

Subscribers to the service provide a profile of their information needs, which is broadly based on their hardware and software configuration. **MYWARP** takes in information feeds from trusted sources, including (but not limited to) Microsoft, Symantec, Sophos, Cisco, Sun, Silicon Graphics, Hewlett Packard, ISS, Red Hat Linux, Debian Linux, Security Focus, Message Labs, UNIRAS (the UK government Computer Emergency Response Team) and US-CERT (US government Computer Emergency Response Team). The warnings and advisories are measured against each subscriber's profile to provide a filtered service of relevant information customised for each subscriber.

To exercise proper vigilance enterprises ought to examine all warnings and advisories coming from trusted sources throughout the information processing industry. The workload involved, and the expertise required, make this operation prohibitive in terms of cost and capacity. Enterprises have to spend a maximum of time profitably using their information systems, and a minimum of time servicing and protecting them.

MYWARP subscribers still need to scrutinise and take decisions about the warnings and advisories they receive, but do so knowing that they are only receiving information which refers to their particular technological profile and needs.

4 The MYWARP Community

Usually a product or service is aimed at a particular market. The WARP concept is a community, a group of subscribers with enough in common to provide a degree of synergy. The community which **MYWARP** is designed to serve is defined geographically and by size of business. The mid-Yorkshire area can be loosely defined as the three Metropolitan Districts covered by **MYCCI** – Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield – plus Bradford and Leeds. Within those five districts is concentrated a major part of the North's economic activity, enterprises of all sizes with a shared experience of the benefits and difficulties of operating in the region. There are also five major local authorities, intimately involved with the commercial and social infrastructure of the area.

With the exception of the local authorities, the sector of the business community most in need of the service offered by **MYWARP** comprises business in the small to medium category. However diverse the products and services they provide, they share the problem of limited resources, and operate in the same local infrastructure.

As a not-for-profit service, **MYWARP** is not seeking a rewarding market-place. It is seeking instead to create and serve a community of businesses who can gain mutual benefit from using and supporting the service.

5 MYWARP Operations, Management and Organisation

MYWARP is operated as a joint venture by The Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry (**MYCCI**) and DVS Security Services. It is managed and hosted by the **MYCCI** Information Services Department at Commerce House, Huddersfield. **MYCCI** are certified to BS:7799 for Information Security. The **WARP** Filtered Warnings software is licensed by the National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre, and is only available to **WARPs** and related bodies.

The **MYWARP** Filtered Warning Service is manned and operating from 08:00 to 18:00 on weekdays, and is served by automated features for high priority warnings at all other times.

Warnings can be sent to subscribers by e-mail, or by SMS if required.

As well as operating the Filtered Warnings Service, **MYWARP** provides a means for subscribers to share their security incident experiences, and to obtain 'best practice' advice. It is up to individual subscribers to decide whether to act on the warnings and advice they receive.

6 Finance

Each subscriber will pay an annual fee. The price charged will depend on the size and complexity of the subscriber's I.T. facilities, on the number of employees they have, on the size of the subscribing **WARP** community, and on the remaining costs to be covered once any sponsorship of **MYWARP** has been taken into account. The terms of the license from the National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre permit charging for the service only to cover set-up and operational costs.

7 Summary of Benefits of Membership of the MYWARP Community

Enterprises of all sizes have commercial and legal reasons for ensuring the security of information which they hold, whether it is information about the business, about themselves and their employees, or information about customers or competitors.

Most enterprises today store a majority of their information electronically, and most of those which do have computers or computer networks which at some time connect to the Internet.

No software or hardware is perfect. Vulnerabilities – gaps in the defences which can be exploited from outside – are being discovered all the time. As soon as the ‘hackers’ discover them, they take advantage of them. As soon as the software or hardware houses, or anti-virus providers, discover them, they issue warnings, protective devices, software patches, and advice.

This service provides an early warning; new information will often be relayed to the organisation before it is picked up by public channels, reducing each member’s vulnerability

To remain secure, all enterprises should subscribe to and evaluate a wide range of the available warnings and advice, decide on what is applicable to their situation, and use the information to ensure their systems remain secure. Very few enterprises have the resources to do this, or if they do, it involves a manual task costing a lot of expensive man hours, and with significant opportunity cost.

MYWARP membership vastly reduces the task of keeping up to date and secure. It also provides a ‘you are not alone’ community sharing experiences and best practice. The fact that most enterprises carry out little or no information security at present does not devalue the positive worth to be had from membership. Just the increased awareness of what can happen, and what steps should be taken is of high value.

The information sharing culture which is fostered by the WARP will facilitate comparisons between WARP members’ state of readiness, and level of protection, which can be useful when considering appropriate levels of resourcing for Information Technology security. Knowledge of whether your peers have yet applied a new major patch, and tips on the success or problems of implementation, can be vital to decision making at times of high threat. Knowledge that another member has fallen victim to a new exploit or fraud (which may never be made available publicly) can be a life saver for any business, and the WARP is designed to supply that sort of information without risk.

Any enterprise which completes a genuine risk analysis with reference to its information assets can’t help but be convinced of the value of making them secure. The WARP service is a cheap, cost effective weapon in the information security armoury.