wanstories

News & Events Summer 2021

Badges of Honour

Wanstor has achieved two new Microsoft competencies!

The first is a Gold Cloud Productivity competency, which is based on our ability to deliver and service 365. The second is a Silver Security Competency. This adds to the competencies we already have, including Gold Application Integration, Gold Cloud Platform, Gold Datacenter, Silver Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions, Silver Application Development, Silver Data Analytics and Silver Data Platform.

Wanstor are continuously looking to evolve and ensure we are offering the best service to our customer, which includes ensuring we have the most relevant and useful competencies.

Microsoft Partner

Microsoft

Gold Application Integration
Gold Cloud Platform
Gold Datacenter
Gold Cloud Productivity

Microsoft Partner

Microsoft

Silver Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions
Silver Application Development
Silver Data Analytics
Silver Data Platform
Silver Security

Gold
Microsoft
Partner

Microsoft

Cyber Essentials Certification: Why it's vital to the protection of your business

Wanstor are helping our customers secure their businesses against cyber-attacks by leveraging the Cyber Essentials Certification, a Government-backed certification in partnership with Iasme.

A recent **Government survey** found that 4 in 10 businesses (39%) and a quarter of charities (26%) report having had cyber security breaches or attacks in the last 12 months.

Like previous years, this is higher among medium businesses (65%), large businesses (64%) and high-income charities (51%) as the attacks become increasingly complex.

Wanstor have helped several customers become more prepared for cyber-attacks, subsequently increasing their ability to prevent one by 80%, and helping them to prepare against current threats and vulnerabilities.

We offer a range of services within Cyber Essentials, all of which help you to protect your business to the best of your ability and prevent the potential high costs incurred of a breach.

4 in 10 businesses report having had cyber security breaches or attacks in the last 12 months.

Find out more about how you can protect your business with the Cyber Essentials Certification with Wanstor at the link below.

See how we can help

Forging ahead with another level of digital transformation for customers

Our CEO Francesca Lukes and Project Manager Mike Henrie have been drawing to a close the first in a series of new workshops with one of our customers, forging ahead with another level of digital transformation.

The workshops really extend the boundaries of what traditional MSPs offer and take Wanstor's added value to a new level, and we plan to extend this offering across to our customers.

Under Fran and Mike's guidance, the workshops were formatted to explore our customers end-to-end customer / beneficiary journey, developing an empathy profile for the beneficiary and documenting any challenges and pain-points that they may experience along with how they currently interact with the charity.

This information will be used in conjunction with the challenges experienced by their employees when trying to fulfil their roles in order to identify the technology the charity needs to run optimally.

This was orchestrated because the charity needed to operate more efficiently and required the IT to support the transformation but was in the very early stages of identifying and documenting how they could make that happen.

With Fran and Mike's experience in business consultancy and change management, the session provided a deep dive into how we could help our customer more than the typical process vs technology audit that usually proceeds an MSP sale.

We should not underestimate the power of workshops like this to really set us apart and deliver incredible solutions to both current customers and new prospects.

We need to talk about Immutable Storage

Stu Palmer
Infrastructure Manager, Wanstor

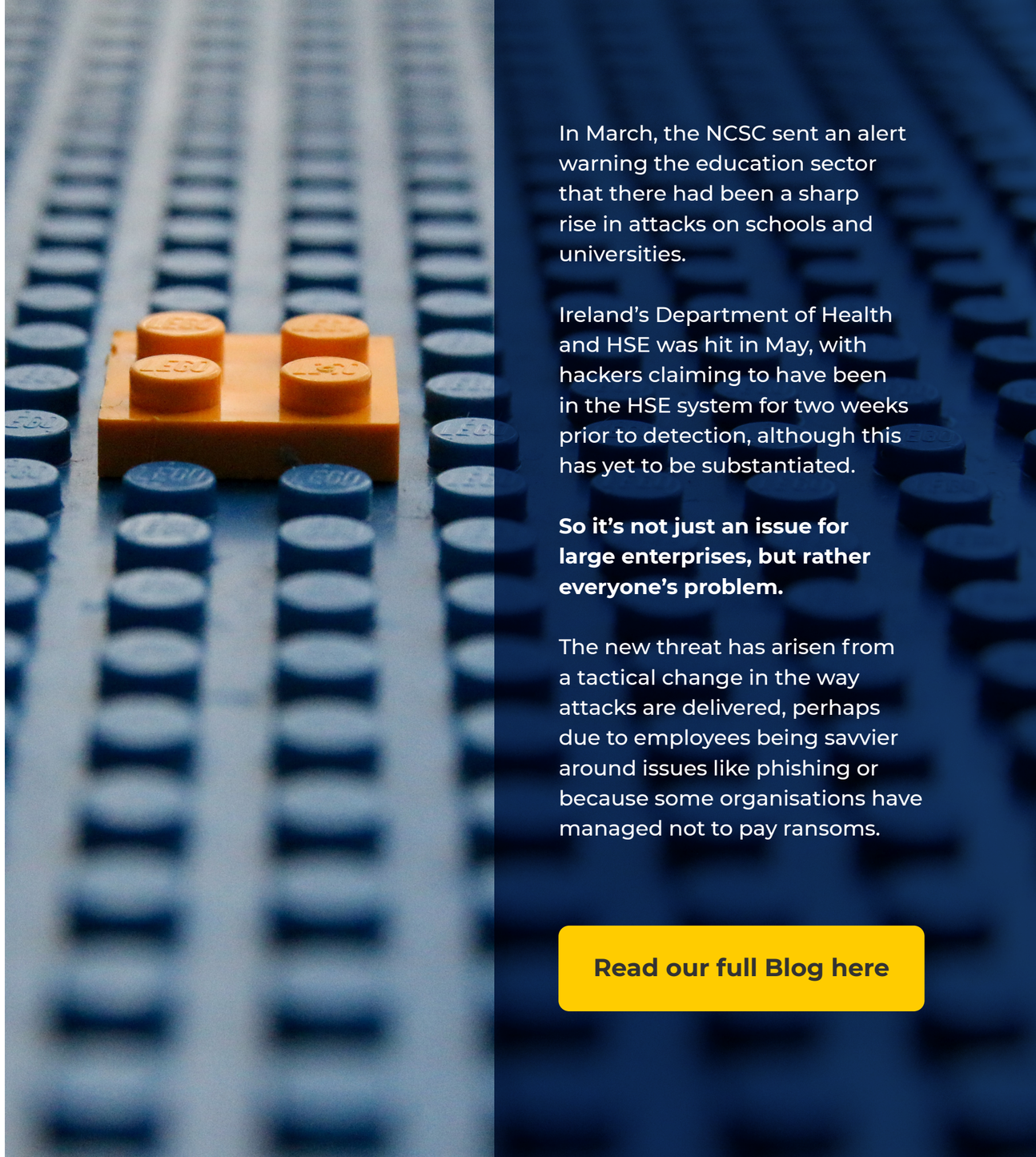
According to a host of authorities on IT security, ransomware attacks are now universally considered one of the single most dangerous threats for any organisation.

We want to talk about this because one way that hackers have made attacks more sophisticated is by penetrating networks and deleting all backups on file.

Ransomware attacks are concerning for all organisations but particularly perilous for those who don't understand the new risks posed.

If that's you, please take a few minutes to read this article so that you can consider how to best protect your business moving forward.

Data shows that ransomware attacks were the largest contributor to data breaches in April 2021, and in total, responsible for **a third of all data breaches – approximately 350,000 so far this year**.



In March, the NCSC sent an alert warning the education sector that there had been a sharp rise in attacks on schools and universities.

Ireland's Department of Health and HSE was hit in May, with hackers claiming to have been in the HSE system for two weeks prior to detection, although this has yet to be substantiated.

So it's not just an issue for large enterprises, but rather everyone's problem.

The new threat has arisen from a tactical change in the way attacks are delivered, perhaps due to employees being savvier around issues like phishing or because some organisations have managed not to pay ransoms.

Read our full Blog here

Three cheers from Catch22!

We are always thrilled to receive great customer feedback and this week we've had some great news from Catch22.

The organisation is now Cyber Essentials Plus certified, made possible with the hard work of the team here at Wanstor.

catch 22

"I'm writing to inform you that Catch22 is now CE+ certified, and to thank Wanstor and its incredible team for guiding, assisting and working with us to the tightest of deadlines.

Dustin, Sam, Kasim, Sean, Charlotte, Ian, Saj, Fawaz, Frankie, Stephen, Ebi, Shamila, Michael D and the wider team have all gone above and beyond to keep Catch22 on track and get us over the line. We have had some amazing feedback over the past two weeks regarding the professionalism and support given to our staff by Kasim, Sean and Charlotte, which has been overwhelming.

The amazing scripting, knowledge and professional services from Dustin, Sam, Sean, Frankie, Stephen and Michael mean that I can honestly say without their dedication, long hours and effort we wouldn't have reached this milestone.

I want to take this opportunity to extend our thanks from the Chief Officer's group, Directors, management team, Catch22 staff and the IT team. Wanstor truly is an amazing partner and a pleasure to work with.

We look forward to our next project!"

Daniel Swithinbank
Head of IT and Digital

Shining a Light on Hackers

We are pleased to announce we're currently developing our first SIEM solution with one of our customers.

SIEM (security information and event management) is a solution which gives the customer realtime visibility of what's going on within their network.

It's in great demand, but is equally not very well understood.

Its popularity has grown with the rise and evolution of threats like Ransomware because it allows businesses to see if hackers are poking around their site (more on that in a minute) but people often think it's plug and play, and it isn't.

It needs to be integrated properly and constantly refined and managed so that it works optimally, and costs don't scale exponentially.

This is because with some solutions, the customer must pay for each log registered, so it's crucial they work with a provider who can tell them what logs they actually need.

Wanstor is capable of making SIEM work extremely well for the customer, as well as staying entirely affordable in consideration of their budget.

SIEM at a glance

"A good analogy is that while hackers tend to hide in the shadows, SIEM is able to shine a light on them."

Network Manager Steve Austin explains: "A good analogy for the solution is that hackers hide in the shadows and SIEM can shine a light on them.

The skill comes in identifying where that light should be shone, based on our knowledge of the business and the threat landscape.

That's something that will change regularly so a good provider is really important."

For businesses who may not have the budget, we advise that they concentrate on protecting their network with the right hardware, applications and patches so that hackers can't get in in the first place. The SIEM solution can alert businesses to a whole host of things happening with their network but there are a few key deliverables which have the highest impact on protecting against threat. These include:

+ **Alerts or logs on anyone trying to escalate privileges (hackers accessing the network trying to elevate a status to admin)**
+ **Any access through unpatched applications**
+ **Files becoming encrypted. Critical issues such as these will now be passed to Wanstor immediately to investigate on behalf of the customer**

Welcome back hospitality - we've missed you!

In the last 18 months, hospitality has faced some testing times as lockdowns have prevented them from running as usual. Now that it has returned, how much of what we've missed will return exactly as it was?

We were recently joined by some of our hospitality customers to discuss how the road to return has been, and how restaurants will be shaped for the future, and what opportunities for growth they've discovered during this year of unrest for the industry.

The event was held just after hospitality began to kick off again, and we were delighted that conversation flowed nicely with the help of a virtual gin tasting experience. It was a great and informative event, and an excellent chance to get industry peers together sharing their experiences and building on the community we are creating here at Wanstor.

Read the Blog

"We all know it's interaction with the waiting team that makes a great customer experience but recently we've looked at giving staff technology to make that even better. This means using data to deliver a bespoke, individual experience. Wouldn't it be great if the waiter already knew your favourite seat, cocktail and entertainment preferences - even in bigger chains?"

"Expectations have changed across the board. Some customers want far more automation and others have missed a chat and are fed up with no contact. What both groups have in common is they don't want to waste their time using poor IT or inefficient, slow apps. Everything needs to be seamless, easy and hassle free."

"Lockdown allowed us to think and adapt whilst the restaurant was closed and create new ways to improve the customer journey and differentiate ourselves. It's meant we're really started to look at how we can innovate."

"More and more restaurants will be able to increase their use of technology because it's already becoming more affordable and peer tested."

Rather than just being a tick in the box, the Cyber Essentials accreditation represents a continuous effort for all customers.

Whilst only an entry level certification and the start of a wider security roadmap for most, as the recognised security standard, it must regularly evolve to cover all necessary ground.

One such update was recently made at the beginning of May, changing the previous Likert style scale used to answer questions to a more concrete ‘yes’ or ‘no’ option. To put that simply, businesses can no longer say that they back up ‘some of the time’.

They either do or they don’t. This should make things easier, removing any ambiguity present in the previous format and making the rules simpler to understand. Also, rather than the original five governing bodies, there is now only one, called IASME.

IASME GOVERNANCE AUDITED GOLD CERTIFIED

GDPR CERTIFIED

QUALITY PRINCIPLES CERTIFIED

“ Wanstor is helping our customers who may have to change a few things internally to ensure that they are compliant with their yearly renewal with IASME, seeking to ensure we take a proactive approach to these changes.”

The Latest Changes to Cyber Essentials

SECURE CONFIGURATION

BOUNDAY FIREWALLS & INTERNET GATEWAYS

ACCESS CONTROL & ADMINISTRATIVE PRIVILEGE MANAGEMENT

PATCH MANAGEMENT

MALWARE PROTECTION

“ Our customers should be aware should be taking a look at the new process now and identifying any alteration that needs to be made a couple of months in advance. A few small things like the configuration of devices have been added but these are well worth the effort since this minimum compliance is shown to stop more than 80% of the common threats.

It’s nothing to worry about but customers should be aware that it’s an ongoing process that needs to be kept on top of.”

Vlad Birgauanu
Information Security Consultant, Wanstor

Can’t Touch This: Zero Touch Deployment

The evolution of Zero Touch provisioning and deployment is revolutionising how businesses get new devices ready and shipped to a distributed workforce.

Zero Touch isn’t just easing the workload for IT, but providing a plug and play sensation for the end user, proactively simplifying the journey from procurement through to upgrades and secure patching.

Manual configuration is a time-consuming process, not least because of the logistics of getting the device to the IT team, but also the chore of configuring one machine at a time.

Zero Touch, merging the benefits of Windows Autopilot, Microsoft Intune and Microsoft Azure, allows remote configuration and remote management of every machine at the same time.

Regardless of geographical location, a machine can now be purchased directly from the vendor and sent straight to the end user – either by a provider like ourselves can white glove the deployment in minutes.

Order device to arrive with intended recipient

Connect to Wi-Fi for zero-touch self-configuration, ready to start work

Device automatically remains updated

Alternatively, the end user can securely self-deploy with just an internet connection and access to a pre-configured auto pilot profile.

This enables every piece of software and application which should be available on the machine, getting it ready with the correct policy overlay, for immediate use.

The Zero Touch deployment ensures that it is much easier and cost effective for businesses who want to open new sites in new locations, or as the way we work continues to evolve, create a functional flexible working policy.

Wanstor are here to help our customers with Zero Touch deployment, helping businesses as they seek to ensure their processes are smooth and resilient in an everchanging world.

wanstor