



CASE STUDY

SECURITY IS MUSIC TO HMV'S EARS

HMV is one of the most progressive High Street businesses, not only running the well-known shop that is its namesake, but also operates the UK's largest retail chain of bookstores – Waterstones.

As HMV re-engineers its business to create synergies between the online and physical stores, it faces the challenges of successfully extending the brand to the Internet, whilst also building the trust of its customers, and proving that it can manage their personal data securely. For a

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company like HMV, there are at least three angles to the security story. There is the requirement to be compliant with regulations, such as PCI and the duty of care the Directors have towards

Data Protection and the shareholders. High Street retail is a hugely competitive industry, and there is a real requirement to keep

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sensitive data secure from competitive interests. Not least, of course, there is a requirement to keep customer data confidential, and to build trust.

Something HMV was not willing to compromise on was the quality of their external and internal security assessments. They reviewed a number of products doing Vulnerability Assessment, and quickly decided that the quality of reporting was going to be a key, determining factor. As Roger Colling the Network and Security

Team Leader comments, “Until we saw Colossus, all the reports we looked at were too long, had too many errors and were overly complex. I didn't see it as my job to clean up the vendors reports, I wanted a tool that gave me accurate information in an easy to read manner, and Colossus delivered just that.”

Because of the unique architecture of Colossus, it actually runs specialised tests designed for each service or process it finds, producing much more accurate results. “When we engage with a new customer to deliver an on-site vulnerability scanner, we really spend a lot of time with that customer before and



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after the sale”, says Matta Managing Director Nick Baskett. “Colossus can be tuned to maximise the results on any particular

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network, and we take the time to do that so the customer gets a report that is as close to having a highly skilled consultant on tap as is possible.”

With Colossus in place internally on a standard rack mounted server, HMV can run scans as often as they like. “Matta really seems to have given a lot of thought to the product from the customers perspective. I’ve found the user interface is the easiest to use, and they listen to our comments and feedback. I suggested an improvement to the interface, and it was incorporated within a couple months. Other vendors have told us it’s ‘take it or leave it.’”

Security Managers agree

that they simply do not have the time to wade through often hundreds of pages of verbose reports, with inaccuracies, and lack of good advisory material.

“The objective of the exercise is to fix the problems” says Nick Baskett, “and if we focus on that being the objective, you have to ask yourself how far the VA solution you have in place right now is taking toward that goal. The answer is invariably

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that it’s getting you only part-way, usually to stage 1. It’s then up to you, or someone in your security team to weed out the false positives, validate the issues manually, group the related items together, prioritise and create a set of action points from there. Even after all of that, the metrics gathered in the report are all out, and they never get corrected in our experience. Our

ambition with Colossus is not to deliver a stage 1 report, but to give a set of action points which can be immediately acted upon with confidence.” To a veteran security manager, who’s had to allocate a good chunk of their time each month to sorting out the VA results, the difference between the traditional tools, and our reports is like night and day. To a forward thinking company like HMV, where efficiency is highly valued, Colossus was a natural choice.



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