Case Study

ISO 27001 compliance

Customer: Jemena
Industry: Utility
Services: ISO 27001 compliance

Challenges:

▷ Adoption of best security practices across a complex OT environment

▷ Alignment of security across operational boundaries

▷ Proving control effectiveness

Outcome:

▷ ISO 27001 certification for the OT and SCADA environment

▷ Confidence to maintain security standards over time under a unified framework

▷ Independent verification for energy industry regulators

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The challenge

As a utility company, Jemena is heavily reliant on the SCADA systems that monitor and control its numerous networks. Data generated by these operational technology (OT) systems is relayed to the company's data centres in New South Wales and Victoria and processed by a fleet of 70 servers and 30 workstations.

"Having effective security in place is vital to ensure we are able to meet the needs of our customers at all times," says Calvin Li, Jemena's SCADA Security Engineer. "If any problems occurred in our control systems it could cause disruption to our customers."

To ensure the security mechanisms and methods in place were the best possible, we decided to attain internationally recognised ISO27001 certification. "We knew we had a range of security elements in place but we wanted to be sure they were operating together as a cohesive whole," says Li. "Also, as there is no recognised security framework for operational technology, we felt ISO 27001 would be the best fit for us."

The solution

The engagement consisted of two components:

Assessing the gaps

As a first step in the compliance process, the Jemena security team undertook a gap analysis designed to determine where any weaknesses might exist. This involved a thorough assessment of everything from the physical security within the data centres to the hardware and software supporting the SCADA systems.

Li says CyberCX' extensive experience in the utilities sector, together with sound knowledge of what's required to reach fully ISO 27001 compliance made the decision a simple one.

Achieving compliance

Working alongside the Jemena security team, CyberCX reviewed each identified gap and advised on the steps required to close it. CyberCX also conducted training for team members to ensure they understood what was required to not only achieve certification but retain it in the longer term.

Work then focused on building the frameworks, strategies and workflows to meet the requirements of IS0 27001.

The outcome

ISO 27001 certification provides the Jemena SCADA management team with confidence that it has in place proper guidelines and best practices to ensure the highest possible security standards are in place.

Jemena now has a comprehensive, documented security framework in place that all staff can follow into the future.

Li says that, because energy companies are heavily monitored by the Australian energy regulator, having compliance is clear evidence that Jemena has taken all steps necessary to ensure the security of its critical SCADA infrastructure, and is operating in alignment with a recognised international standard.

Furthermore, it provides consumers with confidence that Jemena applies best practice management systems and processes, as it was the first utility in Australia to be jointly certified to ISO 55001 (asset management) and ISO 27001 (information security management) standards.

Additionally, Jemena benefits from compliance with the ISO55001 asset management standard. This serves to further strengthen security and ensure Jemena is best placed to meet any future issues that might arise.

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