Trustwave powers Inmarsat's managed security services for the maritime industry

AARON SHERRILL

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Mobile satellite vendor Inmarsat recently launched managed security services for the maritime industry powered by Trustwave to provide continuous protection and cyber resilience at sea.

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The challenges of protecting organizations from cybercrime, terrorism, insider threats and other malicious activities are not just limited to land-based operations. With the availability of global connectivity, many organizations are struggling to protect a growing and mobile attack surface that extends to the air and sea, including infrastructure, systems and data located in mobile vehicles such as trucks, trains, aircraft and sea vessels.

In September, Inmarsat Maritime, a provider of global mobile satellite communications, announced the launch of Fleet Secure – a set of managed security services designed specifically to protect sea vessels. Through a strategic partnership with Trustwave, a subsidiary of Singtel, the company offers fully managed threat detection, vulnerability management, security monitoring and incident response for the maritime industry. Designing and delivering managed security services (MSS) can be challenging and complex for any service provider but designing and delivering MSS for mobile shipping fleets presented Trustwave with several unique challenges to overcome.

THE 451 TAKE

According to 451 Research's Hosting, Cloud & Managed Services Market Monitor service, the managed security services sector continues to gain traction and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 16.8% to a total market value of almost $18bn by 2021. To capture a greater share of the overall market, many providers are looking to offer differentiation and tackle industry verticals with specialized MSS geared to deliver a deeper level of expertise and services that could not be delivered via vendors with a more generalized approach to MSS. Trustwave's partnership with Inmarsat has enabled the company to enter the maritime industry and provide security services to shipping vessels at sea.

CONTEXT

In 2016, Inmarsat Maritime decided to address the often overlooked but growing problem of cybersecurity in the maritime industry. Looking to establish itself as a leader and forerunner in maritime managed security services, the company partnered with Trustwave to develop and deliver a security services platform to counter the increasing volume of threats.

Trustwave notes that while the land side of the maritime industry has had security programs and controls in place for several years, sea vessels often lacked security controls and threat-detection capabilities. As an increasing number of vessels became equipped with global connectivity, the risks of cyber threats grew exponentially. The company reports that one of the major goals of information security in the maritime industry is ensuring safety, but fleet operators and ship managers are also concerned about minimizing threats that could result in the interruption of operations, loss of reputation and data exposure. Just as with other industries, maritime businesses are seeing an increase in network-connected devices aboard vessels that include modern technologies such as electronic navigation systems and computer-controlled engines, as well as traditional technologies such as HVAC systems that are now exposed on the network. A growing number of regulations and compliance requirements are also fueling the need for security services.

As Trustwave commenced designing MSS for the shipping industry, it encountered several unique challenges. The company found that while connectivity, through Inmarsat's satellite services, was available on most shipping vessels, the bandwidth was quite limited compared with typical land-based enterprise operations. Limited bandwidth is rarely an obstacle to delivering MSS to the typical enterprise but Trustwave discovered that managing and securing a ship's infrastructure over low-bandwidth conditions required that processes and tools be adapted and modified. Maintenance tasks and other supporting activities had to be carefully architected and scheduled to minimize bandwidth utilization.

Provisioning services also proved to be a challenge. Trustwave says that while the deployment of services for a typical enterprise often involves fixed locations, shipping vessels are constantly on the move. According to the company, deployments are often limited to a four-hour window of time while the ship is docked at one of a number of ports around the world, requiring a high level of coordination and streamlined, automated provisioning processes.

Trustwave notes that delivering MSS for a very specific vertical such as maritime requires providers to have a flexible and modern approach to tackling problems that often cannot be resolved with the static, preconfigured service stacks offered by many managed security firms. According to the company, collaboration, integration and automation are core requirements to successfully meet the needs of such a niche industry. Trustwave reports that its security operations center (SOC) engineers work in partnership with Inmarsat's SOC team to deliver MSS to Inmarsat's partner channel. In addition, Trustwave says that it has developed deep integration with Inmarsat's infrastructure and systems, including crafting custom portal environments to enable Inmarsat's partner channel to initiate service provisioning, analyze threats, collaborate on incident response, and have visibility into the services being consumed, including the status of their overall digital security posture.

Trustwave reports that Inmarsat is marketing the fully managed security services to its partner satellite service providers and directly to ship operators and managers, and claims that it has already seen significant interest in the services. According to Trustwave, Inmarsat offers a choice of three service levels with varying degrees of monitoring analysis and response, ranging from real-time, daily and self-management options.

COMPETITION

Trustwave reports that it is not aware of any other companies offering fully managed security services targeted specifically at the maritime industry, stating that few providers have the global presence, expertise and integration capabilities that are required to deliver to this vertical. While this is a niche market, it is unlikely that Trustwave and Inmarsat will enjoy a lack of competition for long. MSS providers such as SecureWorks, IBM, Verizon, CenturyLink and others are increasingly offering MSS tailored for specific industries such as retail, healthcare, utilities and financial services.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS
The partnership with Inmarsat is a significant advantage to offering managed security services for the maritime vertical. Integrating with Inmarsat's global satellite communications network gives Trustwave the ability to combat threats and provide real-time MSS that would otherwise be unfeasible.

WEAKNESSES
While security services for sea vessels is a largely untapped market with low competition, Trustwave and Inmarsat may experience long sales cycles as the sector becomes aware of their new security offerings and the challenges they address.

OPPORTUNITIES
Trustwave should be able to leverage the experience gained from developing MSS for a niche industry with distinctive challenges to provide custom services for other niche markets where similar challenges exist.

THREATS
As the bandwidth capacity for vessels at sea continues to increase, Trustwave should be able to offer more robust security services – in the meantime, however, the number and variety of threats, including external attacks over high-speed satellite broadband and intrusion via crew devices, will continue to push the capabilities of its MSS.