NewsDirect

Data Security: how to minimize risk in your PR workflow

COVID-19 has accelerated the need for digital requirements and tools, such as robust cybersecurity protections, to ensure customer data is safe and secure. Prior to COVID-19, hackers sought to exploit sensitive customer data, whether in the form of ransomware attacks or various forms of phishing activities. With more professionals continuing to work remotely, there continues to be major security vulnerabilities. Many organizations do not have a comprehensive security infrastructure, governance, and internal controls in place for remote employees. And while public relations professionals, and the public relations function, may not seem like a particularly vulnerable segment, think again.

Sensitive and confidential information, whether in the form of an acquisition or earnings reports, reflect forms of pre-market data vulnerable to breaches. Often, business leaders and professionals do not have sufficient insight into the process of submitting and posting traditional press releases. This includes sending a press release to wire services ahead of distribution and relying on customer service or editors to review and ultimately upload content to their respective site. This process, coupled with more employees working remotely, increases the risk of pre-market content exposure. Is your company taking the necessary steps to protect its data along the way?

Third party risk and the use of newswire vendors

Using any third-party vendor introduces data security vulnerabilities. In fact, according to Gartner, "more than 80% of legal and compliance leaders tell us that third-party risks were identified after initial onboarding and due diligence, suggesting traditional due diligence methods in risk management policy fail to capture new and evolving risks." The information within a press release -- sensitive financial information; CEO successions; therapeutic launches -- often contains highly confidential information. It's imperative to keep this data under wraps until it's ready to be shared with the world. Even in a pre-COVID era, the practice of uploading a release via most wires required someone else in a crowded newsroom to transfer the information into another format.

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Given this, third-party risk is critical to consider when selecting vendors. The use of digital tools and services is accelerating; so too is the amount of data being leaked. It's sad but true that 20% of organizations have already experienced a breach as a result of working remotely due to COVID-19.

Security features and processes to look for with newswire vendors

While there are various topics that PR pros and journalists don't see eye-to-eye on, they are on the same page when it comes to the importance they place on data security during the media outreach process. Comms pros (80.4%) and journalists (74.2%) both agree that data security is critical.

So, what should you consider when evaluating the cyber security features and processes of a new wire service partner? Here are a few suggestions:

Consider solely using products and services that offer two factor authentication and permission-only access to ensure your content and data stay protected.

Ask if your providers store your content in a separate, individual customer environment. One example is cloud-based isolation technology that keeps individual customer account data in separate secure environments in the cloud.

Lastly, ensure that any content sharing capabilities are invite-only. Collaboration is essential for businesses, and when it's happening remotely there are more vulnerabilities so secure sharing functionality should be expected.

If you want to be confident that your newswire partner takes security as seriously as you do, we invite you to learn more about our platform, News Direct, and the exclusive, industry-leading security features we offer to ensure you, your company and clients are always protected. **Learn more and request a demo here.**

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