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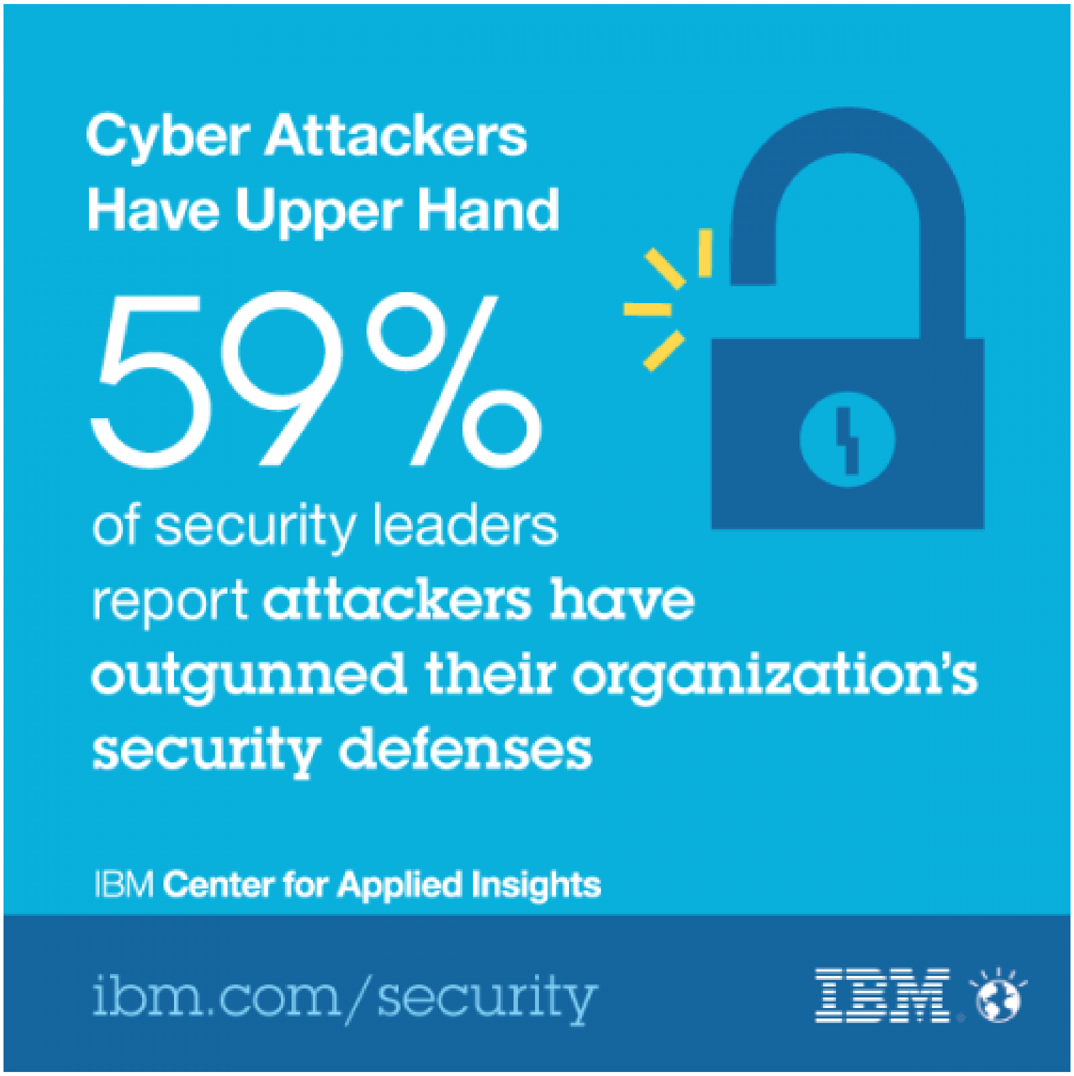
IBM study: Organizations struggling to defend against sophisticated cyber attacks

December 9 2014, by Michael Rowinski


Cyber Attackers Have Upper Hand
59%
of security leaders report attackers have outgunned their organization's security defenses
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More than 80 percent of security leaders believe the challenge posed by external threats is on the rise, while 60 percent also agree their organizations are outgunned in the cyber war, according to findings released today by IBM. The study additionally reveals that technology is seen as a critical component in addressing these security issues and threats, with big data, cloud and mobile named as the most significant areas of prioritization.

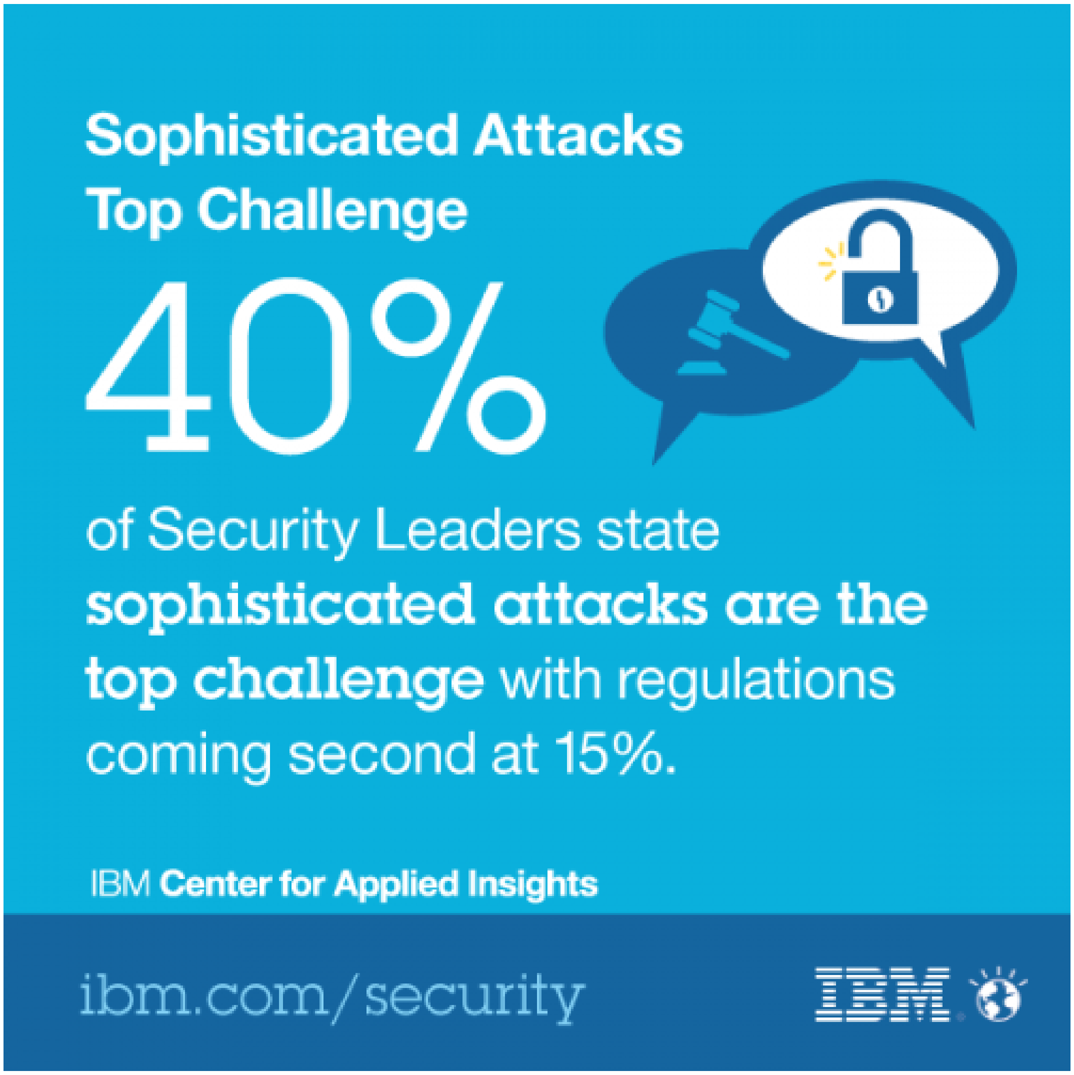
IBM's third annual Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) study was conducted by the IBM Center for Applied Insights and is based on responses from 138 in-depth interviews with the surveyed organizations most senior security leaders. Sophisticated external threats were identified by 40 percent of security leaders as their top challenge with regulations coming in a distant second at just under 15 percent. As enterprise leaders continue to outline business priorities, external threats will require the most organizational effort over the next three to five years – as much as regulations, new technologies, and internal threats combined.

"CISOs are finally getting a seat in the Boardroom," said Brendan Hannigan, General Manager, IBM Security. "Security leaders must now use this growing influence to deliver better results: prioritizing the protection of critical assets, focusing investments on intelligence and recruiting top industry talent to augment internal efforts."

Today's Organizations Rethinking Cybersecurity Tactics

The study aimed to uncover and understand how organizations are currently protecting themselves against cyber attacks, finding 70 percent of security leaders believe they have mature, traditional technologies that focus on network intrusion prevention, advanced malware detection and network vulnerability scanning.

However, nearly half (50 percent) agree that deploying new security technology is the top focus area for their organization, and they identified data leakage prevention, cloud security and mobile/device security as the top three areas in need of dramatic transformation.



Sophisticated Attacks Top Challenge

40%

of Security Leaders state **sophisticated attacks are the top challenge** with regulations coming second at 15%.

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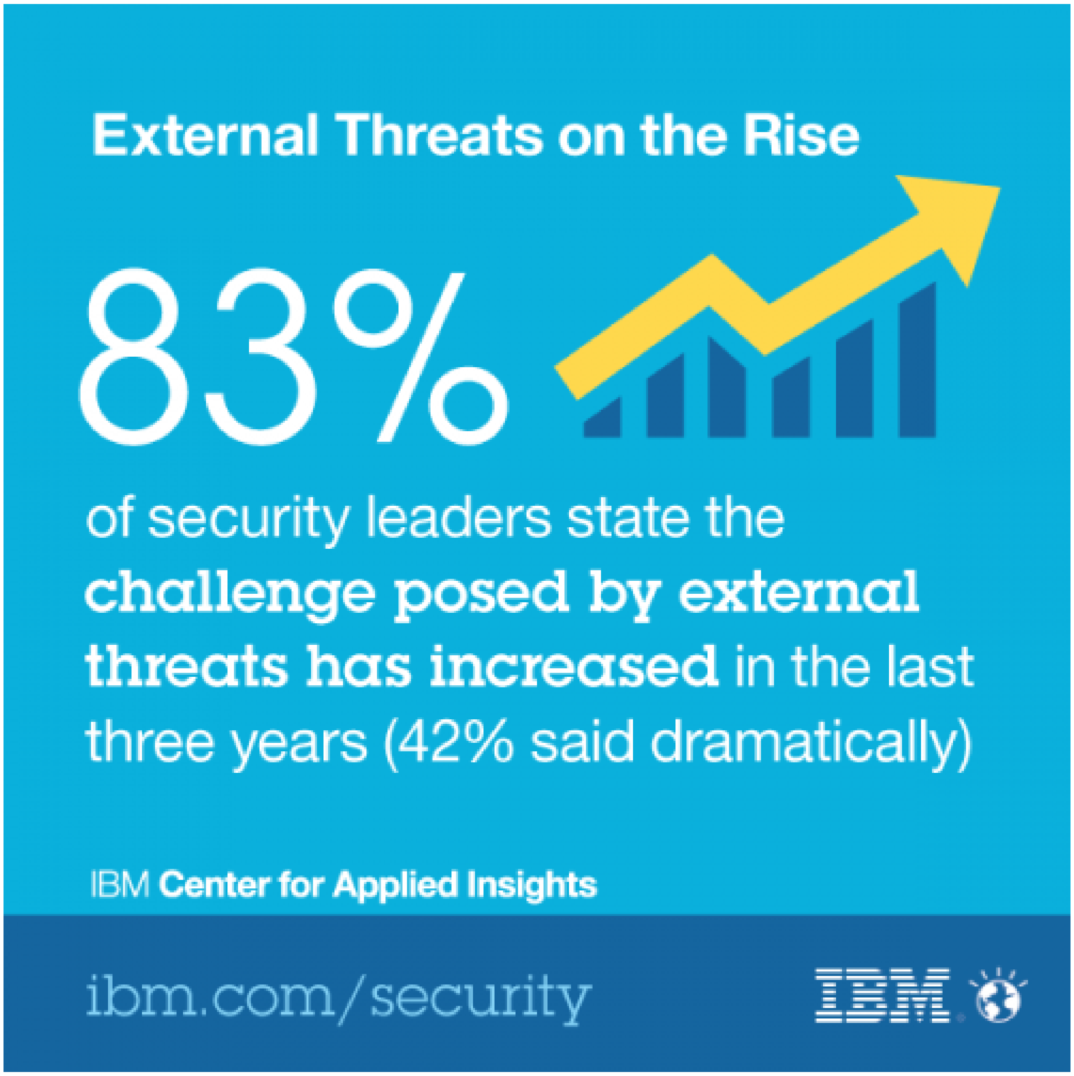
Additional findings from the IBM CISO study include:

Cloud Security Continues to Lead the Agenda: While concern over cloud security remains strong, close to 90 percent of respondents have adopted cloud or are currently planning cloud initiatives. Of this group, 75 percent expect their cloud security budget to increase or increase dramatically over the next three to five years.

Data Driven Security Intelligence Capabilities are Top of Mind: Over 70 percent of security leaders said real-time security intelligence is increasingly important to their organization. Despite this strong agreement, the study found areas such as data classification and discovery and security intelligence analytics have relatively low maturity (54 percent) and require a higher need for improvement or transformation.

Significant Mobile Security Needs Still Remain: Despite the growing mobile workforce, only 45 percent of security leaders stated they have an effective mobile device management approach. In fact, according to the study, mobile and device security ranked at the bottom of the maturity list (51 percent).

Managing Uncertainty around Government Landscape



External Threats on the Rise

83%

of security leaders state the **challenge posed by external threats has increased** in the last three years (42% said dramatically)

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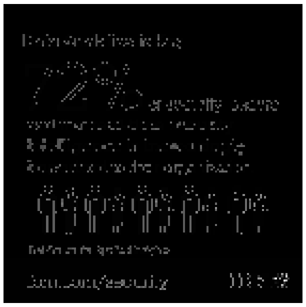
In addition to external threats, the study indicated CISOs face additional challenges from governments as nearly 80 percent of respondents said the potential risk from regulations and standards have increased over the past three years. Security leaders are most uncertain about whether governments will handle security governance on a national or global level as well as how transparent they will be in doing so. Only 22 percent think that a global approach to combating cybercrime will be agreed upon in the next three to five years.

Empowering Today's Security Leaders

With cyber attacks and government regulations continuing to evolve, a majority of organizations have redefined their view of security over the past three years, vaulting security leaders into more influential roles. According to the study, 90 percent of security leaders strongly agree that they have significant influence in their organization, with 76 percent stating that their degree of influence has significantly increased in the last three years. In addition, 71 percent strongly agree that they are receiving the organizational support that they need in order to do their jobs effectively.



About the Assessment

To obtain an understanding of security leaders' current conditions and views of the future landscape, the IBM Center for Applied Insights, in collaboration with IBM Security, conducted in-depth interviews with 138 security leaders – the senior-most IT and line-of-business executives responsible for information security in their organizations. Some of these leaders carried the title of Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), but given the diversity of organizational structures, some did not. Others interviewed included CIOs, VPs of IT Security and Security Directors. Sixty-three percent of organizations interviewed had a named CISO. Participation spanned a broad range of industries and five different countries.

More information: To download the report please visit www.ibm.com/security/ciso.

Provided by IBM

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