

Cybersecurity has emerged as a strong focus area as Indian enterprises are increasingly going the digital way. Growing instances of security breaches are compelling organisations to revisit their security strategy to better anticipate and prepare for threats. Fortinet, a global leader in broad, integrated and automated cybersecurity solutions, is partnering with several enterprises in India to help them secure their networks, processes and systems. In an interview with tele.net, Fortinet's Michael Joseph, director, system engineering, India and SAARC, talks about the evolving cybersecurity needs and the opportunities that the Indian market presents...

What are the key trends in the cybersecurity space?

In the past five to seven years, enterprises have realised the importance of security for their businesses and chief information and security officers (CISOs) are beefing up investments on the security front. Threat factors have become more sophisticated and blended in nature and thus, security frameworks also need to evolve accordingly. Further, with several enterprises embarking on a digital transformation, a shift towards cloud architecture has become inevitable, which, in turn, requires appropriate security frameworks and processes to be put in place.

How have CIO and CISO strategies changed over time?

The thought process is moving towards the adoption of proactive strategies for ensuring security. Most CISOs or CIOs today are looking at the global threat landscape (specific to their industry) to identify potential risks and taking proactive measures to secure their systems. Enterprises are now asking for threat intelligence from security vendors in real time. They are also looking at whether their existing security partners' solutions can integrate with third-party threat intelligence or not. These are some of the new needs that were not considered by security vendors a few years back. But today, they are the need of the hour. Fortinet's solutions are based on the security architecture that can integrate with third-party solutions to share threat intelligence.

Which industry verticals are the front runners in demand for cybersecurity solutions?

The e-commerce industry is definitely a front runner as it is highly technology driven. For instance, companies like AirBnB and Uber do not own any assets and are purely technology platforms, which need to be highly secured. IT/ITeS is another vertical wherein companies are

adopting cloud in a big way and thus require secure solutions. Of late, even telcos are adopting digital technology in a big way to improve their operational efficiency and rationalise costs.

What kind of a relationship do you share with telcos?

Telecom is an important vertical for Fortinet globally, with a good percentage of our revenues coming from it. In India too, most of the telcos and internet service providers are Fortinet's partners. They have been offering managed security services using Fortinet's solutions for over six years. Earlier, there were only a handful of security vendors offering these platforms and Fortinet was one of them. For telcos, it is important to secure the IP core network. The processing power required in a telco environment is very high as compared to that of IT/ITeS or other segments. Fortinet has specialised hardware architecture and processes to deliver such performance. Owing to business evolution, telcos are now looking at a single box running multiple solutions on it – routing, security and SD-WAN – instead of using dedicated vendor appliances for each solution. This gives rise to an NFV (network functions virtualisation) kind of environment. Fortinet's high performance solutions are suitable for such environments.

What opportunities do you see in India?

As a security vendor, India presents a big opportunity to grow and expand. When it comes to information and communication technology adoption and expansion, government projects like Digital India, the Smart Cities Mission and BharatNet are creating significant demand for security solutions. Similarly, there are government projects in the education sector. With 5G coming in, the security solutions already deployed by telcos would need a massive performance scale-up. Clearly, the opportunity in India is exponentially high compared to other markets in the world.

For enterprises, from a banking and financial services' perspective, the recently released security guidelines/framework by the Reserve Bank of India is a positive step. It mandates every bank to have a security operations centre (SOC) and deploy certain solutions as well as report on the progress of the project on a weekly basis. This has transformed into a big opportunity for us as banks are now approaching us for solutions, whereas traditionally it has been the other way round. Several scheduled banks have partnered with third-party vendors to set up SOCs, which will also manage the infrastructure for the next five to seven years. For smart cities too, a decent level of network security has been established. We are offering solutions for several smart cities, Nagpur being one where we have deployed solutions based on evaluations made by

various consultants and government agencies.

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