Events DC secures against ransomware with partnership from True Zero Technologies and Tanium

Events DC is Washington, D.C.'s official convention and sports authority and plays a pivotal role in driving the city's economy through tourism, events, and entertainment.

ORGANIZATION

Events DC

LOCATION

Washington, D.C.

Events DC owns and operates 12 venues, including the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Nationals Park, the Entertainment & Sports Arena, and the historic Carnegie Library. Their venues host a wide array of events ranging from conventions and concerts to sporting events, contributing significantly to the local community and economy.

The organization aims to provide unforgettable experiences for visitors while fostering a strong community connection. As Zach Schwartz, Chief Information Officer at Events DC, explains, "We focus on making sure if you're here visiting locally for an event at the convention center or you're out for a baseball game, you have an amazing experience". However, delivering these experiences requires not only top-tier facilities but also robust cybersecurity to protect both the organization and its visitors.

Ransomware Attack

In the wake of a severe ransomware attack, Events DC faced a critical challenge: rebuilding and securing its IT infrastructure. The ransomware had locked up key systems, including the organization's financial management solution. "The ransomware attack was a dark day for Events DC," recalls Ken Ford, Chief Information Security Officer. "They took over our entire environment and encrypted everything." This incident exposed significant gaps in their cybersecurity posture, prompting a reevaluation of their systems and strategies.
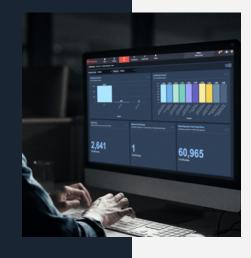
In response, Events DC sought a solution that could not only protect their IT environment but also enable them to recover swiftly from future incidents. That solution came in the form of True Zero Technologies and Tanium.

Why True Zero Technologies and Tanium?

True Zero Technologies, a veteran-owned cybersecurity firm, worked closely with Events DC to deploy Tanium's powerful endpoint management and security platform. According to Nicholas Brown, Senior Tanium Engineer at True Zero, Tanium acts like a "nervous system" that connects and monitors the entire IT infrastructure, giving organizations unparalleled visibility into their systems.

Tanium provided Events DC with detailed insights into their network, helping to identify and mitigate security risks. When Tanium was first implemented, it revealed numerous vulnerabilities, many of which the IT team was previously unaware of. "Tanium literally went out and discovered all these devices that we had no clue were in our environment," said Ford. "It was extremely eye-opening."

"Events DC had to partner with somebody that they could trust. While they could take on the implementation and deployment of new technologies, they could do it a lot quicker and a lot more reliably with a managed service partner. True Zero was selected as a trusted partner to help manage and improve overall cyber resilience, cybersecurity posture, and IT operations for Events DC," said Andrew Manos.

Comprehensive IT and Security Overhaul

True Zero Technologies helped Events DC deploy and manage Tanium, ensuring that the technology was fully integrated into their IT operations. According to Andrew Manos, Director of Services at True Zero, the company's approach is to view security and IT operations as one continuous workflow. "We bring our customers together on that journey from security through operations," he says.

Tanium enabled Events DC to:

- Gain full visibility into all assets across their network, including previously undiscovered endpoints.
- Strengthen patch management, ensuring all systems were up-to-date and reducing exposure to vulnerabilities.
- Automate IT processes, significantly reducing the time it took to provision new devices from days to hours.

Ken Ford, Chief Information Security Officer at Events DC, emphasized the importance of establishing secure baselines: "We deployed the security baselines first, then we looked at our patch management throughout the environment." This comprehensive approach ensured that Events DC could proactively secure its IT environment.

Ken Ford also shared how **Tanium Automate** revolutionized their device deployment process: "Using Automate, we can get a device out in less than six hours. That's re-imaging, patching, putting all of our agents, all of our security configurations." This shift allowed Events DC to focus on more critical tasks and streamline their operations.

Kristin Galemore, Director of IT Program Management at Events DC, highlights the importance of having True Zero as a partner. "Having a partner like True Zero really expedited our timeline. Through their experience, agility, and flexibility, they were able to adapt to our needs and help us get a solution implemented very quickly and successfully."

> "Tanium was the first tool that I brought in after starting here at Events DC. Recognizing the recovery was critical for recognizing the recovery of Events DC's technology. We knew we needed a strong tool like Tanium to help us with our patching and overall visibility into our infrastructure."
>
> **Zack Schwartz**
> CIO of Events DC

Business Impact and Key Outcomes

The implementation of Tanium, facilitated by True Zero, yielded significant business outcomes for Events DC. One of the most crucial was restoring confidence in their security posture, which had been severely impacted by the ransomware attack. "We can confidently say that we can monitor, detect, and respond to threats within our network," says Galemore. This confidence was not only essential for internal operations but also for Events DC's clients, who could now trust that the venues were secure for their events.

Ken Ford emphasized the role Tanium played in improving their vulnerability management: "Tanium helped us close three of the five audit findings, focusing on secure baselines, patching, and overall vulnerability management in general." These improvements enabled Events DC to proactively manage risks and maintain a secure environment for events and visitors.

"The partnership with True Zero and Tanium allowed Events DC to achieve a positive result on an audit six months after we deployed Tanium. The ability to patch more effectively, manage software, and gain instant visibility into assets enabled them to prioritize and address vulnerabilities," said Andrew Manos.

Tanium also played a key role in the success of high-profile events like the NATO Summit. "We worked with the U.S. Secret Service, and they conducted a vulnerability assessment of our infrastructure. They said they had never seen a convention center as secure as ours," recounts Ford.

The partnership with True Zero and Tanium also provided a competitive advantage in attracting business to Washington, D.C. "We've now attracted some of the world's elite conferences by talking about the fact that our IT is some of the best in the world," Schwartz proudly states.

Through their partnership with True Zero Technologies and Tanium, Events DC successfully rebuilt its IT infrastructure, transforming from a victim of a crippling ransomware attack into a leader in cybersecurity within the convention and sports arena industry. The combined forces of Tanium's technology and True Zero's managed services enabled Events DC to protect its assets, reduce risks, and confidently offer a secure environment for all visitors and event organizers.

"We are a force multiplier for our clients," Manos explains. "True Zero's mission is to help our clients get continuous value out of their technology and ensure they achieve their business outcomes."

For Events DC, this mission was accomplished with resounding success.

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Andrew Manos
Director, Commercial Services
True Zero Technologies