

**SIRE's new partnership with Blackfoot will give customers access to the latest thinking and support for their Compliance Management**

Reflecting its goal of ensuring that any organisation's IT adds real value to the core business, SIRE Technology has agreed a partnership with Blackfoot. Blackfoot is an information risk, security and compliance specialist company that seeks to ensure that organisations are compliant with the current legislation pertinent to their own sector. Working closely together and with each customer this new arrangement between SIRE and Blackfoot will alleviate many of the concerns and anxieties that small business owners might have about keeping track of legislative and regulatory changes that might impact on how they operate their business.

Russell Cook, MD at SIRE explains more about this latest edition to the company's services; "Whilst you may have appointed a managed service provider (MSP) to act as your IT department you still have a responsibility to be aware of what they are doing. The ultimate goal of many of these legislative measures is to ensure greater security, reliability and responsibility from organisations that are dealing with valuable assets such as business or personal data. Should something go wrong and data be lost or compromised due to a breach of security your ignorance will not be a defence and this is where CMaaS, or Compliance Management as a Service can really help."

Head of Channel Development at Blackfoot, Shaab Al-Bagdadi, explains how they approach the provision of a bespoke Compliance Management programme; "There are three, what we call, 'A' elements that will help to ensure any organisation meets its compliance requirements, namely ; they advise us of where they need to be eg they may need to meet the PCI requirements for handling credit card transactions and we then advise and help them plan their next step. The second is a a technical assessment including an analysis of the current environment and suggestions for any remedial actions that may need to be implemented and finally we can offer assurances and audit certificates."

The aim of the partnership is to offer a seamless solution that covers the best approaches to both processes and systems and which will ensure an organisation's compliance. Any businesses' IT systems need to deliver business efficiency, full compliance, continuity in the face of adversity and should be future proofed to cope with changes, be they business growth, technological advancement or more changes in compliance requirements. In the vast majority of cases this will mean a cloud based solution, which is where SIRE's expertise comes to the forefront.

Blackfoot has particular experience in working with organisations that take credit card payment. The PCI DSS credit card handling standard has recently been revised and the latest version has a number of additional requirements and standards, not all of which will apply to all businesses. However organisations need to be sure their Managed Service Provider can provide the right answers. Without the MPS' compliance then the company taking the payments will not be compliant which could have serious consequences should an issue arise in the future.

"Standards are evolving and regulators are strengthening the requirements in many areas," said Al-Bagdadi

### **It could be excluding you from opportunities**

One such accreditation scheme is the government's Cyber Essentials programme aimed at helping businesses protect themselves from cyber attacks. Since October of last year the government has required that all suppliers bidding for certain sensitive and personal information handling contracts be certified against the Cyber Essentials scheme . There are two levels, Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus, that are awarded to organisations deemed to have implemented basic controls to mitigate the risk from common internet based threats. For more information about the Government's Cyber Essentials scheme visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-essentials-scheme-overview>

### **Background**

With over twenty years experience, SIRE has established itself as one of the leading providers of innovative systems and processes, that make a real difference to the organisations it works with. It allows these companies to focus on their core activity whilst SIRE manages the infrastructure on which it is based. By using a combination of cloud computing technique and virtualisation, SIRE is able to provide organisations with a reliable, flexible and financially viable IT infrastructure coupled with a robust Business Continuity Plan.

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AC/ST 16