e-Crime & Cybersecurity Congress Online Series: Retail

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e-Crime & Cybersecurity Retail Summit

November 19th, 2025, Online

Held to ransom: lessons from a summer of pain

The extent of cyber-attacks on the retail sector this year means an update on the lessons learned is already overdue, especially given the level of secrecy that has surrounded the responses to many of these incidents.

AKJ Associates

https://akjassociates.com/event/retail

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A Brutal Year for European Retail Cybersecurity

2025 has proven devastating for the retail sector across the UK and Europe. High-profile retailers—including Marks & Spencer, The Co-op, Harrods, Adidas, El Corte Inglés, Tendam, Alcampo, and Decathlon—have all fallen victim to significant cyberattacks. In many cases, these attacks were not direct intrusions into the retailers' own systems, but instead entered through the digital backdoors of third-party suppliers, underscoring the fragility of the modern supply chain.

So, what are the key lessons from these many attacks?

The Supply Chain *Is* the Attack Surface: El Corte Inglés, Adidas, and M&S were all breached through third-party service providers.

- **Treat vendors and service providers as an extension of your enterprise**.
- Implement **zero trust architectures** that apply across your supplier ecosystem.
- Demand **security certifications**, regular **pen testing**, and visibility into **their incident response capabilities**.
- Maintain a **centralised third-party risk registry** and integrate it with your SIEM.

Social Engineering Is Outpacing Tech Defences: The Co-op, Harrods and M&S were infiltrated by the **Scattered Spider group**, who used **voice phishing (vishing)** to impersonate IT staff and gain password resets.

- Train help desks and HR teams to **spot and halt social engineering attempts**.
- Enforce **multi-step verification for all sensitive changes** (e.g. password resets, privilege escalations).
- **Limit what internal data is publicly available** (e.g. LinkedIn job roles).
- Rotate from "security awareness" to **attack simulation and resilience training**.

Retail-Specific Digital Weak Points Are Being Targeted: Retailers lost access to **point-of-sale systems, fulfilment chains, online stores, and customer loyalty systems**.

- Retail CISOs must **map critical dependencies** between digital, physical, and customer systems.
- Segment **POS**, **fulfilment**, and **web commerce** systems from each other.
- Implement **real-time monitoring** on transactional anomalies across platforms.

Visibility and Detection Gaps Are Exploited: Many retail attacks went undetected for days or weeks due to **low visibility across hybrid systems**.

- Invest in **extended detection and response (XDR)** and **real-time behaviour analytics**.
- Ensure logs from **cloud, in-store, and vendor platforms** feed into a single threat detection system.
- Use **AI-based anomaly detection** for spotting unusual activity in inventory systems or staff credentials.

Cyber Resilience Must Be a Business-Level Priority: Cyber Risk = Financial Risk**.** Marks & Spencer at one stage saw **over £1bn wiped off its valuation**.

- Retail CISOs must lead cross-functional resilience planning: not just IT but logistics, legal, brand, and customer experience.
- Secure **off-site backups of operational data**, and test recovery plans regularly.
- Simulate full-blown outages of **fulfilment systems, payment gateways, and CRM platforms**.
- Work closely with the CFO to quantify cyber risk in financial terms: **lost revenue per hour**, **customer churn**, and **data breach penalties**.

The e-Crime & Cybersecurity Retail Summit will take place online and will look at how cybersecurity teams are tackling this new world.
Join our real-life case studies and in-depth technical sessions from the security and privacy teams at a range of different providers and suppliers.

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Key Themes

Achieving visibility across ecosystems

From exposed initial access points such as warehouse management systems to complex machine control software, simply understanding your device and application landscape, its connection and data flows and dependencies is a huge challenge. **Can you help with asset tracking and endpoint visibility? And what about anomaly detection after that?**

Transitioning OT to the Cloud?

OT traditionally was localized in particular sites and air-gapped from IT systems. But connectivity with broader corporate networks and the need to manage technology more centrally (especially during COVID) has seen companies looking at managed services in the Cloud for OT. **Is this a way forward?**

Defending against the latest ransomware variants

Ransomware is effective precisely because it can exploit whatever weaknesses exist in your security architecture and processes. The threat and the actors are constantly evolving and that evolution is forcing the hands of government and causing havoc in the insurance market. **What can CISOs do to better defend against ransomware?**

OT and the regulations

DORA, NIS2 and other regulations put more responsibility for resilience on firms deemed important or critical. Many have focused on IT networks but the regulations include all resilience and so OT environments matter. **What does this new emphasis from regulators mean practically for OT security?**

Why zero trust, isolation and segmentation are key

There has been a shift in recent attacks away form the theft of data – now threat actors are concerned with interrupting all operation activity. It is now critical that business functions are separated, and that internet access to OT networks is limited**. Can security teams keep up with sophisticated foes?**

Pen testing for OT / SCADA

Testing is key to identifying and fixing vulnerabilities before they're exploited. Regulations like NERC CIP require utilities to assess and mitigate risk. Testing checks OT security controls are functioning properly shows regulators an organization's commitment to security. **Can you help?**

Why AKJ Associates?

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A History of Delivery

For more than 20 years, AKJ Associates has been running been the world's most sophisticated closed-door meeting places for senior cyber-security professionals from government, law enforcement, intelligence and business.

For example, our annual London-based e-Crime Congress is still **the largest invitation-only, Chatham House rules,** gathering of the most senior information risk and security professionals from business and government in the world.

The UK Home Office sponsored the public sector delegation from 40 countries in 2002 and we are delighted to say they still do today.

Global Engagement

We have run hundreds of events in the **UK, across Europe, the Middle East and Asia**, attracting **tens of thousands of delegates** in cybersecurity, data security and privacy.

These delegates range from C-suite CIOs, CTOs, CROs and C(I)SOs, to heads of enterprise architecture, desktop and network. They encompass all the senior professionals whose input drives security and privacy solution purchase decisions.

And as well as cross-sector events for both private and public sector, we also design and deliver sector-specific conferences for high-value, high-sophistication sectors including the legal sector, financial services and gambling and gaming.

Unrivalled Relationships

Events like this have enabled us to build relationships of trust with **the most influential decision-makers** at the full spectrum of public and private sector organisations in the UK, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

By providing this audience with valuable insights and business intelligence over the past 20 years, we have built up **the world's most significant community of professionals in cybersecurity.**

We use this to develop new events; to conduct research to understand what cybersecurity professionals are doing, thinking and buying; and to market our conferences and other services.

Smart Lead Generation

We have also developed and trained one of the **most effective marketing and telemarketing operations** in the cybersecurity space.

Our in-depth knowledge of the marketplace allows us to design marketing outreach that **consistently delivers the best audiences** for the providers of critical cybersecurity infrastructure and solutions.

We connect vendors directly with B2B decision-makers. By combining unrivalled reach, deep knowledge of specialist markets and sophisticated marketing we **engage buyers to deliver real results.**

Why the e-Crime and Cybersecurity Online Series?

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The challenge: end-user needs are rising, solution providers' too

Our end-user community of senior cybersecurity professionals is telling us that they face a host of new threats in the post-pandemic environment, to add to their existing challenges.

Remote working and an increased reliance on Cloud and SaaS products are all putting organisations across the world under even more strain. **They need cybersecurity products and services that can solve these issues**.

In addition, the post-COVID environment has created groups of cybersecurity professionals who are less willing or able to attend physical events, and yet these groups still demand the latest information on security technology and techniques.

At the time solution providers are finding it ever more difficult to build relationships in an increasingly competitive environment.

Economic and business drivers are making CISOs more selective and pushing them away from large security stacks and multiple point solutions.

To sell to this increasingly sophisticated community, vendors need multiple access points to engage security professionals, to build deeper relationships and maintain those relationships throughout the year.

To cater to all of the different sectors of the market, this means an increasingly varied palette of communications.

Therefore, **in response to many requests from our community** for us to continue to deliver best practice advice and to give them the up-to-date technical case studies and content they need to cope in the current environment, **we are adding to our traditional physical services.**

The e-Crime & Cybersecurity Congress Virtual Series will offer virtual versions of our key upcoming events and will deliver great **opportunities for lead generation and market engagement**.

Maintaining the ethos and quality of our physical events we will continue to offer **unrivalled partnership opportunities to cybersecurity vendors** looking to build strong, engaged relationships with high-level cybersecurity professionals.

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Delegate Acquisition

- The e-Crime & Cybersecurity Congress has the **largest community of genuine cybersecurity stakeholders** to invite to our events.
- Our delegates are **invited by an in-house delegate liaison team** who call senior security and privacy professionals at public and private sector companies with a personal invitation to attend
- We **follow up all registrations** with further calls, emails on logistics requirements and reminders to **ensure the best possible attendance**.

Lead Sourcing

- The e-Crime & Cybersecurity Congress prides itself on **putting the key cybersecurity buyers and sellers together**
- To offer you the best prospects to network with, **we don't invite academics, job seekers, consultants,** non-sponsoring vendors or marketing service providers to this closed-door event. This **attention to quality over quantity** will be the case for our online offering.
- **Each of our vendor partners will receive a delegate list at the end of the event.**

Get Your Message Across

- **Content is king,** which is why the e-Crime & Cybersecurity Congress prides itself on delivering informative and useful content, to attract senior audiences of decision-makers.
- Deliver an exclusive 20-min keynote presentation in the online plenary theatre: good content drives leads and engagement post event, as you showcase your company's expertise
- AKJ's in-house content / research team will complement the agenda with best practice from senior security professionals from the end-user community

Exclusivity Delivered

- AKJ Associates has never done trade shows. We see most value in working with **a select number of the top vendor partners** and offering those companies the best access to leads.
- Our online events keep the same ethos, limiting vendor numbers. We will keep our **online congresses exclusive and give you the best networking opportunities**.
- This is an opportunity to **continue building pipeline and driving leads** in partnership with our outstanding 20-year reputation and the e-Crime & Cybersecurity Congress brand.

Delivering the most senior cybersecurity buyers

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Our USP? We put buyers and sellers together

We understand that every vendor needs to sell more. That is the bottom line. This is even more necessary in the present situation.

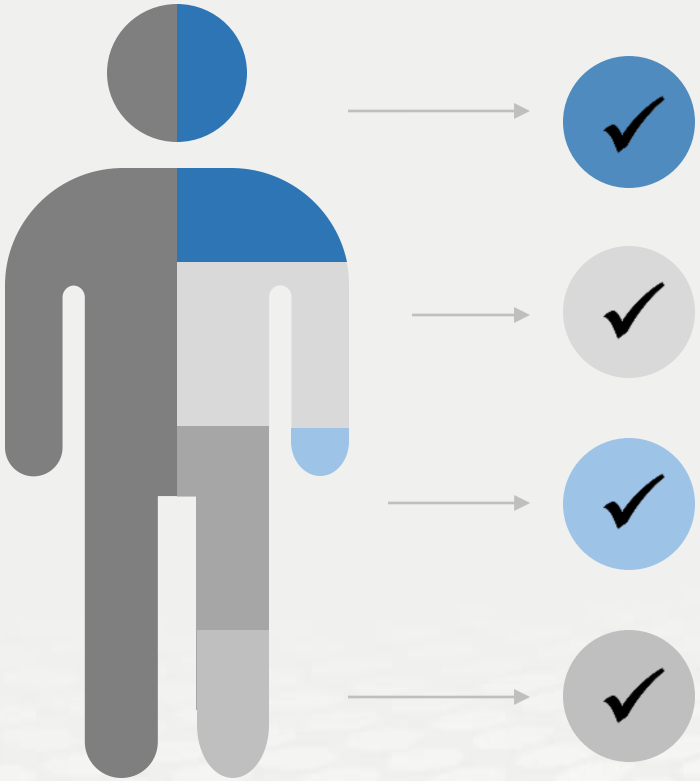
You will have access to the most senior buying audience in the cyber-security market.

AKJ Associates has been building relationships with senior information risk and security professionals for 20 years and our cybersecurity community is the largest of its kind globally.

We know the senior executives who drive strategy from the top, we know the enterprise architects who often control the largest budgets and we know the IT Security Leads and Engineers who so often dictate the purchase process.

All of these job titles attend e-Crime & Cybersecurity Congress events.

Getting access to the right people at the right time always increases the lead generation and always increases profitable sales activity.



Cyber-security
We have an almost 20-year track record of producing the events cyber-security professionals take seriously

Risk Management
We attract senior risk officers with responsibility for information risk assessment and mitigation

Fraud, Audit, Compliance
We provide the go-to events for fraud prevention and compliance owners at the world's key corporates

Data Protection & privacy
We are a key venue for decision-makers with budget and purchasing authority

We deliver the most focused selling opportunity

Specific, actionable and relevant information for time-constrained industry professionals

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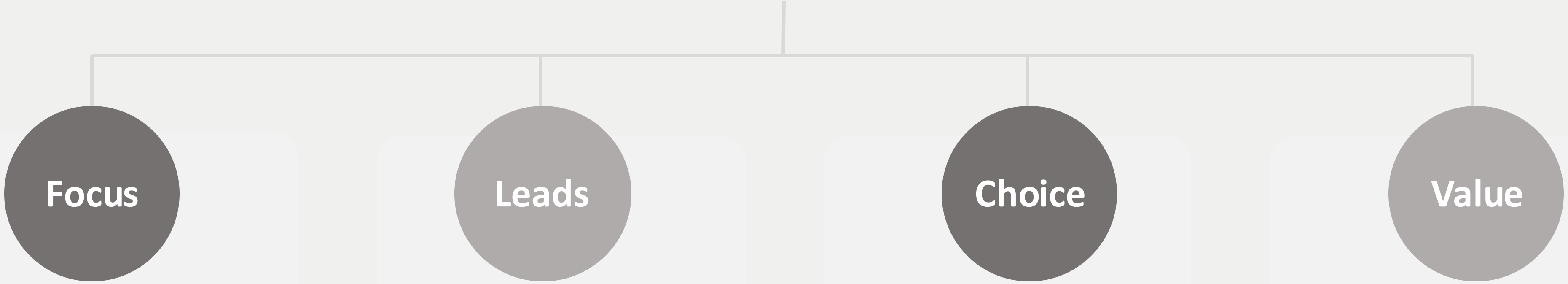
The perfect platform for solution providers to deliver tailored advice to the right audience



Target growth

Each event represents a targeted opportunity to address the needs of a specific community whose need for your solutions and services is growing.

Boost sales

Sponsors can tailor messages to the needs of an audience that shares similar concerns and challenges, looking for solutions now.

Meet commercial aims

We work with sponsors to ensure they meet their commercial aims. We offer a number of sponsorship options, each providing specific benefits.

Showcase solutions

Our events provide sponsors with a unique platform to showcase solutions, as well as provide advice on how best to solve delegates’ key challenges.

What our sponsors say about us

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PhishRod

It was indeed a great show. Despite the situation overall [COVID 19] the number of people that turned up, shows the trust people have of the e-Crime brand. Wish you all the best for the upcoming events and we shall surely be a part of them.

VERACODE

The level of engagement yesterday *[at the Virtual Securing Financial Services Congress]* was outstanding and we have already managed to book 2 meetings as a result, live on the day.

vmware Carbon Black

AKJ has been a valuable partner for us for a few years now, enabling us to build relationships and engage with the CISO community in a number of key territories across Europe. The events they hold are a great vehicle for discussing the latest challenges and opportunities in the security sector, and our work with them has delivered way beyond expectations.

✓Ninety five percent of our exhibitors and sponsors work with us on multiple occasions each year

✓Our sponsor renewal rate is unrivalled in the marketplace

✓This is because our sponsors generate real business at our events every year

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