



One of the world's largest IT companies is using CSA STAR Certification to provide security assurance to its Public Sector Customers

“Being a major cloud service provider, we fully understood the importance of achieving CSA STAR Certification. This certification provides further assurance to our UK Government customers that we have gone the additional mile to differentiate our cloud offering from that of our peers.”

Gursharan Virdi,
UK&I ISO/IEC 27001 Programme Manager,
HP

Customer objectives

- Demonstrate cloud security
- Reassure public sector customers
- Differentiate service offering
- Raise the bar for the industry
- Underpin future growth

Customer benefits

- Improved cloud security measures
- Strong customer reassurance
- Visible best practice
- Industry leadership
- Competitive advantage

Customer background

Hewlett-Packard (HP) is a multi-billion turnover multinational IT company, employing over 320,000 staff globally. The company provides a wide array of IT products, software, solutions and services to consumers, small and medium-sized businesses and large enterprises, including the government, health and education sectors.

Among its many products and services, the company offers HP Public Cloud, a transparent, enterprise-grade public cloud, based on OpenStack®, an open, scalable cloud computing platform. HP Cloud provides customers with on-demand, pay-as-you-go cloud services for computing and storage infrastructure as well as platform services.

Why certification?

Since early 2013 BSI and HP UKPS (HP's public sector arm) have been working together to take HP's new Enterprise Cloud Services for Government (ECS-G) through the ISO/IEC 27001 Certification process. The award of ISO/IEC 27001 is a key indicator of process maturity and a necessary step towards security accreditation for ECS-G. While working through this project the BSI and HP teams agreed that ECS-G should also be used to pilot the new Cloud Security Alliance (CSA) Cloud Controls Matrix (CCM) as part of the CSA Security, Trust and Registration (STAR) initiative.

The CSA CCM was specifically designed to provide fundamental security principles to guide cloud service providers like HP and to help their prospective customers in assessing the security risks of a cloud service provider. The CSA STAR Certification includes rigorous independent assessment by BSI of the security of HP's UKPS ECS-G cloud service.

Benefits

The strategic and operational benefits of CSA STAR Certification to HP, underpinning its future growth strategy for cloud computing:

- Sets a new standard for cloud security in the industry

- Creates visibility, so that senior management can evaluate the effectiveness of its management system for cloud services in relation to expectations of the international standard and the cloud security industry
- Allows a tailored audit to be implemented that will reflect how HP's security goals are aimed at optimizing its cloud services
- Offers an independently validated award from BSI to benchmark HP's performance against peers and to demonstrate continual progress and improvement in HP's cloud services.
- Makes information available that allows HP to understand its current security status and identify any improvements required, resulting in new service improvement programmes where these are required
- Provides HP with a view of the status of the business and highlights the strengths and weaknesses of cloud services, allowing HP to maximize resources, improve operational efficiencies and reduce costs
- Gives independent reassurance to senior management on where the risks, threats and opportunities lie within HP's cloud service offering.

Implementation

HP deployed a strong management team to pursue CSA STAR Certification. The project team found implementing the CSA STAR programme relatively straightforward, given that HP had been working continuously with BSI to understand the new CCM framework in preparation for a combined audit of its cloud security controls (CSA CCM and ISO/IEC 27001).

"Switching to obtain the CSA STAR Certification did not greatly impact the planned project and didn't affect our readiness for audit in terms of project timelines, man effort or financially," says Viridi. "The strategic and operational benefits of the CSA STAR Certification to HP far outweighed such considerations."

BSI's role

From July 2012, BSI supported HP with ISO/IEC 27001 certification of the company's UKPS ECS-G cloud services. This continuous engagement included numerous face-to-face meetings and several joint cloud workshops to understand the CCM framework in readiness for the combined BSI audit conducted in October 2013. In addition, to validate HP's approach and progress towards fulfilling the requirements of the audit, BSI carried out a two-day pre-assessment in early August 2013.

BSI visited several HP UKPS ECS-G delivery sites to perform the combined audit for Stage 2 ISO/IEC 27001 and CSA STAR Certification. At the end of the rigorous five-day audit, HP learnt that it had successfully achieved ISO/IEC 27001 certification for its ECS-G cloud services, with no non-conformities being raised. HP was also awarded the CSA STAR Certification with its maturity being assessed at the Silver Level. HP is the first large CSP to achieve this milestone in the UK.

HP plans to build on this experience to bring other variants of its cloud service offering to the same level of expertise and maturity. With respect to the UKPS ECS-G cloud services, HP will be continually working with BSI to ensure it maintains this certification and improve the maturity levels it has achieved providing further assurance to its UK Government clients.

John Mullin, HP UKPS Portfolio Lead for Cloud, sums up, "I am delighted that we have been able to work with BSI to pilot the CSA STAR Certification Scheme and that HP is one of the first UK CSPs to achieve this status. Delivered from award winning data centres in the UK, the ECS-G range of secure cloud services will enable Public Sector customers to consume cloud services flexibly while benefiting from the quality of supply for which HP is renowned."