

ESET Keeps M-Sport on Track with 24/7 Cybersecurity Support

M-Sport, a leading motorsport team, was previously using an alternative vendor for cybersecurity. However, they faced significant challenges, including poor support and false positives that disrupted their critical operations, particularly in configuring their rally cars. This led M-Sport to explore alternative solutions.



Introduction

Q: Can you introduce M-Sport?

A: We are a dynamic motorsport engineering company based in Dovenby Hall near Cockermouth, Cumbria. Founded in 1979 by Malcolm Wilson, we have a rich history in motorsport, particularly in rallying. Since 1997, we've partnered with Ford to compete in the FIA World Rally Championship, developing iconic vehicles like the Ford Escort WRC and Ford Focus RS WRC. Beyond rallying, we provide engineering expertise, manufacturing services, and operate the Junior WRC championship on behalf of the FIA. Our headquarters at Dovenby Hall also houses a state-of-the-art automotive evaluation facility, supporting our ongoing dedication to excellence in motorsport engineering.

Q: What role does cybersecurity play in your business?

A: Cybersecurity is critical for M-Sport. At M-Sport, cybersecurity is essential to protect our sensitive data, intellectual property and critical operations. Our engineers depend on specialised software to configure and fine-tune our cars in real-time. If our systems are compromised, it could impact performance on race day. We need a security solution that protects us without disrupting operations. With our focus on high-performance vehicle design and development, securing digital systems and race-day data is crucial. Cybersecurity safeguards our collaborations with partners like Ford and ensures the integrity of our engineering processes, allowing us to stay competitive in the motorsport industry.

The Challenge

M-Sport required a cybersecurity solution that wouldn't interfere with their essential car configuration software, used to optimise the performance of their vehicles during races. The alternative vendors support failures during a high-pressure race weekend highlighted the need for a more reliable and efficient solution. With their existing contract coming up for renewal, M-Sport needed a cost-effective and seamless transition to a new security provider.

Understanding the increase in sophistication of cyber attacks over the last few years, M-Sport also wanted to explore a 24x7x365 solution that bolstered their protection and freed up resource for them to concentrate on their core activity – winning races.

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Q: What challenges did M-Sport face before working with ESET?

A: Before switching to ESET, we were using an alternative vendor but encountered several issues. One of the biggest challenges was false positives that interfered with our software causing disruptions when configuring our cars. Additionally, we struggled with slow support responses, which became a major problem during race weekends when we needed immediate assistance.

Q: What made you start looking for an alternative cybersecurity solution?

A: When our contract was coming up for renewal, we realised we needed a solution that offered better support, lower false positives and a more cost-effective approach. The push from our previous vendor at the time to renew early, combined with high costs, made us reconsider our options.

The Solution

ESET, through a reseller (Storm Technologies), was introduced as a comparison solution. After a thorough proof of concept (POC) and multiple demos, ESET's solution proved to be a better fit due to its ability to effectively safeguard M-Sport's network while minimising system impact and false positives. ESET offered additional features such as vulnerability scanning and Office 365 tenancy that provided added value.

Q: How did you come across ESET as a solution?

A: We were introduced to ESET through Storm Technologies. They suggested that we compare ESET to our existing setup and after seeing the features and support on offer, we decided to explore it further. We chose ESET MDR for its advanced machine learning, customised protection and proactive threat hunting that minimises false positives while detecting real risks, key for us at M-Sport. Due to the 'anti-social' hours of our operation, 24x7x365 support is critical. ESET do what they do best so that we can do what we do best.

Q: What made ESET stand out during the evaluation process?

A: ESET provided a seamless proof of concept (POC) where we could test its impact on our systems. Unlike our previous provider, ESET worked closely with us to ensure there were

no disruptions to our software. Their flexibility, hands-on support and additional security features, like vulnerability scanning, really set them apart.

The Transition

M-Sport was particularly concerned about downtime, especially during key race weekends. ESET worked closely with M-Sport's IT team to ensure a smooth and phased migration. The deployment was completed without causing disruption to operations, thanks to ESET's flexibility and comprehensive support. Due to the 'anti-social' hours of operation, 24x7x365 support was critical.

The Deployment

Q: How was the transition to ESET?

A: The transition was well-planned and executed smoothly. Our biggest concern was downtime, especially during race weekends, but ESET worked closely with us to phase the deployment without affecting operations. Their team took a proactive approach, supporting us throughout the process and making sure our IT team had all the resources they needed.

Q: How did ESET's customer support compare to your previous experience?

A: The difference was night and day. With our previous provider, we often struggled to get quick responses, which is a big issue in a high-pressure environment like motorsport. With ESET, we had direct access to expert support whenever we needed it. Their responsiveness made a huge difference to our confidence in the solution.

Q: Tell us more about the products that you use from ESET?

A: ESET MDR which is a managed cybersecurity service that combines advanced threat detection technologies with expert human analysis to identify, investigate and respond to cyber threats 24/7. It helps organisations reduce risk, improve response times and strengthen their overall security posture.

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The Outcome

The successful transition to ESET has resulted in improved system performance, better support, and a more reliable security framework. M-Sport now enjoys enhanced protection with reduced false positives and minimal impact on their critical car configuration software. The team is also more confident in ESET's ability to provide timely support during crucial race events.



The Results

Q: What improvements have you seen since moving to ESET?

A: We've seen major improvements in system performance and reliability. False positives are no longer disrupting our software, and we now have peace of mind knowing that our cybersecurity is in good hands. The support from ESET has been outstanding and we feel much more secure overall.

Q: Would you recommend ESET to other businesses?

A: Absolutely. If you're looking for a cybersecurity solution that balances protection with performance, ESET is a fantastic choice. Their hands-on support, flexible deployment and cost-effectiveness make them stand out in the market. We couldn't be happier with our decision to switch.

Conclusion

M-Sport's switch to ESET underscores the importance of reliable support, minimal system impact and cost-effective cybersecurity for high-performance teams. ESET continues to safeguard M-Sport's operations as they move forward, both on and off the racetrack.

Q: Any final thoughts on your partnership with ESET?

A: ESET has been more than just a security provider—they've been a real partner in our success. They've become part of the team. They took time to understand our challenges and work with us to ensure we're protected without compromising performance. We're excited to continue working with them in the future!

Racing our high-performance cars requires expert drivers; ESET's team are expert drivers of a high-performance security solution and we're glad we chose to work with them.

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