

OCTOBER 2023

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# inside zhero

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ZHERO GOES  
FOR GOLD  
SME500 Awards

OUTSOURCING IT  
Health, knowledge  
and wealth

CELEBRATING  
CYBERSECURITY  
Tips, tricks and  
cybersecurity insights



# Message from Izak

Greetings everybody! I'm sure you'll find this edition of Inside Zhero a true delight. In July, we all saw Zhero turn 17. This month we have another birthday to celebrate – Cyber Security Awareness Month.

**IZAK OOSTHUIZEN**

Bestselling Author,  
Founder and MD



## In this issue

Our feature “Secure Our World” delves into Cybersecurity Awareness Month and its key themes.

Why do we need to Secure Our World? Here's a good reason - 64% of companies worldwide have experienced at least one form of cyberattack, 90% caused by us humans.

# CRUSH IT CHAOS



Tune in here:



zhero | PODCAST

# ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED

The Zhero family has indeed enjoyed a year filled with remarkable achievements. In September, the company was honored with the prestigious 'Best International SME IT & Cyber Security Support Company 2023' award from SME News. And now, the accolades continue as we proudly announce our victory at the SME500 UK Awards 2024, where we were recognized as the 'Most Innovative Computer & Network Security Company of 2024.'

The SME500 UK Awards serve as a tribute to the unsung heroes bolstering the UK's economy. These awards acknowledge businesses and leaders who consistently raise the bar and consistently go the extra mile. Candidates for these awards undergo a rigorous evaluation based on their domestic performance, innovative practices, growth metrics, and global impact. The judges of the SME500 UK Awards consider factors such as strategic relevance, operational complexity and scale, and the level of innovation when determining the winners.

Securing an SME500 UK Award is a monumental achievement, one that speaks volumes about the leadership and contributions of the Zhero team to the IT and cybersecurity industries. The selection panel also underlined Zhero's strategic depth and the extent of our innovation, making our accomplishment a noteworthy addition to the SME500 UK Award index. Zhero has now joined an exclusive group that is widely recognized for its excellence in the marketplace.



# TOUCHDOWN IN LONDON

Last week, Izak arrived in London to join the London Market Forums (LMF) Technology & Innovation Summit, an event founded by Roger Oldham that fosters professional collaboration, learning, and networking. LMF hosts a variety of gatherings, from seminars and lectures to roundtable forums and thought leadership sessions.

The summit brought together UK business leaders spanning sectors like insurance, finance, and IT, with Zhero joining other London-based companies like Cognizant, Bizzdesign, Novidea, Mendix, and Velonetic. Throughout the day, over 16 expert speakers shed light on insurance, technology, and innovation. Key themes included the rapid evolution of digital transformation, the potential of generative AI, and the value of ideation and hackathons.

In a panel discussion on "The Role of Data in Business Transformation," Izak shared insights on data strategy and security, while Christian Kitchen, CEO of Travelers Europe, explored data's role in business transformation. Simon Asplen-Taylor, CEO of Data Tick, moderated the discussion, which also touched on data's impact in the insurance sector. It's worth noting that Izak previously took the stage in June as the keynote speaker in an LMF event focused on "You Don't Need a £1 Million Cybersecurity Budget."





# AN OUTSOURCING ADVOCATE

In the past few years, we've seen the winds of change sweep across the world, with many of us being impacted by the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, not to forget the cost of living crisis. And now, there is the devastating conflict in Israel. These, and other events, have changed the way we live and work for good. Many businesses in the UK, particularly small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) have been forced to make massive cuts, simply to keep their heads above water. Competition is becoming fiercer and there's less cash to spread around. This means that SMEs are always on the lookout for solutions that increase profitability, improve efficiency, and streamline business operations. To that end, I am a staunch advocate of outsourcing. In my case, it's all about outsourcing your IT and cybersecurity.

# Growth. Productivity. Profitability.

A friend of mine once told me that the three things that matter the most to her are health, knowledge, and wealth – in that order. Sadly, she wasn't motivated by love. I digress. When we translate these three factors into an operational context, I see health as equating to growth and competitiveness, knowledge as focus and productivity, and wealth – that goes without saying – as profitability. I know that when SMEs outsource their IT, they can achieve a level of health, knowledge, and wealth that is sustainable, flexible, and scalable. Let's see how this is possible.



## Did you know

92% of G20  
companies  
outsource IT

# Business health

Without increasing sales and revenue, it is nearly impossible for a company to scale and grow. You not only have to keep your existing customers happy but also need to expend time and energy by bringing new ones on board. Put simply, for effective growth, focusing on customer experience and new business is crucial. By outsourcing their IT, SMEs become well-positioned to adapt to changes in the market and focus on their customers. They can concentrate on day-to-day business without the headaches of data storage and management, hardware setup and network support, security, or anything else IT. Your IT provider will have access to the latest technologies, including cloud and backup solutions, that streamline customer and third-party interactions and those of the internal team. The provider also has expertise with the software they offer so that you avoid the steep learning curve of using unfamiliar systems. All this means having a competitive edge and providing a superlative customer experience. Outsourcing IT is business health.

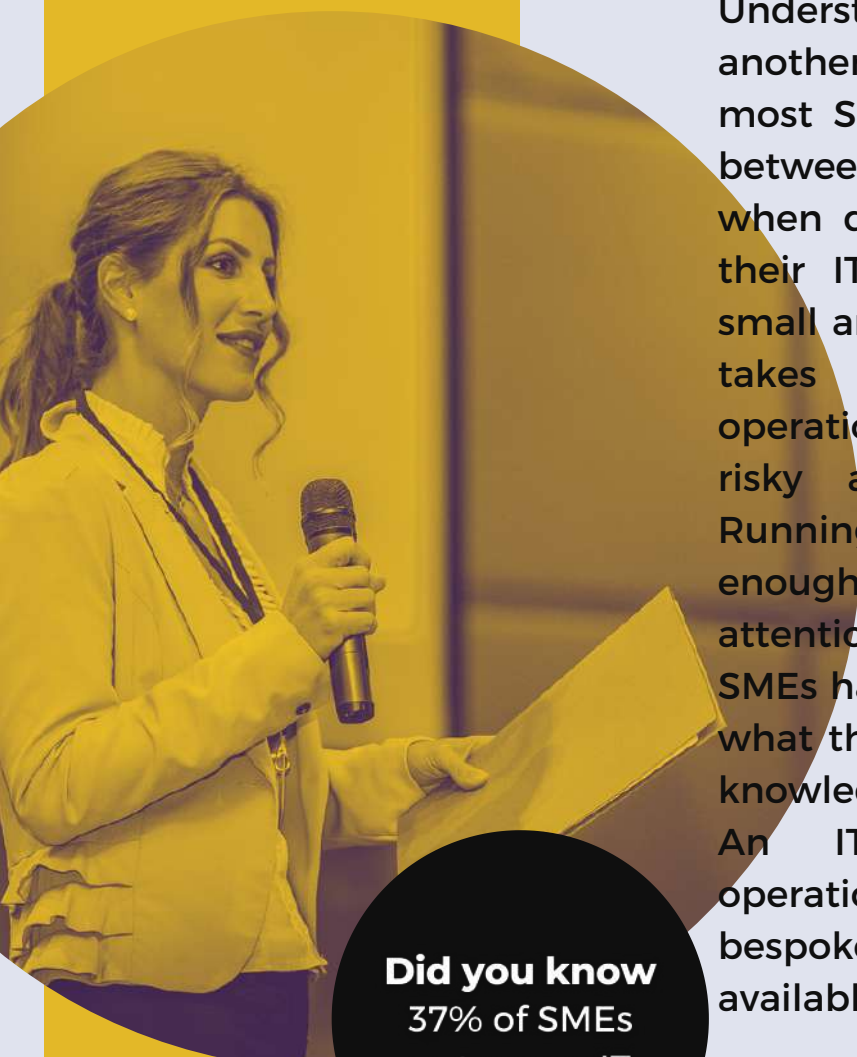
## Did you know

72% of all global outsourcing is IT



# Business knowledge

IT is much more than plugging in a few cables and powering up a laptop. Through my years of experience, I have learnt that IT is a potentially complex and multi-faceted matrix of data management, infrastructure support, cybersecurity, compliance, and much more. Knowing the best IT package for your company can be challenging in itself. Understanding how to implement is another story. With this in mind, most SMEs find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place when deciding on how to manage their IT. Typically, SME teams are small and under-resourced. IT hence takes a back seat to business operations, something that is both risky and downright dangerous. Running any business is tricky enough and it needs your full attention. By outsourcing their IT, SMEs have more time to enjoy doing what they do best and use in-house knowledge to achieve business goals. An IT provider will reduce operational risk, offer a range of bespoke services, and always be available.



**Did you know**  
37% of SMEs  
outsource IT

Outsourcing your IT also supports safe and secure remote working. The long and the short is that SMEs that outsource quickly become more productive and efficient, increasing the speed at which they get things done. Outsourcing IT is business knowledge.

## Business wealth

Last, but by no means least, is wealth. I feel bold enough to say that cash flow and profitability are at the forefront of the minds of most business owners, especially the CEOs of SMEs. Many small businesses don't have the money to invest in an IT team or expensive technology. By outsourcing IT, SMEs can sidestep the need for substantial investments that might jeopardize an already fragile financial position. Less investment towards in-house IT staff and equipment will result in better stability for your business. SMEs are also prone to growing pains as they expand. The good news is that flexibility and scalability, by design, are accommodated by outsourcing your IT. When business speeds up, you'll spend a little more. On the other hand, if things slow down during quieter times, you can scale back on your IT and save money without affecting your operation. I'll go out on a limb by saying that IT outsourcing is an affordable solution that allows SMEs to stay within budget while accessing best-of-breed technology solutions. Outsourcing IT is business wealth.

### Did you know

IT outsourcing is valued at £350 billion

# It won't cost £1 million

Speaking of wealth, outsourcing IT doesn't need to cost an arm and a leg. Neither should your cybersecurity. Many small business owners seem to think that adequate cybersecurity and cyber hygiene is only for the big boys like banks and tech giants. It's not! Everybody has the right to protect and secure their data – and themselves. Cybersecurity won't put you out of pocket. I often tell my clients and prospects that are about to join the Zhero family simply to stick to the basics and the rest will take care of itself. And the basics are these five things:

- Have strict password policies with MFA
- Always apply critical security updates
- Use the latest anti-virus
- Use the latest anti-ransomware
- Use a password manager and vault

There's a lot more to basic cybersecurity than I've spelt out here. Next month, my new book **You Don't Need a £1million Cybersecurity Budget** hits the stores. I'm not going to let the cat out of the bag just yet but I believe it's going to be a revelation to most small businesses – and a wake-up call for a few. Using a keep-it-simple-and-straightforward approach, I'll take you guys on an in-depth cybersecurity journey, and show you how to eradicate threats by embracing the basics of IT security. You don't need a £1 million cybersecurity budget is coming very soon. Watch this space.

# A GLOBAL ENDEAVOUR

Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which kicked off back in 2004 and happens every October, is a global endeavour dedicated to fostering awareness and advocating for best cybersecurity practices. This initiative thrives on collaboration, uniting businesses, government entities, educational institutions, associations, nonprofit organizations, and individuals who share a commitment to enlightening others about online safety.

## The mission

Technology is all around us, from smartphones to smart homes. As tech advances, cybercriminals get smarter in disrupting our lives.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month tackles these challenges, offering guidance for a secure digital world.

## The theme

This year, the central theme of Cybersecurity Awareness Month is 'Secure Our World' with a primary focus on four essential cybersecurity best practices:

- Password managers
- MFA
- Phishing
- Updates

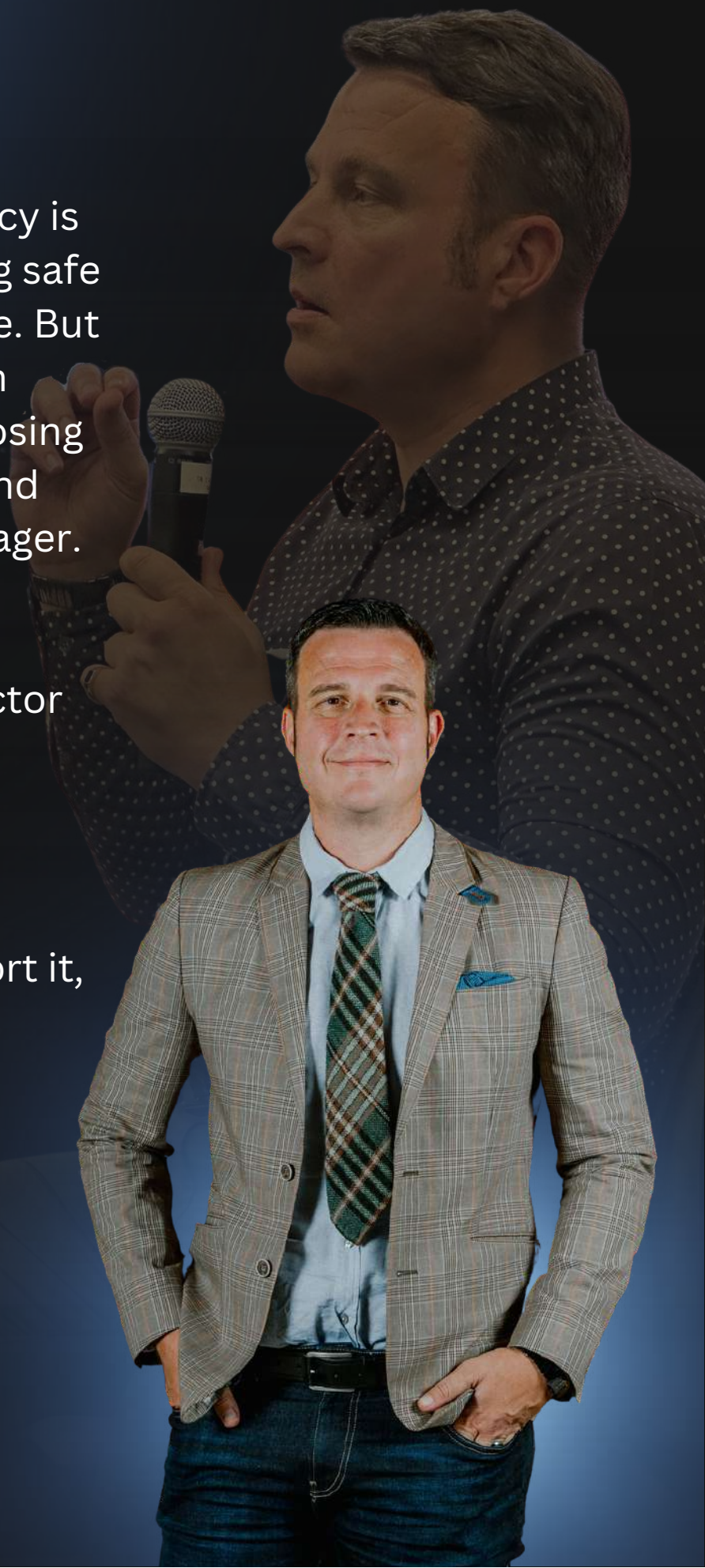
“A good password policy is fundamental to staying safe in our digital landscape. But cyber strength is much more than simply choosing a complex password and using a password manager.

Secure your online presence with multifactor authentication and by updating software the moment patches are available. Then there’s phishing – spot it, report it, and it’s all sorted.”

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**Izak Oosthuizen**

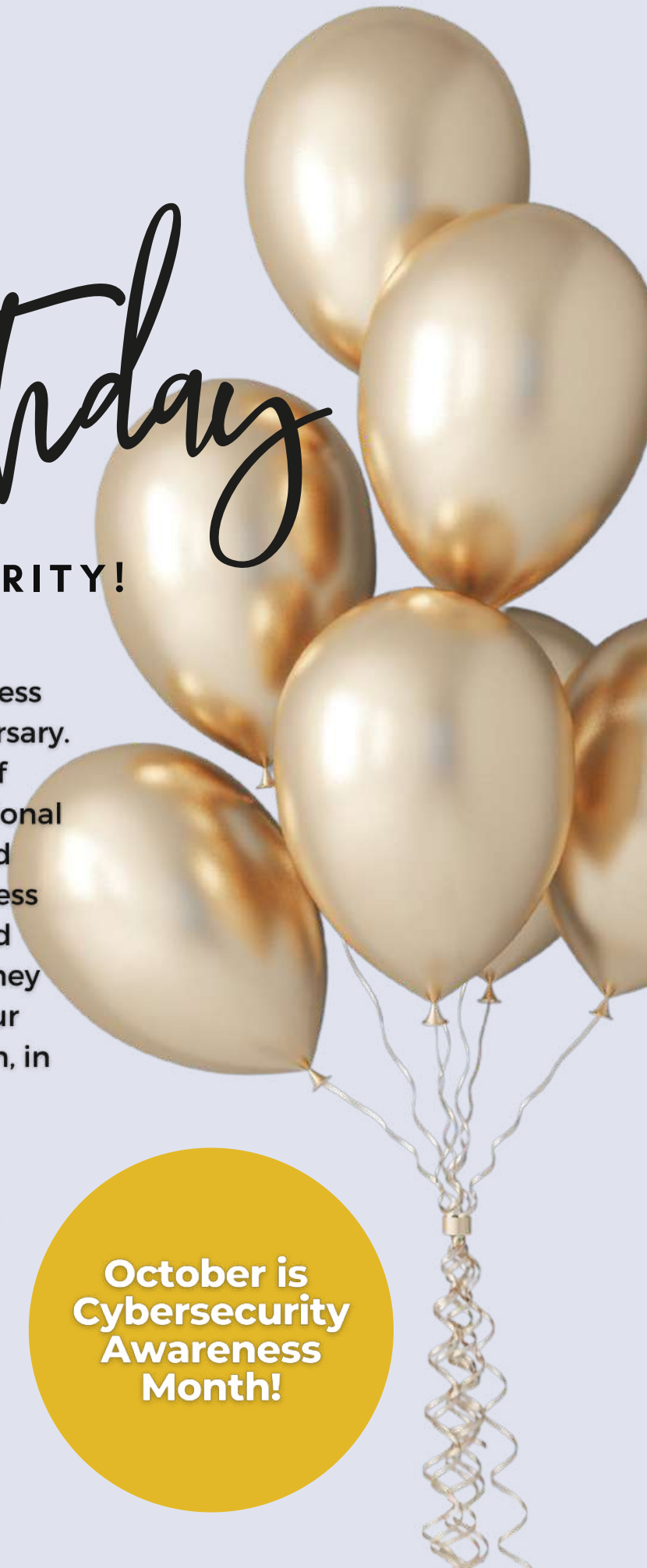
Zhero Founder and MD,  
Best selling author



HAPPY  
*Birthday*  
CYBERSECURITY!

This year Cyber Security Awareness Month celebrate its 20th anniversary. Back in 2004, the Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance launched National Cyber Security Awareness Month to help folks in the United States stay safe online. At first, they just gave advice like keeping your antivirus software updated. Then, in 2009, an annual theme was introduced - Our Shared Responsibility. In 2011, weekly themes were added to span the whole month.

**October is  
Cybersecurity  
Awareness  
Month!**



# Awareness in Europe

Cyber Security Awareness Month first took place in Europe in 2012 as a collaboration between the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the UK. 2013 saw the official launch in the European Union Member States. In 2019, a year before the pandemic, a total of 525 activities took place across 36 countries. That same year, the UK's National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) made its last ever tweet using the hashtag #CyberSecMonth. Despite Brexit, hundreds of cybersecurity events will take place in the UK this month, underpinned by the Secure Our World theme and its four principles.

## Secure your passwords

As our online presence continues to grow, the average person has transitioned from managing just a handful of passwords to dealing with upwards of 100. That's right, a 100 unique passwords to keep track of, assuming you're practicing good password habits. But here's the lifesaver:

password managers. They can spare you the headache of memorizing a multitude of passwords and, in the process, bolster your account security by suggesting robust, one-of-a-kind passwords and storing them conveniently in one place.

### Did you know

Only 33% of us create unique passwords for all accounts

**Did you know**

Only 33% of us create unique passwords for all accounts

## Tips for strong passwords

Using a predictable password is akin to locking your door but then leaving the key in the lock - easy for intrusion by cybercriminals. The upside, though, is that strong passwords represent one of the simplest yet most effective means to safeguard your accounts from unauthorized access and minimize the risk of someone absconding with sensitive information, your data, finances, or even your identity.

**Strength in Length** - Passwords that boast a minimum of 16 characters are the most resilient against cracking attempts.


**Outsmart the Guessing Game** - Opt for a random combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. If you're aiming to commit a password to memory, fashion a memorable "passphrase" composed of 5 to 7 unrelated words. Feel free to get inventive with spelling or incorporate numbers and symbols.

**Be One-of-a-Kind** - Make sure each account has its very own unique password.

Recalling lengthy, distinctive passwords for all your accounts can feel like an impossible feat. Instead of jotting them down or resorting to feeble, reused passwords, consider utilizing a password manager.



# Layers of Authentication



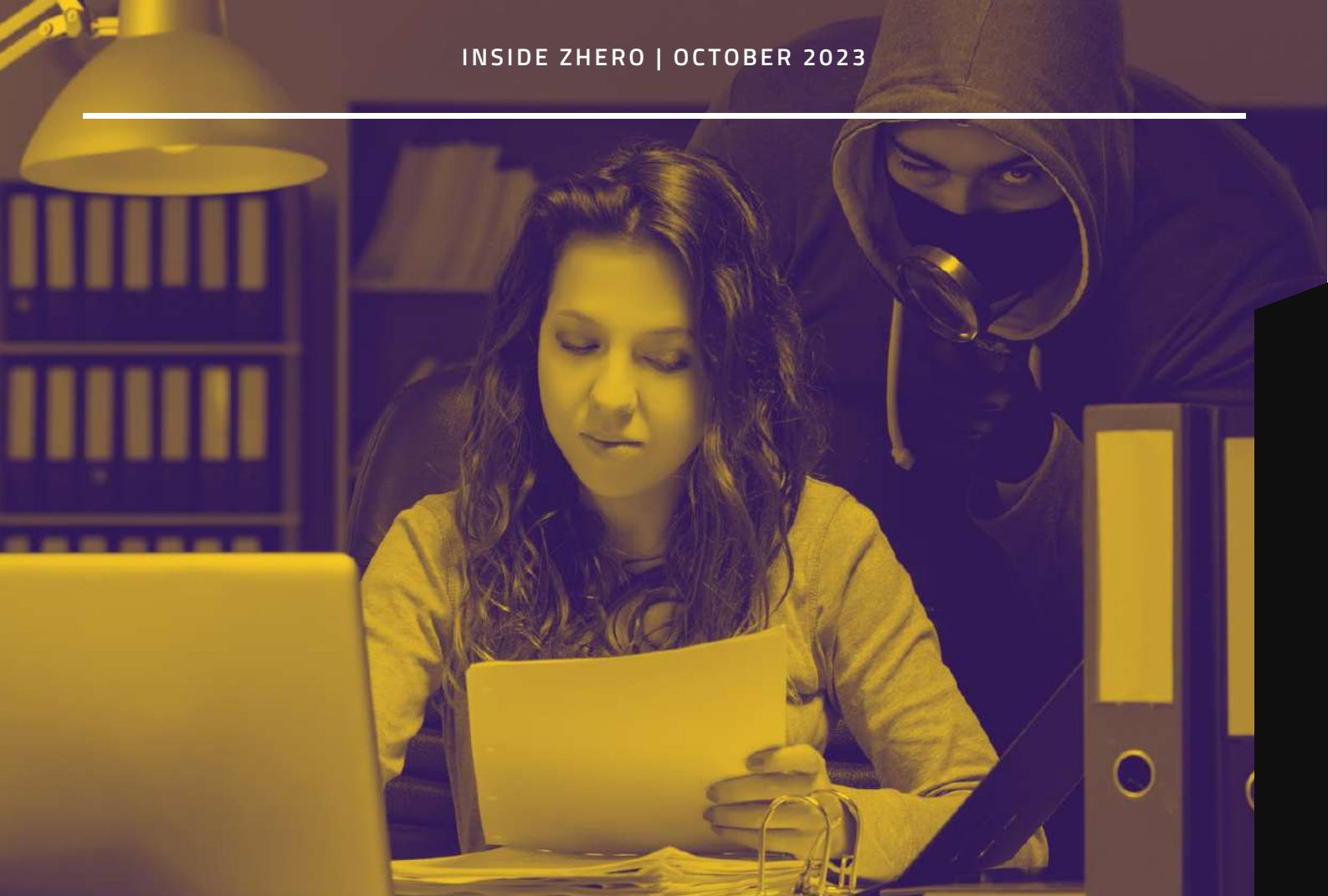
About 57% of us have heard of multifactor authentication (MFA), but not everyone realizes how important it is for keeping their accounts safe. MFA basically adds another layer of security when you log in. Usually, it asks you to enter a code sent to your phone or email or generated by an app. Sometimes, you get push notifications for it too. This extra step makes it much harder for unauthorized folks to get into your accounts, even if they somehow know your password. Turn on MFA for every online account or app that offers it. Doing that, you'll protect your email, finances, social media, online purchases and identity.

## Did you know

Only 79% of people who knows of MFA, are actively using it.

## Spot the phish

Phishing is when hackers attempt to trick you into clicking on dangerous links or opening harmful attachments that could snatch your personal info or infect your devices. They typically use messages, often disguised as emails, texts, social media DMs, or phone calls, as their "bait." These messages often try to mimic trusted individuals or organizations to lure you into taking action. It's crucial for everyone to pause and consider before clicking on any links or opening attachments, and to be aware of warning signs.



## Phishing Tips

- Look for overly pressing or alarming language.
- Be cautious of any requests for personal or financial information.
- Look out for poorly written messages, misspellings, or unusual language.
- Verify email addresses, domain names, and links for accuracy such as domains like "amazon.com"
- Report - fish the phish and report it to protect yourself and others
- For personal emails, you might be able to report spam or phishing by right-clicking on the message.
- Delete the message. Don't reply or click on any attachment or link, including any "unsubscribe" link. Just delete. End of story.

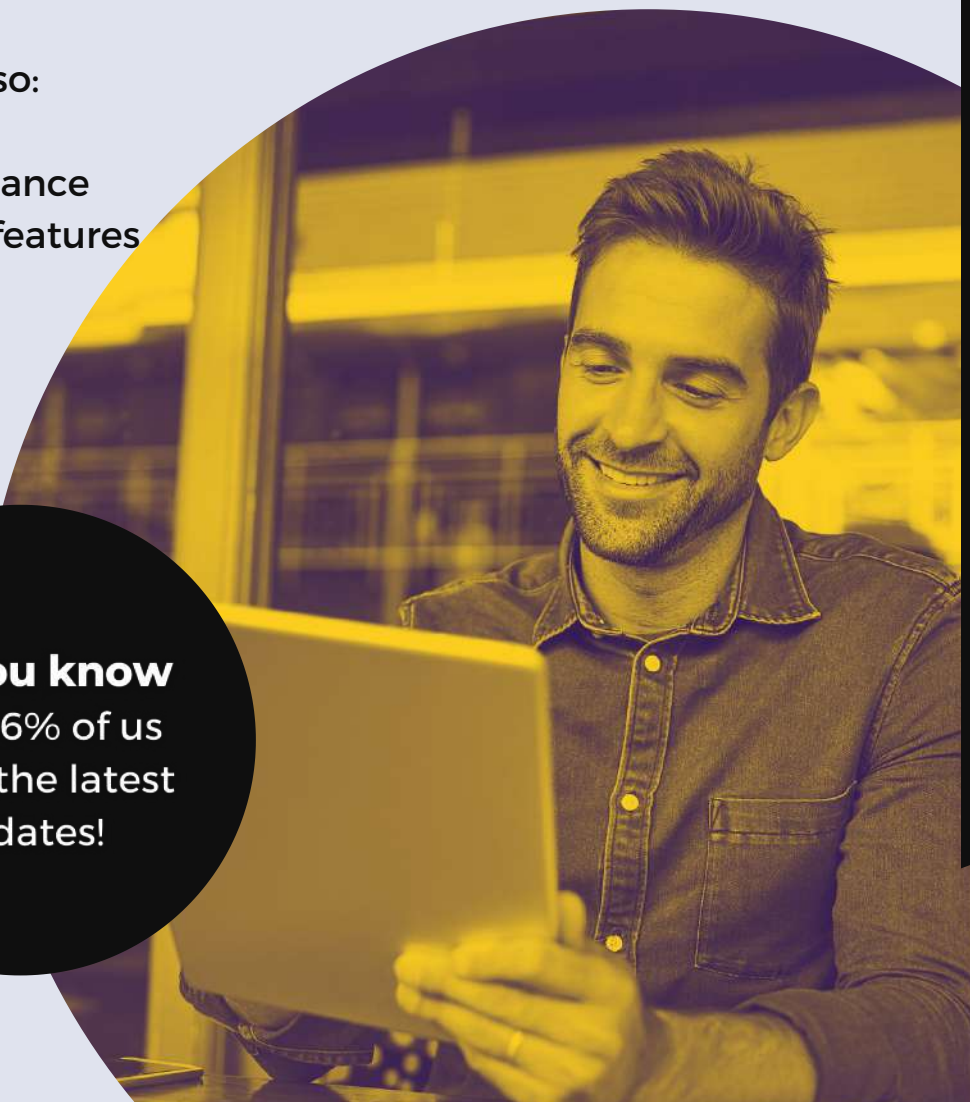
# Updates mean security

Keeping your software and apps current is a straightforward and efficient method to protect your accounts and data. Updates are routinely issued to address software glitches and patch up known security vulnerabilities. This is a simple strategy to boost your digital security.

For added convenience, think about turning on automatic updates in your device or app security settings. Set it and forget it!

Software updates also:

- Fix bugs
- Improve performance
- Install the latest features



**Did you know**  
Only 36% of us  
install the latest  
updates!

# Meet the team



**Wesley Harris**  
HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT

Hi Wesley! What made you realise you want to go into the IT industry? ✓✓

I've always been interested in technology from since I can remember. I loved figuring out how computers work so this was a natural evolution.

What's your most-used productivity tool? ✓✓

Teams, Planner, Outlook. Mostly Microsoft products but every now and then I'll use something like Lucid chart to collaborate with my team during brainstorming.

How would you describe yourself? ✓✓

I am an analyst. I a quiet, reserved and very observant.

What do you enjoy the most about your role? ✓✓

I really enjoy developing and improving processes. Seeing how my work influences others is very fulfilling.

Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies? ✓✓

I'm quite good at tennis and table tennis. I also enjoy playing video games and the outdoors and often go hiking.

What is your favourite movie or TV show? ✓✓

There are so many to choose from. If I had to choose it will be Better Call Saul, Game of Thrones, and Breaking Bad.



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