

Is vulnerability assessment what it should be? Peter Stephenson examines the field and discovers there have been some subtle – and a few not so subtle – evolutions in the space.

When we looked at vulnerability assessment tools, we found something interesting: Vendors are starting to decide where their products fit in the marketplace. On the surface, that sounds like a no-brainer, but there have been some evolutions in the world of vulnerability assessment.

What do we really mean by vulnerability assessment? There is an emerging trend toward vulnerability management and we will begin to see the vulnerability assessment category – pure-play vulnerability assessment – give way to vulnerability management. Regulatory requirements are forcing ever more

detailed reporting. And, managing such things as patching, remediation, etc., is becoming more difficult, especially for very large enterprises. Since both of these issues address vulnerabilities directly, we are beginning to see the emergence of novel ways to manage vulnerabilities and the resulting follow-on.

Vulnerability Manager



Vendor McAfee
Price \$11,700 (appliance with SW)
Contact www.mcafee.com

The McAfee Vulnerability Manager is a powerful appliance-based tool that provides vulnerability assessment, penetration testing and web application scanning along with rogue device detection and plug-in capability to LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) and Microsoft Active Directory for asset management. The software that powers the appliance can do over 15,000 vulnerability checks across a broad range of systems and network devices.

Vulnerability Manager comes as a plug-and-play server running Windows Server 2003 Appliance Edition. The software is pre-installed and ready to be configured. Once we had the device powered up and did some network configuration,

we could access the web-based management interface. This interface is easy and intuitive to navigate and we were scanning in just a few minutes. While the interface itself is easy to use and the scanning is intuitive, the one feature we would have liked to have seen was a real-time, in-progress report of what the scanner was finding. While scanning we could just see the scan duration time and percent completed, not what host was being scanned or what it was finding during the scan.

Compliance is what drives this appliance, with references from Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE) to government-centric Federal Desktop Core Configuration (FDCC) and Security Content Automation Protocol (SCAP).

Documentation includes various PDF guides, the main one being an administrator guide that is loaded with step-by-step configuration instructions, screen shots and fea-

ture descriptions. This guide is easy to follow with an organized layout.

McAfee offers several support levels, each with customized phone and email support options that can meet the needs of any size organization.

At a price just shy of \$12,000 with hardware included, we find this product to be a solid value for the money. Vulnerability Manager provides many easy-to-use powerful vulnerability assessment tools in one appliance.

SC MAGAZINE RATING	
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★★
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★
Strengths Vulnerability management and penetration testing, as well as many compliance-based tools.	
Weaknesses None that we found.	
Verdict For its comprehensive capability and ease of use, we rate this one our Best Buy.	



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