

CU SECURITY: BEYOND THE MOAT - COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY STRATEGIES

Organizations often deploy security tools while lacking a comprehensive security strategy or measurement framework. This causes inappropriate buying behaviors and a lack of ability to measure performance. Organizations are struggling to effectively communicate the security posture to senior management. ComSec is focusing on embracing information security with formal, management strategies and a balanced scorecard approach.

We are seeing credit unions become more interested in security for several reasons. Regulations are continuing to evolve, and the auditors are assessing at a more granular level. We are also becoming aware of many organizations who want to align their business needs with information technology for maximum return-on-investment. Mid-level managers are trying to focus on high-level, business issues as opposed to strictly technical nuances. A need for a comprehensive system for all management facets of the security posture is being sought. Current Security Information Management (SIMs) generally provides vulnerability analysis data or countermeasure result consolidation, yet lack the breadth of coverage needed to manage the overall security posture.

As information security consultants, we focus on security assessments and risk management services. A large part of our engagements analyzes current posture, clarifies adequate risk mitigation techniques, and provides recommendations for an overall, security strategy. In a sense, we often act as their virtual Chief Security Officer. A crucial part of this role is to make sure that the IT and Security departments are in alignment with the institution's business goals.

Because new devices, services, and business processes are always developing, credit unions must stay on top of the security implications of these ongoing changes. We help them from the very beginning, ensuring a more cost effective deployment. Our focus is on enabling managers to measure information security, quickly identify projects with maximum returns, and document quantifiable success.

The first step toward a methodical approach is to understand the current security posture. Comprehensive review of policies, procedures, implementation, training, testing, topology, strategy, and goals need to be identified and documented. Once this is complete, organizations need to identify key business performance indicators that will be leveraged to determine success, or failure, of security initiatives. A cyclical process ensures integrity and continual assessment. Finally, independent review is needed to assure an unbiased perspective is obtained.



Jeromie Jackson is the Founder and the Chief Technical Officer of ComSec, Inc. As a renowned security analyst and highly sought after consultant, Mr. Jackson has been called upon to be a speaker at many conventions, was covered in Forbes Magazine, and has appeared on several talk shows. ComSec, Inc. provides security assessment and consulting services to organizations worldwide. ComSec's focus is on quantifying information security risks. The focus of Mr. Jackson's current research relates to structured management techniques and how they may be leveraged to deliver quantifiable perspectives of an organization's information security posture. Previously, Mr. Jackson was founder and Chief Technology Officer for Garrison Technologies, a well-respected organization within the information security market. At Garrison Technologies, Mr. Jackson helped develop the security firm to well over 2 million dollars in annual revenues.