

Weill Cornell Medical College Relies on Rapid7 Nexpose for a Secure Environment

Diverse and Demanding Computer Operations

With the university's main campus in Ithaca, the Weill Cornell IT staff has a lot of independence when it comes to managing its operations in New York City. "We have our own administrative departments, and the services that we offer here are specific to our environment, which is an academic medical center, not a generalized university setting," explains Ben Nathan, Associate Director, Security and Identity Management. "In addition to supporting the college, my group does a lot of work for NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, so we must address the needs of a user community that extends beyond our campus."

When protecting the school's complex computer network, Nathan believes in practicing the industry-standard philosophy of "defense in depth," which means ensuring that the systems are always as protected from threats as possible. "We have to continually find and patch areas of vulnerability," says Nathan. "At the same time, we need to avoid doing unnecessary patches, because they are invasive and often require rebooting the system, which interrupts services. To maintain maximum up-time, we need a vulnerability scanner that helps us to determine what's crucial and what can be either postponed to a later date or not done at all because it doesn't pose a critical risk."



Client

Weill Cornell Medical College

Industry

Higher Education & Healthcare

Website

www.med.cornell.edu

Rapid7 Nexpose Software as a Strong Defense

In addition to delivering reliable services, Weill Cornell computer systems must support regulatory security, such as HIPAA requirements, demanded of a first-class medical school. Of paramount importance is identity management for the many electronic user accounts with specifically designated roles and access privileges. Nathan and his team had these requirements in mind when they decided to seek a replacement for their original vulnerability scanner.

"The scanner we had been using didn't scan all our platforms, nor did it capture as many vulnerabilities as we thought it should," says Nathan. "Furthermore, we knew that it was not going to be able to support us through our next generation, which was a move from distributed to centralized security management. Because of these shortcomings, we began searching for a full-featured, enterprise-class product that could provide longevity."

Case Study Highlights

Challenge

Weill Cornell Medical college is located separate from the main university campus and serves as an academic medical center requiring HIPAA compliance. They have complex IT security needs and needed a solution to prioritize and protect from threats as well as grow with the college.

Solution

Rapid7 Nexpose simplified scanning for Weill Cornell and gave them better visibility into their network. Automated functions like calendaring allow precisely timed scans without requiring engineers to manually conduct each scan.

From the start, they were impressed with the Rapid7 Nexpose solution. “We brought in a Rapid7 support team to help with the installation, and we were getting meaningful information about our systems within a week,” says Nathan. “They helped us to create reports that were useful, both at executive and system-administration levels, and, by the end of the first month, we were scanning everything that we needed to scan throughout our network.”

The strengths of the Rapid7 solution include its core functionality, thoroughness, and ability to update itself continually and automatically so as to address the very latest security threats. Weill Cornell platforms include many versions of UNIX, Windows, Mac, Linux, and OS-10 servers. The Rapid7 Nexpose software assesses the vulnerability of all these systems and generates reports that are comprehensive, meaningful, and actionable. “The people responsible

for updating our systems use these reports to decide which patches are worth installing. With Rapid7 Nexpose, we have a way to remediate risk in accordance with priority,” explains Nathan.

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Associate Director, Security and ID Management
Weill Cornell Medical College

Benefits

Prioritized remediation

With Nexpose, Weill Cornell can remediate risks in order of priority level, rather than wasting time on low level risks.

Large network scan capabilities

Zero

Time taken to do scans with calendaring

Auto scan with calendaring

Nexpose’s calendaring feature allows Weill Cornell to schedule scans for exact times, maximizing efficiency.

Improved Productivity and Security

The quality of a scanner’s calendaring system is critical to its success, especially at a place like Weill Cornell, where about 1,000 systems are scanned every week and those scans must be conducted at exactly the right time. Before installing Rapid7 Nexpose software, the Weill Cornell systems engineers were doing a lot of manual scans, but now, thanks to the Rapid7 Nexpose calendaring feature, manual scanning is no longer necessary. “We have cut the time it takes to do scans from a few hours a week to nearly zero because Rapid7 Nexpose calendaring works so well,” says Nathan.

Nathan’s group is now helping other Weill Cornell organizations to use the Rapid7 Nexpose product. Because the software updates itself and is hassle-free, it is very appealing to IT groups throughout the campus that need an efficient way to scan their critical systems. As Nathan says, “Making Rapid7 Nexpose available to others has been very easy, and it has improved the general security of our college.”

About Rapid7

Rapid7 is a leading provider of IT security risk management software. Its integrated [vulnerability management](#) and [penetration testing](#) products, Nexpose and Metasploit, and [mobile risk management](#) solution, Mobilisafe, enable defenders to gain contextual visibility and manage the risk associated with the IT environment, users and threats relevant to their organization. Rapid7's simple and innovative solutions are used by more than 2,000 enterprises and government agencies in more than 65 countries, while the Company's free products are downloaded more than one million times per year and enhanced by more than 175,000 members of its open source security community. Rapid7 has been recognized as one of the fastest growing security companies by Inc. Magazine and as a "Top Place to Work" by the Boston Globe. Its products are top rated by Gartner®, Forrester® and SC Magazine. The Company is backed by Bain Capital and Technology Crossover Ventures. For more information about Rapid7, please visit <http://www.rapid7.com>.