Nexpose is a "Tireless Force Multiplier" at the University of Mary Washington

Two Years of Experience with Rapid7 Nexpose

Clay Calvert, one of 40 members of the University's IT staff, is Director of IT Security. In addition to his oversight of IT security issues, he is responsible for following certain state and PCI guidelines and for conducting security awareness training. In April of 2007, the IT department began using Rapid7 Nexpose to help safeguard its extensive computing infrastructure.

As Calvert recalls, "We wanted to protect the security of our servers and other IT equipment. We had tried Open Source tools, but they were not enough. When we compared them to Nexpose, we realized that they uncovered about four vulnerabilities to every 100 identified by Nexpose."

UMW

Client
University of Mary Washington

Industry
Higher Education

Website
www.umw.edu

A Rapid Learning Curve

To get Calvert started, Rapid7 created a virtual machine and sent it to him on a DVD. "All I had to do was to get that up and running," he says. "It was a very easy learning curve. We were getting useful information from Nexpose within the first day."

As the only person on the IT staff focused entirely on security, Calvert appreciates the fact that Rapid7 Nexpose does a lot of the tedious tasks that would otherwise consume his time. "I can just set it to go," he says. "If I personally were to look for things like sequel injections or cross-site scripting, it would take hours. In addition, there are some things built into the product that I don't have the specific skills to look for."

One feature required by UMW is the ability to granularly assign permissions to IT staff members. It is important to be able to create accounts for system and database administrators and the University's webmaster so that they can scan only the systems for which they are responsible. A Rapid7 Nexpose account was also created for the IT auditor. This account allowed for scanning all systems, but did not enable the auditor to change settings with Nexpose itself.

Case Study Highlights

Challenge

University of Mary Washington state needed to prove their compliance with PCI DSS and state security requirements. The IT department needed to help safeguard its extensive computing infrastructure.

Solution

Implementing Rapid7 Nexpose allowed University of Mary Washington IT staff to save time on repetitive tasks that would otherwise take up a lot of their time and intelligently allocate asset permissions to the right asset owners.

"Nexpose is like another set of eyes for us," says Calvert. "I initially did scans of the systems and showed them to one of our main administrators. She said, "I would have bet you hundreds of dollars that these issues had already been fixed." Calvert has seen that things like patches can actually undo many settings. He notes, "The point is that even if you're competent at setting security on whatever you're working on, sometimes it gets 'unset' for unknown reasons. That's why it's good to have Nexpose."

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> **Clay Calvert**
> Director of IT Security
> University of Mary Washington

Planning Ahead

The school is planning to deploy Rapid7 Nexpose soon on their Microsoft Active directory migration. As Calvert points out, "Microsoft machines are bigger targets than other operating systems, so we will be glad to have Nexpose to crawl through everything. Furthermore, UMW has not been a Windows shop, so it will be good to have Nexpose to double-check everything."

A few times each year, Calvert copies the virtual machine to his laptop and then does external scans. "That way, I can use it as a penetration testing tool, as well as a regular vulnerability testing tool," he says. He is looking forward to the day when Rapid7 Nexpose will be provided on virtual machines. "We already consider Nexpose 'a tireless force multiplier' for us. If we could get it already installed and then just secure the proper licensing, that would make everything even easier," he concludes.