



Why security hinges on interoperability

The U.S. Air Force provides a model for organizations that want to modernize across the enterprise



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THERE IS NO shortage of tools to address the demands of an increasingly complex security environment. However, individual tools typically solve a particular problem, and they often add to the broader challenge of trying to manage too many tools with overlapping capabilities.

When IT teams evaluate solutions on a tool-by-tool basis, it is difficult to build a strategy for risk mitigation. And although advances in automation and machine learning are making it possible to identify and take action against threats in real time, making the most of the technology requires tools that work together across the entire IT ecosystem.

We need more innovation around reducing tool complexity so that on-premises environments can work seamlessly with cloud, mobile and internet-of-things environments. By consolidating tools in the direction of standards and interoperability, we can drive down costs, reduce operational complexity, improve agencies' security posture and ultimately build a foundation for taking advantage of automation.

Using zero trust to facilitate mobility

Mobility has been instrumental in improving the productivity and effectiveness of the government workforce, but it is also adding to the complexity of IT systems and the challenge of securing them. To achieve the efficiency and agility associated with cloud technology, employees must be able to access resources from whatever device they're using and from any location.

The combination of a mobile workforce

and the move to the cloud is dissolving the network perimeter and driving the adoption of zero trust. It is not an individual product but a platform and a discipline. It allows agencies to implement a security architecture that controls access to web, cloud and on-premises applications by using built-in intelligence to enforce a dynamic security policy based on the user, the device, the geographic location and other factors.

However, zero trust hinges on interoperability. A typical employee might use a smartphone to securely connect to

an Office 365 environment, then leave that environment to access an on-premises legacy application. A software-defined perimeter based on zero trust can provide that granular access by verifying identity and role before allowing access to an application infrastructure. And it can extend an agency's on-premises security controls into the cloud.

Bringing together a community of vendors

In most segments of IT — such as networks,





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enterprise resource planning systems or storage — there has been some level of standardization. However, we have not yet achieved integration and interoperability around security, which is arguably the most fractured segment of IT. It is also the one that requires advanced integration because complexity is the enemy of a good security posture.

At Symantec, we have brought together

a community of over 150 companies to drive interoperability and ultimately achieve some level of automation in the cybersecurity realm through our Integrated Cyber Defense Platform, which is an open-standards-based interoperability fabric for our products, services and partners.

The government could help us facilitate that work by holding industry accountable as a community to do a better job of

working with one another and with the government to break down barriers so that we can communicate more effectively. That way, we can all work toward the common goal of simplifying the monumental task facing the government's security teams and ultimately protect agency networks. ■

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