

Minimizing cyber tool complexity

Industry and government should work together to standardize and consolidate cybersecurity technology



Chris Townsend

Vice President of Federal,
Symantec

MOST CYBERSECURITY ENVIRONMENTS were built reactively. As new threats emerged, agencies bought new tools. The result is tremendous complexity without any type of integration or standardization.

Agencies might be using best-of-breed tools to secure endpoints, networks, data and users, but those tools don't adhere to a common protocol or language that would enable them to share information.

That complexity is the enemy of a strong cybersecurity posture, and it is an area that is ripe for modernization. Reducing complexity through standardization can enhance protection at every level and support a more robust approach to risk management.

Indeed, the Office of Management and Budget recently issued a series of recommendations for addressing cybersecurity shortcomings at agencies. One of those recommendations involves standardizing IT and cybersecurity capabilities to control costs and improve asset management.

Quantifying risks and investing resources

We've seen standardization in almost every other segment of IT, including networking, storage, enterprise resource planning and operating systems. That level of interoperability does not exist with security tools. Consequently, security professionals and threat analysts are being forced to correlate all that information, and we are essentially trying to achieve interoperability among tools using a human element. That approach is not scalable or agile enough to

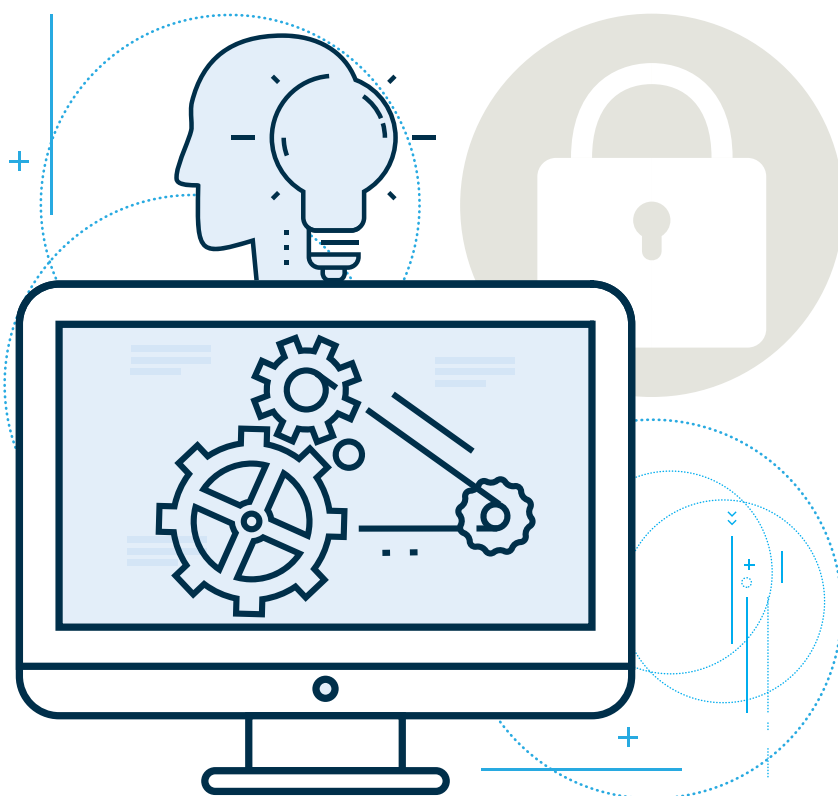
respond to the state-sponsored threats and bad actors we face on a daily basis.

We need to mirror the integrated approach we've taken in other segments of IT because highly motivated attackers will always find ways into IT environments. To begin, agencies must shift from applying all their resources toward building a hard perimeter around their infrastructures and instead identify high-value assets and make investments to reduce the vulnerability of those assets.

In addition, as agencies move activities to the cloud, they should build a fully integrated security platform that extends

from on premises into the cloud. Likewise, security policies should follow the user, regardless of whether the user accesses data on a government-furnished device or a personal device. Instituting better identity management and tracking behavioral analytics on user actions in the cloud environment are critically important.

For chief information security officers, those changes require moving away from being technology experts and becoming more focused on business analysis so that they can quantify the risks associated with a particular asset and invest resources wisely to minimize those risks.



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A strategic approach to interoperability

Government and industry need to take a more strategic approach to the problem, and companies should work together to help solve the security challenges agencies face as they increasingly rely on cloud-based and mobile technology.

For its part, Symantec is building an open standards-based security fabric

called the Integrated Cyber Defense platform with a number of industry partners. By moving the industry toward a standardized approach to improving interoperability among our tools, we can reduce complexity and enhance security for agency partners.

Companies should be helping agencies identify their high-value assets and any opportunities for consolidating security

tools. Then they can work with agencies to develop strategic plans for achieving those goals. When government and industry execute those plans together to create an interoperable ecosystem of security tools, they will improve operational efficiency and drive down costs across agencies. ■

Chris Townsend is vice president of federal at Symantec.

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