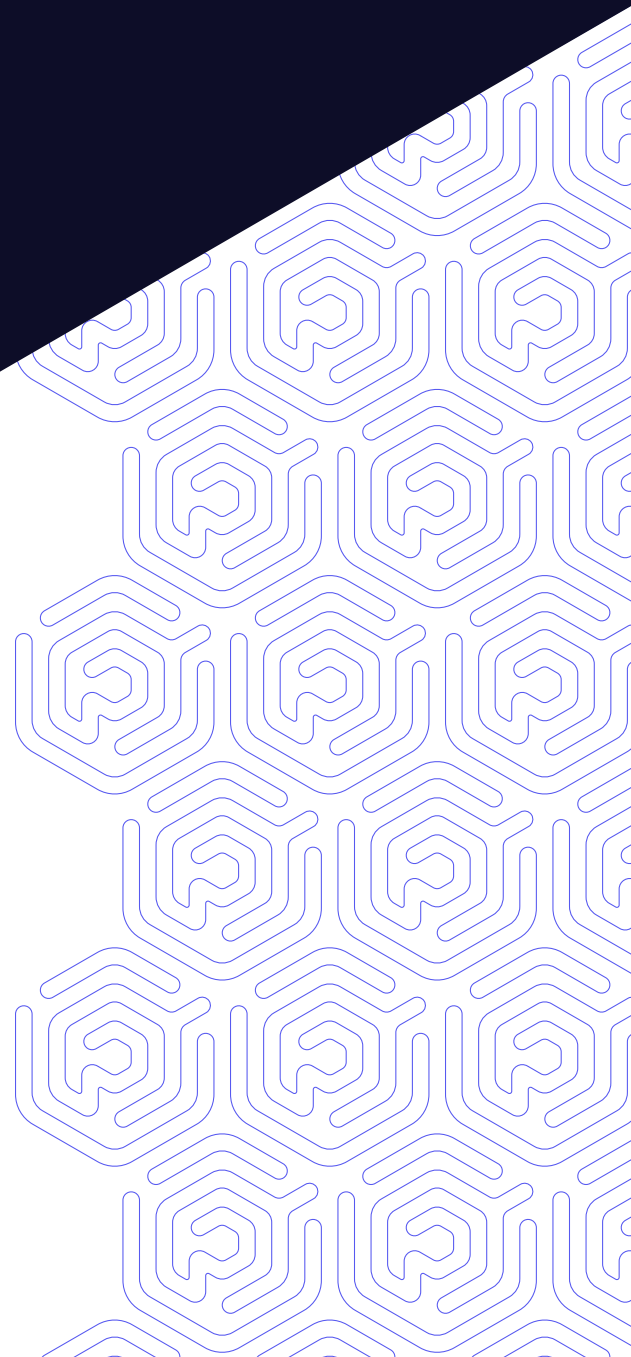


WHITE PAPER

Continuous Offensive Security

Partnering to Proactively Protect the Digital Frontier



A robust cybersecurity program continuously identifies vulnerabilities and proactively secures critical assets.

INSIDE THIS REPORT

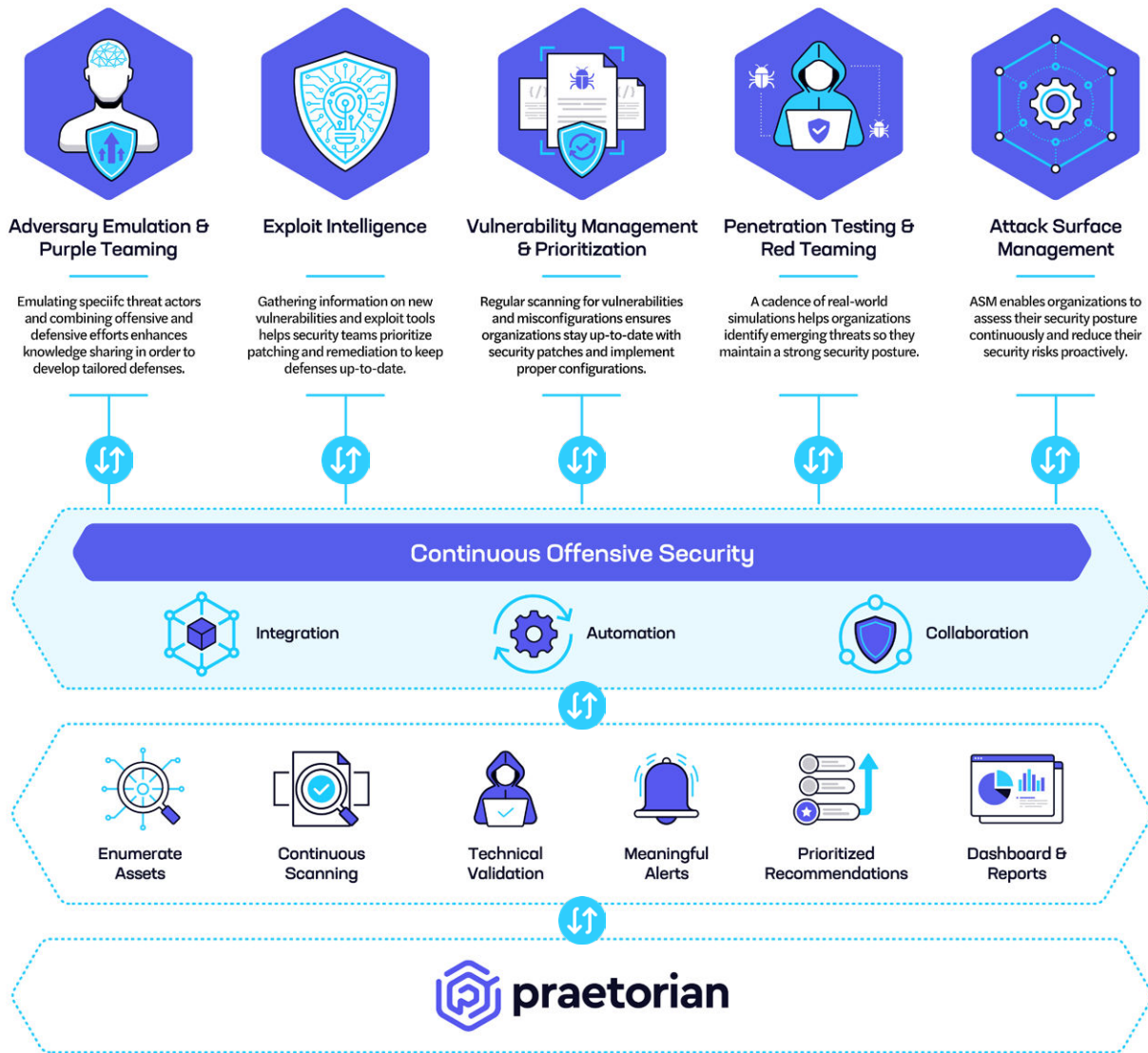
- What Is Continuous Offensive Security?
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As organizations embrace new technologies, their attack surfaces expand, creating opportunities for threat actors to exploit vulnerabilities. Traditional security measures are no longer sufficient to protect against advanced cyber-attacks. Instead, in an age of digital transformation, businesses must adapt to the rapidly-evolving threat landscape. Continuous Offensive Security (COS) addresses this challenge by proactively and continuously identifying and mitigating threats, securing critical assets, and ensuring a robust cybersecurity posture at all times.

What Is Continuous Offensive Security?

At the broadest level, we can understand the goals of External ASM by pulling the acronym apart: COS is a proactive and ongoing approach to cybersecurity that **focuses on identifying and mitigating threats in real-time**. COS goes beyond traditional defensive security measures, such as firewalls and antivirus software, to actively engage with potential threats, identify weaknesses in systems and applications, and remediate vulnerabilities before attackers can exploit them.

COS is most effective when it is a managed service, which means that a third-party partner has committed to proactively monitor and manage an organization's security posture. The partner integrates several security solutions into a single managed offering that includes attack surface management, red teaming and penetration testing, vulnerability triage and prioritization, exploit intelligence, and adversary emulation.



At the core of COS is a **risk-based approach** to security testing. This involves prioritizing vulnerabilities based on their impact on an organization’s business objectives and allocating resources to address the most critical vulnerabilities first. Adopting a risk-based approach ensures that an organization is focusing its efforts and resources where they will have the greatest impact.

COS also involves a continuous improvement process, which means that the program is **constantly evolving and adapting** to new threats and vulnerabilities. This can include new asset discovery, vulnerability triage and validation, regular red team exercises, and real-time monitoring of exploit intelligence feeds. According to a [2020 survey by Forrester Consulting](#), 80% of organizations that adopted a proactive approach to cybersecurity testing reported improved confidence in their security posture.

The Need For Continuous Offensive Security

The increasing complexity of IT ecosystems, adoption of SaaS and PaaS, and the ever-expanding attack surface has created the perfect environment for sophisticated attackers.



This change in threat environment necessitates a shift from reactive to proactive security measures and from point in time security assessment to continuous security testing.

COS **actively engages with potential threats**, identifies weaknesses in systems and applications, and helps defensive teams demonstrate the risk of vulnerabilities and advocate for their remediation before they are exploited by an attacker. The end results of a COS program include the following:

- A more resilient and agile response to emerging threats
- Greater visibility into an organization's risk exposure and potential attack vectors
- Improved security posture through constant discovery of unknown material risks
- Better alignment of security practices with business objectives

Furthermore, COS can help organizations avoid the potentially significant financial impact of a successful attack. According to the [Ponemon Institute's 2022 Cost](#)

[of a Data Breach Report](#), the global average cost of a data breach in 2021 was \$4.35 million. By adopting a more proactive and continuous approach to security testing, organizations can reduce the risk of a successful cyber-attack and potentially avoid the high costs associated with a data breach.

Why Choose Continuous Offensive Security Over Other Solutions?

The market offers several different approaches to cybersecurity testing and validation, including bug bounty programs and separate point products for attack surface management, breach and attack simulation, and continuous automated red teaming. A COS managed service solution is a better option for several reasons.

First and Foremost: A Partnership, Not a Product.

A successful COS program is not just about the technology, but also about the people and processes that support it. That's why we take a partnership approach with our clients to help them achieve their cybersecurity goals. Understanding their unique security challenges and objectives enables us to tailor our services to meet their specific needs.

We base our partnership approach on the following principles:

1

Trust: We believe that trust is essential to a successful partnership. Our clients trust us to provide them with the best possible cybersecurity solutions and to act in their best interests at all times.

2

Collaboration: We work closely with our clients to develop a deep understanding of their security needs and objectives. This collaboration helps us to develop tailored solutions that are specifically designed to meet their unique requirements.

3

Expertise: Our team of security experts has years of experience in the cybersecurity industry. We leverage this expertise to provide our clients with the best possible guidance and advice.

4

Continuous Improvement: Cybersecurity threats are constantly evolving, and so are our solutions. We are committed to continuous improvement and work closely with our clients to ensure that our solutions are always up-to-date and effective.

Our partnership approach has been key to our success in delivering effective COS solutions to our clients. By working closely with our clients to identify and remediate vulnerabilities before they can be exploited, we help them build a more resilient and agile security posture. Our clients have peace of mind knowing that they have a trusted partner who is committed to their success.

Other Key Differentiators of Continuous Offensive Security

Extends Your Team With External Experts: Since COS is a managed service, it includes security experts who have the expertise to identify and remediate vulnerabilities. They also can provide actionable insights to improve security posture. In contrast, point products often require in-house expertise to operate effectively, which can be a significant challenge for organizations that do not have dedicated security teams.

Focuses on Comprehensive and Customized Testing: COS offers a comprehensive and customized approach to security testing, which integrates attack surface management, red teaming, penetration testing, vulnerability management, exploit intelligence, and adversary emulation. This ensures evaluation and validation for all aspects of an organization's cybersecurity posture, providing a holistic view of the security posture.

Provides Proactive Defense: COS keeps organizations several steps ahead of attackers by continuously identifying and mitigating potential vulnerabilities and attack vectors

before attackers can exploit them. In contrast, point products such as bug bounty and breach and attack simulations focus on identifying vulnerabilities after an attack has already occurred.

Includes Full Scope: COS challenges industry norms around applying an artificial “scope” to testing. Traditionally, organizations have focused on testing a specific subset of their systems or applications based on predefined criteria such as the most critical assets or the most likely attack vectors. This approach can result in blind spots and cause organizations to miss material exposures and vulnerabilities that exist outside of the defined scope.

Satisfies 3rd Party Penetration Testing Compliance Requirements: COS is designed to help organizations achieve compliance with regulatory frameworks such as GDPR, HIPAA, and PCI DSS. Managed service partners have expertise in compliance and can help organizations navigate the complex regulatory landscape.

Common Use Cases for Continuous Offensive Security

Mergers and Acquisitions: During M&A activities, organizations must assess the cybersecurity posture of the target company. COS techniques like red teaming and penetration testing can help identify vulnerabilities, assess security risks, and ensure a smooth integration of digital assets.

Supply Chain Risk Management: As organizations rely on third-party vendors and service providers, they must ensure that these partners maintain strong security practices. COS can evaluate the security posture of third parties, identify potential risks, and develop strategies to mitigate these risks.

FDA Premarket Submission and Postmarket Monitoring: In the healthcare industry, the FDA requires medical device manufacturers to ensure the security of their devices before they can be marketed in the US. COS validates medical device security as part of the premarket submission and then continuously monitors the security of medical devices post-market. This helps ensure that medical devices remain secure against evolving cyber threats, protecting patient safety and data privacy.

Securing Digital Transformation: As organizations increasingly migrate to the cloud, they must ensure that their cloud-based assets are secure. COS can help identify misconfigurations, vulnerabilities, and potential attack vectors in cloud environments, enabling organizations to secure their cloud infrastructure effectively.

Satisfying Regulatory Compliance Requirements: Regulatory frameworks, such as GDPR, HIPAA, and PCI DSS, require organizations to maintain strong security practices. As a managed service that includes manual penetration testing, COS satisfies compliance annual penetration testing requirements.

Validating Incident Response Preparedness: Organizations must be prepared to respond effectively to security incidents. COS can help organizations develop and test their incident response plans, ensuring they are ready to respond quickly and effectively when an incident occurs.

Conclusion

Overall, Continuous Offensive Security can be a valuable tool for any organization that wants to proactively defend its digital assets against cyber threats. By employing COS techniques, organizations can identify vulnerabilities, assess risks, and remediate security gaps before attackers successfully exploit them. This can result in a more resilient and agile security posture, better alignment of security practices with business objectives, and improved compliance with regulatory frameworks.

RESOURCES

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