OVAL Board Meeting (3/2/2015)

Attendees

Blake Frantz – Center for Internet Security
Adam Montville – SACM
David Solin – jOVAL.org
Tigran Gevorgyan, Qualys, Inc.
Scott Armstrong, INADEV Corporation
Jack Vander Pol – SPAWAR, U.S. Navy
Kim Watson – DHS
Randy Taylor – ThreatGuard, Inc.
Kent Landfield – McAfee, Inc.

Matt Hansbury – MITRE
Danny Haynes – MITRE

Meeting Summary

Welcome

The Board members were welcomed to this fourth follow up conversation on the topic of an OVAL transition. The purpose of this call is to get an update on the CIS review of the tasks required to take on the OVAL moderator role.

Discussion

CIS Update

Blake Frantz from CIS began by giving an update on the internal conversations held within CIS on the topic of taking on the moderator role of OVAL from MITRE. The outcome was generally positive with a few key takeaways:

1. CIS seems to be willing to take on the bulk of the moderator activities, including the OVAL Repository.
2. They are not interested in taking on the OVAL Interpreter.
3. CIS estimates that around 2 FTE of effort would be required to take on the effort.
4. In order to feasibly take this on, they will require some amount of external funding (estimated at the max end at $250,000)

Blake pointed out that during the first year of operation they would work towards lowering the ongoing cost of operation by further engaging the OVAL community to take on some of the responsibility where possible. They expect that via this mechanism, the ongoing maintenance cost would decrease.

Some conversation occurred following this update, the highlights are mentioned below:

- The OVAL Repository cost is included in the FTE estimate. CIS has discussed taking on just the Repository in the past, but that is on hold until a destination for the larger OVAL effort is determined as it didn't seem to make sense to break up the project across separate organizations if possible.
- The OVAL Interpreter was discussed. Generally, it was agreed that the reference implementation was no longer strictly required and that support was not essential for it.
  - NIST has been known to make use of the Interpreter as part of their SCAP Validation Program. Since no NIST representative was on the call, MITRE will follow up with NIST to find out their status and interest with the Interpreter.
  - It was also suggested that if no organizations were willing to take over the Interpreter, it could continue to exist as a purely open source project moderated by members of the community.
- There was some discussion about how the external funding model would work.
  - Blake suggested that options such as a tiered sponsorship model (i.e. gold, silver, etc. levels of support) as well as a non-profit donation model were both potential ways to fund. It was also noted that donations would likely be tax deductible. There also needs to be further discussion around what benefits a member organization or donor might get in return.
  - The XMPP effort was suggested as a possible model for the sponsorship model.
  - MITRE suggested that an informal poll be made of the Board member organizations to see if the organizations had a basic interest level in funding this. This will be an initial, yes or no, non-binding survey to start with.
  - It was also suggested that the group should approach the federal government to see if any funding is available to support this via things like CDM, etc.
- Some asked if the OVAL efforts would continue to be free and open.
  - Blake suggested that CIS is not looking to limit OVAL.
  - It was generally agreed that for OVAL to continue to be successful, it must remain free and open.
  - The topic of intellectual property, copyright, etc. also came up. It was understood that this aspect would need to be investigated as well. DHS is aware of these issues and is investigating this on their end.
- One member asked if a more federated approach could be considered. The idea here was to ask some or all of the Board member organization to host some of the required artifacts/documents/etc. as opposed to a single organization.
  - Generally, it was agreed that a truly federated model for OVAL would be challenging, especially with respect to the OVAL Repository.
- Generally, the members expressed concern about the need for external funding.

Actions

1. MITRE to send an email to the OVAL Board List to survey member organizations interest in potentially supporting CIS financially to take on the OVAL moderator role.

2. MITRE and DHS to follow up with NIST regarding NIST's interest level in the OVAL Interpreter moving forward.
3. MITRE to schedule follow up meeting for following Monday (March 9).