

OVAL Board Meeting (5/11/2015)

Attendees

Blake Frantz – Center for Internet Security
Adam Montville – SACM
Randy Taylor – ThreatGuard, Inc.
William Munyan – Center for Internet Security
Steven Piliero – Unified Compliance
Morey Haber – BeyondTrust, Inc.
Steve Grubb – Red Hat, Inc.
Jamie Cromer – Symantec Corporation
Chandan M C – Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P.
Tigran Gevorgyan – Qualys, Inc.
Kent Landfield – Intel Corporation

Matt Hansbury – MITRE
Danny Haynes – MITRE
Mike Cokus – MITRE

Guest Attendee

David Ries – jOVAL.org

Meeting Summary

Welcome

The Board members were welcomed to the OVAL Board call. This call was held as a follow up to previous Board calls to further discuss the upcoming OVAL transition.

Discussion

Dan Haynes began the call with a recap of main transition discussion from the last meeting, which focused on the OVAL transition and actions required to move it forward. Over the course of the past few months, the board has been engaged in discussion on how to best transition the different parts of OVAL. That conversation continued during this meeting.

Dan noted that MITRE heard back from 5 organizations on the Board, 2 of which stated that they were open to contributing money towards CIS for OVAL moderation, totaling \$7500, far short of the required \$100,000. The other 3 companies said that they were still working on if and how their organizations could contribute.

One Board member asked if MITRE had any sense into whether or not we expected other Board members to respond. MITRE did not have any insight into this beyond the members who responded. Following that, there was some conversation on how and if to distinguish between current CIS members

and the funding requested for OVAL moderation. Specifically, some showed reservation in the possibility of “paying twice”, that is not only paying for the current CIS content, but also being asked to contribute to the OVAL effort. Blake explained that the additional funds were specifically covering the work required to moderate the OVAL Language, and not for content-related expenses. Blake expects that the cost to moderate the OVAL Language would go down over time as CIS learns the processes and tools that MITRE has used over the years.

Some Board members, however, noted that for them, OVAL’s value lies in the content and not as much in the OVAL Language itself. This was acknowledged in general as a concern for the group. It was further suggested that users of OVAL content should be expected to pay and not just those organizations that sit on the OVAL Board. Blake explained how they would like to avoid putting the OVAL Repository and language behind some type of pay wall. Furthermore, it was noted that the schemas and content were developed with tax-payer funds. The Board members agreed that it will probably be necessary to reach out to the mailing lists and adopters if we are going to continue to pursue the CIS moderation model.

Another Board member suggested that CIS may want to consider a subscription model that is based around a delay for when the content will be available. For example, all content may be free 90 days after it is published, but if you would like access to the content before then, it would require a subscription. It was noted that this would not apply to content that has already been created with tax-payer funds.

Another Board member asked if DHS had followed up on their contribution towards the CIS OVAL moderation effort, as a DHS representative had suggested on a previous call. MITRE hasn’t heard more about this, but will take an action to follow up with DHS on the topic.

At this point, the general consensus was that, given where we are in time and with respect to the required funding for CIS moderation as proposed, we must consider other options.

The Board discussed whether it was absolutely essential that the OVAL Repository be maintained after the transition. A number of board members said the Repository was not an important factor their current or future business plans. They were much more concerned with the evolution of the OVAL Language and that a single, official version of OVAL be maintained, regardless of whether or not a repository for OVAL content would be supported. One Board member asked for a timeline for OVAL potentially going to the IETF SACM WG. Adam explained how an Internet-Draft was submitted that maps OVAL to the SACM Information Model and that we probably wouldn’t see anything until 2016 at the earliest. Matt explained how it could possibly take years. Dan also noted that the strategy was to ensure the OVAL Language, as-is, would be available for future development by the community as work was being done in the IETF SACM WG.

One Board member said that the Board was probably not a representative sample of OVAL users with regard to this topic. He went on to say that some vendors rely on the Repository to meet customer requirements. Matt also mentioned how he knows there are organizations in industry and government that use the content from the Repository. For this segment of the OVAL community, losing the

Repository could have a significant, negative impact. Another Board member recommended that every effort should be made to ensure that the entire OVAL community be made aware that the Repository currently maintained by MITRE could cease to be available after the transition is made. Other Board members noted, however, that other OVAL repositories currently existed and that one or more of these could potentially take on the central role that the MITRE-maintained repository currently supports. Another Board member mentioned that when transitioning the content in the Repository, we need to have a clear understanding of the license it will be offered under. MITRE took an action to determine the best way forward to maximize the notice for those that depend on the Repository.

MITRE reiterated that the July 31st cutoff date is a hard one and that no other timeline has been established. At this point, the discussion turned to alternative plans for handling the OVAL transition. Blake and David Ries stated that they (including others from their organizations) have had some conversations on such alternatives. Generally, the ideas seemed to center around more offering of resources (i.e. people and their time) than money. Several folks noted that it is easier to come up with resources than money, though they all believed that more details are required before making a decision. Another Board member also mentioned that it may be worth reaching out to members of the OVAL community that have contributed in the past and see if they would be willing to contribute under such a model. David Ries committed to draft an initial set of rules on how this would operate. MITRE offered to help with reviewing the draft produced.

Actions

1. MITRE to follow up with DHS sponsor on funding question.
2. MITRE to determine how best to notify the community with respect to the OVAL Repository transition.
3. David Ries to draft an initial version of a resources-based approach for OVAL moderation.
4. MITRE to schedule another follow up Board call.