

Virginia Tech's Subcommittee for IT Security

Meeting Details

- Date and Time: December 2, 2010 | 10am to 11:30am
- Location: IT Security Office | 1300 Torgersen Hall

Attendees

- Present
 - Randy Marchany
 - Mary Dunker
 - Al Cooper
 - Dale Pokorski
 - Rebecca Simon
 - Sandy Power
- Not Present
 - Dominik Borkowski

Agenda

A formal agenda had not been set prior to the meeting. Mary Dunker proposed an agenda that included discussion of:

- Discussion of the Password Change Project
- Discussion of the Secure ED-AUTH Project
- Open discussion

Discussion of the Password Change Project

Randy Marchany updated the subcommittee on the progress of the Password Change Project that was announced in October during the DCSS meeting. Discussion included justification for the project. Randy listed justifications as:

- The project will address future audit concerns regarding Virginia Tech password procedures.
- Attempts to compromise Virginia Tech's PID passwords are constant. Randy gave an example of how the Library proxy server is constantly used to crack weak passwords to PIDS.
- Randy stated that some personnel have worked at Virginia tech for years and have never changed their password.
- PID passwords now are used for more than just email. The passwords now protect services that affect everything from class registration to direct deposits.
- Randy showed the subcommittee website at <http://www.skullsecurity.org/wiki/index.php/Passwords> that had list of passwords that are commonly used.

Randy discussed the importance of the advertising campaign to limit disruption in access to systems on the June 30th 2011 enforcement date. Dale Pokorski stated that she felt it was important to notify students using Scholar to prevent disruption and that Scholar should be fronted with CAS. Rebecca Simon posed a question to Randy asking about the difficulty to crack passwords. Randy discussed that if he had access to the machine he could easily crack many passwords using Opcrack.

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Many of the Subcommittee asked how the user community would change their password once the June 30th 2011 deadline passed. Randy stated users who use CAS fronted applications will be redirected to change their password. He further explained that HOKIES and Oracle passwords managed by Central IT will have the ability to change their passwords after June 30th 2011. Mary Dunker indicated that the Password Change Project presented an opportunity to further help with de-provisioning old accounts.

Discussion of ED-AUTH Project

Mary Dunker announced "heads up" that there will be a project that will phase out ED-AUTH as a method of authentication. She stated that at present there are 3 ways to bind. She listed binding methods as:

1. Anonymously
2. ED-AUTH –LDAP Bind
3. Certificate

Mary stated the problem was that ED-AUTH was accessible to everyone and it was not easy to see who was using it. The problem was that people could create an application and use ED-AUTH to bind a user but not have to follow the Virginia Tech's rules. ED-AUTH also shows too much information including affiliation. CAS solves this problem in a secure manner. Mary stated that early versions of CAS could only authenticate. However, it was now possible to see affiliations as of about a year ago.

Rebecca indicated concern since she had many applications and vendor solutions that predated CAS and anticipated cost in conversion. Mary replied that there were many plugins for CAS that have been developed. She also indicated that Shibboleth could be used to authenticate. Mary estimated that the time line for the project would be a year.

Mary asked the Subcommittee for their input of applications that used ED-AUTH that needed to be converted to CAS. Scholar and Ensemble were submitted by the Subcommittee.

Open Discussion

Some topics were submitted by Subcommittee members for discussion. The topics included:

- Al Cooper stated that there is a need for better contact information for IT related issues. Al suggested that an IT Director/Liaison for each unit would be advantageous. Others in the group agreed and stated that it would be important and beneficial to keep IT Director contact information current.
- Dale stated that the needed level of authority to start PACE accounts access was not always clear. Dale also stated that it may make the process easier to use digital signatures instead using a technique that has IMS comparing signatures with those that are on record.
- Randy announced that there would be another SANS 542-Application Penetration Testing and Ethical hacking class during the March break.
- Randy showed Al Cooper's IT Policy quick reference sheet to the subcommittee.
- Rebecca mentioned that she thought the process to obtain certificates from ITA and IMS was too cumbersome and not worth the monetary savings. Rebecca stated that she could receive a

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certificate for a server from an outside vendor in 15 minutes opposed to a week from Virginia Tech. Mary will look into streamlining the process for obtaining SSL certificates from VTCA.

Action Items

- Al Cooper was going to speak with possible student candidates to fill the vacancy on the IT Security Subcommittee.
- Further investigate the idea of having IT Director/Liaison for each unit to help bridge the communication gap between Central IT and the rest of the university.