Customer Success Story

The Company
Picopulse

Picopulse is a China-based systems integrator that provides organizations, primarily corporations, with technology services, including hardware and software forensics, and related training. Headquartered in Changshu, with satellite offices in Xiamen and Hong Kong, the company is particularly focused on the security assessment business, and helping its customers understand how they can better protect themselves from potential attacks and data breaches.

As head of foreign trade at Picopulse’s Hong Kong-based division, Michael Zhang is a member of the team responsible for selecting the technologies that the integrator uses to help customers test the exploitability of security vulnerabilities to target their remediation efforts. Using CORE Impact Pro, Picopulse’s services teams proactively assess the security of customers’ infrastructure and applications, and train clients to conduct subsequent testing on their own.

Solution Summary

CUSTOMER TYPE | Systems Integrator.

CHALLENGE | Helping customers improve their overall security posture using proactive security testing.

SOLUTION | CORE Impact® Pro, the first comprehensive penetration testing software solution for exposing vulnerabilities, mitigating operational risk and assuring the efficacy of patching and perimeter defense mechanisms.

“CORE Impact Pro is the right product for today’s security assessment and forensics marketplace, it gives our teams the ability to understand which vulnerabilities represent our customers’ most significant risks, and allows them to provide optimal value through our services engagements.”

The Challenge

Picopulse aims to help its security services customers rapidly mitigate risk by using penetration testing to identify how and why their systems might be open to exploitation from external threats.

By assessing the manner in which customers’ vulnerabilities can be compromised by hacking attempts or malware programs, the systems integrator contends that it can allow its clients to better identify, prioritize and eliminate points of exposure where they have weaknesses or perimeter defenses are inadequate.

“From vulnerabilities in widely-deployed technologies that have not been properly patched by their vendors, to proprietary applications that have been built from scratch, customers face a growing challenge to stay abreast of all their potential security risks,” said Zhang. “We want to help these organizations quickly improve their overall security standing by lowering the chance for outside attack, and help them understand how to better align their defenses in the future.”

Via its training services, Picopulse teaches clients how to test their internal security posture on an ongoing basis to maintain optimal levels of security, even after consulting engagements have concluded.

While the company has been using open source exploit authoring frameworks to carry out many of these tasks for some time, it sought an automated testing solution to service and train its customers more efficiently.

The Solution

To help customers understand where their most significant risks reside, Picopulse’s services professionals utilize CORE Impact Pro to actively test whether their customers’ networks, endpoints, Web applications and e-mail users are open to potential attacks, and to determine if their existing defensive mechanisms are aligned properly to stop external threats.

By feeding the automated penetration testing system with results from third party vulnerability scanners, along with data garnered from point solutions including IDS/IPS, firewalls and security event management tools, and vulnerabilities discovered by its assessors, the systems integrator contends that it is offering its clients the most comprehensive view into their overall security posture.
Whereas Picopulse’s consultants would spend longer periods of time hand-scripting penetration test exploits in the past, and showing its training customers how to do so for themselves, adding CORE Impact Pro into its services delivery model has allowed the company to accelerate and improve its work.

Open-source exploit authoring tools may offer the ability to test infrastructure and applications for security weaknesses, but Zhang said that CORE Impact Pro allows his company’s services professionals to deliver more consistent, repeatable forensic assessments, and train IT staffers to carry out their own internal audits faster.

As a commercial-grade security assessment package, CORE Impact Pro also provides Picopulse’s consultants with the auditing and reporting tools they need to communicate vulnerability testing data to customers and students quickly to help them understand the scope of any issues.

Developed entirely in-house at Core Security, the test code used in the product undergoes frequent and thorough quality assurance review, meaning that users can run regular tests against live infrastructure without jeopardizing systems integrity or introducing potential backdoors.

**The Result**

**Accelerating services delivery**

For services providers, time is money. By adopting more highly-automated security testing capabilities in the form of CORE Impact Pro, Picopulse’s services professionals can identify exploitable vulnerabilities faster and begin working with customers to address security problems earlier in their engagements. This not only improves the efficiency of their work, but allows systems integrators and other services organizations to impress on their clients that they are highly qualified to carry out these complex tasks.

By adding CORE Impact Pro to its security solutions work bench, Picopulse’s professionals have also added deeper consistency and repeatability to their process, improving the overall quality of their services and freeing their consultants to spend more time doing customized testing to meet the needs of customers’ unique environments. It has also reduced the amount of energy consultants need to expend on basic pen testing tasks that have been addressed in the product through automation.

**Increasing the value of training services**

Using CORE Impact Pro in its training engagements allows services providers like Picopulse to advance the practical testing skills of their students faster. Rather than spending longer periods of time instructing classes about the rudimentary building blocks of penetration testing, and waiting for students to grasp the finite details needed to write safe, effective exploit code, consultants using Impact Pro in this context can have their classes conducting functional tests in a relatively short amount of time.

While students may still desire to learn and understand the underlying process of writing exploit code to carry out some of their environment-specific assessment work, arming classes with an automated software solution that allows them to view and engage in all the fundamental elements of the security testing process helps them understand the entire testing process faster.

**Communicating Real-World Risks to Customers**

By showing up at clients’ doorsteps with the most effective technology in hand for completing security testing and training services interactions, customers are left with the impression that a consulting organization has researched the vendor marketplace and made sure that its professionals are prepared to deliver the highest possible return-on-investment via their engagements.

Customers want to feel that they have received the most comprehensive, effective security assessment services to ensure that their operations will be protected from emerging attacks long after the professionals have walked out the door. By adopting CORE Impact Pro and bringing the industry’s only truly commercial-grade penetration testing solution to bear on customer environments, clients are reassured that they have made a wise investment in their service providers, and are therefore far more likely to seek out the same expertise the next time they need to address similar projects.

“As we’ve used CORE Impact Pro over the last year, it has helped us satisfy the expectations of our customers in helping them address their most significant security challenges more effectively; it has also met our business needs in terms of delivering higher quality services and training engagements.”

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CORE Security

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