



## **The Why Behind Vulnerability Scanning**

*By Robert Gentry, information security analyst, Vizo Financial*

Think back over the last five years. How many vulnerabilities have made the news as major threats to security? There was HeartBleed in 2014, which affected the OpenSSL cryptographic software library. Then we experienced the Juniper Firewall vulnerability in 2015. And in 2016, there was the Decrypting RSA with Obsolete and Weakened Encryption (DROWN) vulnerability, which allowed middle-man hackers to decrypt secure websites and steal data.

Get the picture yet? These are just some of the countless vulnerabilities that attackers can exploit to get access to your credit union's sensitive information. And, really, it's just scratching the surface.

While no one wants to hear about such vulnerabilities, they do serve as a great reminder as to why credit unions should be conducting periodic vulnerability scans to protect their systems. A vulnerability scan is an automated process that scans the computers, servers, printers and other devices connected to your institution's network.

Unfortunately, not all threats to your network get as much publicity as the HeartBleed or DROWN vulnerabilities. The truth is, there are too many new attacks surfacing every day to even keep up with. As financial institutions, credit unions will always be a primary target. But you don't have to be frightened...just proactive.

Don't rely on the media to announce a new attack in the headlines before you take action. Keep vulnerabilities and security threats at bay, or at least minimize their impact, by performing regular vulnerability scans.

And for an even more in-depth evaluation of your security controls, consider performing a penetration test after you've completed your vulnerability scans. As we like to refer to it, penetration testing is like vulnerability scanning 2.0. It takes the vulnerabilities found in the scan and exploits them (ethically, of course) to show just how your credit union could be impacted by those weaknesses.

If you're looking for vulnerability scanning and even penetration testing services, Vizo Financial offers both. Our vulnerability scans will analyze your systems to look for known security gaps and holes in your network. The system will then generate a report prioritizing the remediation efforts based on the severity of each threat.



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When it comes to the “why” behind vulnerability scanning, the answer is a no-brainer. In order to better protect your data and that of your members, it helps to know where attackers might strike. Vulnerability scans will give you the upper hand and a better understanding of your risk.

For additional information on vulnerability scanning, please contact Vizo Financial’s risk management team at [riskmanagement@vfccu.org](mailto:riskmanagement@vfccu.org).

***About Robert Gentry***

Robert Gentry works as an information security analyst for Vizo Financial Corporate Credit Union, providing information security risk assessments, security awareness training and incident response planning services to credit unions. Mr. Gentry also delivers tailored training and consulting services for credit unions, assisting them with their specific information security needs.

