Is vulnerability assessment what it should be? Peter Stephenson examines the field and discovers there have been some subtle – and a few not so subtle – evolutions in the space.

When we looked at vulnerability assessment tools, we found something interesting: Vendors are starting to decide where their products fit in the marketplace. On the surface, that sounds like a no-brainer, but there have been some evolutions in the world of vulnerability assessment.

What do we really mean by vulnerability assessment? There is an emerging trend toward vulnerability management and we will begin to see the vulnerability assessment category – pure-play vulnerability assessment – give way to vulnerability management. Regulatory requirements are forcing ever more detailed reporting. And, managing such things as patching, remediation, etc., is becoming more difficult, especially for very large enterprises. Since both of these issues address vulnerabilities directly, we are beginning to see the emergence of novel ways to manage vulnerabilities and the resulting follow-on.

Scanner + Exploit
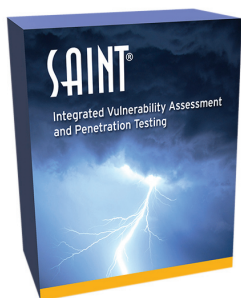
Vendor	SAINT
Price	$8,500 for a Dynamic Class C one-year subscription
Contact	www.saintcorporation.com

SAINT Scanner and SAINT Exploit are two products brought into one place for a powerhouse combination. Scanner and Exploit work together to find vulnerabilities and try to exploit those holes resulting in fewer false positives. This product includes a wide view of problems by reporting vulnerabilities using many standard references.

While this is a Linux-based product, we found admins do not need to be Linux gurus to install and use it. The installation process is well outlined and requires just a few commands in the Linux terminal. After the install is complete, the program can be run either from the command line for those that are command line-centric or from a web GUI for users more comfortable with radio buttons and check boxes. We used the GUI and found it to be quite simple to navigate with a well-organized tab-top layout.

During the scan, the scan progress is shown and it gives real-time results of what is being found and what host is being scanned. When the scan is complete, results can be easily viewed and exported to a report. The only trouble we ran into was that the default directory, where reports are stored, is accessible by the root account only, so we had to run some commands to access the reports.

Documentation is a very in-depth help file that can be accessed online or in the product. This help file provides many step-by-step configuration instructions, as well as several screen shots and descriptions of product features.

SAINT provides eight hours a day/five days a week phone and email support at no cost to all customers, but 24/7 support can be purchased at 10 percent of the cost of the license.

At a price of $8,500 annually for a Class C license, we find this product to be a good value for the money. SAINT provides a lot of functionality including penetration testing and quality reporting in one easy-to-use solution.

SC MAGAZINE RECOMMENDED

SC MAGAZINE RATING	
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★★
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

Strengths Powerful scanner and penetration testing tool.
Weaknesses None that we found.
Verdict We love this program and have for years since it was open source (under a different name, of course). This year it didn't disappoint and we name it our Recommended product.

SAINT®

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