Open-Source Security Tools Touted at InfoSec

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Created *06/04/2005 - 2:10am*
Submitted by srlinuxx on Wednesday 6th of April 2005 02:10:04 AM Filed under OSS [1] Security [2]

A well-known security consultant on Tuesday urged cash-strapped businesses to consider using free, readily available open-source security tools and applications to help cope with the rising spate of malicious hacker attacks.

In what has become a recurring theme at this year's InfoSec World conference here, president and principal consultant at Sph3r3 LLC Matt Luallen said enterprises must embrace the same hacking tools used by the bad guys to find potential faults and vulnerabilities within critical information infrastructure.

"You can use open-source applications alongside commercial applications [to cut down on costs]," Luallen said during a show-and-tell with dozens of toolsets that can handle anything from fault identification to spam detection to incident response.

"There are some open-source utilities that blow away commercial products, and you should take advantage of them."

"Some of these tools work so well that, at the very least, you should start evaluating them for widespread use in your organization," Luallen said, seeking to dismiss fears that the absence of product support when using open-source utilities could be a deterrent.

"These open-source tools have better product support-it's called Google Groups. If you do a search on Google Groups, in most situations, you'll have an international community available with answers round-the-clock."

"I'm not here to tell you that you should get rid of commercial products. There are some fantastic commercial products out there. However, in many cases, it is practical, cheaper and even better to look for an open-source alternative," Luallen said.

"Remember, the attack utilities are open-source as well. It's important that you understand the tools the bad guys are using to find holes in your system. You have to use those tools, too, and find the same faults."

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