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PORTCULLIS

Security
Research



About Portcullis

Test. Respond. Consult. Research. These are our four areas of expertise.

Portcullis is not new to the Information Security marketplace, with the foundations of our company dating back to the mid-80s. It is fair to say that a lot has changed over the past three decades, but the fundamental principles of why organisations embrace Information Security have remained constant. Private information needs to remain confidential. There is a need to trust the integrity of information. That information needs to be available when it is required. Our areas of expertise deliver this.

Security testing enables our clients to see exactly where they stand in terms of the confidentiality, integrity and availability of their systems. What and how we test continues to change, but the motivations remain the same: our clients have questions, and we deliver the answers.

Incidents can and do happen, and when there is an issue Portcullis are always there with the expertise to respond, manage and restore our clients' faith in their own systems. The more that can jointly be done to refine this process ahead of time, the better.

Information Security is not just about the tech, and much of an organisation's overall security posture is embedded in its culture, policies, processes and standards. Working in business terms, our consultants are able to advise our clients on how to overcome the challenges of today, and also of tomorrow.

In order to keep our clients up-to-date and to ensure that we remain industry leaders, Portcullis has – and always has had – a very strong commitment to research. Research benefits the community, our company and our clients. It costs, but it is worth it.

Across all service areas, our aim is to utilise the best consultants, understand what the client needs, then wrap this skill and knowledge up in efficient processes and deliver on our promises. Technical expertise alone is not enough; it has to be delivered effectively and for the right reasons.

One of the main challenges within the Information Security arena is the constant change. Threats continue to evolve, the use of technology changes and businesses constantly require better access to more information. Security cannot stand in the way of this, and we enable our clients to take advantage of new concepts by helping them understand the risks and how to manage them.

With Portcullis you are in safe hands. We know what our clients need both today and tomorrow, and our capability to deliver has been proven time and again for decades. We are tried, tested and proven.





Portcullis Security Research

20% of our consultants' time is allocated to R&D, with at least half of that being allocated to vulnerability research.

Security research is an important part of Portcullis' role in the security community, to the ongoing development of our organisation and to our clients.

Community values

As a pro-active member of the security community, it is important for Portcullis to perform and share vulnerability research. Vulnerabilities exist in systems and we know that these are leveraged by attackers and malware alike. Once identified, these issues can be ethically reported, vendors can release fixes and users can apply them. The ultimate aim is to find these issues before the 'bad-guys' do, but regardless of who gets there first, these issues need to be identified and understood.

We could leave this to others and ride on their coat-tails; allowing our competitors and enthusiasts to spend time and money identifying issues, seeing their inclusion in

testing tools and using them to our own advantage 'free of charge'. However, if everyone took that approach, the vulnerability research community would collapse to the detriment of all. We feel a corporate responsibility to contribute. Approximately 20% of our consultants' time is allocated to R&D, with at least half of that being allocated to vulnerability research. That time spent on research, if billed, has a value of over £2m per annum. Our website tracks our security advisories and we average 10 per month, with the most recent ones shown as 'upcoming', whilst we are waiting for vendors to release patches and to formally attribute the discovery to Portcullis.



Employing the best

Being such a prominent member of the security research community helps us to attract and retain staff; our pro-active outlook, willingness to fund R&D and the public profile of our team all helps attract like-minded staff. Put simply, the R&D time is what consultants love and it goes some way to make up for the time stuck in a cold, noisy server room. This is a huge asset to Portcullis, because we want to employ the best; the kind of people that can find fault in well-established systems. Our vulnerability research is key to our ability to do this.

Service development

Vulnerability research is not just about finding flaws in systems with a view to a patch being released; it is also vital to continual service development. Portcullis needs to predict future requirements and to ensure that our team are ready to review new types of systems, before our clients are. Having been in this business since the mid-80s, Portcullis have seen the emergence of web applications, wireless, VPNs, mobility solutions and everything else that has burst into the corporate environment over the past 30 years. The team has always been

ready to test them. Clients expect their security partner to be expert, as anyone less than an expert may leave them exposed. Without lab time to explore solutions, this level of expertise simply will not exist. Rest-assured, our lab is bursting with the latest technology and we are working out how, and where, it can be compromised.

Sponsored research

Portcullis has good relationships with our clients, vendors and special interest groups, resulting in paid research. The approach and concept remains the same; the difference is that our clients choose the areas of research for us. It could be as part of beta testing for an important new solution or product, baselining the capability of a security solution, or providing access to multi-million research facilities not accessible under normal circumstances. We also have a few community-minded clients who, like us, appreciate that so much of security is dependent on us working together and are happy to fund research 'just because'.



Co-ordinated disclosure

Portcullis has a co-ordinated disclosure policy, which is designed to manage the process through which vulnerabilities are reported to vendors and the wider community. The short term goal is to see the issue fixed, but there is also consideration to the longer term aspiration of helping the community understand how this issue was found and to inspire further research.

Sharing

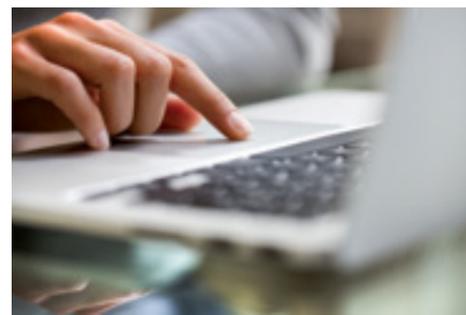
The ability to identify new vulnerabilities is always drafted into our testing methodologies at the earliest opportunity, meaning that we can discretely inform clients of new issues not yet publicly released. Portcullis is pro-active in reaching out to clients known to operate technologies shortly to be subject to a public vulnerability disclosure. There is no point in us knowing a vulnerability in our client's infrastructure, if they do not.

In terms of wider research, whitepapers are regularly released and are normally partnered by briefing days for our clients. Portcullis is also pro-active within shows and events, keen to take advantage of any opportunity to share our expertise to a wider audience.

Examples

This year has already seen advisories released for Sophos anti-virus, Symantec PGP messenger, Oracle Demantra, VMware Workstation and Player, IBM AIX, Citrix Netscaler and many more well-known products. Whilst these big-names are great for headlines, Portcullis also covers many of the lesser well known brands, which play an equally important part in many organisations.

We can discretely inform clients of new issues not yet publicly released.



Why Portcullis?

Pedigree

Now in our third decade of delivering information security consultancy and widely recognised amongst the best, we know what it takes to excel. Portcullis' teams are unsurpassed and our R&D department ensures that we continue to set the standards others strive to follow.

Delivery

A successful engagement is judged end-to-end. Portcullis' account management, pre-sales operational and editorial teams combine to launch a project certain to succeed. Our consultants have the expertise to deliver and are supported by rigorous quality assurance to ensure a high level of client satisfaction.

Approach

To our clients, we are more than just a supplier; we are their trusted advisor, confidant and problem-solvers. Portcullis takes the time to support our clients, provide sound advice and form long lasting partnerships.

It takes all this and more to be tried, tested and proven.

Get in touch

We are keen to talk to you and discuss your security issues, find practicable solutions and allow us to demonstrate why we are trusted by so many.

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