

# HP research identifies new era of security risk, shifting vulnerability landscape

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HP today published the 2011 Top Cyber Security Risks Report, which identifies the growing sophistication and severity of security attacks and the resulting risks.

The report provides the information to help enterprises and governments understand the threat landscape and assess their [security](#) posture.

The report also indicates that [hacker](#) motivations are continuously changing due to the growing presence of “hacktivist” groups, such as Anonymous and LulzSec, which perform highly organized attacks in retaliation for perceived wrongdoing. In addition to changing motivation, advances in attack techniques have led to the increased “success” rate of security breaches. As a result, enterprises and governments are faced with new challenges in assessing and remediating risks.

Historically, the number of vulnerabilities disclosed in a year indicated the current state of the security industry and helped organizations prioritize their defenses. According to the report, pure vulnerability volume is no longer a valid indicator of the security risk landscape. While newly reported vulnerabilities in commercial applications continue to decline, a large number of vulnerabilities are unaccounted for, and are therefore undisclosed to the broader security industry.

“To protect organizations against a wide range of attacks, HP has established a global network of security researchers who look for vulnerabilities that were not publicly disclosed,” said Michael Callahan,

vice president, Worldwide Product and Solution Marketing, Enterprise Security Products, HP. “The intelligence gained from this research group is built into HP enterprise security solutions in an effort to proactively reduce risk.”

## **Shifting vulnerability landscape**

Disclosure of new vulnerabilities in commercial applications has slowly declined since 2006, dropping nearly 20 percent in 2011 from the previous year. However, data from the report demonstrates that this decline does not signify decreased risk.

This decline is due to several factors, including the advent of a private market for sharing vulnerabilities. In addition, the proliferation of custom-built web applications, such as retail web sites, has created a market for unique vulnerability exploits that require advanced expertise to locate and address.

Key findings from the report include:

- Although vulnerability reports have declined, attacks on web applications have more than doubled as measured by HP TippingPoint Intrusion Prevention Systems (IPS) in the second half of 2011.

- Nearly 24 percent of new vulnerabilities disclosed in commercial applications in 2011 have a severity rating of 8 to 10. These vulnerabilities can result in a remote code execution, the most dangerous type of attack.

- Roughly 36 percent of all vulnerabilities are in commercial web applications.

- Approximately 86 percent of web applications are vulnerable to an

injection attack, which is when hackers access internal databases through a website.

-- Due to a high success rate, web exploit toolkits continued to be popular in 2011. These “packaged” attack frameworks are traded or sold online, enabling hackers to access enterprise IT systems and steal sensitive data. For example, the Blackhole Exploit Kit is used by most cybercriminals, and reached an unusually high infection rate of more than 80 percent in late November 2011.

To combat changing [security risks](#), HP offers the HP Security Intelligence and Risk Management (SIRM) platform, an integrated platform of risk-driven security solutions. [HP SIRM](#) delivers visibility across traditional, mobile and cloud environments enabling enterprises to apply adaptive security defenses based on specific organizational risk.

**More information:** [www.hpenterprisesecurity.com/cybersecurityrisks](http://www.hpenterprisesecurity.com/cybersecurityrisks)

Provided by Hewlett-Packard

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