

2.4.4 Impact of Vulnerabilities Facts

It's important to properly secure networks against vulnerabilities. Threat actors are always on the lookout to exploit vulnerabilities and the impacts can be very detrimental.

This lesson covers the topic of the impacts of vulnerabilities.

Impacts of Vulnerabilities

Vulnerabilities in networks and systems are often exploited by attackers. Here's a few of the direct impacts successful exploitations can cause:

Impact	Description
Data loss	Data loss is often caused by a virus or malware. Data loss is particularly problematic because it's hard to detect the extent of the loss and it's costly for businesses to repair damaged files.
Data breach	<i>Data breach</i> occurs when confidential or protected data is exposed. Examples of confidential information include Social Security numbers, bank account numbers, credit card numbers, health information, passwords, and email. Data breach allows criminals to access sensitive information and profit from it. It can be intentional or accidental.
Data exfiltration	<i>Data exfiltration</i> occurs when information or files are transferred from a computer without authorization. It can be done manually, if the attacker has physical access to the computer; or, it can be automated over a network by an attacker using malware. A common tactic attackers use for data exfiltration is DNS tunneling.
Identity theft	<i>Identity theft</i> refers to an attacker accessing information to commit fraud. Examples of fraud include creating false credentials, opening new accounts in someone else's name, or using someone's existing accounts. Many attackers use data breach to get the information they need to commit identity theft. There are several types of identity theft such as criminal, medical, tax, and child identity theft.
Availability loss	<i>Availability loss</i> occurs when an attacker performs a malicious act to make the network so busy that the system goes down. This is also referred to as denial of service. When this happens, employees are unable to accomplish their tasks. Also, customers are unable to access the company's services. Loss of availability can be accomplished with malware.

In addition to the direct financial impact of the exploitation, the reputation of organizations is negatively impacted. If sensitive data is stolen or compromised, this news is communicated to clients, who lose trust in and respect for the organization. Even after recovering from the data loss, businesses need to rebuild client relationships.

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