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7-1 Journal: Consider the Motive of the Attack

CS 405 Secure Coding

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Understanding the motive behind hacking can be one of the easiest things to understand, as the motive generally falls into one or more of these categories:

1. Cash
2. Challenge
3. Hacktivism
4. Revenge
5. Subversion
6. Infamy

With an understanding for each one of those categories, we can understand what motivates hackers. Applying this empathy towards understanding the motives behind hacking needs to be a best practice for every programmer. When you have an understanding, it gives you the abilities to think of loopholes that could expose security vulnerabilities to prevent attacks beforehand. Making security a top priority and not waiting until the end of the SDLC to address security concerns is something that I will always apply to my own practice.

To explain this to a new developer on my team, I would emphasize this from the start. Ensuring the importance of exposed information is the top priority of everything that we do. Not only can attacks be costly, but also detrimental to sensitive personal information and company reputation.

So just how important is understanding motive, even though it seems to be a mystery? Take for example the biggest data breach the United States has ever seen, Yahoo. Three billion people were affected and exposed because the motive was not understood, leaving loopholes for the hackers to come in. This attack could have been prevented if security would have been prevented a top priority.