Module 8:
Endpoint Protection and Vulnerability Assessment

Module Objectives

Module Title: Endpoint Protection and Vulnerability Assessment

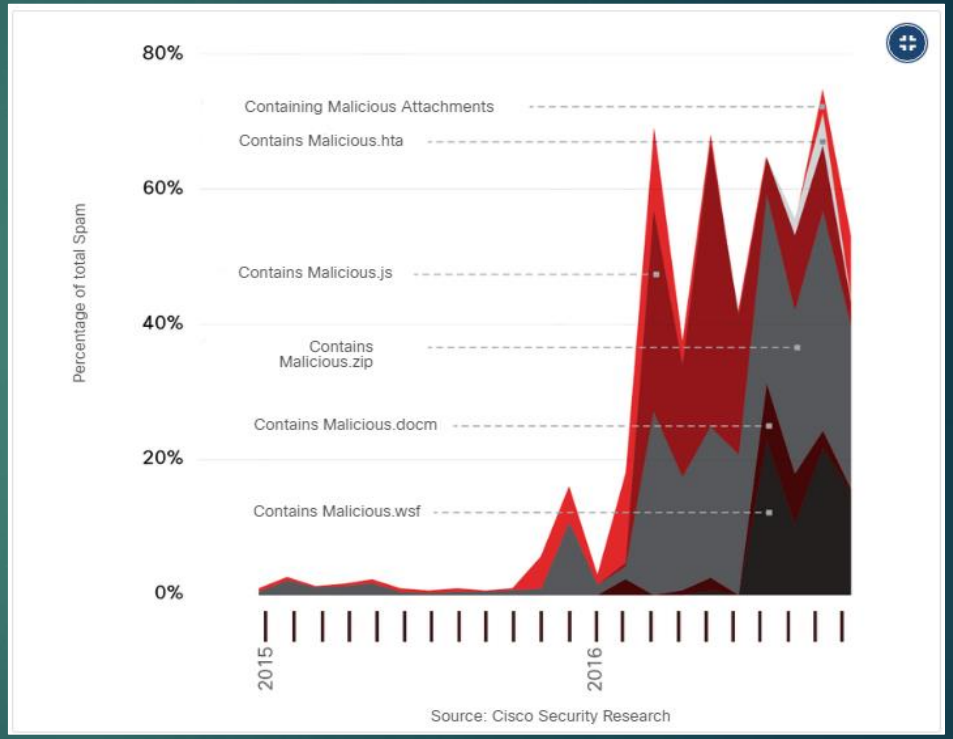
Module Objective: Explain how endpoint vulnerabilities are assessed and managed.

Topic Title	Topic Objective
Antimalware Protection	Explain methods of mitigating malware
Network and Server Profiling	Explain the value of network and server profiling.
Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS)	Explain how CVSS reports are used to describe security vulnerabilities.
Secure Device Management	Explain how secure device management techniques are used to protect data and assets.
Information Security Management Systems	Explain how information security management systems are used to protect assets.

Endpoint Protection

Endpoint Threats

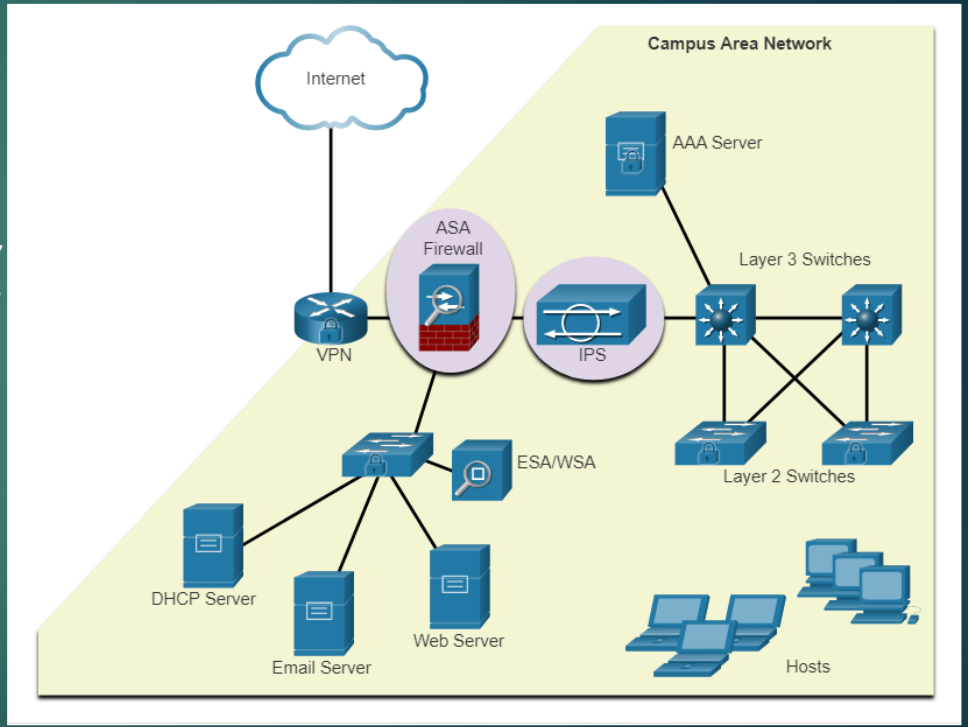
- Endpoints can be defined as hosts on the network that can access or be accessed by other hosts on the network.
- Each endpoint is potentially a way for malicious software to gain access to a network.
- Devices that remotely access networks through VPNs are also endpoints that could inject malware into the VPN network from the public network.
- Several common types of malware have been found to significantly change features in less than 24 hours in order to evade detection.



Malicious Spam Percentage

Endpoint Security

- As many attacks originate from inside the network, securing an internal LAN is nearly as important as securing the outside network perimeter.
- After an internal host is infiltrated, it can become a starting point for an attacker to gain access to critical system devices, such as servers and sensitive information.
- There are two internal LAN elements to secure:
  - **Endpoints** - Hosts are susceptible to malware-related attacks.
  - **Network infrastructure** - LAN infrastructure devices interconnect endpoints



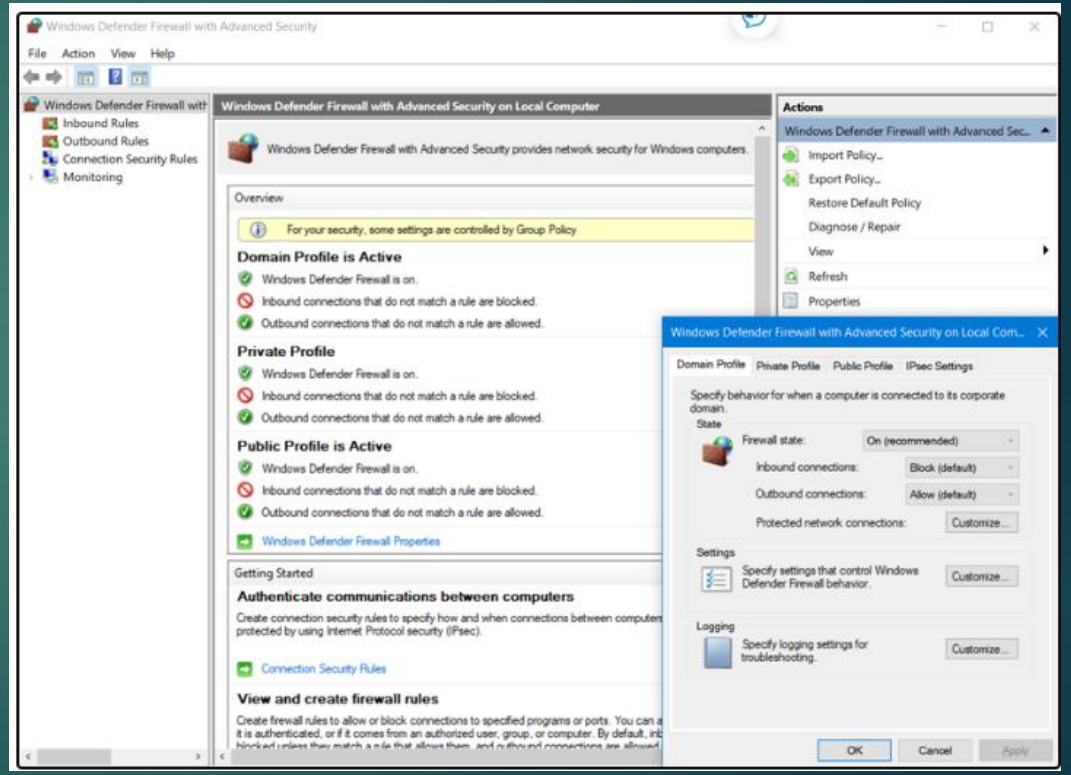
Host-Based Malware Protection

- Host-based antimalware/antivirus software and host-based firewalls are used to protect mobile devices using VPN.
- **Antivirus/Antimalware Software:** It is a software that is installed on a host to detect and mitigate viruses and malware. For example, Windows Defender Virus & Threat Protection, Cisco AMP for Endpoints, Norton Security, McAfee, Trend Micro, and others.
- Antimalware programs may detect viruses using three different approaches:
  - **Signature-based:** Recognizes various characteristics of known malware files
  - **Heuristics-based:** Recognizes general features shared by various types of malware
  - **Behavior-based:** Employs analysis of suspicious behavior
- Host-based antivirus protection, also known as agent-based, runs on every protected machine.

Host-Based Malware Protection (Contd.)

Host-based Firewall

- This software is installed on a host.
- It restricts incoming and outgoing connections to connections initiated by that host only.
- Some firewall software can prevent a host from becoming infected and stop infected hosts from spreading malware to other hosts. This function is included in some operating systems.
- For example, Windows includes Windows Defender Firewall with Advanced Security.



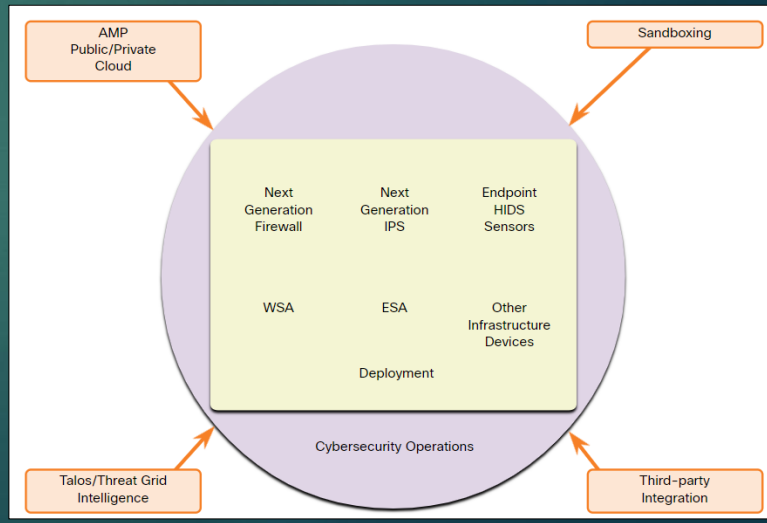
Host-Based Malware Protection (Contd.)

Host-based Security Suites

- It is recommended to install a host-based suite of security products on home and business networks to provide a layered defense that will protect against most common threats.
- These include antivirus, anti-phishing, safe browsing, Host-based intrusion prevention system, and firewall capabilities.
- Host-based security products also provide telemetry function.
- Most host-based security software includes robust logging functionality that is essential to cyber security operations.
- The independent testing laboratory AV-TEST provides high-quality reviews of host-based protections, as well as information about many other security products.
- AV-TEST | Antivirus & Security Software & AntiMalware Reviews

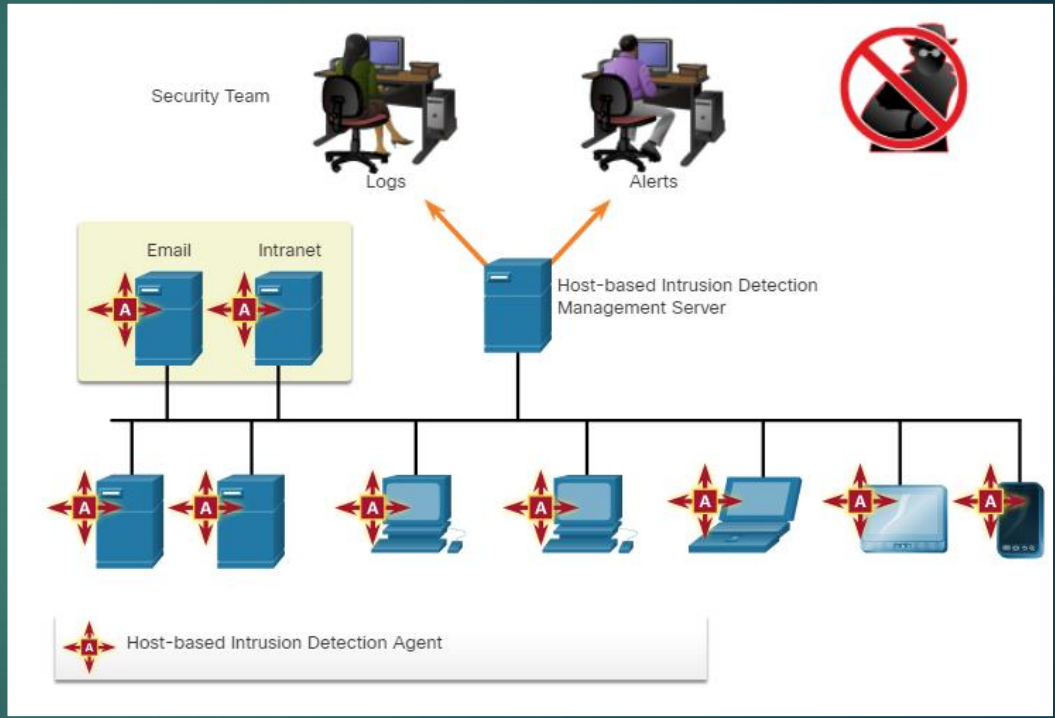
Network-Based Malware Protection (Contd.)

- Network-based malware prevention devices are capable of sharing information among themselves to make better informed decisions.
- Protecting endpoints in a borderless network can be accomplished using network-based, as well as host-based techniques.
- Some examples of devices and techniques that implement host protections at the network level:
  - **Advanced Malware Protection (AMP)** - Provides endpoint protection from viruses and malware.
  - **Email Security Appliance (ESA)** - Provides filtering of SPAM and potentially malicious emails before they reach the endpoint.
  - **Web Security Appliance (WSA)** - Provides filtering of websites and blacklisting
  - **Network Admission Control (NAC)** - Permits only authorized and compliant systems to connect to the network.



Host-Based Intrusion Detection

- A Host-based Intrusion Detection System (HIDS) is designed to protect hosts against known and unknown malware.
- A HIDS can perform detailed monitoring and reporting on the system configuration and application activity.
- HIDS is a comprehensive security application that combines the functionalities of antimalware applications with firewall functionality.
- As HIDS must run directly on the host, it is considered as an agent-based system.



Host-based Intrusion Detection Architecture

HIDS Operation

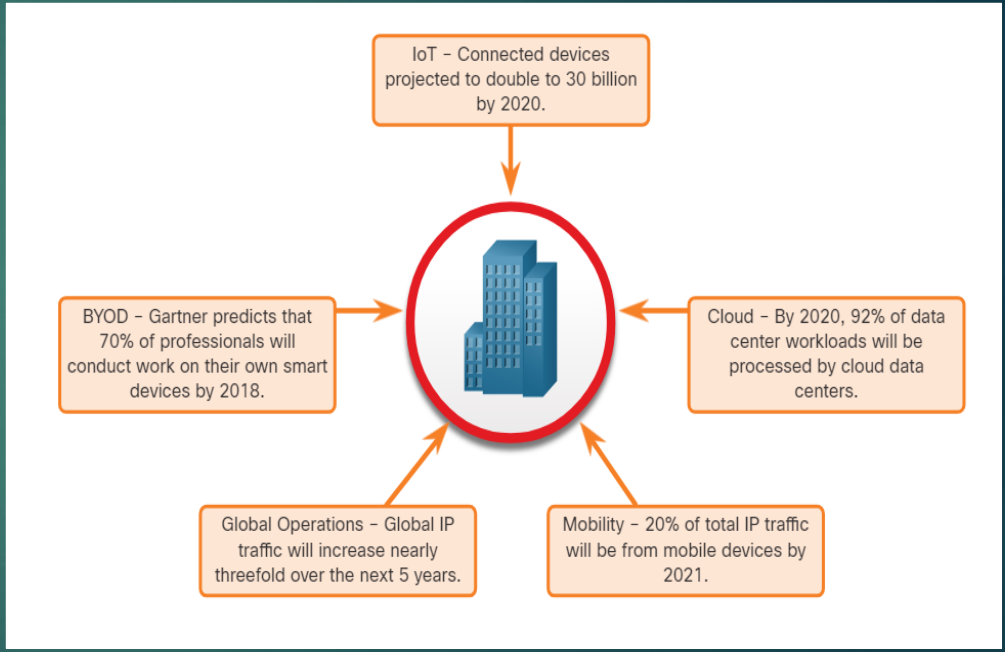
- A HIDS can prevent intrusion because it uses signatures to detect known malware and prevent it from infecting a system.
- Some malware families exhibit polymorphism.
- An additional set of strategies are used to detect the possibility of successful intrusions by malware that evades signature detection:
  - **Anomaly based** - Host system behavior is compared to a learned baseline model of normal behavior. If an intrusion is detected, the HIDS can log details of the intrusion, send alerts to security management systems, and take action to prevent the attack.
  - **Policy based** - Normal system behavior is described by rules, or the violation of rules, that are predefined. Violation of these policies will result in action by the HIDS, such as shut down of software processes.

HIDS Products

- Most of the HIDS utilize software on the host and some sort of centralized security management functionality that allows integration with network security monitoring services and threat intelligence.
- Some examples are Cisco AMP, AlienVault USM, Tripwire, and Open Source HIDS SECurity (OSSEC).
- OSSEC uses a central manager server and agents that are installed on individual hosts.
- The OSSEC server, or Manager, can also receive and analyze alerts from a variety of network devices and firewalls over syslog.
- OSSEC monitors system logs on hosts and also conducts file integrity checking.
- OSSEC - World's Most Widely Used Host Intrusion Detection System - HIDS

Attack Surface

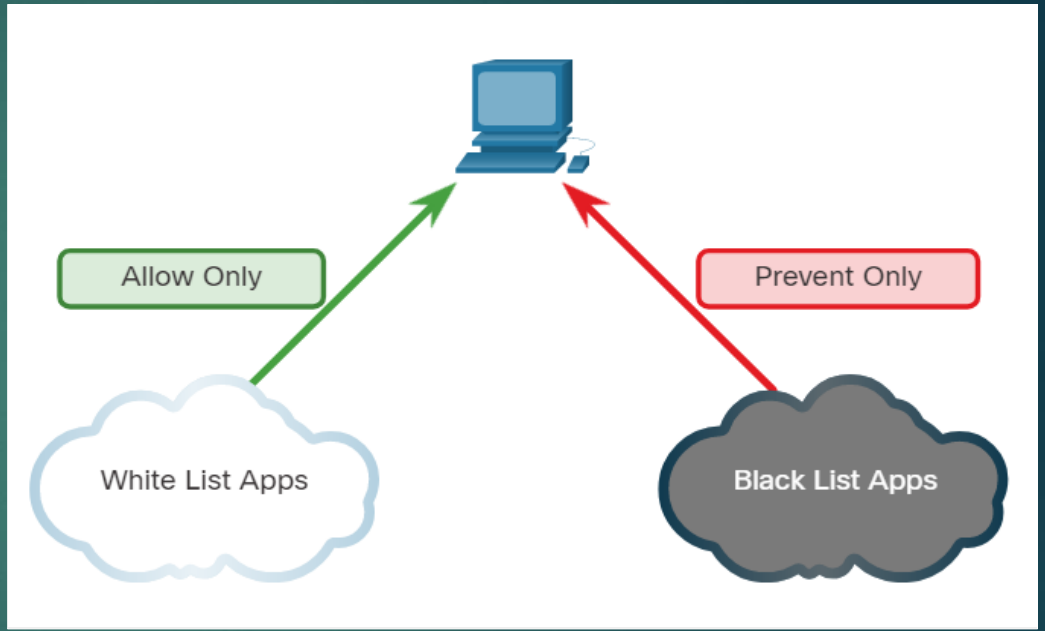
- **An attack surface** is the total sum of the vulnerabilities in a given system that is accessible to an attacker.
- It can consist of open ports on servers or hosts, software running on internet-facing servers, wireless network protocols, and users.
- Components of the Attack Surface:
  - **Network Attack Surface:** Exploits vulnerabilities in networks.
  - **Software Attack Surface:** Delivered through exploitation of vulnerabilities in web, cloud, or host-based software applications.
  - **Human Attack Surface:** Exploits weaknesses in user behavior.



An Expanding Attack Surface

Application Blacklisting and Whitelisting

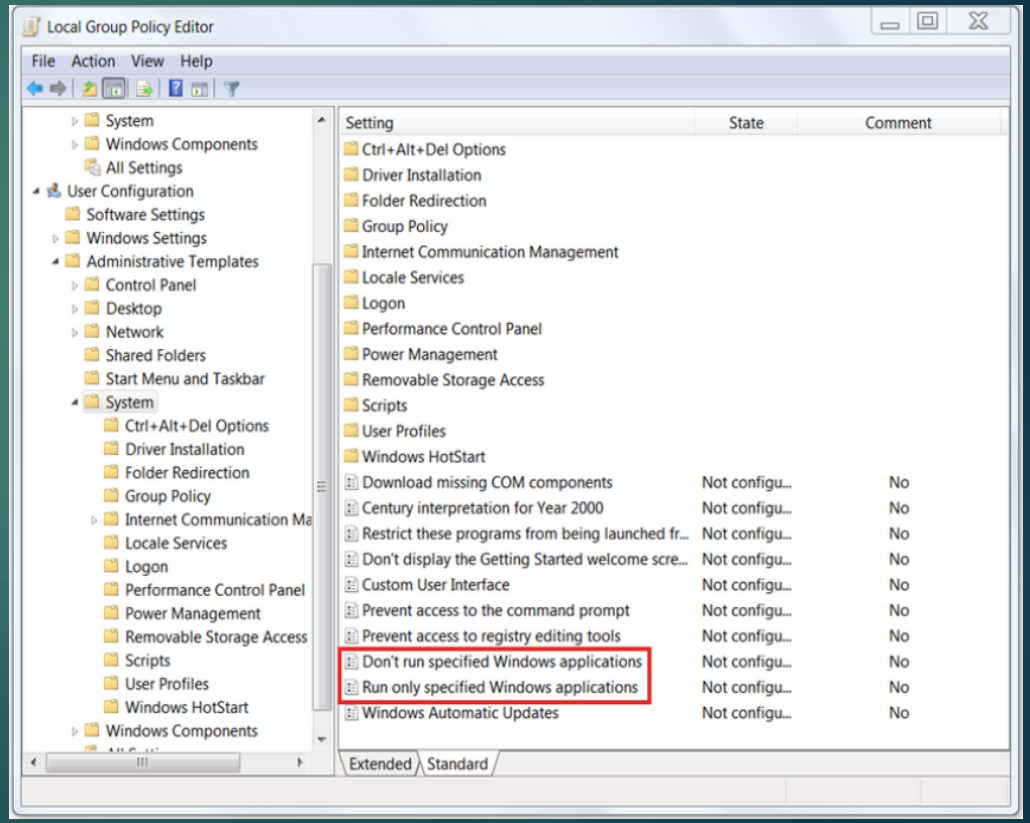
- Limiting access to potential threats by creating lists of prohibited applications is known as blacklisting.
- Application blacklists can dictate which user applications are not permitted to run on a computer.
- Whitelists specify which programs are allowed to run.
- In this way, known vulnerable applications can be prevented from creating vulnerabilities on network hosts.



Application Blacklisting and Whitelisting

Application Blacklisting and Whitelisting (Contd.)

- Websites can also be whitelisted and blacklisted.
- These blacklists can be manually created, or they can be obtained from various security services.
- Blacklists can be continuously updated by security services and distributed to firewalls and other security systems that use them.
- Spamhaus is the world leader in supplying realtime highly accurate threat intelligence to the Internet's major networks.
- The Spamhaus Project



Application Security

System-Based Sandboxing

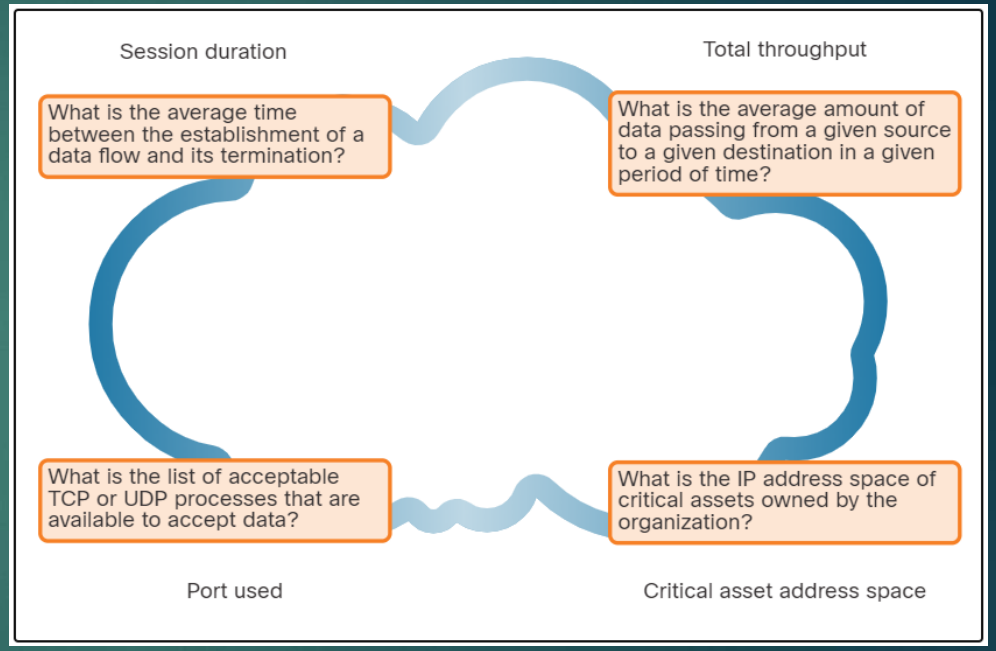
- Sandboxing is a technique that allows suspicious files to be executed and analyzed in a safe environment.
- Cuckoo Sandbox is a popular free malware analysis system sandbox. It can be run locally and have malware samples submitted to it for analysis.
- Cuckoo Sandbox - Automated Malware Analysis
- ANY.RUN is an online tool that offers the ability to upload a malware sample for analysis like any online sandbox.
- ANY.RUN - Interactive Online Malware Sandbox

Video - Using a Sandbox to Launch Malware

- Play the video to view a demonstration of using sandbox environment to launch and analyze a malware attack.

Network Profiling

- Network and device profiling provides statistical baseline information that can serve as a reference point for normal network and device performance.
- Elements of network profile:
  - Session duration
  - Total throughput
  - Critical asset address space
  - Typical traffic type



Elements of a Network Profile

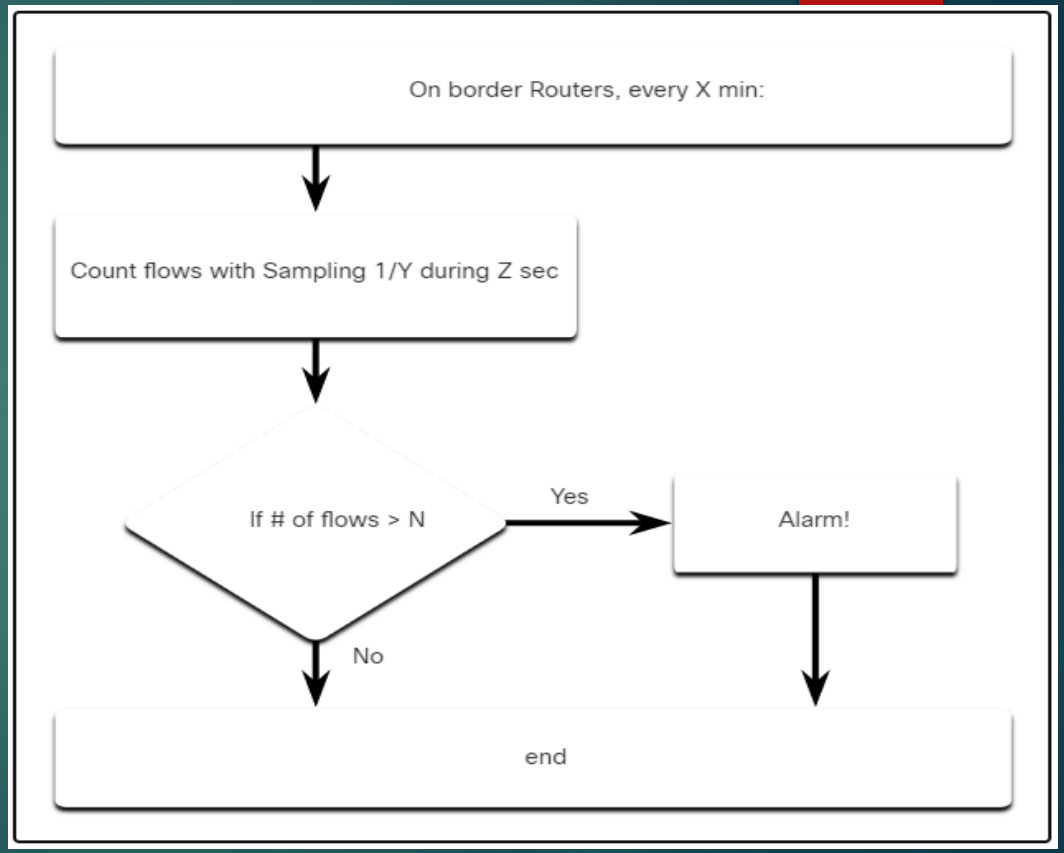
Server Profiling

- A server profile is a security baseline for a given server.
- Server profiling is used to establish the accepted operating state of servers.
- The server profile elements are as follows:

Server Profile Element	Description
Listening ports	These are the TCP and UDP daemons and ports that are normally allowed to be open on the server.
Logged in users and accounts	These are the parameters defining user access and behavior.
Service accounts	These are the definitions of the type of service that an application is allowed to run.
Software environment	These are the tasks, processes, and applications that are permitted to run on the server.

Network Anomaly Detection

- Network behavior is described by a large amount of diverse data such as the features of packet flow, features of the packets themselves, and telemetry from multiple sources.
- Big Data analytics techniques can be used to analyze this data and detect variations from the baseline.
- Anomaly detection can identify infected hosts on the network that are scanning for other vulnerable hosts.
- The figure illustrates a simplified version of an algorithm designed to detect an unusual condition at the border routers of an enterprise.



Network Vulnerability Testing

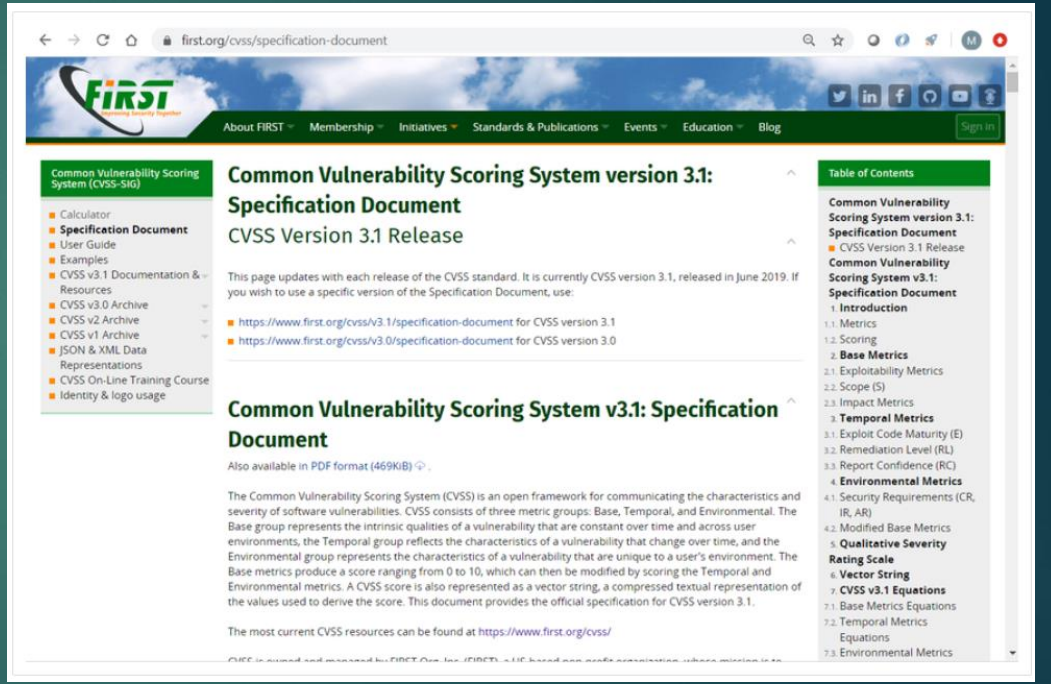
- Network Vulnerability Testing includes Risk Analysis, Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing.
- The table lists examples of activities and tools that are used in vulnerability testing:

Activity	Description	Tools
Risk analysis	Individuals conduct comprehensive analysis of impacts of attacks on core company assets and functioning	Internal or external consultants, risk management frameworks
Vulnerability Assessment	Patch management, host scans, port scanning, other vulnerability scans and services	OpenVas, Microsoft Baseline Analyzer, Nessus, Qualys, Nmap
Penetration Testing	Use of hacking techniques and tools to penetrate network defenses and identify depth of potential penetration	Metasploit, CORE Impact, ethical hackers

Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS)

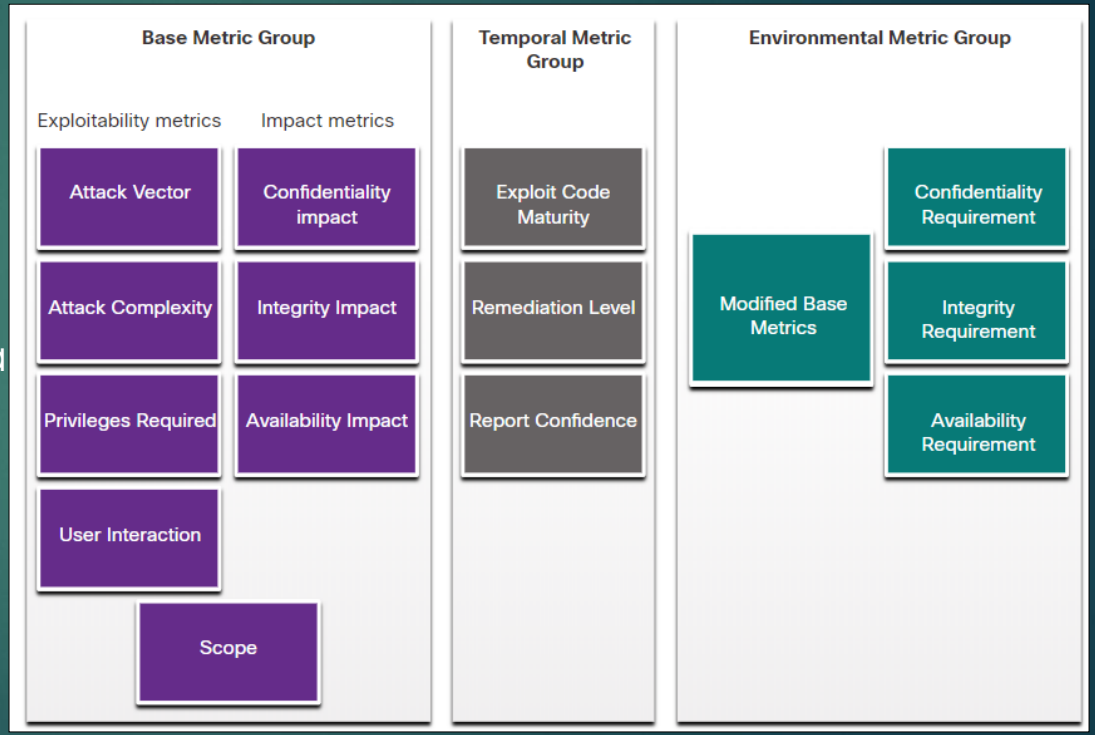
CVSS Overview

- The Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS) is a risk assessment tool designed to convey the common attributes and severity of vulnerabilities in computer hardware and software systems.
- CVSS provides standardized vulnerability scores.
- It provides an open framework with metrics to all users.
- CVSS helps prioritize risk.
- The Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST) has been designated as the custodian of the CVSS to promote its adoption globally.
- [Common Vulnerability Scoring System SIG (first.org)]



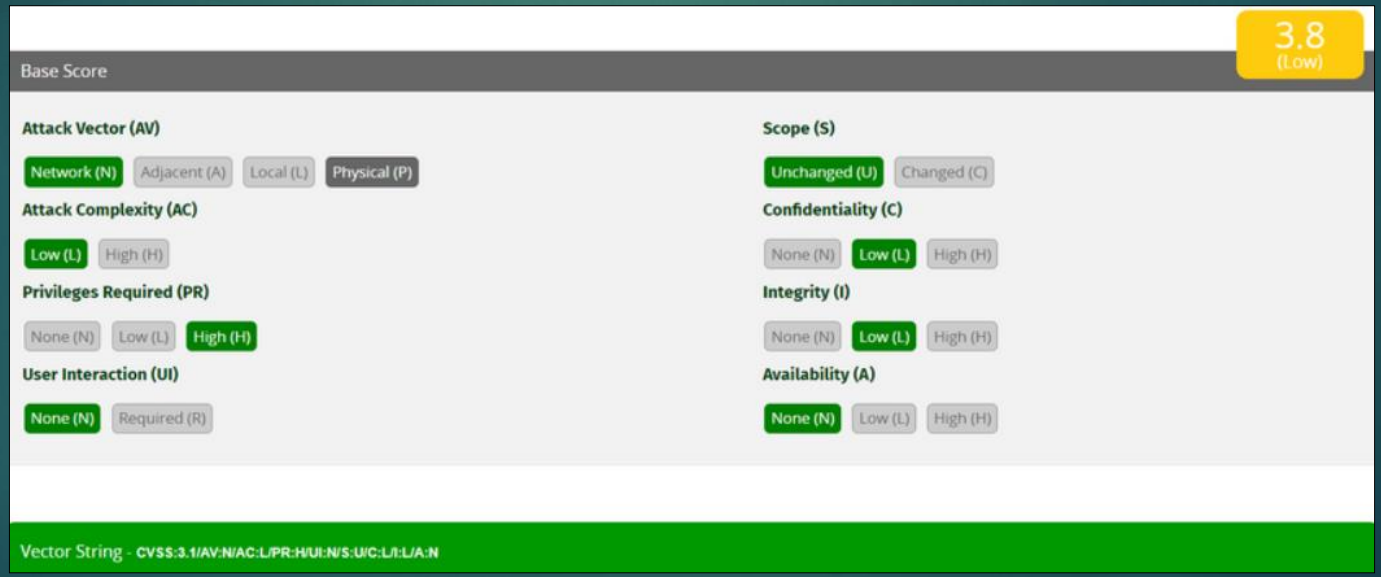
CVSS Metric Groups

- The CVSS uses three groups of metrics to assess vulnerability.
  - **Base Metric Group**: Represents the characteristics of a vulnerability that are constant over time and across contexts.
  - **Temporal Metric Group**: Measures the characteristics of a vulnerability that may change over time, but not across user environments.
  - **Environmental Metric Group**: Measures the aspects of a vulnerability that are rooted in a specific organization's environment.



The CVSS Process

- The CVSS process uses a tool called the CVSS v3.1 Calculator.
- The calculator is like a questionnaire in which the choices are made that describe the vulnerability for each metric group.
- Later, a score is generated and numeric severity rating is displayed.



CVSS Reports

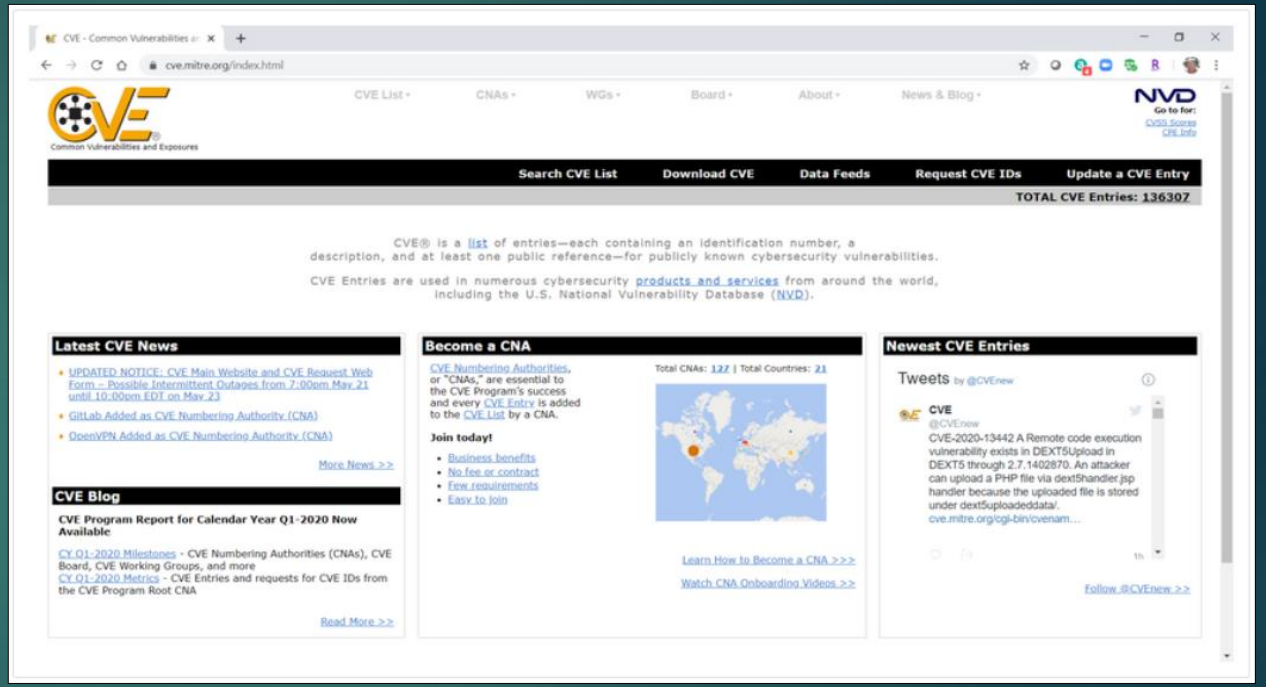
- The higher the severity rating, the greater the potential impact of an exploit and the greater the urgency in addressing the vulnerability.
- Any vulnerability that exceeds 3.9 should be addressed.
- The ranges of scores and the corresponding qualitative meaning is shown in the table:

Rating	CVSS Score
None	0
Low	0.1 – 3.9
Medium	4.0 – 6.9
High	7.0 – 8.9
Critical	9.0 – 10.0

Other Vulnerability Information Sources

Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE):

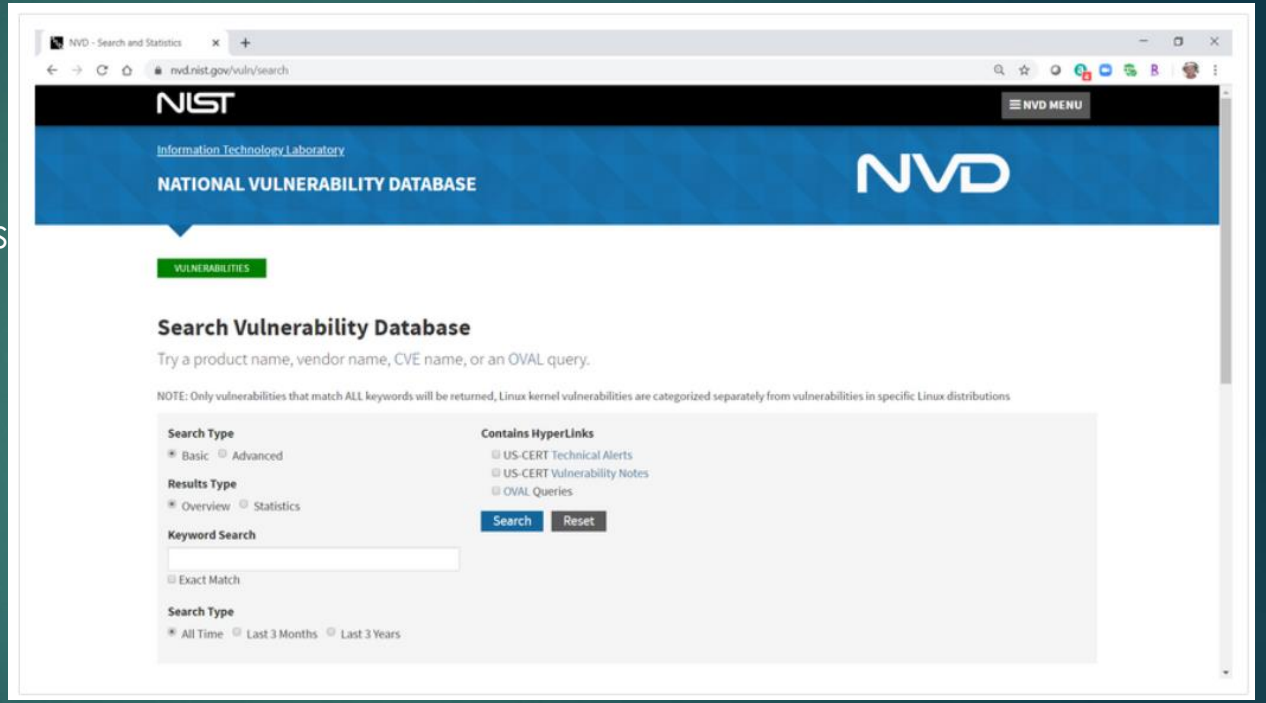
- CVE identifier provides a standard way to research a reference to vulnerabilities.
- Threat intelligence services use CVE identifiers, and they appear in various security system logs.
- The CVE Details website provides a linkage between CVSS scores and CVE information.



Other Vulnerability Information Sources (Contd.)

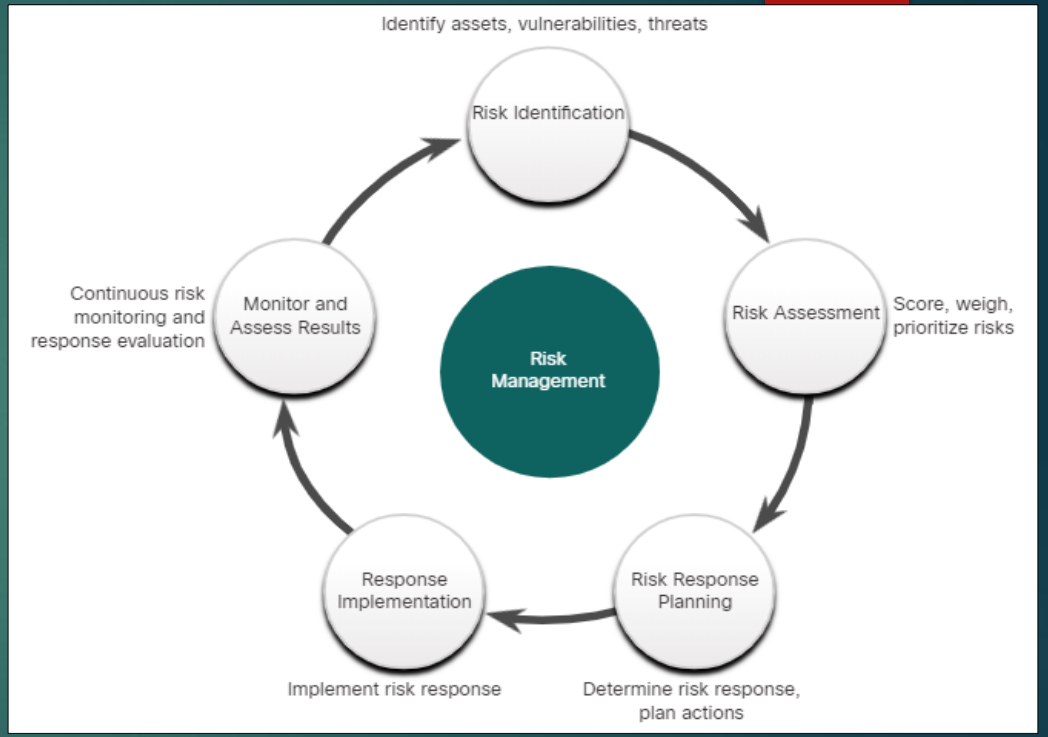
National Vulnerability Database (NVD):

- This utilizes CVE identifiers and supplies additional information on vulnerabilities such as CVSS threat scores, technical details, affected entities, and resources for further investigation.
- The database was created and is maintained by the U.S. government National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) agency.



Risk Management

- Risk management involves the selection and specification of security controls for an organization.
- A mandatory activity in risk assessment is to identify threats and vulnerabilities.
- Ways to respond to identified risks:
  - **Risk avoidance** - Stop performing the activities that create risk.
  - **Risk reduction** - Take measures to reduce vulnerability.
  - **Risk sharing** - Shift some risk to other parties.
  - **Risk retention** - Accept the risk and its consequences.



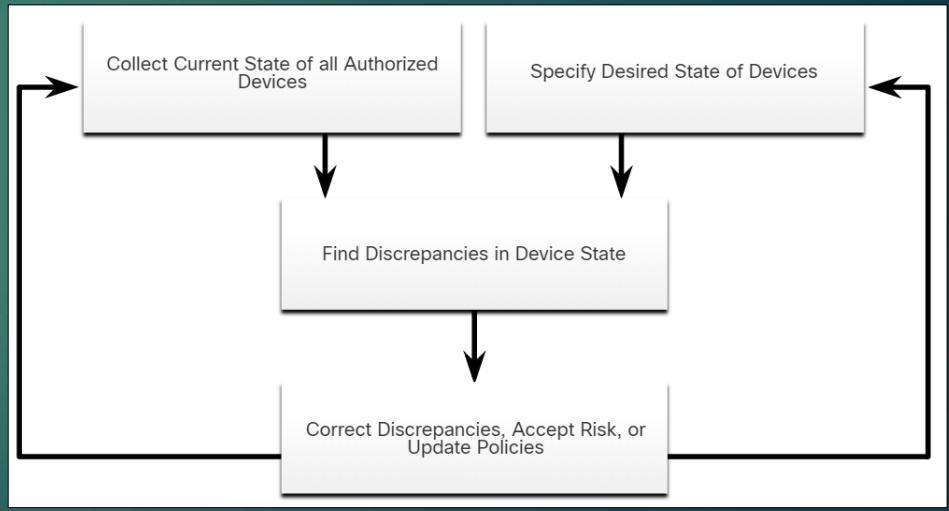
Vulnerability Management

- Vulnerability management is a security practice designed to proactively prevent the exploitation of IT vulnerabilities.
- The steps in the Vulnerability Management Life Cycle:
  - **Discover** - Develop a network baseline. Identify security vulnerabilities on a regular automated schedule.
  - **Prioritize Assets** - Categorize assets into groups or business units, and assign a business value based on their criticality to business operations.
  - **Assess** - Determine a baseline risk profile to eliminate risks based on asset criticality, vulnerability, threats, and asset classification.
  - **Report** - Measure the level of business risk associated with your assets according to your security policies. Document a security plan, monitor suspicious activity, and describe known vulnerabilities.
  - **Remediate** - Prioritize according to business risk and address vulnerabilities in order of risk.
  - **Verify** - Verify that threats have been eliminated through follow-up audits.

Asset Management

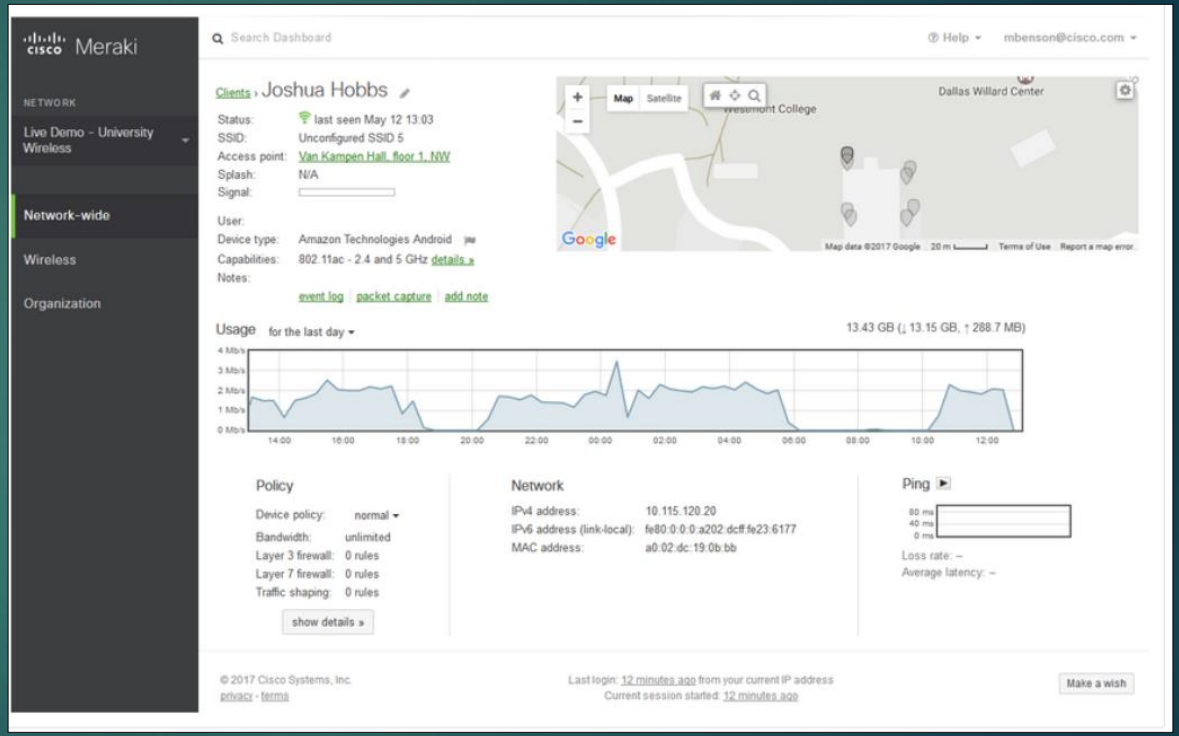
- Asset management involves the implementation of systems that track the location and configuration of networked devices and software across an enterprise.

- Tools and Techniques for Asset management:
  - Automated discovery and inventory of the actual state of devices
  - Articulation of the desired state for those devices using policies, plans, and procedures in the organization's information security plan
  - Identification of non-compliant authorized assets
  - Remediation or acceptance of device state, possible iteration of desired state definition
  - Repeat the process at regular or ongoing intervals



Mobile Device Management

- Mobile devices cannot be physically controlled on the premises of an organization.
- MDM systems, such as Cisco Meraki Systems Manager, allows the security personnel to configure, monitor and update a very diverse set of mobile clients from the cloud.



Configuration Management

- **Configuration Management**: As defined by NIST, configuration management:

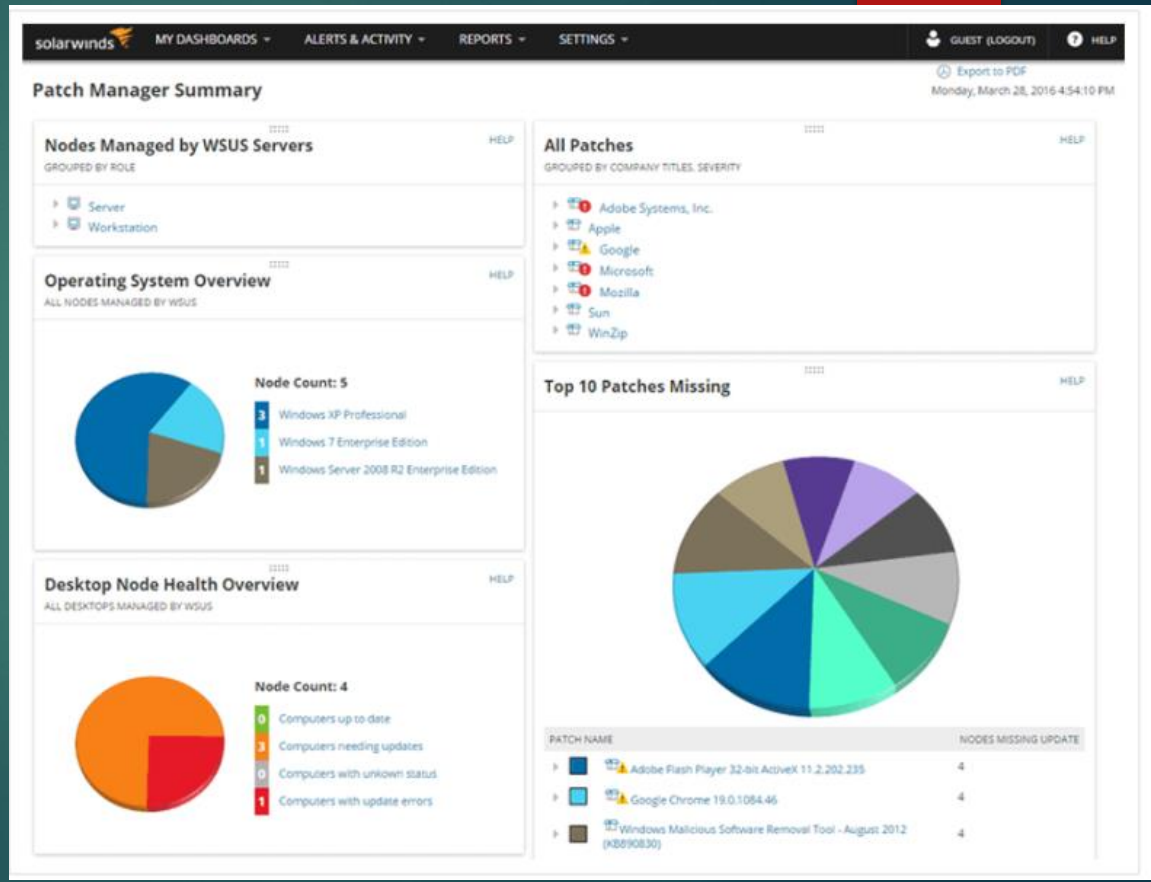
  Comprises a collection of activities focused on establishing and maintaining the integrity of products and systems, through control of the processes for initializing, changing, and monitoring the configurations of those products and systems.

- For internetworking devices, software tools are available that will backup configurations, detect changes in configuration files, and enable bulk change of configurations across a number of devices.
- With the advent of cloud data centers and virtualization, management of numerous servers presents special challenges. Tools like Puppet, Chef, Ansible, and SaltStack enable efficient management of servers that are used in cloud-based computing.

Secure Device Management

Enterprise Patch Management

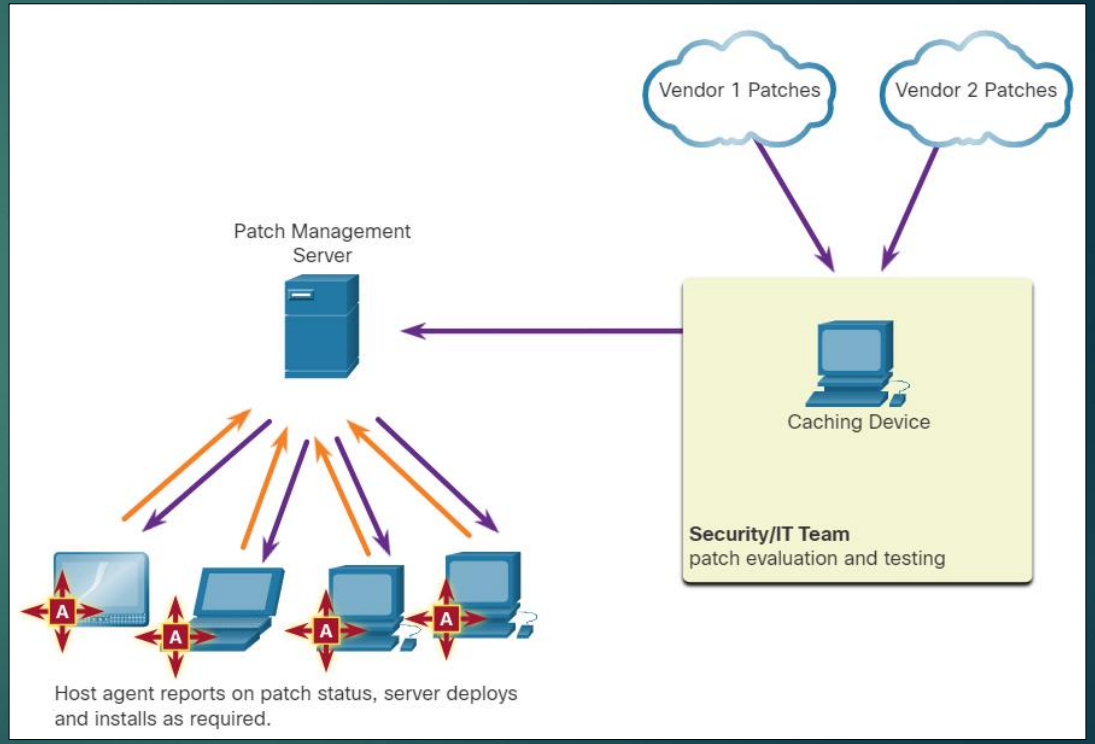
- Patch management involves all aspects of software patching, including identifying required patches, acquiring, distributing, installing, and verifying.
- Patch management is required by some compliance regulations such as Sarbanes Oxley (SOX) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).



Patch Management Techniques

Agent-based:

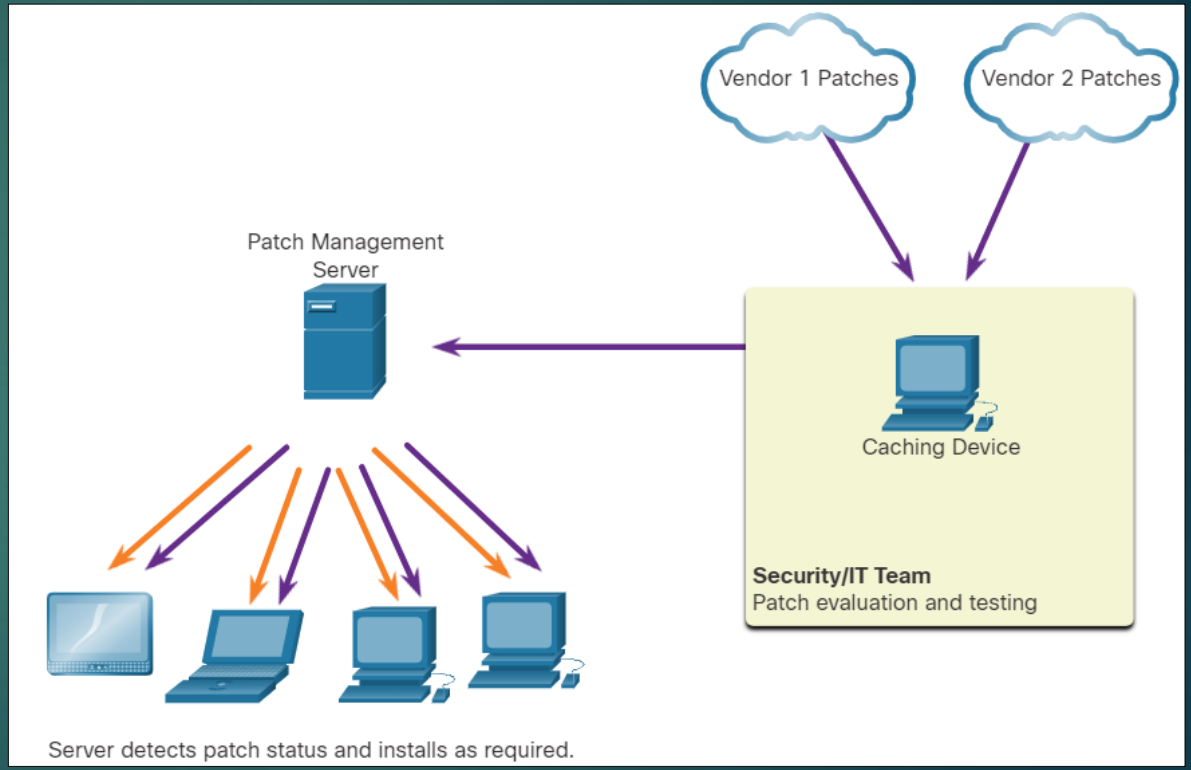
- This requires a software agent to be running on each host to be patched.
- The agent reports whether vulnerable software is installed on the host.
- The agent communicates with the patch management server and determines if patches exist that require installation, and installs the patches.
- Agent-based approaches are the preferred means of patching mobile devices.



Patch Management Techniques

Agentless Scanning:

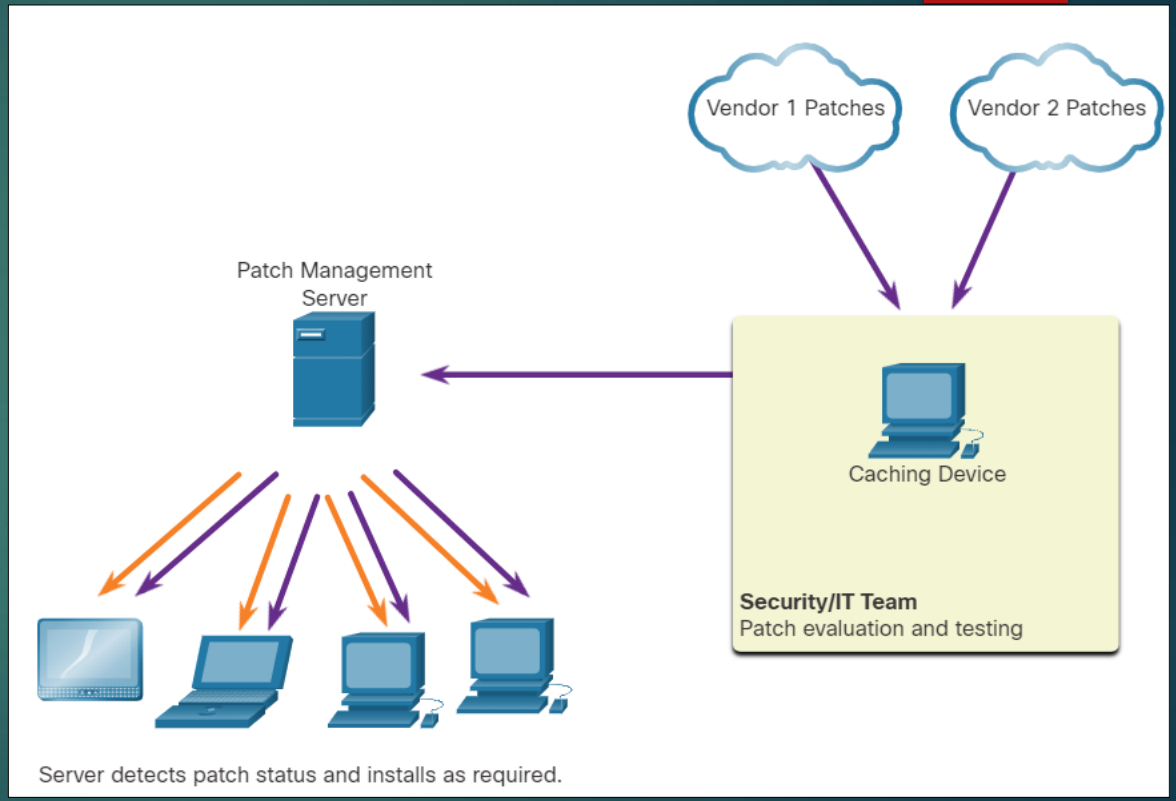
- Patch management servers scan the network for devices that require patching.
- The server determines which patches are required and installs those patches on the clients.
- Only devices that are on scanned network segments can be patched, which can be a problem for mobile devices.



Patch Management Techniques

Passive Network Monitoring:

- Devices requiring patching are identified through the monitoring of traffic on the network.
- This approach is only effective for software that includes version information in its network traffic.



What Did I Learn in this Module?

- Endpoints are defined as hosts on the network that can access or be accessed by other hosts on the network.
- There are two internal LAN elements to secure: Endpoints and Network Infrastructure.
- Antivirus/Antimalware Software is installed on a host to detect and mitigate viruses and malware.
- Host-based firewalls may use a set of predefined policies, or profiles, to control packets entering and leaving a computer.
- Some examples of host-based firewalls include Windows Defender Firewall, iptables, nftables, and TCP Wrappers.
- HIDS protects hosts against known and unknown malware.
- An attack surface is the total sum of the vulnerabilities in a given system that is accessible to an attacker.
- Application blacklists dictate which user applications are not permitted to run on a computer and whitelists specify which programs are allowed to run.

What Did I Learn in this Module?

- Network and device profiling provides statistical baseline information that can serve as a reference point for normal network and device performance.
- Network security can be evaluated using a variety of tools and services.
- Vulnerability assessment uses software to scan Internet-facing servers and internal networks for various types of vulnerabilities.
- The Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS) is a vendor-neutral, industry standard, open framework for rating the risks of a given vulnerability by using a variety of metrics to calculate a composite score.
- Vulnerabilities are rated according to the attack vector, attack complexity, privileges required, user interaction, and scope.
- Risk management involves the selection and specification of security controls for an organization.
- Vulnerability management is a security practice that is designed to proactively prevent the exploitation of IT vulnerabilities that exist within an organization.