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The Right Method To Secure An Oracle Database
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Quick Survey

• How many people here know “where” their key data is held?
• How many people here understand exactly “who” can see or “modify” key data?
• How many people here understand the true “privilege model” employed to protect “key data”?

Agenda

• Hardening by checklist
• Problems with checklists
• The right method
• Data flow
• Privilege/access assessment
• conclusions

Why We Need Security

• The target is often data not the DBA role
• The exploits we see on the net work but stealing data is much more “real” and easy
• It is easy, not rocket science, no skill
• Real theft does not require complex techniques either
• What do you think happens in real life?
  – Exploits can be downloaded for free!
  – Stealing is easy because systems are open

Traditional Approach

• Hardening by checklist – good idea?
• A number of them available
  – SANS Step-by-step guide
  – SANS S.C.O.R.E.
  – CIS benchmark
  – DoD Stig
  – IT Governance book
  – Oracle’s own checklist
Problems With Checklists

- Not many lists exist
- Mostly from same initial source
- Some structure but not good enough
- Doesn't focus on the data
- Difficult to implement for a large number of databases
- CIS for instance has 154 pages

Time / Clever

- Time
  - Could spend man years on even a single database
  - Finding solutions for each issue is not as simple as applying what it says in the document
- Clever
  - Solutions are needed
  - Onion based approach
  - Basic hardening in parallel

Examples Of Problems

- Two examples:
  1) Check 3.0.2 in CIS states “all files in $ORACLE_HOME/bin directory must have privileges of 0755 or less – fine - but the solution states “chmod 0755 $ORACLE_HOME/bin/*” – good idea?
  2) Solutions are not as simple as indicated. For instance fixing a weak password should include, the password, management, hard coded passwords, audit, policy…. 

Checklists And PII Data

Some mention of data BUT not focused

Checklists And Special Data

No special data mentioned at all

The Right Method To Secure

- Start with “the data”
- Understand “data flow” and “access”
- Understand the problem of securing “your data”
- Hardening should be part of the solution BUT not THE solution
- Checklists do not mention “your” data
Complex But Simple Solutions

- Overarching solutions
- Remove all types of access from data
- Ensure only those who should, can see the data
- Unfortunately its not simple as there are
  - Many paths to the data
  - Many copies of data
  - Data stored or in transit that is accessible
  - Data copied outside of the database

Data Access Models

- Data model is not flat
- Access rights are also not flat
- Data is often replicated
  - In other tables – in interfaces – flexfields …
  - Indexes
  - Shared memory
  - Data files
  - Operating system
  - Many more…

Data Access Is Not “Flat”

- The data must be identified
- The access paths found
- The “people” – real people identified
- Map to database users
- Assess who can access data and how
- Only now can we hope to secure data

Securing Data

- We are going to investigate in depth the issues around a simple credit card table
- We need to
  - find the credit card table
  - Find duplicate copies
  - Assess who can access all
  - Other places the data exists
  - More…
- Even these issues are only the “tip of the iceberg” though!
- Lets dig deeper
Securing Data - 2

This problem is often seen. The developers think that everyone accesses the data via their application. The encrypted data could be stolen and cracked off line or decrypted on-line by any user.

Securing Data - 3

Test who can access the credit card crypto package. Again the same problem applies; there is a belief that no one will run this directly.

Securing Data - 4

Wow, there is not a single interface to our credit card data. Each view now needs to be checked to see which users can access the credit card data via these views.

Securing Data - 5

Follow the same process as above. Test who can access the functions found.

Securing Data - 6

There are a number of issues here:

- The data is copied – we can check by looking at IMPORTER.PAN.
- The data is again duplicated in the recycle bin – this needs to be handled.
- Each table found has to be checked for hierarchy and access.
- If we could not find using simple ideas as here we would need to sample data or use specific algorithms.

Securing Data - 7

Sweeping privileges are still dangerous for our data – o7_dictionary_accessibility prevents some hacks but does not stop sweeping data access.

Remember there are other privileges: INSERT, UPDATE, DELETE...

Remember other privileges still that would allow data theft: TRIGGERS, EXECUTE PROCEDURE...
The credit card data can be exposed via export, list files or any other OS / client based resource.

The credit cards can also be exposed in shared memory and many other places. Privileges that allow access to dynamic data or meta-data must be reviewed.

Securing data is not complex but we must take care of all access paths to the data.
We must consider the hierarchy.
We must consider sweeping privileges.
We must consider data leakage.
We must consider data replication.
There is more...unfortunately...
In summary securing specific data ("any data") is first about knowing where that data is and who can access it and how it "flows through the system".

Users – The Opposite Problem

For this example run:
INFO: Number of crack attempts = [41731]
INFO: Elapsed time = [4.36 Seconds]
INFO: Cracks per second = [14170]
53 out of 60 accounts cracked in 4.3 seconds

We are not trying to break in BUT trying to assess the "real security level"

See http://www.petefinnigan.com/oracle_password_cracker.htm

User Types

Shared passwords are a problem
All privileged accounts have the same password
This often implies that the same people do one job or multiple people share passwords.
If database links exist they possibly share the same passwords (check dump files).
Assess not just what you see BUT the implications in terms of management and administration.

Rounding Up

• A simple picture is built of all access to the key data.
• All users are assessed and mapped to the data access.
• Solutions are very specific but generally:
  – Reduce default accounts
  – Reduce access to data
  – Remove duplicate privileges
  – Simplify privilege and access models
  – Generalise

Access Issue
Conclusions

- There are a few important lessons we must learn to secure data held in an Oracle database
  - We must secure the "data" not the software (quite obviously we MUST secure the software to achieve "data" security)
  - We must start with the "data" not the software
  - We must understand who/how/why/when "data" could be stolen
- Oracle security is complex though because we must consider "where" the "data" is and "who" can access it and "how"
- Often there are "layers" and "duplication"
- Careful detailed work is often needed

Quick Survey – Again!

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Any Questions?