The Right Method To Secure An Oracle Database
By Pete Finnigan

Why Am I Qualified To Speak

Quick Survey

Agenda

Why We Need Security

Traditional Approach
Problems With Checklists

- Not many lists exist
- Mostly from same initial source or very similar
- Some structure but not good enough
  - “tip based rather than method based”
- Doesn’t focus on the data
- Difficult to implement for a large number of databases
- CIS for instance has 154 pages

Time “vs” 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 see, 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

Architecture

Data Access Models

Data Access Is Not “Flat”

- Data model is not flat – remove the blinkers
- 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…

How / Who

- The data must be identified (found?)
- The access paths must be 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

Look for the credit cards
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…
Securing Data - 8

- The credit card data can be exposed via export, list files or any other OS / client based resource

Securing Data - 9

- 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 - 10

- 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 sample run:
  - TMD: Number of attack attempts = 14170
  - TMD: Attack per second = 0.9
  - 61791 attempts in 4.36 seconds

- 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"

User Types

- Shared passwords are a problem
- All privileged accounts share the same password
- 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
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!

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

Any Questions?

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