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Cybersecurity — Multi-party coordinated vulnerability disclosure and handling

Cybersécurité — Divulgation et traitement de vulnérabilité coordonnée entre plusieurs parties

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Contents

Page

Foreword ..... **v**

Introduction ..... **vi**

1 Scope **1**

2 Normative references **1**

3 Terms and definitions **1**

4 Concepts **1**
4.1 General 1
4.2 Relationship with other International Standards 3
4.2.1 ISO/IEC 29147 - Vulnerability disclosure 3
4.2.2 ISO/IEC 30111 - Vulnerability handling processes 3
4.2.3 Risk reduction effectiveness 4

5 MPCVD scenarios **5**
5.1 General 5
5.2 MPCVD led by the vendor-coordinator (the owner of the technology developed) – the “mitigating vendor” 5
5.3 MPCVD process in non-owner cases 5

6 MPCVD stakeholders **5**
6.1 General 5
6.2 Vendor 5
6.2.1 Mitigating vendor 5
6.2.2 Dependent vendor 6
6.2.3 Mitigating vendor and coordination 6
6.3 Non-vendor coordinator 6
6.4 Reporters 6
6.5 Users 6
6.6 Product security incident response team (PSIRT) function 6

7 MPCVD life cycle **6**
7.1 General 6
7.2 Policy development 7
7.2.1 Preparation 7
7.2.2 Policy 7
7.3 Strategy development 7
7.3.1 Information sharing strategy 7
7.3.2 Disclosure strategy 7
7.4 Know your customers 8
7.5 Encrypted communication methods and conference calls 8
7.6 Processes and controls 8

8 MPCVD life cycle for each product **8**
8.1 Product and user mapping 8
8.2 Component analysis 8
8.3 User analysis 9

9 MPCVD life cycle for each vulnerability **9**
9.1 Receipt 9
9.2 Verification 9
9.3 Remediation development 10
9.4 Release 10
9.5 Post-release 10
9.6 Embargo period 10

10 Information exchange **11**

11 Disclosure **12**

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12 Use case for hardware and further considerations **12**
Bibliography **14**

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Foreword

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This document was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 27, *Information security, cybersecurity and privacy protection*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html and www.iec.ch/national-committees.

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Introduction

Remediation of vulnerabilities in modern technology systems can vary and depend on the nature of the vulnerable component. Certain vulnerability handling efforts can require multiple ecosystem players taking action at multiple and interdependent layers within a given information and communication technology (ICT) system. Mitigation can necessitate the engagement of the broad ecosystem of stakeholders to develop, test and deploy mitigations in a manner geared to incentivize adoption by end users.

For example, a vulnerability in a widely used software library (protocol) can entail action by different ecosystem players as part of the remediation effort. As another example, a remediation development and testing for a vulnerability in a hardware component can depend on an operating system running on the hardware, and require different actions from different operating system providers. Due to these considerations, multiple vendors need to participate in remediation efforts involving certain vulnerabilities.

Yet vulnerability disclosure and handling processes as described in ISO/IEC 29147 and ISO/IEC 30111 primarily focus on processes involving one reporter and one vendor. Further discussion and considerations are necessary to explain how ISO/IEC 29147 and ISO/IEC 30111 practices apply in the context of multi-party coordinated vulnerability handling and disclosure (MPCVD).

ISO/IEC 29147 and ISO/IEC 30111:2019, Clause 8 briefly and generally address the complex situation of MPCVD, where a broader collaboration within the ecosystem is needed to identify and validate vulnerabilities, develop and test mitigations and finally make them available for end users. ISO/IEC 30111 refers to these situations as “cases where vendors can share vulnerability information in order to resolve the issue that involves components from multiple vendors” and provide five examples of such situations or reasons:

a) A vulnerability which was reported that affects a specific piece of software, but is caused by an issue in an underlying operating system or hardware.

b) Vulnerabilities in various product implementations of a flawed standard functional specification or in published algorithms.

c) Vulnerabilities that are naturally induced by so far widely accepted development methodology.

d) Vulnerabilities in commonly used libraries.

e) Vulnerabilities in software components that lack a current maintainer.

The MPCVD effort for a vulnerability in a technology owned and manufactured by the vendor leading the process – the coordinating vendor, or mitigating vendor manages and leads the coordination effort. The mitigating vendor (example a) above) can entail different processes from one in which a broader collaboration is needed and there is no one distinct vendor of the technology (e.g. protocol-level vulnerabilities) (examples b) to e) above). These examples include both vendor-coordinated MPCVD and non-owner MPCVD. Recognizing MPCVD can raise unique considerations for vulnerability handling given the technical and coordination complexities. Several documents have been published to share norms and best practices in this evolving area. These best practices continue to be developed, iterated and improved as new challenges arise. This document builds upon these sources and refers to them.

The audience for this document includes, among others, the participants of the MPCVD process such as vendors (defined in ISO/IEC 29147:2018, 3.4), maintainers, producers, developers, manufacturers, suppliers[1)], installers, or providers of a product or service, coordinators (including public coordinators), reporters (e.g. security researchers), and users of information technology products and services.

1) By way of example, when the open source maintainer is leading the coordination effort in the non-owner MPCVD case or as “dependent vendor”, a “vendor” can also include open-source software maintainers who develop and distribute code.

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Cybersecurity — Multi-party coordinated vulnerability disclosure and handling

1 Scope

This document clarifies and increases the application and implementation of ISO/IEC 30111 and ISO/IEC 29147 in multi-party coordinated vulnerability disclosure (MPCVD) settings, including the evolving commonly adopted practices in this area, by articulating:

— The MPCVD life cycle and application of coordinated vulnerability disclosure (CVD) stages (preparation, receipt, verification, remediation[2)] development, release, post-release) in MPCVD settings.

— Stakeholders involved in MPCVD include users, vendors (coordinating, mitigating, and dependent vendors), reporters, and non-vendor coordinators (entities defined in ISO/IEC 29147 and ISO/IEC 30111).

— The exchange of information between stakeholders during the vulnerability handling and disclosure process in a MPCVD settings.

Clarifying the application of ISO/IEC 30111 and ISO/IEC 29147 in MPCVD settings illustrates the benefits of vulnerability disclosure processes.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 29147:2018, *Information technology — Security techniques — Vulnerability disclosure*

ISO/IEC 30111:2019, *Information technology — Security techniques — Vulnerability handling processes*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 30111 and ISO/IEC 29147 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

4 Concepts

4.1 General

MPCVD processes are generally based on two concepts: (1) when security vulnerabilities arise, vendors work quickly, collaboratively and effectively to mitigate the vulnerabilities, and (2) all involved parties (which includes the various entities working on the mitigations and the reporters who discovered

2) Remediation is a defined term used in ISO/IEC 30111 and ISO/IEC 29147. This document uses the term "remediation" and verb “remediate” in the context of this definition.

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