



# Cyber Threats in Aviation

Any lessons from history?

Dr. Stefan Frei | [frei@techzoom.net](mailto:frei@techzoom.net) | Twitter @stefan\_frei  
[www.techzoom.net](http://www.techzoom.net)

## Lessons from numerous engagements as ethical hacker (penetration testing) for the largest and best defended organizations around the world

1

In each and every engagement, at the end we had the organization fully compromised.

2

More often than not, it was not necessary to dig deep in our bag of technical tricks to achieve the compromise.

(1) is OK if you hire professionals.

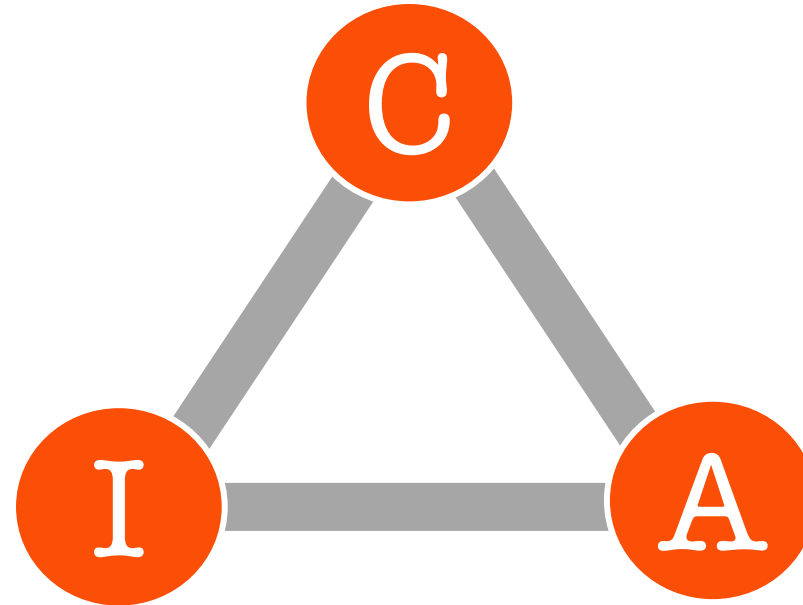
(2) is worrisome, and understanding such failures drives the topics of this course.

# Common Ground

# INFORMATION SECURITY OBJECTIVES – CIA TRIAD

## Confidentiality

Prevention of **unauthorized disclosure** of information.



## Integrity

Prevention/detection of **unauthorized modification** or deletion of information.

## Availability

Prevention of **unauthorized withholding** of information or service.

# SAFETY VS. SECURITY

The English language differentiates **SECURITY** from **SAFETY**, for which there is only one expression **SICHERHEIT** in German.

## SAFETY

- Safety is the protection **against random**, unwanted incidents - resulting from **coincidences** or driven by the environment
- **THE ENVIRONMENT DOES NOT ADAPT TO BYPASS SAFETY MEASURES.**

### Natural Science

Controlled Experiments, Modelling

## SECURITY

- Security is the protection **against intended incidents** – resulting from a **deliberate and planned act**
- Driven by targeted attacker.
- **DELIBERATE ACTS DRIVEN BY AN ADAPTIVE ATTACKER.**

### Social Science

Ever Changing Environment

What makes the  
Cyber World  
different?

# IN JUST TWO DECADES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THE INTERNET TRANSFORMED SOCIETY AND BUSINESSES ALIKE

We had little time to learn or adopt, as individuals, society, industry



1 Million Years



50 Years

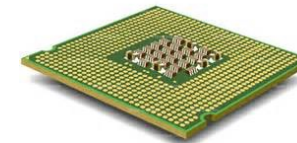
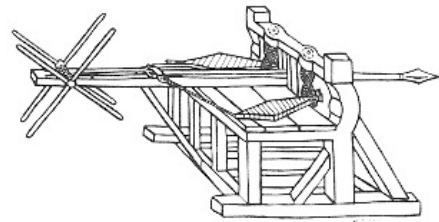


**CRIMINALS PROVED REPEATEDLY TO BE VERY FAST ADOPTERS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.**

# THROUGHOUT HISTORY, NEW TECHNOLOGIES HAVE REVOLUTIONIZED CRIME AND WARFARE ALIKE

... so has Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

- Gunpowder
- Tanks
- Aircraft
- Satellites
- Computers
- Networks
- Internet of things
- ..





# CRIMINALS ARE FAST ADOPTERS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

## Example: Bonnot Gang (La Bande à Bonnot)

- A French criminal anarchist group, operated in France and Belgium from 1911 to 1912
- The gang **utilized cutting-edge technology not yet available to the French police:**

### Automobiles and Repeating Rifles



$$V_{\text{Automobile}} \gg V_{\text{Horse}} \gg V_{\text{Bicycle}}$$

*"They escaped in their stolen automobile as two policemen tried to catch them, one on horseback and the other on a bicycle."*

# HUMANS ARE NEW TO THE MECHANISMS AND ARTIFACTS OF CYBER RISK

We have no built-in concept to deal with abstract risks



No training needed to instantly  
get out of danger

**INSTANT PERCEPTION  
OF RISKS**



Security defects are invisible  
without proper testing

**LIMITED OR NO PERCEPTION  
OF RISKS**



- Difficult to get resources from CxO to counter abstract risks
- Illusion of control and accumulation of hidden risks

# THERE IS DIFFERENCE A BETWEEN PERCEIVED AND ACTUAL RISK

**we over-react to**

**INTENTIONAL ACTION**

*Anthrax*

**IMMEDIATE THREATS**

*Humans are hard-wired  
to do so instinctively*

**THINGS THAT OFFEND OUR  
MORALS**

**we under-react to**

**ACCIDENTS**

*Influenza, Falling down stairs*

**ABSTRACT EVENTS**

*Can't see it*

**CHANGES THAT OCCUR  
SLOWLY**

*Humans are new to predicting,  
global warming*

# RISK PERCEPTION - EXPERIMENT

Consider the following two scenarios:

Game / Experiment	
Scenario 1	Scenario 2
I give you a dollar.	<b>We flip a fair coin:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Heads: I give you <b>\$1,000</b></li><li>▪ Tails: You give me <b>\$998</b></li></ul>
<b>Expected Value: \$1</b>	<b>Expected Value: \$1</b>
$E[\text{Scenario 1}] = 1 \cdot 1 = 1$	$E[\text{Scenario 2}] = 0.5 \cdot 1'000 - 0.5 \cdot 998 = 1$

The expected values are the same in both cases (\$1), but the risks seem quite different.

# THREATS THROUGH CONTINUED INNOVATION AND PRICE EROSION

**Miniaturization and increased capabilities of tools while prices erode.**

This development fundamentally changes how we acquire, share, operate, and use any kinds of goods:

- Today's transistors are **90,000x** more efficient and **60,000x** cheaper than 1971
- A car today would cost **CHF 0.25** and consume **0.2 ml fuel/100 km**



DRONES



3D PRINTER



ROBOTS



SOFTWARE DEFINED  
RADIO



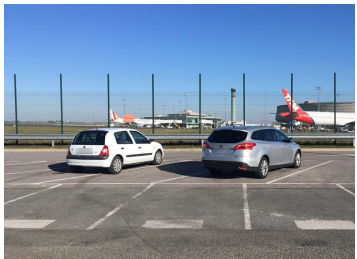
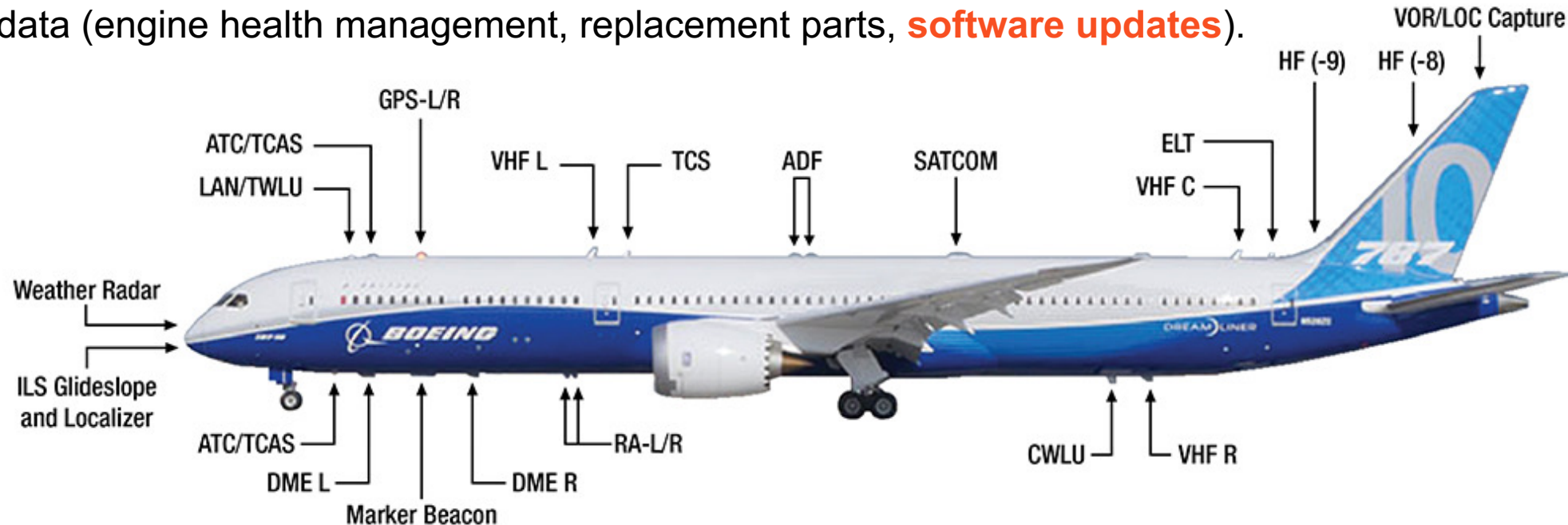
**Any security assumption based on the limited *availability, capability, or high price* of (attack) tools become invalid and must be reconsidered.**

# MODERN AIRPLANES – LEGACY COMMUNICATIONS

## Hacking into wireless communication with software defined radios

Legacy flight critical **communication and navigation** systems are not protected.

Modern airplanes use **wireless (802.11 b/g) technology** while at the gate transferring maintenance and reliability data (engine health management, replacement parts, **software updates**).



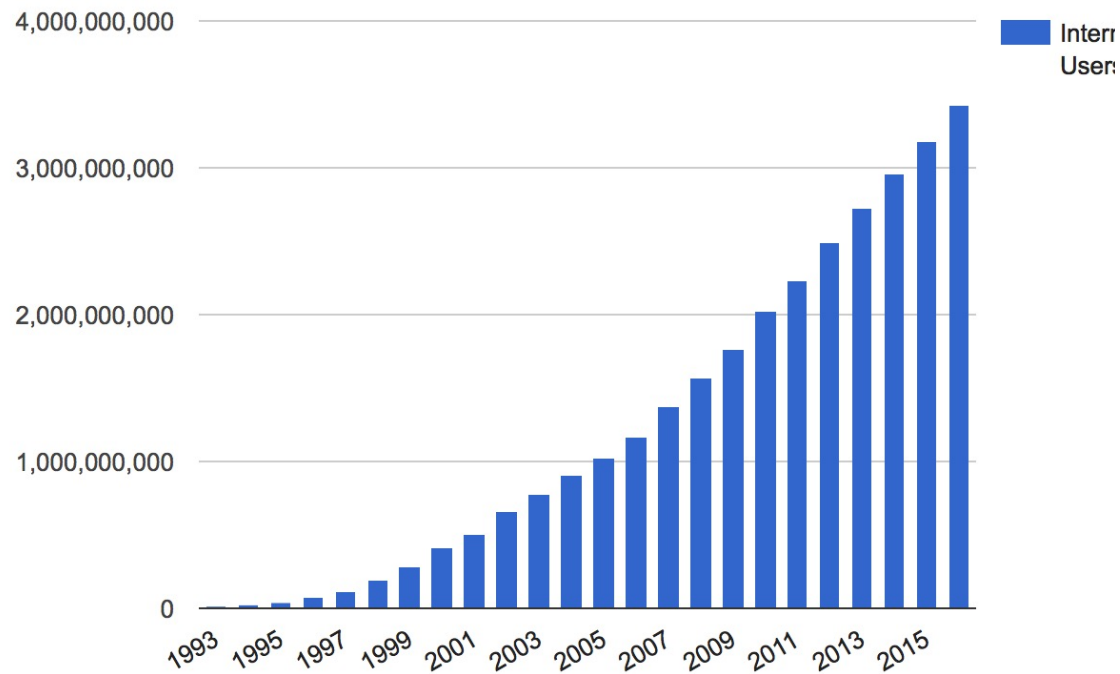
1. Intercept wireless communication between aircraft and airport terminal.
2. Team sits in parked car, connecting to target aircraft with software defined radio.
3. Accessed flight/cabin systems, modified code for specific flight plan.
4. **KNOCKING AT THE DOOR OF THE FMS**



# THE INTERNET OF THINGS AND PEOPLE

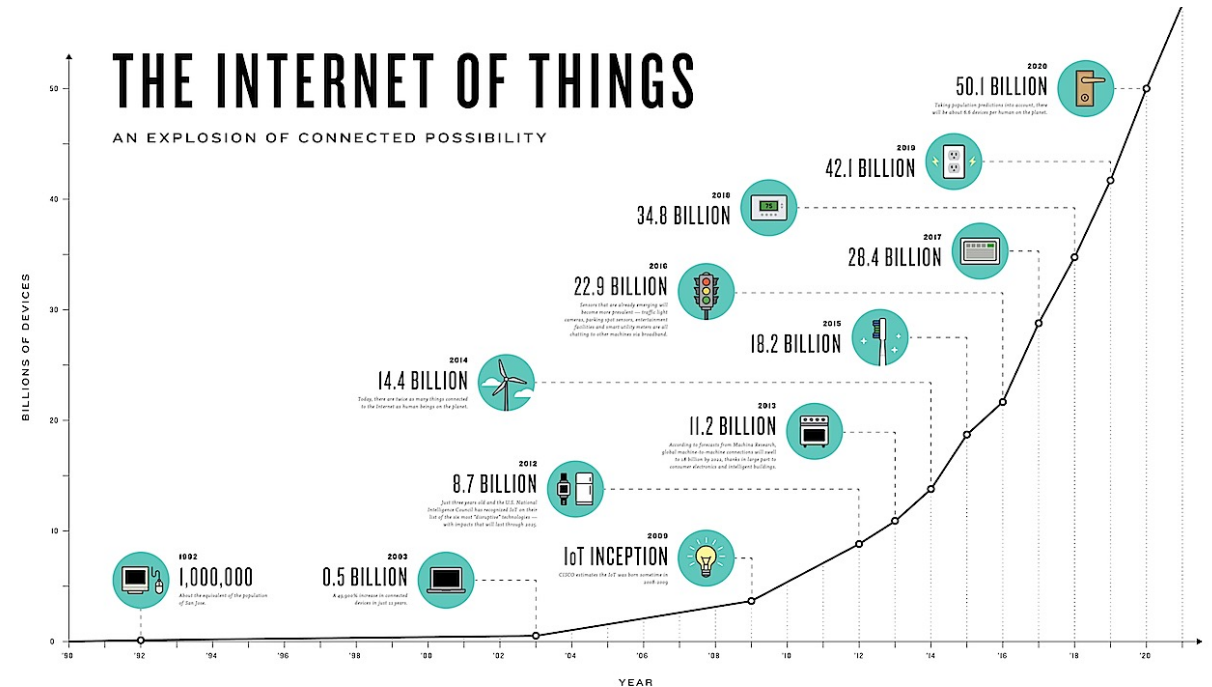
## From an attackers perspective ..

### >3 Billion People Today



Numerous targets

### > 50 Billion Devices by 2020

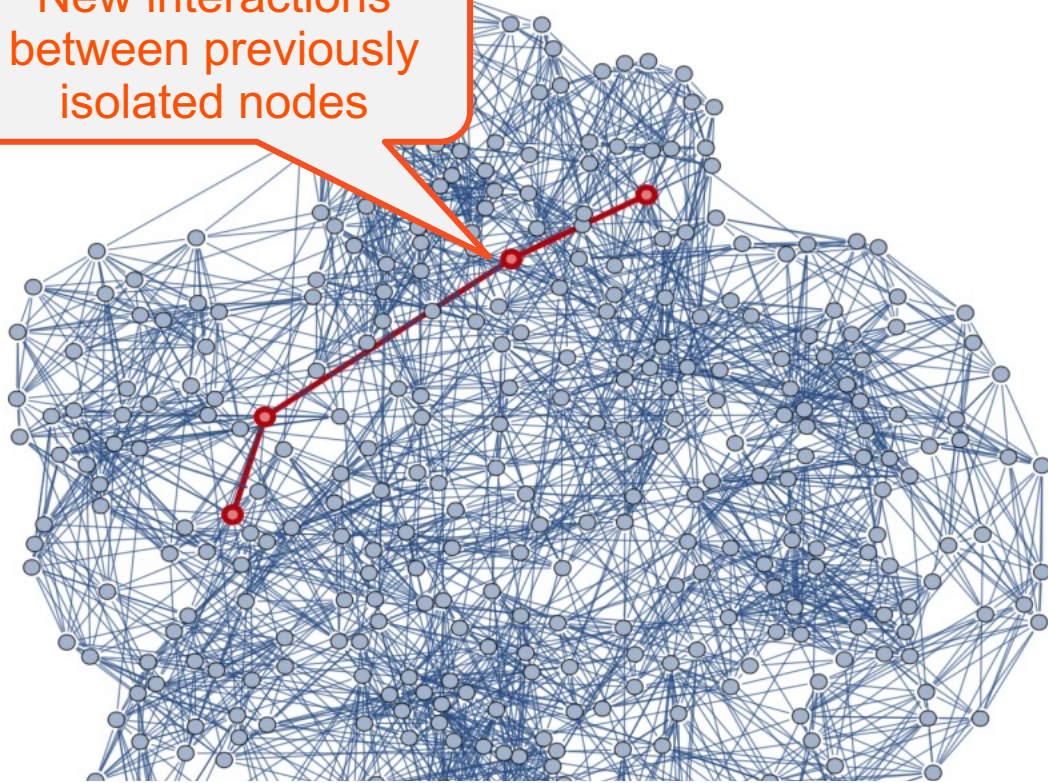


.. even more targets

# CONNECTING PEOPLE, SERVICES, .. & DEVICES

New ways of interaction also create fundamentally novel attack paths which are not predictable by definition

New interactions  
between previously  
isolated nodes



## PROPERTIES OF COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS

<b>CONNECTIVITY</b>	A decision in one part of the system will affect other related or distant parts.
<b>SENSITIVE DEPENDENCE</b>	Non-linearity, cascades.
<b>EMERGENT ORDER</b>	Emergent and unpredictable behavior, which cannot be predicted <b>even with full knowledge of all elements</b>

We have to adopt to permanent change, high dynamics, and decreased predictability



# STRATEGIES TO HANDLE UNPREDICTABILITY

## Different approaches between men and nature

### MEN

Predict and model risks

> PREVENT SHOCKS <

- Relies on **accuracy of models** and **probabilities**
- Optimization: **Short term gain, efficiency**

> FRAGILE <

### NATURE

No attempt to predict risks

> ABSORB SHOCKS <

- Relies on **redundancy, diversity** and **robustness**
- Absorption: **Long term survival, diversity**

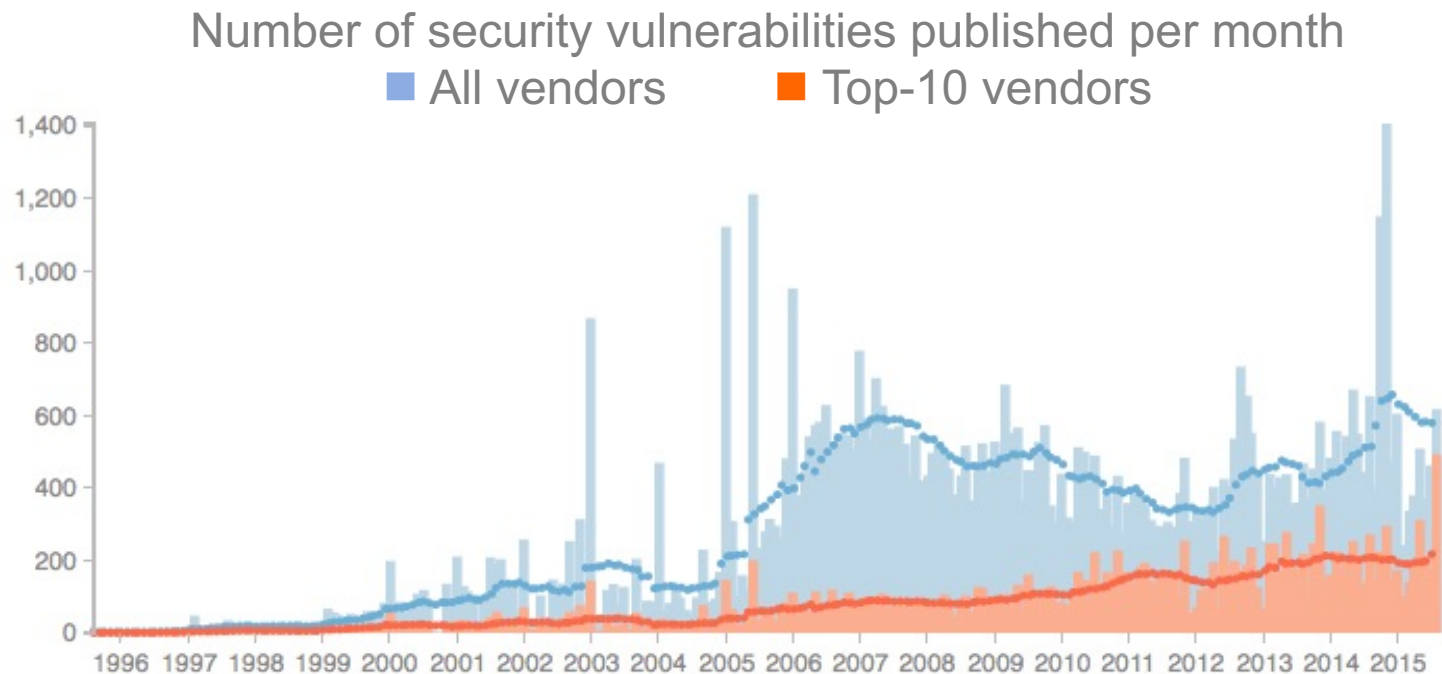
> ANTI-FRAGILE <

**Management:**

**Balance degree of optimization: short term gains vs. long term survival**

# SOFTWARE EATS THE WORLD

In spite of increased investment, there will never be secure code, given the 'special' business model of software.



Complex software with vulnerabilities drives everyday devices – we need to manage vulnerabilities.

## FOLLOW THE MONEY

Economics often explains security defects better than technology.

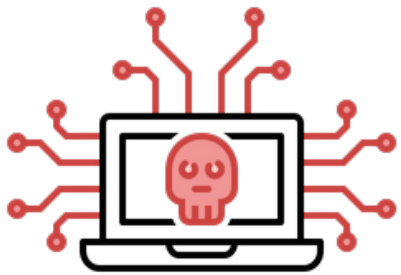
### >> NO PRODUCT LIABILITY FOR SOFTWARE <<

- A security patch is nothing but a **product recall at the expense of the customer.**
- Why do many **smart or IOT devices** offload critical functionality to the cloud?
- No **minimum security or quality standards** for software.

# Threats & Attackers

# TYPES OF ATTACKS

## Targeted Attacks vs. Opportunistic Attacks, and Persistence



---

### TARGETED ATTACK

- Actors have **clearly defined objectives and targets** that they pursue consistently.
- Usually with the backing of considerable resources (finances, expertise, human resources, tools & materials).
- Attackers of this kind are often relentless.

---

### OPPORTUNISTIC ATTACK

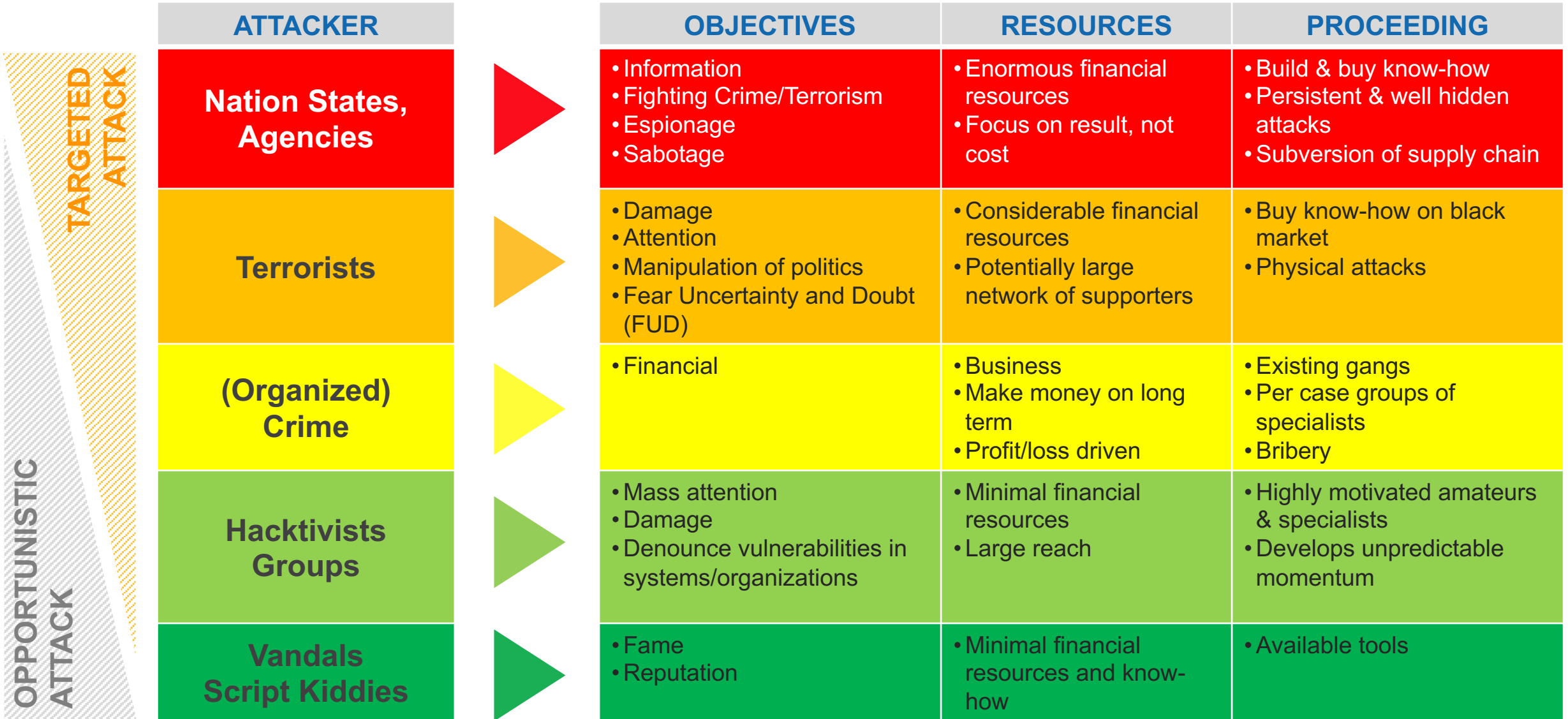
- Actors **take opportunities** online, either by chance or because the target is not adequately protected.

---

### PERSISTENT ATTACK

- The attack is **capable of constantly increasing its penetration** of systems and resources.
  - Attackers pursue their goals **over a longer period of time and via multiple parallel channels**.
  - Reinfection following failed or inadequate attempts.
-

# THREAT ACTORS & ATTACKERS



# PROFESSIONAL ATTACKERS & SERVICES

## Automation, Easy To Use Tools, Service Level Agreements

The image displays several overlapping windows of malware and encryption tools. At the top left is the interface for 'TURKOJAN 4' by Alien Technology. Below it is 'RDG TEJON v0.6 Crypter Private Version' with a list of features like 'Anti-Debugger' and 'Anti-Virtual PC'. In the center is 'IFArZ Crypter 2.7.0' showing file encryption options. To the right is 'Public Crypter Poison Ivy 2.0' with a skull icon. Other windows include 'EVCY 1.0 by TOPCAT\_42' and 'mal-share.blogspot.com'.

**Gold Edition**

- 6 months (unlimited) or 9 months (maximum 3 times) replacement warranty if it gets detected by any antivirus (you can choose 6 months or 9 months)
- 7/24 online support via e-mail and instant messengers

Malware offered for **\$249** with a service level agreement (SLA) and **replacement warranty** if the creation **is detected by any antivirus** within 9 months.



## THE GERASIMOV DOCTRINE

**Gerasimov took tactics developed by the Soviets, blended them with strategic military thinking about total war, and laid out a new theory of modern warfare:**

He wrote

- “The very ‘rules of war’ have changed
- The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness

**The doctrine looks more like hacking an enemy’s society than attacking it head-on.**



Валéрий Васильевич  
Герáсимов

Source: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/gerasimov-doctrine-russia-foreign-policy-215538>



# ALMOST EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO, AND CAN AFFORD THE LATEST IN CYBER WEAPON TECHNOLOGY

Main Battle Tank  
≈ 5 Million



Fighter Aircraft  
≈ 50 Million



Frigate  
≈ 250 Million



Spy Satellite  
≈ 500 Million



Market prices for exploits (= cyber weapons)

**\$1 Million for iPhone exploit**

**\$700k for Android exploit**

$\text{exploit price} \approx \langle \text{market share} \rangle \times \langle \text{security of product} \rangle$

**The historic monopoly of states to access and operate the latest in weapon technology is now broken.**

(Full)  
Disclosure Debate

# YOU DISCOVER A CRITICAL VULNERABILITY IN A POPULAR PROGRAM

What do you do next?



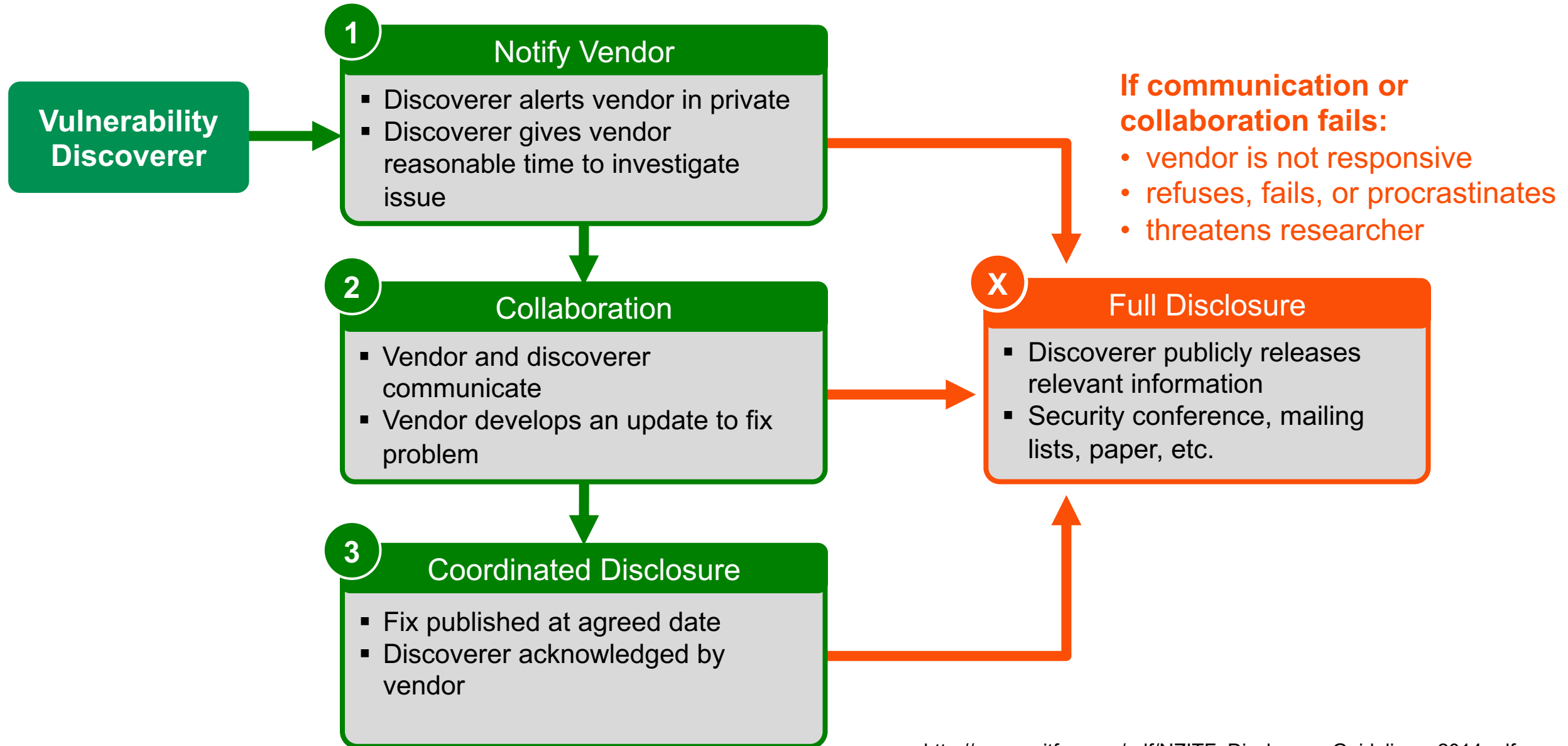
# YOU DISCOVER A CRITICAL VULNERABILITY IN A POPULAR PROGRAM

## What do you do next?



**The desire of vendors to know about their vulnerabilities is not always matched by a willingness to act on the information.**

# COORDINATED DISCLOSURE PROCESS



# RISK MANAGEMENT CULTURE

## Different approaches to risk management in organizations

- The purpose of risk management is **to improve the future, not to explain the past.**
- Risk management is about making decisions.



PATHOLOGIC	BUREAUCRATIC	GENERATIVE
Don't want to know	May not find out	Actively seek
Messengers "shot"	Heard if they arrive	Messengers rewarded
Responsibility shirked	Compartmentalized	Responsibility shared
<b>Failure punished</b>	<b>Local repairs only</b>	<b>Failures beget reforms</b>
<b>IDEAS DISCOURAGED</b>	<b>IDEAS BEGET PROBLEMS</b>	<b>IDEAS WELCOMED</b>

Digital Products  
vs.  
Physical Products

# PERCEPTION OF RISK IN THE IOT WORLD

## From the USERS perspective

Computer

dangerous



Thermostat

great



Toaster

cool



Smart Bear

cute



Smart Meter

nice



Smart-TV

cool





# PERCEPTION OF RISK IN THE IOT WORLD

## From the ATTACKERS perspective

### Computer

antivirus, exploit  
mitigation  
patching



### Thermostat

great



### Toaster

cool



### Smart Bear

cute



### Smart Meter

nice



### Smart-TV

cool



WE ARE PREPARED

WE ARE UNPREPARED

- For an attacker, all these devices are just **poorly protected networked computers**, running **complex software**, suffering the **same vulnerabilities**.
- Easy targets**



# KNOWN AND PROVEN SECURITY PRACTICE

.. mostly ignored in the IOT world



## PERSONAL COMPUTER

- Networked and continuously hardened in battle
  - Designed to withstand **external threats**
  - **Secure defaults**
- Exploit mitigation, antivirus
  - **Frequent security updates**

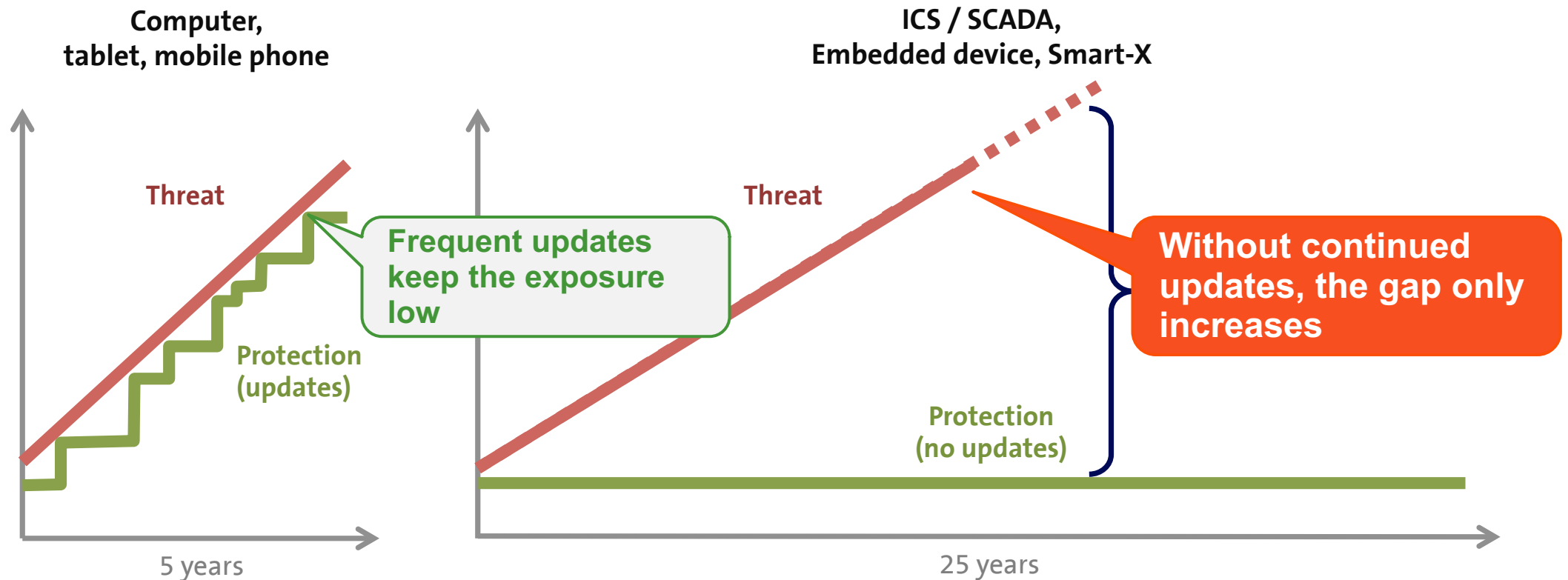
## IOT DEVICE INDUSTRY CONTROL SYSTEMS (ICS)

- Ran isolated for decades
  - Designed for **high availability** and **safety**, not security
  - **Insecure defaults**
- Old code, no protection
  - **No security updates**

**Most IOT and ICS systems are not fit for today's harsh threat environment:  
When deployed, or when being connected.**

# MANAGE AND PATCH VULNERABILITIES

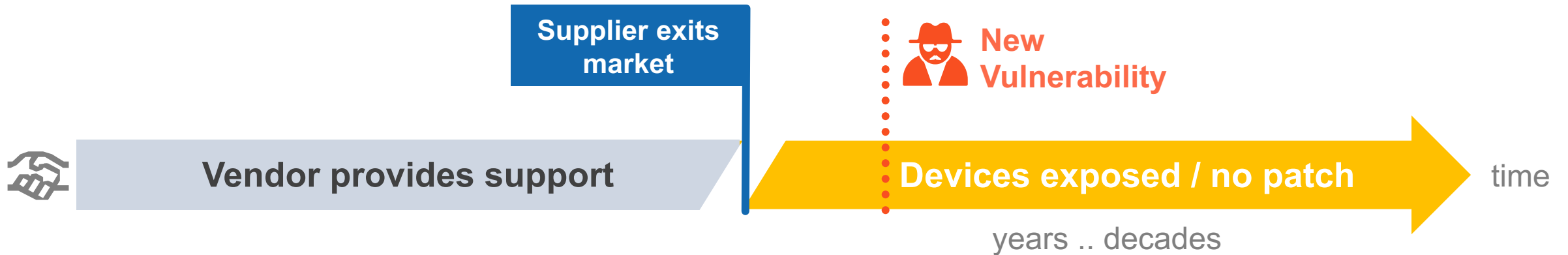
Cyber devices require continued "security maintenance"



We rapidly create a huge future liability with devices lacking and automated and robust update functionality

# TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS vs. DIGITAL PRODUCTS

Traditional products rarely change after delivery, whereas digital products constantly require security updates.



Industry control systems (ICS) may have a **lifetime of decades ...**

## THREAT

### VENDOR GOES BANKRUPT WHILE DEVICES ARE STILL DEPLOYED

- Numerous devices left exposed with no security updates for years or decades
- Replacement is very difficult or too prohibitively expensive.

## OPTIONS

### PREPARE FOR THIS BEFORE PURCHASE

- **Code Escrow** - Copy of source code deposited with trusted third party.
- **Open Source** – Mandate to open source code

# Lessons from History

## OTHER CRITICAL GOODS

Historically, societies always developed binding norms to ensure the safety and security of critical goods – Enforced by harsh testing

### AUTOMOTIVE

- Extensive testing of vehicles before admission
- Periodic inspections



### AVIATION

- Extensive testing of aircraft before admission
- Extensive operations requirements
- Periodic inspections



### MEDICINE

- Extensive testing of new drugs before admission



### FOOD

- Extensive requirements for processing and delivery
- Periodic and surprise inspections

### CYBER

- **No norms or binding minimum requirements covering the security or the integrity of goods**
- **No product liability**

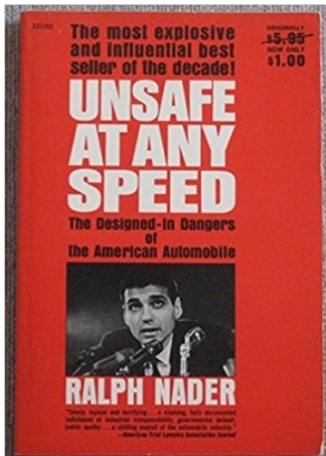


# CALLS FOR SECURITY NORMS ARE TYPICALLY FIERCELY RESISTED BY THE INDUSTRY WITH ALWAYS THE SAME ARGUMENTS

## INDUSTRY ARGUMENTS

- The product is safe - accidents are the fault of the user
- Security norms are unnecessary - they will ruin the industry
- Norms will stifle innovation

### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY (industry still exists)

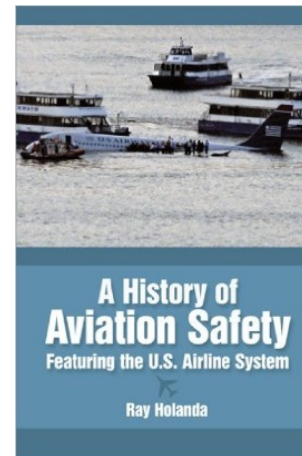


Ralph Nader accusing car manufacturers of resistance to the introduction of safety features such as seat belts, and their general reluctance to spend money on improving safety.

*Let to introduction of crash-test dummies and seat belts after disputes.*

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unsafe\\_at\\_Any\\_Speed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unsafe_at_Any_Speed)

### AVIATION INDUSTRY (industry still exists)



First 50 hour endurance tests for aircraft engines against the protests of the industry: Over half of the engines could not pass the initial test (1920-30)

Early philosophy:

*Fly it, break it, fix it, blame the pilot*

Source: <https://www.amazon.com/History-Aviation-Safety-Featuring-Airline/dp/144900797X>

Too often, we wait for catastrophe  
to spur change.

Absence of evidence is not  
evidence of absence.

Thank You



# NOT COVERED IN THIS TALK

Talk to me for more

- Economics of Cyber Security
- Supply Chain Security
- Protection vs. Detection
- Erosion of Privacy



- How to close FRA with a budget of \$5'000 and two months preparation
- **Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence**  
(these solve all security problems according to the cyber industries' marketing ..)

## CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS

**Technology based security solutions have to complement other domains to achieve the desired security level.**

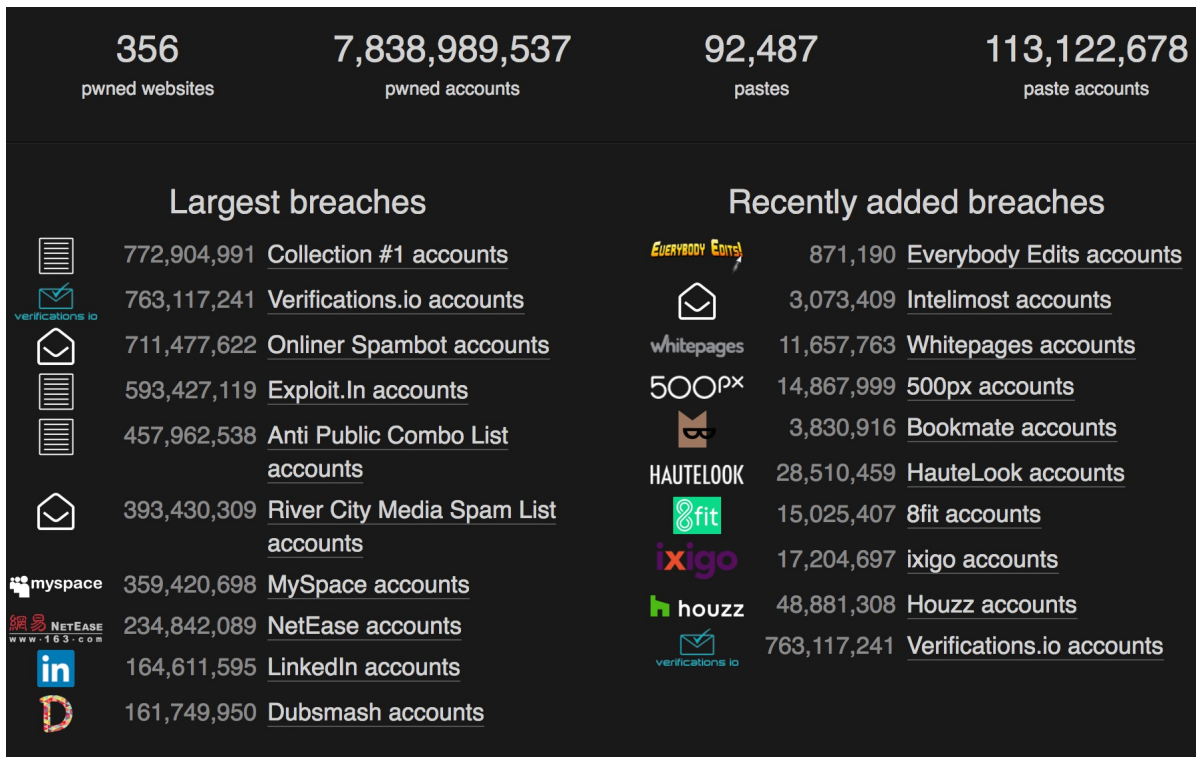
Challenges	What is needed
<p>The security of individual components (e.g. technologies) <b>does not imply the security of the complete system</b> (connected vehicle ecosystem).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design systems with <b>redundancy and resiliency</b> (fail safe, fail secure, Secure SDLC).</li> <li>• Realistic testing plans for the <b>complete system (end-to-end)</b>.</li> </ul>
<p>The continued innovation of attackers, threats, technologies, society, and use-cases creates <b>a dynamic and adaptive threat</b> landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for <b>continued adaptation</b> to new threats, <b>no matter what the driver or domain behind the attacker or threat</b>.</li> <li>• Comprehensive threat modelling and continued threat intelligence and <b>security monitoring</b>.</li> </ul>
<p>Software drives everything, and there is no such thing as secure software. Prepare for the continued <b>discovery and publication of vulnerabilities in software and hardware</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active <b>management of vulnerabilities</b> (coordinated disclosure, bug bounty)</li> <li>• Robust and scalable process to deploy security updates timely and efficiently – <b>on any connected device</b>.</li> </ul>
<p>We depend on a <b>complex supply chain of hardware and software</b> components, which <b>can not be fully controlled</b>. Assume that some components are already compromised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic <b>security and integrity testing</b> of all critical components (reverse engineering of software &amp; hardware).</li> <li>• Comprehensive security appendix in contracts with suppliers</li> </ul>

# APPENDIX

# Data Breaches

# DATA BREACHES

## Data breaches and leaked accounts increased



Verified data breaches with accounts and passwords available at

<https://haveibeenpwned.com/>

May 2017

**240** verified breaches (total)  
**2,186** Million breached accounts

**10** days between breaches days in 2017  
**38.7** Million accounts/breach on average

May 2018

**283** verified breaches (total)  
**5,043** Million breached accounts

**10** days between breaches in 2018  
**20.2** Million accounts/breach on average

2019

**356** verified breaches (total)  
**7,838** Million breached accounts

**18** days between breaches in 2019  
**311** Million accounts/breach on average

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF DATA BREACHES?

We must assume that critical data of yet unpublished data breaches is silently used in the hands of criminals or nation states – also today.

**Dropbox** (68M), **LinkedIn** (164M), **Last.fm** (37.2M), and **VK** (93.3M) were all breached in **2012**, and the breaches became public in **2016**.

Until 2016 the **367.4 Million users** of these portals did not know that their account data was **available in the underground for years**.

Title	BreachDate	Pub Date	Acc [Mio]	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Years
MySpace	Jul 2008	May 2016	359.4		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		7.92
JobStreet	Mar 2012	Oct 2017	3.9					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5.65
Fling	Mar 2011	May 2016	40.8					■	■	■	■	■	■	■		5.22
Last.fm	Mar 2012	Sep 2016	37.2					■	■	■	■	■	■	■		4.50
VK	Jan 2012	Jun 2016	93.3					■	■	■	■	■	■	■		4.44
Dropbox	Jul 2012	Aug 2016	68.6					■	■	■	■	■	■	■		4.17
LinkedIn	May 2012	May 2016	164.6					■	■	■	■	■	■	■		4.05
Sony	Jun 2011	Dec 2013	0.0					■	■	■	■	■	■	■		2.51
Stratfor	Dec 2011	Dec 2013	0.9					■	■	■	■	■	■	■		1.95
Adobe	Oct 2013	Dec 2013	152.4						■	■	■	■	■	■		0.17

# LAW OF SECURITY

- Absolutely secure systems do not exist.
- To halve your vulnerability, you have to double your expenditure.
- Cryptography is typically bypassed, not penetrated.

Adi Shamir, Turing Lecture 2004



# SOFTWARE VULNERABILITIES AND EXPLOITS

**There is no unique definition of the term “vulnerability”. A vulnerability itself does no harm, but if exploited it typically results in unwanted consequences**

---

## VULNERABILITY

A vulnerability is a weakness in software (or hardware) that enables an attacker to compromise the software or the data that it processes.

---

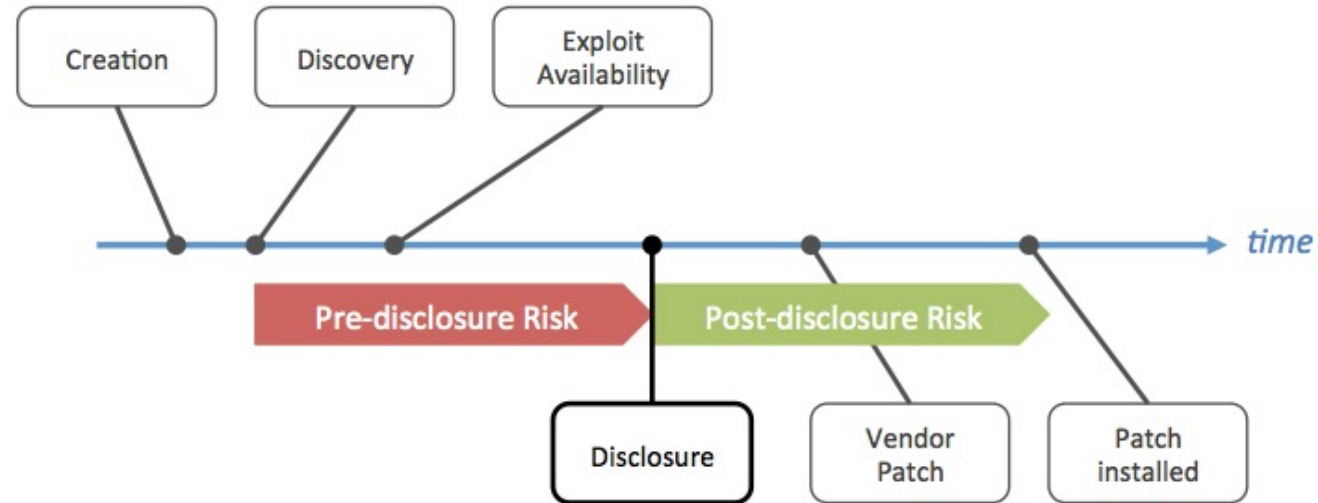
## EXPLOIT

An exploit is a piece of software, a set of data, or sequence of commands that takes advantage of a vulnerability in order to cause unintended or unanticipated behavior to occur in software or hardware.

---

# VULNERABILITY LIFECYCLE PERIODS

## What can users of vulnerable software know or do?



Period	Description	Control
<b>Pre-disclosure risk</b>	During the time from <b>discovery to disclosure</b> , only a privileged group is aware of the vulnerability. This group could be anyone from discoverer, hackers, to cyber-criminals. Users are vulnerable but cannot assess their risk as they are not aware of the vulnerability.	No Control
<b>Post-disclosure risk</b>	During the time from <b>disclosure to patch availability</b> the user of the software waits for the vendor to release a patch. However, the public can assess their individual risk and implement a workaround based on the information of the public disclosure.	Software Vendor
<b>Post-patch phase</b>	The time from <b>patch availability to patch installation</b> . The duration of this period is typically under direct control of the user of the affected software.	User

Source: [http://www.techzoom.net/Papers/Modeling\\_The\\_Security\\_Ecosystem\\_\(2009\).pdf](http://www.techzoom.net/Papers/Modeling_The_Security_Ecosystem_(2009).pdf)

## OFFENCE CAN BE FAVORED OVER DEFENSE!

If you are the director of the NSA and have an exploit for the latest version of Windows - do you tell Microsoft?



You have an zero-day exploit  
Do you tell the vendor to fix the product?

Tell the vendor

- Tell the vendor to fix the product
- Protect 300M Americans

Don't tell the vendor

- Don't tell the vendor
- You are able to hack 400M European and 1,000M Chinese, ..., computers

- If the Chinese hack US systems, they keep quiet.
- If you hack their systems, you can brag about it to the President.

**WannaCry: Exploit got stolen from NSA, NSA did not notify Microsoft when exploit was publicly offered for sale.**