All.Net Analyst Report and Newsletter

Welcome to our Analyst Report and Newsletter

Eat your own dog food

When I first started selling security products of my own making, one of the most interesting questions I encountered was "Do you eat your own dog food?". The fist time I heard it, I didn't understand what it meant and so I asked and found out. It means "Do you you use the thing you are trying to sell me?" Of course in my case, I did run the software I was selling. I used it throughout its development, and that's how I found out about all the problems and how to fix them before customers ever encountered them. This month's bonus article is about applications of the principal, something I think we have lost today to some extent.

Do you follow your own advice?

For years and years, I have been experimenting with security technologies. I think of lots of interesting ideas, some of which are workable but not well enough implemented yet to be really useful or scaleable. I write them up in articles, but before I do, I try them out. While we don't advocate for products, we do find products that actually do the things we talk about and put them into practice before telling others. We think everyone should. Next time you see an article telling you that "firewalls are dead" or any of hundreds of other such things, find out whether the organizations telling you this have removed all of theirs. I bet they still use them.

Do you use the software you are trying to sell me?

I don't sell software anymore, although I have often thought of it. I do license content with software used to apply it efficiently, and of course I use the same software myself. I know it has various problems, but it's just the best we can do with the technology we have today. I implement things with software all the time, and I know it falls over under the wrong circumstances. So I control the circumstances. So it goes. When I buy software from other folks, I try to help them make it better by letting them know of the problems I face. And when they don't respond, I rush to get rid of the crap they won't support. And I ask them the same question. Do you actually run this software you are trying to sell me? How come you didn't notice [whatever the thing that happened to me]? Simple. If you won't run it, why would I?

Do you use your public cloud infrastructure for your own internal information storage?

In the world of cloud infrastructure, I see lots of players telling others to put their information in the cloud and trust them. But how many of them put their most valuable information in their public cloud and use it like other users do? I suspect very few do. We advise people to build cloud-like architectures and use them for some purposes. But it's not just theory. We know a fully layered architecture is problematic for risk disaggregation with control and audit zones. That's why we advise many not to go this route. We're not interested in being Amazon or Google, but we need to know by doing to make sure of what we tell others.

Summary

It's really about the golden rule. Do you do unto others as you would have done to you? Ask your vendors if they eat their own dog food. And if they don't, stay away from them!