

Insight

6Scan gets funding, aims site vulnerability scanning service upmarket

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With a fresh round of venture capital, 6Scan – a provider of website vulnerability scanning and remediation services – is now aiming to move upmarket from its roots in the SMB market. How far it goes depends on what kind of partners it can sign on to help resell its services.

The 451 Take

6Scan has focused on the SMB market for its cloud-based website vulnerability and remediation service, but has its eyes on moving upmarket as it readies a version for Microsoft's IIS. The enterprise market is already filled with options for site vulnerability detection, although 6Scan sees an opportunity to automate the 'fix it' part of the process. The company will need to forge partnerships with MSSPs and larger cloud providers if it wants to move upmarket.

Background

6Scan was founded in 2011 by Nitzan Miron and Yaron Tal, both of whom have a background in the Israeli military's data security unit. CEO Chris Weitzen joined in late 2012 after serving as VP of consumer business at Zone Labs (which was eventually sold to Check Point Technologies).

The company has received two rounds of funding, with the most recent round coming in February from YL Ventures, which previously invested in 6Scan. Gregor Freund, founder of Zone Labs, is also an investor in 6Scan.

Service

According to 6Scan, upwards of 7% of all site traffic (excluding generic site crawler/search engine requests) are malicious requests seeking out vulnerabilities. The SMB market is characterized by companies that often have few or no dedicated IT staff, and one consequence is that inexperienced users are reluctant to make changes to the software that runs their websites.

6Scan's service provides scanning and remediation of website vulnerabilities by 'fingerprinting' a site through simulated attacks. A software agent, which can be installed on any site running Apache Web server or as a WordPress or cPanel plug-in, is used to patch vulnerabilities and remove malware. 6Scan expects to launch a new service in July that quarantines malware in real time.

Scans are done daily or hourly, based on the level of service. Remediation service is priced from \$10-50 per month per site, based on the number of pages per site.

Strategy

There are a few key areas of product and infrastructure development in store for 2014. Because a growing number of larger enterprises have been inquiring about its services, 6Scan is developing software that will run on Microsoft IIS servers so that a larger swath of the market will be able to

Later, 6Scan intends to have a back-end infrastructure that will enable enough data collection and analytics capabilities to enable real-time threat awareness and remediation. Besides protecting from malicious inbound requests, the company can use data to protect company employees from 'watering hole' type attacks and visits to other insecure sites.

Partners

Indirect sales are a key component to 6Scan's business model. The company has partnerships with a number of Web hosting companies: Arvix, A2 Hosting, IDA Group, Locaweb and some consumer software security companies. According to executives, discussions with well-known antivirus and MSSPs are ongoing, although no definitive agreements have yet been signed.

Customers

The company claims there are more than 250,000 sites using the free scanning service, with small businesses being the most frequent customers, although executives say there are other customers such as a state government tax agency in Iowa that use its services.

Competition

SiteLock is the largest and most direct competitor to 6Scan at present time. The company last year combined content caching and Web application firewall (WAF) with its scanning and remediation service, and has added companies such as Web.com and GoDaddy to its list of channel partners. Companies like Securi offer scanning and remediation services, but Securi's process involves having a tech person log in to a site to do manual malware removal.

CloudFlare acquired Stopthehacker.com, a small provider of site-scanning service. CloudFlare provides a DDoS service combined with content delivery functions. Unlike these two companies, 6Scan doesn't foresee adding CDN service to its offering – something that could help it either partner with or be acquired by CDN providers wanting additional security offerings.

Qualys, Rapid7, WhiteHat and others are seen as playing further upmarket in the enterprise in the security testing and vulnerability management space, which is a segment that 6Scan aspires to.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

6Scan has been offering its services for several years, and has a management team with extensive experience in the security market.

Weaknesses

6Scan is a small company that relies on channel partners for marketing exposure and sales. It will need to forge partnerships with MSSPs and larger cloud providers if it wants to move upmarket.

Opportunities

There are a number of software-based tools for vulnerability detection, but not many providers with a stand-alone cloud-based service have focused on an easy-to-use service for the SMB market.

Threats

The enterprise market is already filled with options for site vulnerability detection, including offerings from IBM and HP. Newer competitors like CloudFlare and other companies with content delivery services have integration with WAF offerings.

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