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The Challenge of Secure Web Application Development (and What You Can Do About It)


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There's nothing more exciting than creating a hot, new web app. What isn't as exciting, however, is the inherent security risk involved. When it comes to web application development in today's increasingly digitized, mobilized, Internet-of-Things world, [security measures can no longer be the afterthoughts they once were](http://www.veracode.com/blog/2014/08/the-rise-of-application-security-requirements-and-what-to-do-about-them) ([//www.veracode.com/blog/2014/08/the-rise-of-application-security-requirements-and-what-to-do-about-them](http://www.veracode.com/blog/2014/08/the-rise-of-application-security-requirements-and-what-to-do-about-them)). What makes security integration

such a vital aspect of app development? Let's take a closer look.

A Necessary Component

Web applications are essential for firms - from webmail and wikis, to



online retail sites. They facilitate productivity, provide a competitive edge and enable companies to thrive; in addition, they offer quick access (a vital connection to corporate data) and they have evolved to become the keys to achieving mission-critical business goals. As a result, firms count on developers to build apps that meet their requirements. Competition is tough: If one development team can't meet requirements, it's on to the next team that can. What do firms need? User-friendly applications that offer effortless access, impeccable performance and *security*. That last trait is the trickiest characteristic to achieve these days.

During development, web applications are accessible over networks, which puts them in a vulnerable state. An increasing number of security flaws — SQL injection, [cross-site scripting \(//www.veracode.com/blog/2014/10/only-you-can-prevent-xss-attack-%E2%80%94-heres-how\)](http://www.veracode.com/blog/2014/10/only-you-can-prevent-xss-attack-%E2%80%94-heres-how) and authorization errors, to name just a few — have been found in apps of late, and each one opens the door for cybercriminals to steal data and perform other malicious deeds.

Meeting the Challenges

Application security challenges can be met head on. Developers and firms need to commit to [testing each piece of software \(//www.veracode.com/blog/2014/10/app-testing-and-retesting-when-are-you-secure-enough-launch\)](http://www.veracode.com/blog/2014/10/app-testing-and-retesting-when-are-you-secure-enough-launch) and every application in their portfolios. By doing this early in the web application development process, both can reduce the costs

associated with security. Application firewalls can be used as countermeasures to those trying to hack data from an IP address. There are other encryption, antivirus, antispymware and authentication software solutions that can be specifically used in such cases, as well.

Agile development, too, plays a role, by accounting for the flexibility of app development. With Agile, developers utilize frequent testing so functionality can be perfected and delivered as soon as possible. At the end of the day, this promotes an effective adaptation to change — one that can be directly applied and is extremely useful when aiming for a more secure developmental process. As code is released, for example, security checks can be integrated consistently so they become a part of the process. Agile allows developers to make time allowances, continually ensuring all code is secure despite the rapid, constant introduction of new code and potential vulnerabilities.

The Right Approach Begins with Agile

By partnering with vendors that understand what it takes to ensure app security, firms can improve the efficacy of their applications — and that equals increased productivity. Vendors can assist development teams in implementing Agile, which has been proven to help keep code precise through frequent testing, consistent delivery and security integration. Also, developers can finally set aside an exact amount of time for security using automation.

With [Agile methodology](http://www.veracode.com/blog/2014/10/agile-development-dope-slap) (<http://www.veracode.com/blog/2014/10/agile-development-dope-slap>) and the right approach to web application security, tomorrow's apps can achieve what today's developers are working so hard for: increased productivity for the firms that use them.

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