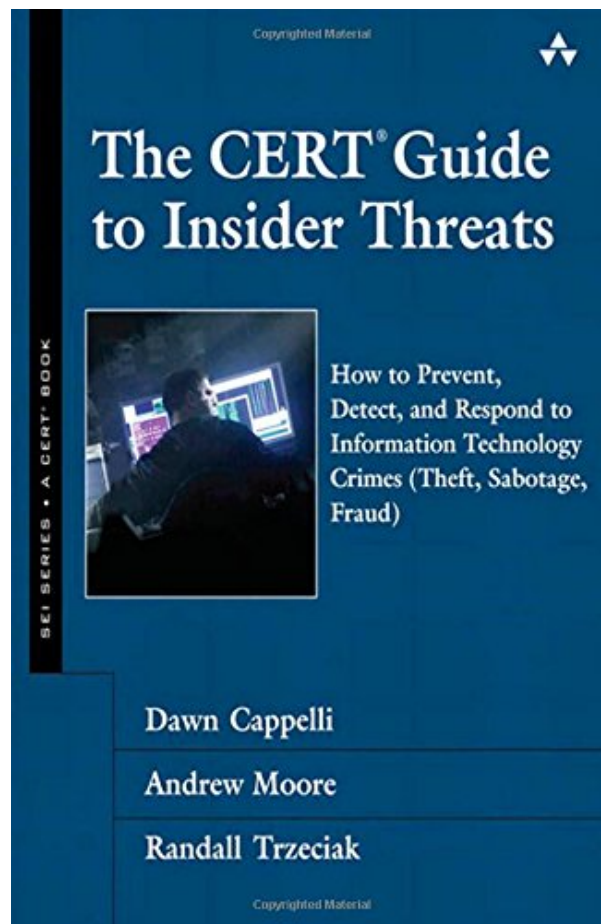


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RESPOND TO INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY CRIMES (THEFT,  
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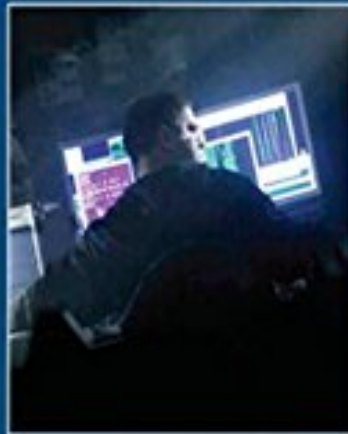


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# The CERT® Guide to Insider Threats

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How to Prevent,  
Detect, and Respond to  
Information Technology  
Crimes (Theft, Sabotage,  
Fraud)

Dawn Cappelli

Andrew Moore

Randall Trzeciak

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## Review

“For years, researchers at the CERT Insider Threat Center at Carnegie Mellon’s Software Engineering Institute have been collecting and studying data on real-world insider incidents. This year, they published a book cataloging the results of their research, called The CERT Guide to Insider Threats. This book is an invaluable guide to establishing effective processes for managing the risk of insider attacks, and it should be on every security professional’s wish list this year. In general, the insider threat drives home the point that perimeter defenses are no longer enough. IT organizations also need to be able to see into their internal networks to identify suspicious activity.”

-- Tom Cross, Director of Security Research at Lanclope, guest writing for Forbes CIO Central

## About the Author

Dawn Cappelli, CISSP, is Technical Manager of the CERT Insider Threat Center and the Enterprise Threat and Vulnerability Management Team at Carnegie Mellon University’s Software Engineering Institute (SEI). She has spent the past decade working with organizations such as the U.S. Secret Service and Department of Homeland Security in protecting the United States against insider threats. Andrew Moore is Lead Researcher in the CERT Insider Threat Center and Senior Member of Technical Staff at SEI. Randall Trzeciak is a Senior Member of Technical Staff at SEI, and Technical Team Lead for the Insider Threat Research Group at the CERT Insider Threat Center.

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Since 2001, the CERT® Insider Threat Center at Carnegie Mellon University's Software Engineering Institute (SEI) has collected and analyzed information about more than seven hundred insider cyber crimes, ranging from national security espionage to theft of trade secrets. The CERT® Guide to Insider Threats describes CERT's findings in practical terms, offering specific guidance and countermeasures that can be immediately applied by executives, managers, security officers, and operational staff within any private, government, or military organization.

The authors systematically address attacks by all types of malicious insiders, including current and former employees, contractors, business partners, outsourcers, and even cloud-computing vendors. They cover all major types of insider cyber crime: IT sabotage, intellectual property theft, and fraud. For each, they present a crime profile describing how the crime tends to evolve over time, as well as motivations, attack methods, organizational issues, and precursor warnings that could have helped the organization prevent the incident or detect it earlier. Beyond identifying crucial patterns of suspicious behavior, the authors present concrete defensive measures for protecting both systems and data.

This book also conveys the big picture of the insider threat problem over time: the complex interactions and unintended consequences of existing policies, practices, technology, insider mindsets, and organizational culture. Most important, it offers actionable recommendations for the entire organization, from executive management and board members to IT, data owners, HR, and legal departments.

With this book, you will find out how to

- Identify hidden signs of insider IT sabotage, theft of sensitive information, and fraud
- Recognize insider threats throughout the software development life cycle
- Use advanced threat controls to resist attacks by both technical and nontechnical insiders
- Increase the effectiveness of existing technical security tools by enhancing rules, configurations, and associated business processes
- Prepare for unusual insider attacks, including attacks linked to organized crime or the Internet underground

By implementing this book's security practices, you will be incorporating protection mechanisms designed to resist the vast majority of malicious insider attacks.

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- Published on: 2012-02-03
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## Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Definitive resource on insider threats

By Ben Rothke

While Julius Caesar likely never said "Et tu, Brute?" the saying associated with his final minutes has come to symbolize the ultimate insider betrayal.

In *The CERT Guide to Insider Threats: How to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to Information Technology Crimes*, authors Dawn Cappelli, Andrew Moore and Randall Trzeciak of the CERT Insider Threat Center provide incontrovertible data and an abundance of empirical evidence, which creates an important resource on the topic of insider threats. There are thousands of companies that have uttered modern day versions of Et tu, Brute due to insidious insider attacks and the book documents many of them.

The book is based on work done at the CERT Insider Threat Center, which has been researching this topic for the last decade. The data the threat center has access to is unparalleled, which in turn makes this the definitive book on the topic. The threat center has investigated nearly 1,000 incidents and their data sets on the topic are unrivaled. With that, the book truly needs to be on the desktop of everyone tasked with data security and intellectual property protection.

The book provides a unique perspective on insider threats as the CERT Insider Threat Center pioneered the study of the topic, and has exceptional and empirical data to back up their findings. While there are many books on important security topics such as firewalls, encryption, identity management and more; *The CERT Guide to Insider Threats* is the one of the first to formally and effectively tackle the extraordinary devastating problem of trusted insiders who misappropriate data.



In the introduction, the authors write that a common misconception is that insider threat risk management is the responsibility of IT and information security staff members exclusively. The reality is that it is the responsibility of senior management to ensure that there is an overarching program to deal with insider threats at the enterprise level. Surprisingly and shockingly, far too few organizations have insider threat programs in place, and the book has scores of stories and case studies on those organizations that have become victims. While senior management created information security solutions to secure the perimeter; they were oblivious to the data leakage emanating from the interior network.

The authors reiterate that it is critical that all levels of management recognize and acknowledge the threat posed by insiders and take appropriate steps to mitigate malicious insiders. While it is impossible to stop every attack, what management can certainly do is build resiliency into their organizations infrastructure and business processes. This enables the organization to detect the attacks earlier and minimize the financial and operational impact. The book provides the specific details on how an organization can precisely do that.

In 9 detailed chapters and 6 appendices, the book provides a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of the problem and menace of insider threats. After completing the book, one is well-prepared to initiate an insider threat program. The book provides examples of insider crimes from nearly every industry segment and ample data to share with management to convince them that the threats, both to their intellectual property and corporate profits, are very real.

After a high-level overview of the topic in chapter 1, the next chapter gets into the details of insider IT sabotage. While some think that stopping IT sabotage is next to impossible, the authors detail and have identified distinct patterns in nearly every IT sabotage case. The book details those patterns and also presents mitigation strategies, both technical and non-technical, to deal with those threats.

The chapter provides fascinating insights into how these crimes are carried out. The authors note that by their very nature, these attacks require technical sophistication and privileged access and are usually carried out by sysadmins, DBA's and programmers. A surprising CERT finding is that the majority of the attacks occur after the insider has been terminated or quit the organization. Part of the problem is that many organizations don't have a process in place to immediately terminate access when a worker resigns or is fired. In addition, 25% of the cases were carried out by full-time contractors.

Chapter 3 provides an intriguing look at the issue of insider theft of intellectual property (IP). Any firm that has a sizable amount invested in their IP (i.e., anything you can put on a USB stick) needs to take this chapter to heart. One of the many misconceptions CERT research has uncovered on this topic is that sysadmins are indeed not the biggest threat to IP, even though they have complete access to networks, systems and data.

According to the CERT data, they have not found a single case in which a sysadmin stole IP. Rather the biggest threat to IP is insider theft by scientists, engineers, programmers or salespeople. Also, CERT found that about a third of the IP cases were carried out for the benefit of a foreign government or organization, with China having more cases of IP theft than the other 9 countries combined.

Given the nature of China and its appetite for data theft, the book is surprisingly silent on specific suggestions in which to deal with threats from China. I would have liked to have seen at least a chapter dedicated to this topic.

The chapter continues and provides detailed lists of issues leading to job dissatisfaction that can lead a trusted employee or contractor to commit IP theft, and provides detailed steps on what companies can do to

stop it.

Chapter 4 details everything you need to know about insider fraud. A fascinating statistic detailed is that the average insider fraud crime spans about 15 months, with half of the crimes lasting 5 months or more. The authors write that insider fraud is typically a long and ingoing crime. All of this is happening, over the course of months and years, and the organizations being pilfered are oblivious to it.

The book is worth reading for chapter 6 alone, which details best practices for the prevention and detection of insider threats. The best practices in chapter 6 give the reader a framework for establishing an insider threat program. Many of the best practices detailed are elements of a good security program, so they should not be news to anyone. Some of the best practices include: security awareness training, physical security controls, separation of duties, and perhaps the most blatantly obvious suggestion of them all: deactivate access following termination.

Another fascinating fact detailed in the book is that almost all insiders involved in acts of IT sabotage displayed behavioral indicators prior to committing their crimes. Some of those indicators include: conflicts with coworkers or supervisors, improper use of data assets, sanctions and rule violations. Organizations that act on these precursors can prevent the insider crimes from taking place.

Aside from its lack of coverage on how to specifically deal with the China threat, the only other lacking in the book is that in all of the examples and case studies, even those whose breaches are publically known, organizations are not mentioned by name.

According to author Dawn Cappelli, Technical Manager at the CERT Insider Threat Center, they took that approach based on interviews for approximately 230 of their cases, with prosecutors, investigators, victim organization, or convicted insiders. In those interviews they guaranteed confidentiality of the information they obtained. Therefore, CERT considers the success of their research directly related to their reputation in the community for being trustworthy for maintaining confidentiality. While there reasoning makes sense, anonymous case studies are often unsatisfying

Insider threats are pervasive and undisputable. Organizations such as the CERT Insider Threat Center and individuals like Antonio Rucci provide vital services evangelizing about this critical topic. This entertaining video of Rucci from DEFCON 17 is a great primer on the topic.

Most of the firms who fall victim to insider threats are oblivious to them as they occur. The book details effective and operational security practices which can help every organization create an insider threat program to counterattack the majority of insider attacks.

When it comes to insider threats, the only way to avert them is to have a prevention program in place. In The CERT Guide to Insider Threats: How to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to Information Technology Crimes, the authors have created an invaluable guidebook, with myriad details in which to enable the reader do that. The facts around insider threats speak for themselves. Anyone charged with protection of corporate data should ensure this book is on their required reading list. If not, and they fall victim to an insider attack, they have no one to blame but themselves.

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

A very very important topic for all those in IT

By T Anderson

Working as a Software Architect one of the main concerns we always have is Security. At an application

level that can usually be easily implemented if you are up to speed with the latest industry standards and best practices for the technology you are working in.

Working as an Enterprise Architect, security becomes a much broader subject. Insider threats become part of the picture and there is no cookie cutter solution for them. I have seen plenty of potential issues thwarted, and over the years working as a consultant I have witnessed plenty of successful insider attacks.

One of my first experiences with insider threat was when I was still in the engineering field. We used an email product called Pega eMail. A few of us discovered that no password was required to log into another person's email if it was done in a certain way. We would do goofy stuff like rename each other's folders to stupid names. We got bored with it in about a day and forgot about it. As time went on our company was purchased by an England company.

The new parent company sent in a new president. One of the new president's jobs was to reorganize. People were let go and offices were moved. Some of the people in one of the departments decided they wanted the inside scoop. Apparently they had learned about the email trick. They began reading all the new presidents emails. From what I heard one of them mentioned something in a meeting that was confidential between the new president and the company's London office.

The IT security team started to investigate and discovered the email product flaw. They then monitored the IP logging into the presidents email and discovered the entire department was guilty. One Friday afternoon they were all escorted out of the building.

I have experienced several insider threat scenarios but the worst one was at a small company that decided it was a good idea to hire a hacker to be the lead network administrator. At the time he was very good at hacking, but not so good with ethical hacking. Actually he wasn't so good with ethics at all. I am pretty sure he had a drug problem also. Either that or he was just downright nuts. He came and went as he pleased. In the weeks leading up to the incident he was missing for days at a time. When he did show up, it was better to avoid him. He was a mess.

They eventually called him in and told him he had to straighten up, or else. He politely apologized, said no problem, and proceeded to change all the network and server passwords and remove everyone else's access. He then disappeared for good. It took the company a few days to figure out what had happened. There only choice was to completely rebuild a mirror company infrastructure. It took weeks and cost them a ton of cash.

That is just two of many things I have witnessed over the years as a consultant. You like to think you work with people you can trust, but everyone has the potential for having an off day and making a bad choice. The problem is being able to identify those individuals that are heading towards their bad day and their bad decision. This book is a tremendous resource in helping with that.

Below are the chapters and appendices included in the book.

Chapter 1: Overview

Chapter 2: Insider IT Sabotage

Chapter 3: Insider Theft of Intellectual Property

Chapter 4: Insider Fraud

Chapter 5: Insider Threat Issues in the Software Development Life Cycle

Chapter 6: Best Practices for the Prevention and Detection of Insider Threats

Chapter 7: Technical Insider Threat Controls

Chapter 8: Case Examples

Chapter 9: Conclusion and Miscellaneous Issues

Appendix A: Insider Threat Center Products and Services

Appendix B: Deeper Dive into the Data

Appendix C: CyberSecurity Watch Survey

Appendix D: Insider Threat Database Structure

Appendix E: Insider Threat Training Simulation: MERIT InterActive

Appendix F: System Dynamics Background

This book has categorized insider threats into IT Sabotage, theft of intellectual property (IP), and fraud. After the introduction in chapter 1 the book has a chapter on each category. It mainly covers attacks by current and former employees, contractors, and trusted business partners. They each cover patterns related to the crimes and offer mitigation strategies.

Insider IT Sabotage covers patterns like Personal Predispositions, Disgruntlement and Unmet Expectations, Behavioral Precursors, Stressful Events, Technical Precursors and Access Paths, and The Trust Trap. Some of the mitigation strategies include Handling Disgruntlement through Positive Intervention, Eliminating Unknown Access Paths, A Risk-Based Approach to Prioritizing Alerts, Measures upon Demotion or Termination, and Test Backup and Recovery Process.

Insider Theft of Intellectual Property patterns include Insider Contribution and Entitlement, Insider Dissatisfaction, Insider Theft and Deception, Insider Planning of Theft, and Increasing Access. This chapter also cover the who, what, and why of the crimes. Some of the mitigation strategies covered include Network Data Exfiltration, Host Data Exfiltration, Physical Exfiltration, Exfiltration of Specific Types of IP, and Concealment.

Insider Fraud patterns include Origins of Fraud, Outsider Facilitation, Recruiting Other Insiders into the Scheme, and Insider Stressors. This chapter also includes a cool who, why, what, and how section. This chapter countermeasure such as watching out for Inadequate Auditing of Critical and Irregular Processes, Employee/Coworker Susceptibility to Recruitment, Financial Problems, and Excessive Access Privilege.

The authors use MERIT (Management and Education of the Risk of Insider Threat) diagrams to design the most effective mitigation strategies. They really help put the threat into context. The really cool thing about the MERIT diagrams in the book is that they are mirrors of actual working system dynamics models. I wish these models were available for download.

The chapter on Insider Threat Issues in the Software Development Life Cycle really points out the importance of following a good SDLC and how a an inadequate job of following one can later lead to exploitations. It covers topics like Separation of Duties, Automated Data Integrity Checks, Exception Handling, Code Reviews, Attribution, System Deployment, and Backups.

Best Practices for the Prevention and Detection of Insider Threats is worth the price of the book. It covers 15 practices. A few of them include Consider Threats from Insiders and Business Partners in Enterprise-Wide Risk Assessments, Institute Periodic Security Awareness Training for All Employees, Anticipate and Manage Negative Workplace Issues, and Monitor and Respond to Suspicious or Disruptive Behavior, Beginning with the Hiring Process. Each principle includes section explaining what you can do, and offers a case study to give you an example of what can happen if you don't.

One of the things I like most about this book is all the examples that are included. They are very interesting. They help to put you in the shoes of a person that may commit a crime. They really will help you identify and head off attacks.

The CERT Insider Threat Center has a ton of additional information available. You can learn a lot from the site, but I highly recommend reading the book. It has put everything together in one place in a logical reading order.

Over all I think every single person that has anything to do with IT should read this book. Even if you don't deal with sensitive data, you are at risk of sabotage.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Book Review for SDSUG

By Ian Mulqueen - SDSUG member

I found Cappelli, Moore, and Trzeciak's CERT Guide to Insider Threats to be a fascinating read, even considering my limited knowledge level. I knew I was in for some serious mind-stimulation based solely on the length of the preface and acknowledgments. My favorite part of the book is that it is designed so that every chapter can be self-sustaining, and reading the whole book in order isn't actually necessary – just read chapter 1 and then you are free to read whatever chapter sounds the neatest...or is the most relevant to your situation.

For example, take chapters 1-4. Chapter 1 provides an overview and briefs you on the three types of insider IT threats (as defined by CERT). It also introduces you to the CERT Insider Threat Center and the CERT database. Chapters 2-4 then elaborate on each of the three insider threats introduced in chapter 1, with a chapter dedicated to each threat respectively. One thing to note: this book intentionally chooses to exclude national security espionage.

Chapter 5 covers vulnerabilities in software engineering, exposing a company to malicious insiders. 6 and 7 focus on mitigation, while chapter 8 is chocked full of actual examples from the CERT database. Even Chapter 9, which is advertised as a “conclusion” still has loads of information to present – mostly stuff that didn't really fit in the other chapters. To top it all off, there are several appendices that are as much must-read material as any of the chapters in this book.

Now, it's probably relevant to my review that I disclose that I am not in the IT industry...yet. Though I am no spring chicken, I have returned to school the last couple years to study this subject and I do hope to find employment in this field very soon. With that being said, having a book like this to help develop my understanding is invaluable. The layout and design of the book does mean that there are some subjects (even entire chapters) that may not have relevance to everyone, but considering how much of a threat insiders pose (as this book helped me to fully grasp), in my opinion this is a tool more so than a book to read. Granted, I may be quite a ways off from being in a position to implement strategies provided in this book or to even be remotely influential in any kind of threat prevention, but this book does help build a foundation of knowledge that every employee anywhere should have and understand. We've all heard the stories of people who try to “stick it to the man”, but what this book really excels at is developing such an awareness of the true threat that insiders pose, that you can't help but walk away from this book trying to put yourself in the minds of any disgruntled friends/coworkers you may have.

Overall I found the book to be well written and easy to follow. The writers of this book clearly want you to take away some very important information, so they even go so far as to include highlighted Tips and Notes sections throughout the book – and not just a few! Pretty much every few pages there's at least either a note

and/or tip to digest. As a current student, I especially appreciated that this book is written similar to a textbook. Clearly, the people at the CERT threat center want their readers to actually LEARN something (many somethings in fact), versus just being entertained.

Ultimately, though this book is geared for those already embedded in the industry, it is written as an educational tool, giving it value even to those of us who don't have a wealth of IT experience. I would absolutely recommend this book! For those just curious about how damaging insider threats can truly be, read chapter 1 and then jump to chapter 8. I guarantee after that, you'll want to delve further into CERT!

See all 11 customer reviews...

# **THE CERT GUIDE TO INSIDER THREATS: HOW TO PREVENT, DETECT, AND RESPOND TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CRIMES (THEFT, SABOTAGE, FRAUD) (SEI SERIE PDF**

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To Prevent, Detect, And Respond To Information Technology Crimes (Theft, Sabotage, Fraud) (SEI Serie Obviously, it will be the best good friend if you read this book The CERT Guide To Insider Threats: How To Prevent, Detect, And Respond To Information Technology Crimes (Theft, Sabotage, Fraud) (SEI Serie up until finished.