

Opera: Five Years Of Championship

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About Opera

An internet technology company, founded in 1995 in Oslo:

- Browsers, ads, news, gaming, crypto, ...
- More than 320 million monthly active users
- About 1000 employees in 20+ countries
- Listed at Nasdaq (as OPRA)



About Me

- 20+ years in cyber security and privacy
- 8+ years at Opera, leading the security team
- I also teach students and serve as a security advisor
- An OWASP member since 2016



Opera Security Team

Our scope of responsibility includes:

- Product security
- IT security
- Data privacy
- Risk and corporate insurance management



Opera Landscape and Scale

- Around 30 relatively independent product teams
- 10 000 servers in data centers in Europe, North America, Asia, Africa
- AWS, GCP, Azure, own OpenStack, Kubernetes
- Technological freedom (a.k.a. "anarchy")



Security Champions

Are all of you familiar with the concept?

If not, please have a look at the [OWASP Security Culture](#) project.



2017 Dilemma

A large centralized security team without champions?

OR

A small core security team with champions in product teams?



2017 Decision

At the end of the day, we decided to kick off the security championship program with the smaller core team.

Why? It was not that obvious then...



Outcomes

- Better scalability and flexibility
- Champions are closer to the product and code
- Easier staffing process
- Internal "career" opportunities



Issues: Incorrect Assignments

Not all team members were equally happy to become security champions.

We have introduced a regular (annual) rotation of champions.



Issues: Champions In Small Teams

Some teams are not big enough to have security champions, which caused more work for product security managers.



Issues: Cultural Differences

For example, for China-based teams, we had to change the approach to selecting champions.



Issues: Resource Constraints

Building the security culture has its own cost and is not self-driven from the start.



Issues: Too Diverse Teams

The security championship model scales pretty well, but not all elements were easily reusable in our case.



Metrics

We use a customized version of OWASP SAMM for the annual security review process.

We don't evaluate champions' maturity (although there is the OWASP guide on that).



Further Program Development

- Introducing uber-champions (or domain experts)
- Engaging champions in security research and public speaking
- Expanding the approach to other domains (SOX compliance, etc.)



Credits

Our security champions program would not survive without:

- Alexander Antukh
- Mariusz Kondratowicz
- Cezary Cerekwicki
- Hans Metsoja

... and all Opera security champions, of course!



Thank You

Q&A / Feedback

