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CertiProf Ethical Hacking Professional Certification Exam Sample Questions (Q16-Q21):

NEW QUESTION # 16

What is Nessus used for?

- A. To scan a network or system for vulnerabilities.
- B. To watch videos on a blocked network.
- C. For automated hacking.

Answer: A

Explanation:

Nessus is a globally recognized, industry-standard vulnerability scanner used by security professionals to identify security flaws in a network, operating system, or application. Developed by Tenable, it is a comprehensive tool that automates the process of finding weaknesses such as unpatched software, weak passwords, misconfigurations, and "zero-day" vulnerabilities.

Nessus operates by probing a target system and comparing the results against an extensive, constantly updated database of thousands of known vulnerabilities (plugins). The scanning process typically involves:

* Host Discovery: Identifying which devices are active on the network.

* Port Scanning: Checking for open services and identifying their versions.

* Vulnerability Assessment: Running specific checks to see if those services are susceptible to known exploits.

* Compliance Auditing: Ensuring that systems meet specific security standards like PCI DSS or HIPAA.

Unlike "automated hacking" tools that focus on exploitation, Nessus is a diagnostic tool. It provides detailed reports that categorize vulnerabilities by severity (Critical, High, Medium, Low) and offers specific remediation advice on how to fix the issues. In a professional penetration test, Nessus is used during the

"Vulnerability Analysis" phase to provide a broad map of the target's weaknesses. This allows the tester to prioritize which flaws to attempt to exploit manually. Regular use of Nessus is a cornerstone of any proactive vulnerability management program.

NEW QUESTION # 17

What is privilege escalation?

- A. It is the term used by major hackers to refer to the request for new permissions to your account with hacked administrators.
- **B. A term used in computer security to describe the situation in which a user or process acquires greater permissions or privileges than they originally had.**
- C. Is the term used when you request elevated permissions to your account with the administrator.

Answer: B

Explanation:

Privilege escalation is a critical phase in the cyber-attack lifecycle where an adversary seeks to expand their influence within a target environment after gaining an initial foothold. In standard security architectures, users are granted the "least privilege" necessary to perform their duties; however, attackers aim to bypass these restrictions to access sensitive data or execute restricted commands. This process is categorized into two distinct dimensions: horizontal and vertical escalation.

Horizontal privilege escalation (also known as lateral movement) occurs when an attacker gains access to resources belonging to another user with a similar level of permissions. This is often achieved through credential theft, session hijacking, or exploiting vulnerabilities in peer-level applications. While the attacker's authorization level remains the same, their reach increases as they assume different identities.

Vertical privilege escalation, or privilege elevation, is the process of moving from a standard user account to one with higher administrative or "root" privileges. This typically involves exploiting system bugs, misconfigurations, or unpatched vulnerabilities in the kernel or operating system. For instance, an attacker might use an exploit to trick a high-privileged service into executing malicious code on their behalf. Gaining root or administrator status is often the ultimate goal for an attacker, as it provides unrestricted control over the entire system, allowing for the deployment of malware, modification of security logs, and total data exfiltration. Effective defense against this threat involves implementing zero-trust architectures, rigorous patch management, and continuous monitoring for unauthorized permission changes.

NEW QUESTION # 18

What is a hacktivist?

- A. Refers to politicians who get involved in social issues by being in the news.
- B. They use their computer skills to steal sensitive information, to infect computer systems, to restrict access to a system.
- **C. Refers to hacking into a computer system for political or social purposes. A hacktivist breaks into a computer system, but always with the aim of influencing ideological, religious, political or social causes.**

Answer: C

Explanation:

Hacktivism is a modern security trend that sits at the intersection of computer hacking and social activism. A

"hacktivist" is an individual or a member of a group who uses their technical expertise to gain unauthorized access to systems or disrupt digital services to promote a specific political, social, or ideological agenda.

Unlike traditional cybercriminals who are typically motivated by financial gain, or state-sponsored actors seeking geopolitical intelligence, hacktivists act as "digital protesters." Their goal is often to draw public attention to perceived injustices, government policies, or corporate misconduct.

Common tactics used by hacktivists include Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks to take down a target's website, "defacing" web pages with political messages, or leaking confidential internal documents (often referred to as "doxxing") to embarrass or expose the target. High-profile groups like Anonymous or WikiLeaks are frequently cited as examples of this phenomenon. While the hacktivist might believe their actions are morally justified by their cause—be it environmental protection, free speech, or human rights—their actions remain illegal under most international and domestic computer crime laws because they involve

unauthorized access or disruption of service.

From a defensive standpoint, hacktivism represents a unique threat profile. Organizations must monitor the social and political climate to gauge if they might become a target of a hacktivist campaign. For instance, a company involved in a controversial project might see a sudden surge in scan attempts or phishing attacks.

Understanding hacktivism is essential for modern threat intelligence, as it requires security teams to look beyond technical vulnerabilities and consider the reputational and ideological factors that might drive an attack. This trend highlights how the digital realm has become a primary battlefield for social discourse and political conflict in the 21st century.

NEW QUESTION # 19

What is a reverse shell?

- A. It refers to a process in which the victim's machine initiates a connection back to the attacker's machine to receive commands.
- B. A common Linux command-line console.
- C. It refers to when the terminal is run with root privileges.

Answer: A

Explanation:

A reverse shell is a technique used in ethical hacking and penetration testing where the target (victim) system initiates a connection back to the attacker's system, allowing the attacker to execute commands remotely. This makes option C the correct answer. Unlike a bind shell, where the victim opens a listening port, a reverse shell is particularly effective in environments protected by firewalls or Network Address Translation (NAT). Since outbound connections are often allowed, the victim system connects outward to the attacker, bypassing many network restrictions.

Ethical hackers commonly use reverse shells during the exploitation and post-exploitation phases of penetration testing to maintain access to compromised systems.

Option A is incorrect because running a terminal as root does not define a reverse shell. Option B is incorrect because a reverse shell is not a standard command-line interface but rather a remote command execution channel.

From an ethical hacking perspective, reverse shells help demonstrate the real-world impact of vulnerabilities such as command injection, remote code execution, or misconfigured services. Once established, a reverse shell may allow privilege escalation, lateral movement, or data exfiltration-highlighting serious security risks.

Understanding reverse shells is essential for both attackers and defenders. Defenders can mitigate reverse shell attacks by implementing strict egress filtering, intrusion detection systems, endpoint protection, and proper system hardening. Ethical testing of reverse shells enables organizations to identify weaknesses and improve overall security posture.

NEW QUESTION # 20

What is ransomware?

- A. A security protocol to protect confidential data.
- B. A type of malicious software that encrypts files and demands a ransom for their release.
- C. A cloud backup service.

Answer: B

Explanation:

Ransomware is one of the most destructive and prevalent information security threats facing organizations today. It is a specific type of malicious software (malware) designed to encrypt a victim's files, making them inaccessible to the legitimate user. Once the encryption process is complete, the software displays a notification-often referred to as a "ransom note"-demanding a payment, usually in an untraceable cryptocurrency like Bitcoin, in exchange for the decryption key required to release the files.

Managing the threat of ransomware requires a comprehensive understanding of its delivery mechanisms. Most infections occur through phishing emails containing malicious attachments or links, or by exploiting vulnerabilities in exposed remote access services like RDP (Remote Desktop Protocol). Once the ransomware is executed, it often attempts to spread laterally through the network to encrypt as many machines and backups as possible, maximizing the pressure on the organization to pay.

From an ethical hacking standpoint, the defense against ransomware is focused on "Resilience and Recovery." Since technical controls can sometimes be bypassed, having an "air-gapped" or offline backup strategy is the only 100% effective way to recover data without paying the attackers. Furthermore, security professionals emphasize the importance of "Endpoint Detection and Response" (EDR) tools that can identify the rapid, unauthorized encryption of files and kill the malicious process before it completes. Ransomware represents a shift in cybercrime from data theft to data "kidnapping," highlighting that even if data isn't stolen, its unavailability can cause catastrophic operational failure. Organizations must view ransomware not just as a virus, but as a business

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