Company profile
Your Creative Solutions
Document information

Version history

Contact information

Company

Your Creative Solutions

Address

Overhoven 124
6136EH Sittard
The Netherlands

Website

http://www.yourcreativesolutions.nl/

Trade #

KvK 17089599

VAT #

NL1590.54.783.B.02

Bank #

ABN AMRO 62.89.93.447

IBAN: NL66ABNA0628993447

BIC: ABNANL2A
Introduction

It is our pleasure to offer you our company profile.

We are confident that our response provides you with satisfactory information on our company and services relevant to your needs. However, if you find you need any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us. We welcome any discussions or questions.

We would be honoured to assist and support you now and in the future.
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About Your Creative Solutions

Your Creative Solutions is the company of Wouter Slegers. We think a company in the security domain always is (or should be) about the people, not the facade of the company. Nevertheless it is useful to understand the background of the company to get a feeling for what the people in it will do (and not do) for you.

New technology and its surprising (mis)uses

From the very start now almost 20 years ago, Your Creative Solutions has been following the bleeding edge technology and has always been seeking to apply this to new areas. In the start this was focussed on normal, non-security functionality such as bringing the BBses to companies as their “extranet” and researching new search engine technology to the then-biggest national search engine in The Netherlands.

In time the focus of Your Creative Solutions shifted towards applying new technologies in the ICT security domain, typically for attack or validation purposes. Exactly because we seek to apply a very broad range of technologies in surprising ways, listing all technologies is not going to be possible.

Explaining why it is secure

Developing attack technology by itself is a highly interesting, but ultimately mostly destructive path. Attack technology’s primary legal use is in showing that a product is insecure to the developer or user. This is a useful measurement which typically leads to fixing that one attack path. Unfortunately this has a high risk to end in an endless “penetrate and patch”-cycle, where after fixing the product is broken again and again. When this cycle is finally ended, because the money ran out or the attacker is too tired to think of new attack paths, the end result is still that “no further flaws were found”.

Your Creative Solutions feels that it is much better to construct an argumentation why a product is secure, and see in this construction where the assurance is lacking. This also delivers the needed or possible improvement points, but in contrast to the “penetrate and patch” approach when finished gives a good assurance and argumentation on the security of the product, not the insecurity. We like to call this an “invulnerability analysis”.

Building a convincing rationale requires a very broad and in-depth knowledge of the possible attack techniques, and a rare skill of constructing argumentations why the product protect against them all, but is well worth the effort. The resulting rationale can then be used to convince users, evaluators, accreditors and other checking entities that a product should be used.

Your Creative Solutions has extensive expertise in writing these analyses in various “evaluation languages” such as the Common Criteria and EMVco for products, national and international accreditation standards and guidelines for systems and locations, and has developed many project analyses approaches as well as the evaluation methodology for testing IP-enabled PEDs for a major credit card company.
Transferring knowledge and expertise

Even in the secretive and closed world of high-end ICT security with all its links to national security and other necessarily tight-lipped organizations, we feel that sharing knowledge and expertise is very important to the field. We hasten to say that this obviously should (and is) be done without disclosing secret information and by not unduly teaching attack technologies to less trusted individuals.

The most common way to share this knowledge is in the form of a workshop/course. Over the lifetime of Your Creative Solutions, we have given 50+ full courses of 2-5 days, a multiple of that of 1 day courses, a dozen presentations for international conferences, and countless impromptu short courses based on a question. Give us a question, a whiteboard and some of your time and we’ll explain to you the answer.

We also share our knowledge and expertise via hands-on training processes. Both of us have been responsible for in-house training of colleagues, and external teaching of even oversight organizations like the certification bodies.

In some cases knowledge can gathered in tools, be it automated or methodological, and transferred that way. The load on the expertise can sometimes also be lightened by these means. Your Creative Solutions is developing several such tools currently.

Summary

Your Creative Solutions contains the extensive experience and skills of Wouter Slegers. The application domains are broad, but attack technology and invulnerability analyses, Common Criteria documentation and training of a wide range of ICT security topics are best highlighted.

Should you seek any service not listed above, please let us know. Chances are that we can help you there also.
About Your Creative Solutions and Wouter Slegers

We think that our people are central to our offering to you. Their skills, experience and honesty are what allows them to provide out-of-the-box and fitting solutions for you. Their ethics and honour are what in the end keep your secrets in-the-box secret.

Therefore we think a description of the company is not complete without explaining the background of the people who are supporting you.

Your Creative Solutions has been the formal vehicle for my creativity from the beginning. As my interests changed over time, the activities of Your Creative Solutions have followed. It started during my gymnasium years with providing support on BBSes for companies, as well as the odd UNIX-job. During my university years, this migrated to more PC-related jobs such as setting up and maintaining the LAN of a small business, and later more R&D jobs such as a study for the improvement of the Ilse.nl search engine and the security design of a web payment application. During the periods of my employment for the NLNCSA and later Brightsight, Your Creative Solutions continued to operate in a non-competing manner (often in the form of R&D on new technology and its unexpected applications).

Now Your Creative Solutions builds on my expertise in all roles in the evaluated ICT security products chain: from developer, to evaluator, to certifier, to accreditor, and finally to end-user. The broad spectrum of services includes training and consultancy for all parties in these processes. From answering the initial question “what would fit our situation and what are the costs/benefits?” to efficient solutions in the product, processes and documentation to smoothly sail through the tough evaluation processes such as the Common Criteria, Your Creative Solutions can provide it all.

To support the training and consultancy, Your Creative Solutions is also developing methodology and tools to support higher-assurance lower-cost analysis and documentation of ICT security products and services. We are particularly excited about our improved security analysis method/tool (codename “Berke”) and the analysis tool for the result of perturbation attacks on software (codename “Disturbed”).
As senior consultant/evaluator I have been part of the growth of Brightsight from a small 5-person research group in TNO to its current form as one of the biggest independent smartcard evaluation labs in the world. The main focus of this lab is the evaluation of smartcard and related financial products, although the CC evaluations have also included more atypical products such as multi functional copiers, national security systems and fighter jet components. I’ve worked on all aspects of an evaluation: as consultant to support customers in their (pre-)evaluation process, as evaluator to assess in a strict but fair manner whether the product meets the criteria, and as a trainer explaining these items to both the evaluators internally and the certifiers externally.

Personally I consider the following achievements the highlights of that time period:

- Leading 10+ large Common Criteria evaluation processes, including the world’s first CCv3.1 smartcard hardware evaluation and CCv3.1 composite of software on that smartcard, from initial idea to final certification.
- Guiding a long list of developers starting in the Common Criteria with typically complex, non-standard products or requirements, to and through a successful evaluation process.
- Helping policy setters responsible for the ICT security (typically in the national or defence security domains, but also the financial domain and others) make their policies clear and translating them to practical requirements/processes. A non-classified example is designing the evaluation methodology for IP-enabled PEDs for a major credit card brand.
- Showing to accrediting organisations why a particular product/system meets their security needs (or to assess the remaining risks of deploying the system and ways of reducing these risks to acceptable levels). This ranged from mundane implementation of VPN technology in a sensitive WAN to classified systems with highly political consequences.
- Teaching the CC, other evaluation methodologies, attack methodologies and more specialized topics such as formal methods, network penetration testing and random number generator evaluation, externally and internally. This has been part of the consultancy, dedicated one-to-one training, one of the 50+ external courses, and 10+ well received presentations in various conferences (including informally representing the smartcard community in the latest 10th ICCC).
- Development and implementation of practical and manageable evaluation processes and methodology, introduced during the transition to CCv3.1. Part of this was a successful (re-)training to CCv3.1 in only two days of the CCv2-accredited evaluators, leading to a ~85% pass rate for the very strict BSI CC test.
- and of course helping my colleagues and many, many customers.
As senior policy member of the NLNCSA (National Communication Security Agency of The Netherlands) I was responsible for the evaluation of devices and software for the protection of Dutch national or NATO secret information, as well as preparation of policy on this domain and representation of the Dutch government in these areas.

Most of the work done there still falls under the national secrecy act, so I’m limited in my description of the actual work performed. Suffice it to say that I’ve done evaluations of security products and policy work mostly on software and network security topics in classified usage scenarios.

This work has made me well aware of the dynamics of government policy setting and evaluation processes and it gave me a taste for the high end security solutions protecting against extremely powerful attackers.

The NLNCSA is now also responsible for the technical oversight of the Dutch Common Criteria Certification Body (i.e. the certifiers work at the NLNCSA).

At the Eindhoven University of Technology I’ve studied Computing Science at the Mathematics and Computing Science department. Heavily influenced by Edsgar W. Dijkstra, it has a very strong foundation in a wide range formal methods. I did my specialization under the Coding and Cryptography group, including a thesis for and at the NLNCSA.

Besides my studies I was active in GEWIS (Mathematics and Computer Science student society) as board and committees member, in STACK (student computer society, largest student organization at the EUT at that moment) board and committees member, STIK (social skills trainer, and trainer of trainers), and competed in the ACM international collegial programming contest with a shared fifth place.

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NL-Staatsgeheim Confidentiël (valid indefinitely)