

Overview

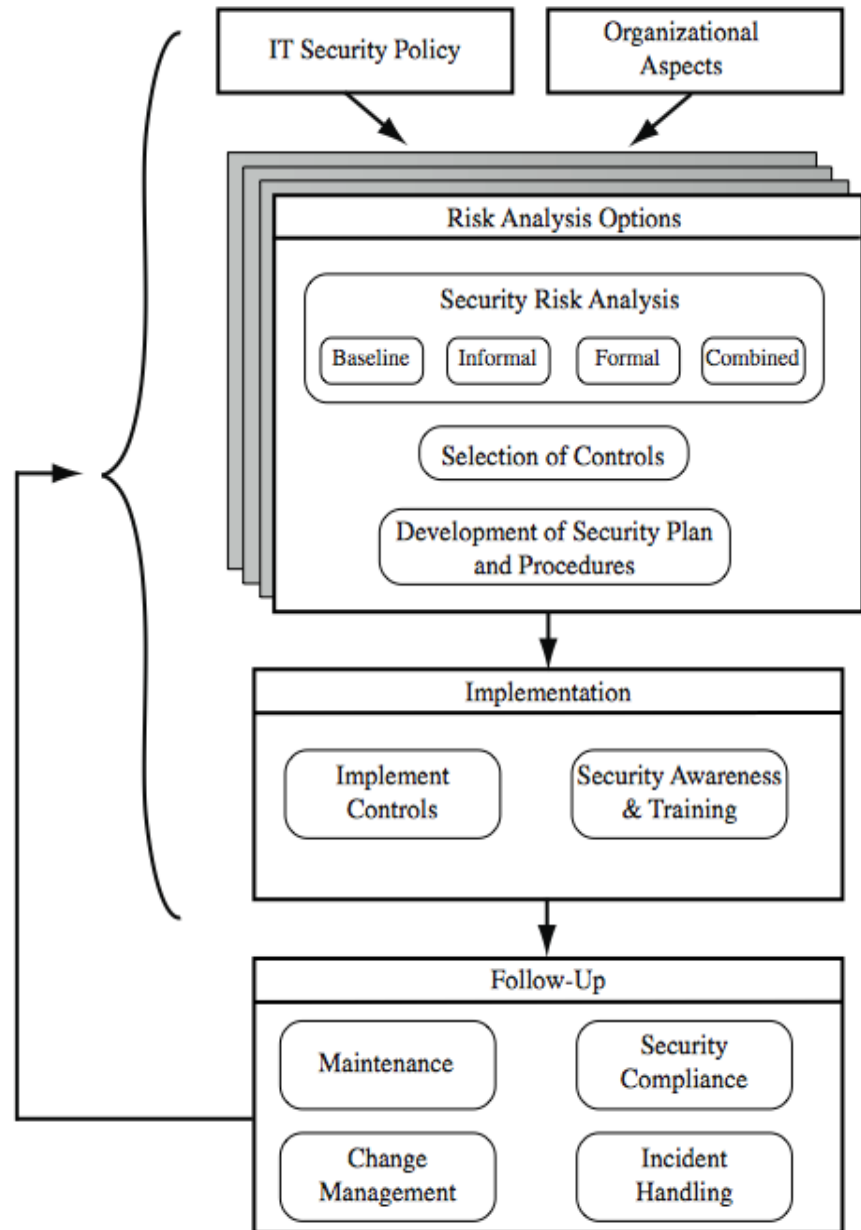
Risk Assessment

Three Fundamental Questions

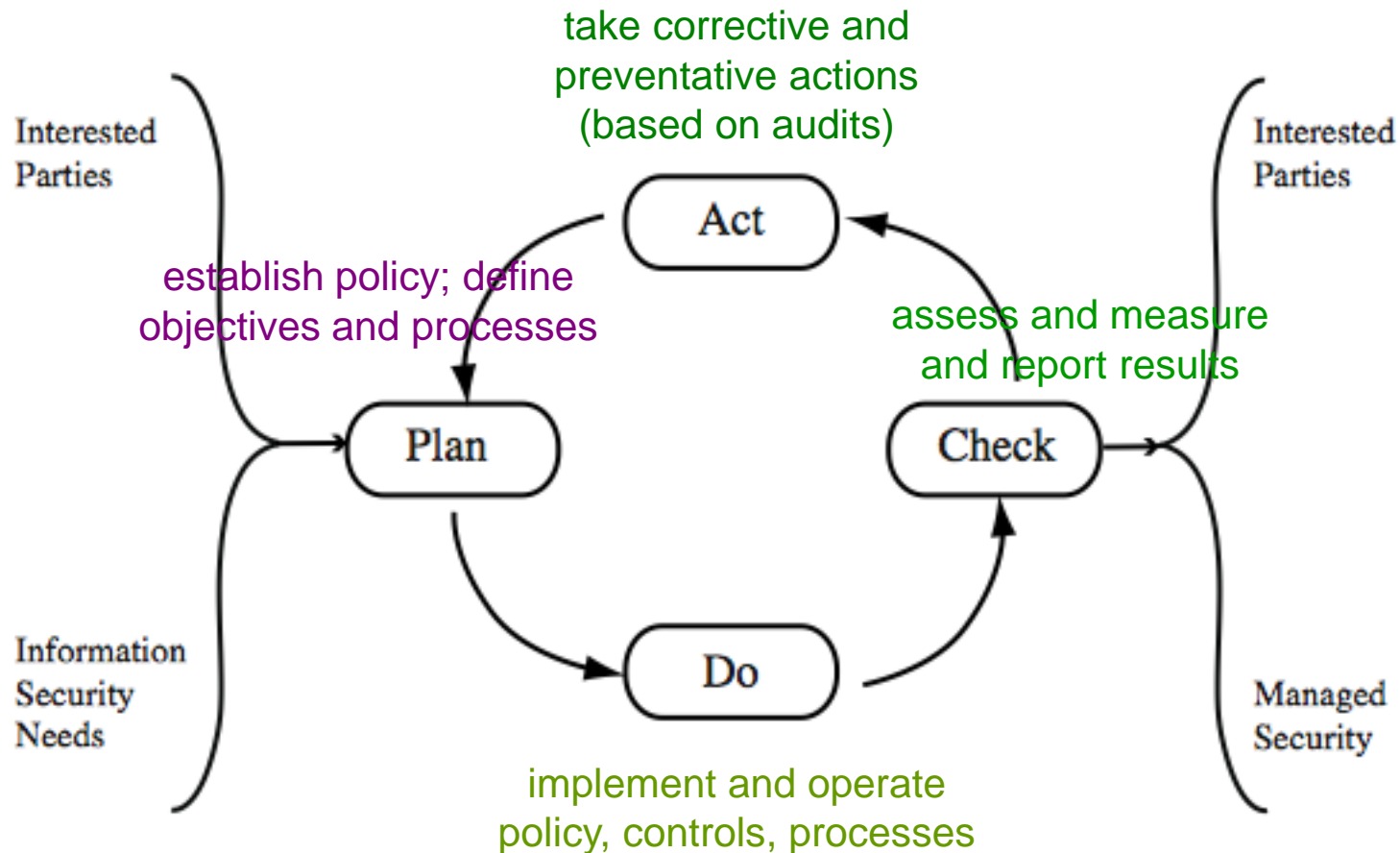
1. What assets do we need to protect?
2. How are those assets threatened?
3. What can we do to counter those threats?

IT security **risk assessment** should answer the three key questions for each asset in the organization that requires protection.

Security Risk Management Process



Plan - Do - Check – Act (Deming Cycle)



Security Risk Assessment

- critical component of process
 - else may have vulnerabilities or waste money
- ideally examine every asset vs risk
 - not feasible in practice
- choose one of possible alternatives based on organization's resources and risk profile
 - baseline
 - informal
 - detailed
 - combined

Baseline Approach

- use “industry best practice”
 - easy, cheap, can be replicated
 - but gives no special consideration to org variations
 - may give too much or too little security
- implement safeguards against most common threats
- baseline recommendations and checklist documents available from various bodies
- alone only suitable for small organizations

Informal Approach

- conduct informal, pragmatic risk analysis on organization's IT systems
- exploits knowledge and expertise of analyst
- fairly quick and cheap
- does address some org specific issues
- some risks may be incorrectly assessed
- skewed by analysts views, varies over time
- suitable for small to medium sized orgs

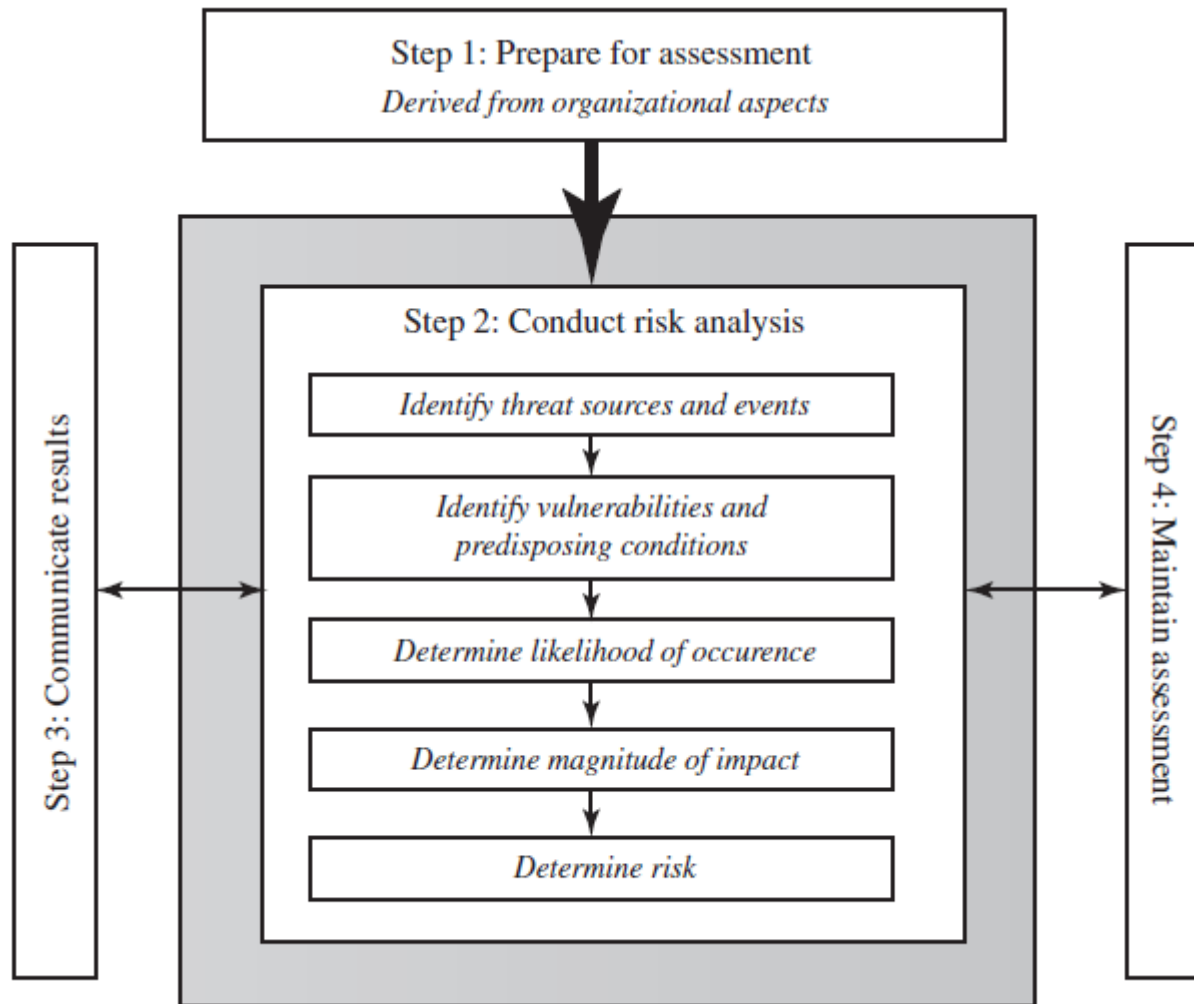
Detailed Risk Analysis

- most comprehensive alternative
- assess using formal structured process
 - with a number of stages
 - identify likelihood of risk and consequences
 - hence have confidence controls appropriate
- costly and slow, requires expert analysts
- may be a legal requirement to use
- suitable for large organizations with IT systems critical to their business objectives

Combined Approach

- combines elements of other approaches
 - initial baseline on all systems
 - informal analysis to identify critical risks
 - formal assessment on these systems
 - iterated and extended over time
- better use of time and money resources
- better security earlier that evolves
- may miss some risks early
- recommended alternative for most orgs

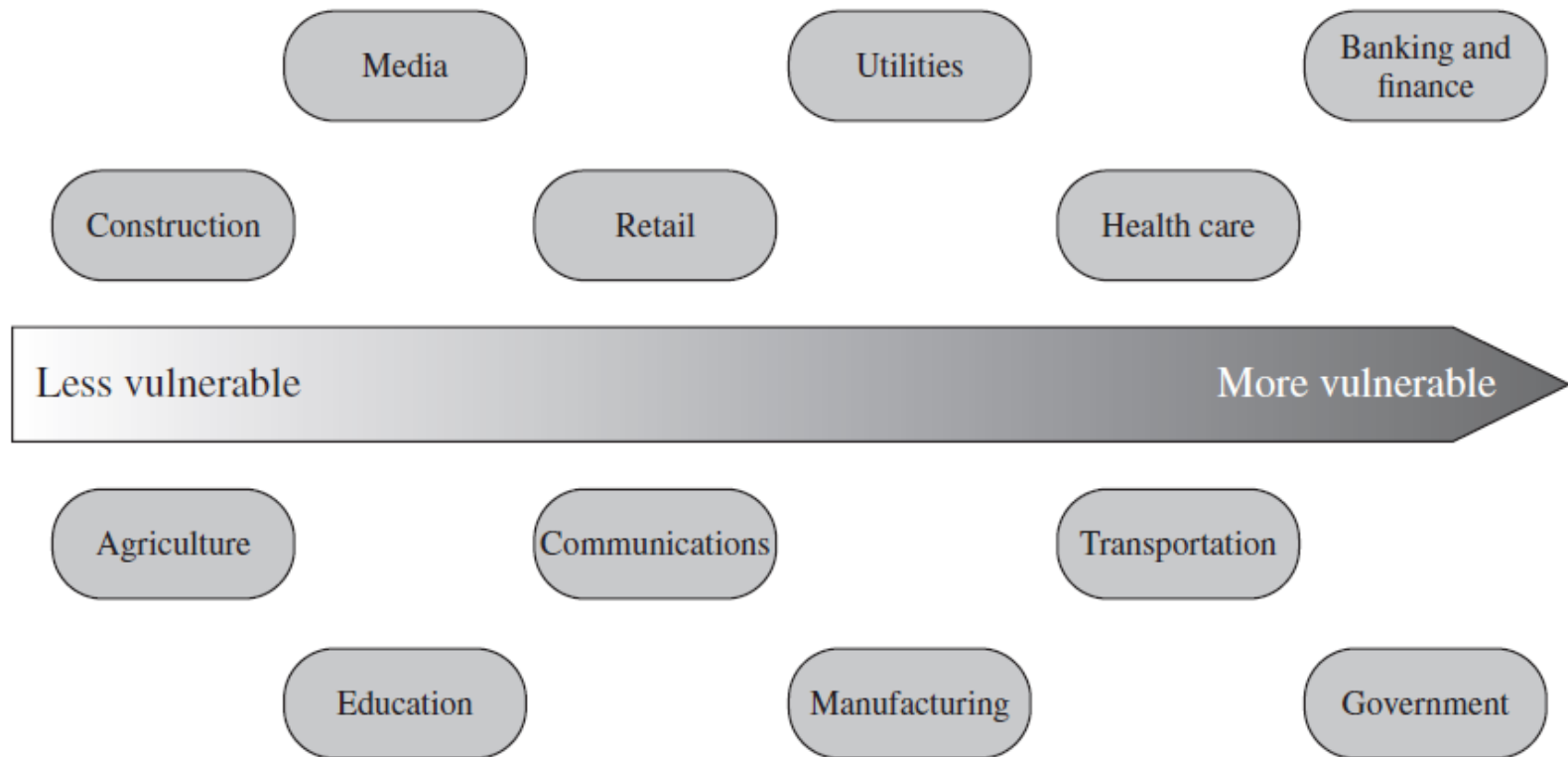
Detailed Risk Analysis Process



Establish Context

- determine broad risk exposure of org
 - related to wider political/social environment
 - legal and regulatory constraints
- specify organization's risk *appetite*
- set boundaries of risk assessment
 - partly on risk assessment approach used
- decide on risk assessment criteria used

Organizational Risk Context



Asset Identification

- identify assets
 - “anything which needs to be protected”
 - of value to organization to meet its objectives
 - tangible or intangible
 - in practice try to identify significant assets
- draw on expertise of people in relevant areas of organization to identify key assets
 - identify and interview such personnel
 - see checklists in various standards

Terminology

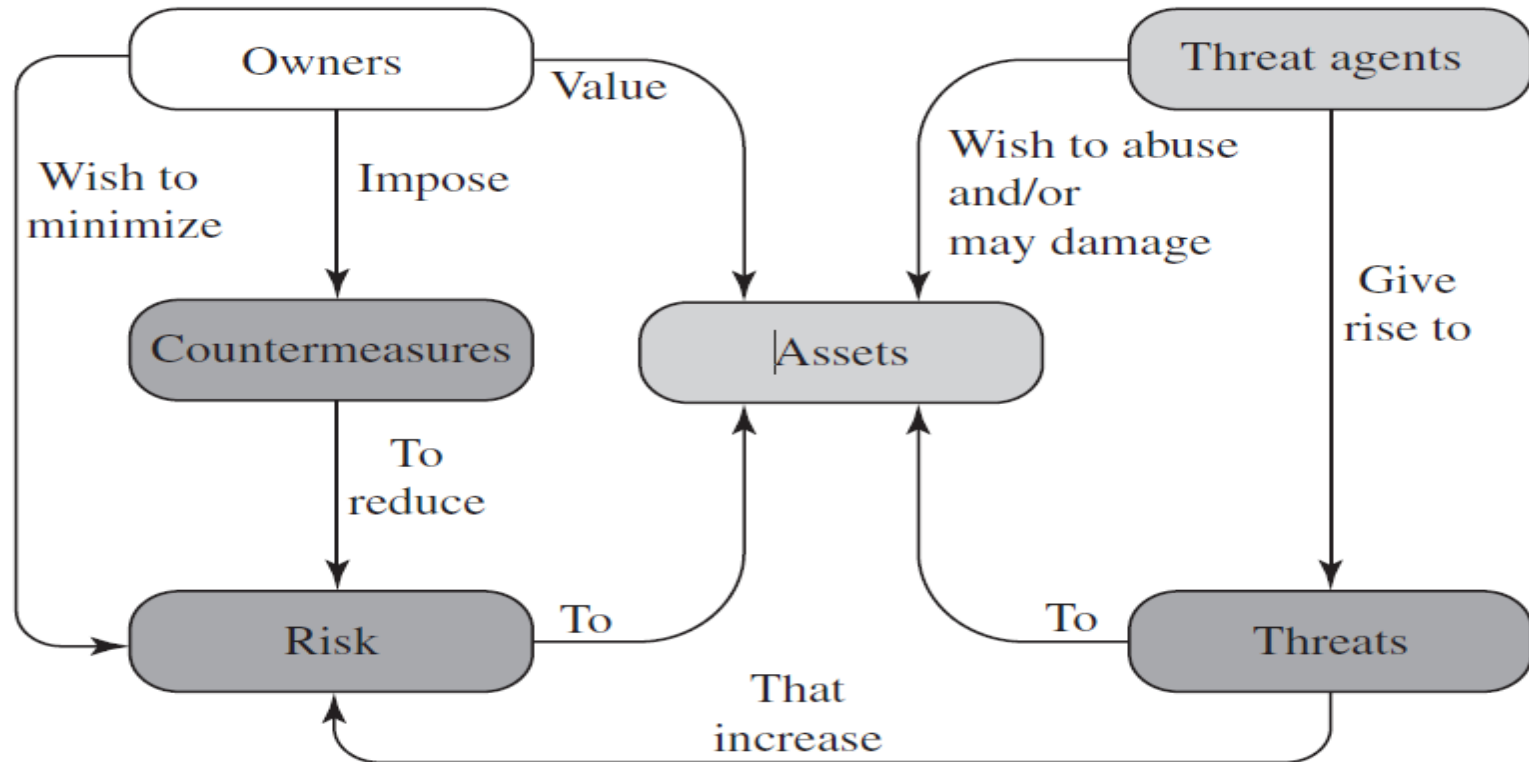
Asset: A system resource or capability of value to its owner that requires protection.

Threat: A potential for a threat source to exploit a vulnerability in some asset, which if it occurs may compromise the security of the asset and cause harm to the asset's owner.

Vulnerability: A flaw or weakness in an asset's design, implementation, or operation and management that could be exploited by some threat.

Risk: The potential for loss computed as the combination of the likelihood that a given threat exploits some vulnerability to an asset, and the magnitude of harmful consequence that results to the asset's owner.

Asset + Threat + Vulnerability = Risk



Threats may exist, but if there are no vulnerabilities then there is little/no risk. Similarly, you can have a vulnerability, but if you have no threat, then you have little/no risk

Threat Identification

- to identify threats or risks to assets ask
 - who or what could cause it harm?
 - how could this occur?
- threats are anything that hinders or prevents an asset providing appropriate levels of the key security services:
 - confidentiality, integrity, availability, accountability, authenticity and reliability
- assets may have multiple threats

Threat Sources

- threats may be
 - natural “acts of God”
 - man-made and either accidental or deliberate
- should consider human attackers
 - motivation
 - capability
 - resources
 - probability of attack
 - deterrence
- any previous history of attack on org

Threat Identification

- depends on risk assessors experience
- uses variety of sources
 - natural threat chance from insurance stats
 - lists of potential threats in standards, IT security surveys, info from governments
 - tailored to organization's environment
 - and any vulnerabilities in its IT systems

Vulnerability Identification

- identify exploitable flaws or weaknesses in organization's IT systems or processes
- hence determine applicability and significance of threat to organization
- need combination of threat and vulnerability to create a risk to an asset
- again can use lists of potential vulnerabilities in standards etc

Analyze Risks

- specify likelihood of occurrence of each identified threat to asset given existing controls
- specify consequence should threat occur
- hence derive overall risk rating for each threat
risk = probability threat occurs x cost to organization
- in practice very hard to determine exactly
- use qualitative not quantitative, ratings for each
- aim to order resulting risks in order to treat them

Determine Likelihood

Rating	Likelihood Description	Expanded Definition
1	Rare	May occur only in exceptional circumstances and may be deemed as “unlucky” or very unlikely.
2	Unlikely	Could occur at some time but not expected given current controls, circumstances, and recent events.
3	Possible	Might occur at some time, but just as likely as not. It may be difficult to control its occurrence due to external influences.
4	Likely	Will probably occur in some circumstance and one should not be surprised if it occurred.
5	Almost Certain	Is expected to occur in most circumstances and certainly sooner or later.

Determine Consequence

Rating	Consequence	Expanded Definition
1	Insignificant	Generally a result of a minor security breach in a single area. Impact is likely to last less than several days and requires only minor expenditure to rectify.
2	Minor	Result of a security breach in one or two areas. Impact is likely to last less than a week, but can be dealt with at the segment or project level without management intervention. Can generally be rectified within project or team resources.
3	Moderate	Limited systemic (and possibly ongoing) security breaches. Impact is likely to last up to 2 weeks and generally requires management intervention. Will have ongoing compliance costs to overcome.
4	Major	Ongoing systemic security breach. Impact will likely last 4-8 weeks and require significant management intervention and resources to overcome, and compliance costs are expected to be substantial. Loss of business or organizational outcomes is possible, but not expected, especially if this is a once off.
5	Catastrophic	Major systemic security breach. Impact will last for 3 months or more and senior management will be required to intervene for the duration of the event to overcome shortcomings. Compliance costs are expected to be very substantial. Substantial public or political debate about, and loss of confidence in, the organization is likely. Possible criminal or disciplinary action is likely.
6	Doomsday	Multiple instances of major systemic security breaches. Impact duration cannot be determined and senior management will be required to place the company under voluntary administration or other form of major restructuring. Criminal proceedings against senior management is expected, and substantial loss of business and failure to meet organizational objectives is unavoidable.

Determine Resultant Risk

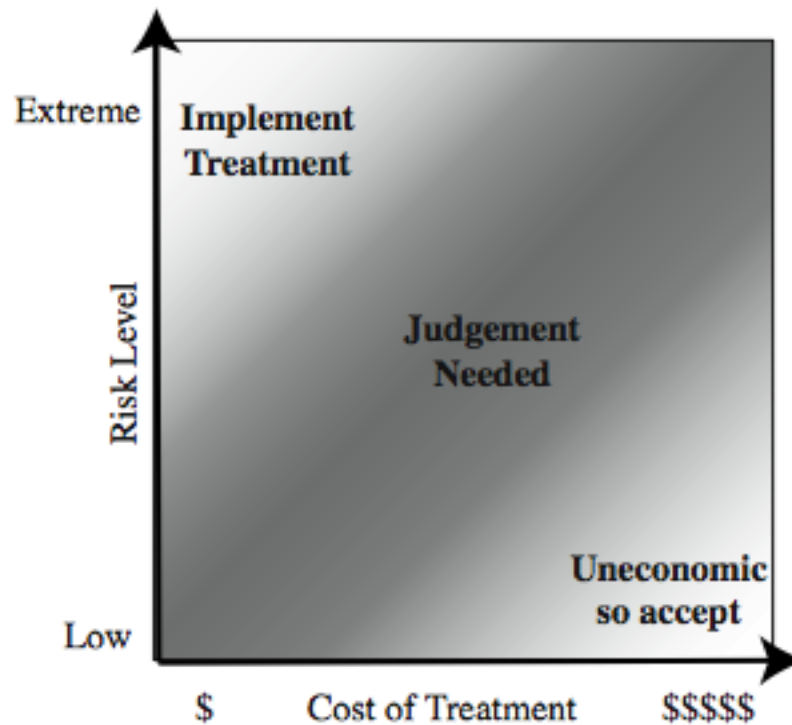
	Consequences					
Likelihood	Doomsday	Catastrophic	Major	Moderate	Minor	Insignificant
Almost Certain	E	E	E	E	H	H
Likely	E	E	E	H	H	M
Possible	E	E	E	H	M	L
Unlikely	E	E	H	M	L	L
Rare	E	H	H	M	L	L

Risk Level	Description
Extreme (E)	Will require detailed research and management planning at an executive/director level. Ongoing planning and monitoring will be required with regular reviews. Substantial adjustment of controls to manage the risk are expected, with costs possibly exceeding original forecasts.
High (H)	Requires management attention, but management and planning can be left to senior project or team leaders. Ongoing planning and monitoring with regular reviews are likely, though adjustment of controls are likely to be met from within existing resources
Medium (M)	Can be managed by existing specific monitoring and response procedures. Management by employees is suitable with appropriate monitoring and reviews.
Low (L)	Can be managed through routine procedures.

Document in Risk Register and Evaluate Risks

Asset	Threat/ Vulnerability	Existing Controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Level of Risk	Risk Priority
Internet Router	Outside Hacker attack	Admin password only	Possible	Moderate	High	1
Destruction of Data Center	Accidental Fire or Flood	None (no disaster recovery plan)	Unlikely	Major	High	2

Risk Treatment



Risk Treatment Alternatives

- **risk acceptance:** *accept risk (perhaps because of excessive cost of risk treatment)*
- **risk avoidance:** *do not proceed with the activity that causes the risk (loss of convenience)*
- **risk transfer:** buy insurance; outsource
- **reduce consequence:** *modify the uses of an asset to reduce risk impact (e.g., offsite backup)*
- **reduce likelihood:** *implement suitable controls*

Case Study: Silver Star Mines

- fictional operation of global mining company
- large IT infrastructure
 - both common and specific software
 - some directly relates to health & safety
 - formerly isolated systems now networked
- decided on combined approach
- mining industry less risky end of spectrum
- management accepts moderate or low risk

Assets

- reliability and integrity of SCADA nodes and net
- integrity of stored file and database information
- availability, integrity of financial system
- availability, integrity of procurement system
- availability, integrity of maintenance/production system
- availability, integrity and confidentiality of mail services

Threats & Vulnerabilities

- unauthorized modification of control system
- corruption, theft, loss of info
- attacks/errors affecting procurement system
- attacks/errors affecting financial system
- attacks/errors affecting mail system
- attacks/errors maintenance/production affecting system

Risk Register

Asset	Threat/ Vulnerability	Existing Controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Level of Risk	Risk Priority
Reliability and integrity of the SCADA nodes and network	Unauthorized modification of control system	layered firewalls & servers	Rare	Major	High	1
Integrity of stored file and database information	Corruption, theft, loss of info	firewall, policies	Possible	Major	Extreme	2
Availability and integrity of Financial System	Attacks/errors affecting system	firewall, policies	Possible	Moderate	High	3
Availability and integrity of Procurement System	Attacks/errors affecting system	firewall, policies	Possible	Moderate	High	4
Availability and integrity of Maintenance/ Production System	Attacks/errors affecting system	firewall, policies	Possible	Minor	Medium	5
Availability, integrity and confidentiality of mail services	Attacks/errors affecting system	firewall, ext mail gateway	Almost Certain	Minor	High	6

Summary

- detailed need to perform risk assessment as part of IT security management process
- relevant security standards
- presented risk assessment alternatives
- detailed risk assessment process involves
 - context including asset identification
 - identify threats, vulnerabilities, risks
 - analyse and evaluate risks
- Silver Star Mines case study