



SECURING OPERATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS.

The industrial sector is a vast and dynamic segment of the global economy that is continually evolving. As industrial sites and factories become more digitized, critical infrastructure and assets are increasingly being connected to the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT). Unfortunately, this has made the sector a prime target for cybercriminals who seek to exploit the security vulnerabilities of operational technology (OT) in manufacturing.

A [recent study](#) revealed that the manufacturing sector is the most attractive target for attacking operational technology. The study found that in 2022, 76% of manufacturing companies had unpatched high-severity vulnerabilities in their systems, making it easy for cybercriminals to gain access to their systems. Furthermore, almost 40% of these companies experienced malware infections.

Securing OT technology in this sector is a significant challenge. The original purpose of OT systems was to operate in a separate environment isolated from the digital space. However, remote capabilities and technology have been introduced to drive efficiency and reduce costs, and this separation has dissolved. Some of the challenges faced in protecting OT effectively include a lack of security expertise, limited security awareness, outdated systems, limited visibility and control, and limited security testing and monitoring.

Patching is a critical measure that can be used to secure the sector. Endpoint security solutions are required to defend against advanced threats, APTs, zero-day malware, ransomware, phishing, rootkits, memory vulnerabilities, and non-malware attacks. [WatchGuard EPDR](#) is an endpoint protection solution that combines EPP and EDR capabilities, enabling prevention, detection, containment, and response actions capable of effectively securing OT. This solution also protects legacy systems, including Windows XP and Server 2003, ensuring that all assets are protected. The patch management module of WatchGuard EPDR enables central management of software updates and patches, automating updates to ensure that there are no active vulnerabilities. IBSCY as a partner of WatchGuard in Cyprus, offers comprehensive OT security solutions to all kinds and sizes of businesses in Cyprus and Europe.



In conclusion, vulnerabilities are the primary security risk for this sector, but there are other weak points too. To ensure the safety of equipment and maintain business continuity and productivity, the industry needs to strengthen its cybersecurity with solutions specifically designed for its needs.

[Source](#)