hackerone | Snap Inc.

CASE STUDY

How HackerOne Helps Snap Ensure User Trust in AWS Cloud

Snap Inc. is a camera company with a community of more than 600 million, so consumer security and trust are of the utmost importance. In 2015, Snap engaged HackerOne to help them ensure their products are always secure by leveraging bug bounty insights and trends to automate and prevent vulnerabilities throughout the software development lifecycle (SDLC).

Snap has always set an extremely high-security bar for their teams to ensure they grow thoughtfully with the right solutions in place for the entire Snapchat community. Over the last decade, Snap has scaled tremendously with new user growth, new international content partners, and several strategic mergers and business acquisitions.

Snap currently has 300+ million active daily users in over 100 countries. To ensure they're focusing efforts in the right areas, they perform periodic threat modeling to identify the most significant threats and then define and implement strategic and operational projects and programs to manage those threats. "As the world's first ephemeral messaging platform, our customers unequivocally expect privacy and security from our products. Maintaining these principles to a high bar is vital for our company", said Nick Reva, Snap Security Engineering.

Snap's security team is constantly working to ensure they are prepared to address ever-changing risks so they can scale with confidence, minimize potential gaps in the attack surface, and continue to deliver innovative and safe experiences for their community.

Snap relies on many AWS services to assist with innovation, speed to market, and cost control. With AWS, Snap engineers can focus on building features instead of building net infrastructure, ultimately allowing them to deliver more customer value.

AWS services like DynamoDB have enabled Snap to seamlessly scale, reduce latency, and save on infrastructure costs. Snap also values AWS's focus on security and privacy.

~300+

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Nick Reva
ENGINEERING,
SNAP SECURITY

When Snap launched their first private bounty program with HackerOne in January 2015, they were looking to conduct a regular gap analysis to identify areas for their internal team to focus future efforts. With the help of HackerOne, Snap engineers were able to gain better visibility and insight into potential security risks and cover those gaps to reduce their security risk.

Though Snap often prefers to build solutions in-house, they consider HackerOne's diverse ethical hacking community a critical resource and an important extension of the team. On multiple occasions, the community has been able to identify novel bugs before they became an issue, helping Snapchat stay ahead and creating a strategic partnership that allows Snap to focus on the business of delighting their customer.

To help Snap get ahead of potential security threats, HackerOne leveraged several AWS tools and services such as OpenSearch, Private Link, RDS, ECR, ECS, and DynamoDB.

AWS OpenSearch lets HackerOne perform search capabilities and analytics at various stages of production in real-time and helps HackerOne identify spam and duplicate detection so customers like Snap can operate more efficiently. AWS RDS and DynamoDB let HackerOne focus on building security products for customers rather than managing high-volume, large-scale databases. Additionally, AWS offers resources that can be quickly spun up in multiple regions, allowing HackerOne to create disaster recovery sites within hours, assuring that the platform is readily available for Snap and hackers alike.

HackerOne's data engineers rely on AWS to move data around swiftly to support customers with a need similar to Snap's. HackerOne's data warehouse integrates with AWS PrivateLink, ensuring that the confidential data we house for our customers is secure. Additionally, HackerOne uses AWS ECR and ECS to scale processing jobs and provide another resource layer when the system might require one.

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When Snap first began introducing its assets to HackerOne's community of ethical hackers, they knew the importance of scaling up slowly to put the right vulnerability tracking and remediation framework in place, so they started with a private bug bounty program. They put internal processes in scope, grew their scope, offered attractive rewards for top vulnerabilities, and eventually took their program public.

HackerOne has been an invaluable partner to Snap. On several occasions, HackerOne's work has saved Snap time, money, and much stress.

In one instance, an ethical hacker in Snap's bug bounty program was able to identify a new risk area that Snap engineers were not aware of previously. By catching this critical discovery, Snap was able to assemble a working team, and get ahead of the issue.

In another instance, a HackerOne ethical hacker found a novel bug in one of Snapchat's subsidiary company's code, before the product went live. This catch allowed the team to enable better security and circumvent the issue before the product went live.

And as a bonus: Snap's bug bounty program has also helped augment their hiring efforts. They've been able to hire interns and a full-time engineer from the community of innovative, intelligent, ethical hackers who've participated in the bug bounty program.

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As Snap continues to scale and acquire new users and products, they are excited to continue their partnership with HackerOne and work together to continue to secure their assets in the AWS cloud.

HackerOne connects organizations with the most trusted HackerOne hacker community to identify and fix vulnerabilities before they might be exploited. By facilitating hacker communications and payments, integrating with existing security workflows, and managing the vulnerability lifecycle within the HackerOne SaaS platform, customers across industries can scale security and reduce risk. As an AWS Advanced Technology Partner, HackerOne can bring hacker-powered security to AWS customers to host key applications and services in the same environment.

Snap Inc. is a camera company. Snap's camera supports real friendships through visual communication, self-expression, and storytelling. Snap's camera is playing a transformative role in how people experience the world around them, learn, shop, and play, by combining what they see in the real world, with all that's available to them in the digital world.

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HackerOne has vetted hackers for hundreds of organizations including:

GM | ZEBRA | Lufthansa | European Commission

Spotify | citrix | PayPal | UBER | HYATT

Google | reddit | Nintendo | Adobe

A.S. Watson Group | Dropbox | yahoo! | priceline

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