



WHITE PAPER

Why Organizations Need a Complete View of All Assets During Mergers and Acquisitions

Executive Summary

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are pivotal moments for organizations, presenting opportunities for growth, market expansion, and increased value. However, the integration of two distinct entities introduces significant complexity, particularly in IT and cybersecurity. A complete view of all assets and inventory in the target organization is not just advantageous—it is essential.

This white paper outlines the critical role of comprehensive asset visibility during M&A, the shortcomings of traditional methods, and how modern solutions provide the insights and control necessary to manage risks and ensure a smooth integration process.



The Role of Asset Visibility in Mergers and Acquisitions

The Imperative of Due Diligence

The due diligence phase of an M&A process is a critical juncture where the acquiring organization assesses the value and risks associated with the target company. This evaluation must extend beyond financial statements and market potential to encompass the digital infrastructure, and potential risk that underpins operations.

A detailed inventory of the target organization's devices, applications, systems, and data repositories is necessary to:

- **Understand the scope and composition of all digital environments**
- **Identify potential vulnerabilities and risk in devices and systems**
- **Map the interdependencies that could impact integration efforts**

Without comprehensive asset visibility, acquiring organizations risk operational disruptions, security breaches, and costly compliance violations.

Risk Awareness and Mitigation

M&A transactions are inherently risky, but the lack of a clear view into the digital infrastructure of the target organization exacerbates these risks. Unidentified devices and shadow or systems can harbor vulnerabilities, legacy infrastructure may lack critical updates, and dormant threats like malware could be waiting to activate post-integration.

These issues can lead to:

- **Security Incidents:** Unaddressed vulnerabilities may provide entry points for attackers.
- **Operational Downtime:** Undetected conflicts between systems may cause disruptions.
- **Security Incidents:** Sensitive data stored in undocumented systems may not comply with regulations.

An effective strategy for risk mitigation begins with a complete understanding of the target organization's asset inventory, supported by tools and processes that can identify, assess, and address potential threats.

Challenges with Traditional Security Tools

Limitations of Existing Solutions

Traditional methods for asset discovery and management are often ill-suited to the dynamic and complex environments typical of M&A transactions. Common approaches such as IT Asset Management (ITAM) systems, Configuration Management Databases (CMDBs), network scanners, and agent-based solutions have significant limitations:

- **Outdated and Incomplete Data** - ITAM and CMDB systems rely on periodic updates, leading to discrepancies that undermine their accuracy.
- **Missed Devices** - Network scanners can overlook critical systems, particularly those segmented for operational or security purposes. In some cases, scanning tools can even disrupt essential operations, creating downtime and additional costs.
- **Agent Deployment Challenges** - Agent-based tools like Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) or Microsoft SCCM require installation on endpoints. They cannot address unmanaged devices, such as IoT, medical, or industrial systems, which are increasingly prevalent in modern IT and OT environments.

These limitations create significant gaps in visibility of the overall footprint, leaving acquiring organizations susceptible to risks that could jeopardize the success of the merger or acquisition.

A Comprehensive Approach to Asset Visibility and Security

Pre-Acquisition: Building a Foundation

To address these challenges, acquiring organizations must adopt a systematic approach to asset visibility, inventory and security during the pre-acquisition phase.

The first step is comprehensive asset discovery. This involves deploying tools that can identify all assets, devices, systems, and applications in the target environment, including unmanaged and specialized devices. Agentless solutions are particularly valuable, as they can provide visibility into devices that traditional methods miss.

Following discovery, organizations should perform a detailed risk evaluation. This involves assessing vulnerabilities and threats across the identified assets, including unpatched systems, outdated software, and misconfigured devices. Simultaneously, threat detection tools should be employed to uncover active threats, such as malware or unauthorized access.

Post-Acquisition: Ensuring Seamless Integration

Once the acquisition is complete, the focus shifts to integration. At this stage, centralized asset management is essential to unify the digital infrastructures of the two organizations. A single platform that provides real-time updates and supports continuous monitoring ensures that no assets are overlooked and that emerging risks are promptly addressed.

Proactive risk identification and mitigation becomes the priority. Organizations should implement security measures to address identified vulnerabilities before full integration and establish monitoring capabilities to detect new threats. Automated tools can streamline this process, and provide a near real time picture while also eliminating the manual effort and time required to secure the environment.

Finally, ensuring compliance and governance is crucial. With comprehensive and accurate asset inventories, organizations can demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements and simplify reporting processes, reducing the risk of penalties and legal complications.



The Benefits of Comprehensive Asset Visibility

The ability to see, understand, and secure the entirety of the target organization's digital environment provides acquiring firms with several key advantages:

- Enhanced Security** - A complete view of all assets with deep insights across both the acquiring company and acquisition target allows for the identification and mitigation of vulnerabilities and risk, thus reducing the likelihood of security incidents.
- Operational Continuity** - Comprehensive visibility minimizes the risk of disruptions during and after integration, ensuring business operations continue seamlessly when systems are eventually joined.
- Regulatory Compliance** - Accurate inventories support compliance efforts, avoiding potential legal and financial consequences.
- Informed Decision-Making** - Real-time data on assets and risks enables better strategic planning and resource allocation throughout the integration process.

Conclusion

A successful merger or acquisition demands more than just financial and operational alignment. IT and security teams must ensure that the digital infrastructures of the two organizations can integrate securely and effectively. Achieving this requires comprehensive visibility, security and manageability of assets within the newly formulated.

Traditional tools are insufficient to meet these demands. Modern, agentless solutions that provide real-time visibility, risk assessment, and threat detection are essential to navigate the complexities of M&A transactions. By adopting these advanced approaches, organizations can mitigate risks, streamline integrations, maximize and secure the value of their investments.



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