



SD-WAN Delivers Compliance Controls

The 451 Take

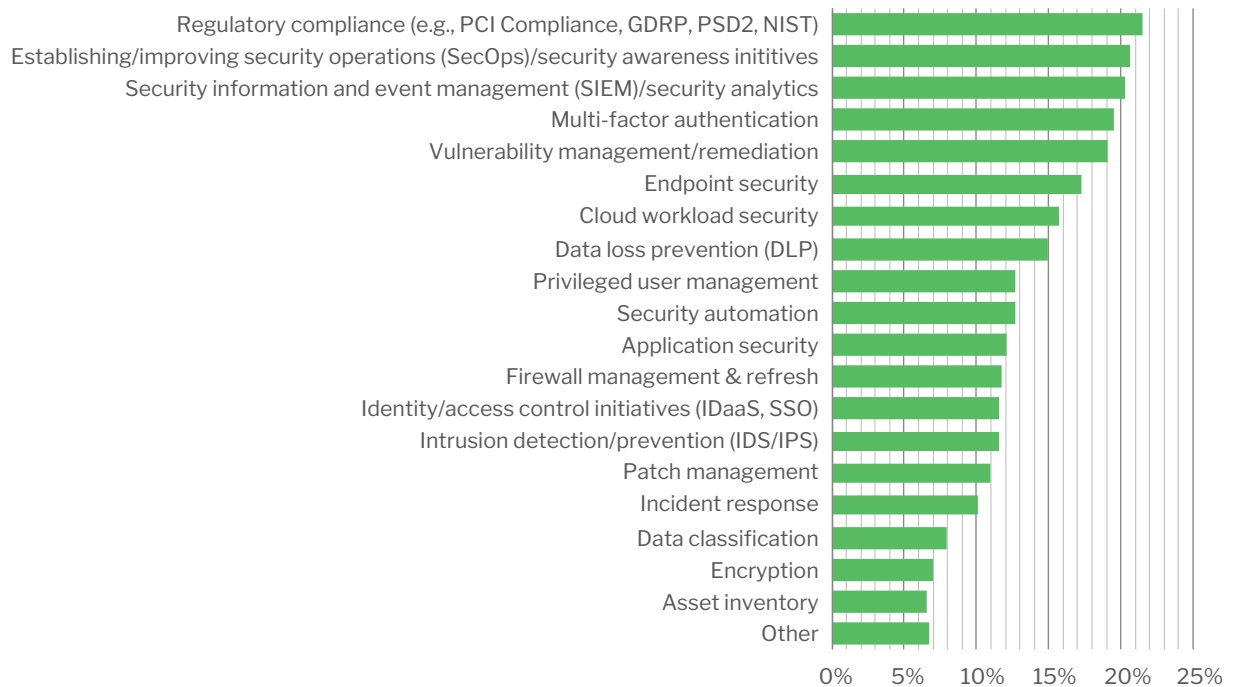
While there are many challenges in the world of enterprise IT, compliance concerns are a perennial leader in the minds of IT executives. And no wonder. The variety of compliance imperatives, their regional variability, and the complexities of proving adherence consume considerable resources. In the midst of all of this, though, there is good news in one of the hotter areas in IT – SD-WAN initiatives can have a significant and positive effect on enterprise compliance. Where many new technologies throw an additional wrinkle into compliance efforts, SD-WAN offers tools that can be put to work as effective compliance controls.

Top Three Information Security Projects Over the Next 12 Months

Source: Voice of the Enterprise: Information Security, Workloads & Key Projects Q1 2019

Q2. What will be your top three information security projects over the next 12 months?

Base: All respondents (n=503)



Compliance challenges

Businesses have always worked hard to build effective security capabilities, but have often struggled to achieve their compliance goals. With a slew of new technologies and capabilities to implement, IT teams are often challenged to sort out how to wrap controls around them to ensure compliant use. Controls often don't exist within the native technology, and, when they do, they are often inconsistent. SD-WAN is a technology that can actually aid teams in compliance efforts, since it can deliver comprehensive controls and visibility – and often can do it in ways that reduce the work required to maintain compliant environments.

The network controls that SD-WAN can offer operate at a critical point in application architectures and typically have a level of sophistication that allows granular partitioning of traffic in ways that work well for compliance enforcement. When they're aligned with existing security capabilities, they can provide control consistency that can simplify policy management.

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The 451 Take (continued)

SD-WAN benefits

The key benefits of SD-WAN implementations are their ability to simplify operations and deliver consistent policy controls. They do that by acting as a control overlay that has the benefit of high-level abstractions for policy design and reducing the amount of low-level network reconfiguration that traditional approaches require. Overlay approaches have the advantage of using the same controls across a range of access technologies, ensuring that the right policies are in place, no matter how users and applications are connected.

Deployment options

To minimize any complications in the transition to SD-WAN from traditional branch and remote networks, it's important to consider how these new capabilities will be blended with existing environments. Being able to maintain control compatibility with security functionality that's already in place can smooth the integration. It will reduce the work to align policies and validate that the appropriate controls are in place. Many SD-WAN offerings have reporting functionality that can provide insights and ensure operational simplicity. The goal for any deployment should be to take full advantage of the benefits that SD-WAN can deliver.

Business Impact

SD-WAN DEPLOYMENTS CREATE OPPORTUNITY. New deployments of WAN technology present an opportunity for enterprises to put more effective security controls into place in an area that's been challenging.

OVERLAY CONTROLS. SD-WANs offer overlay controls to segment and encrypt traffic across the varied access networks that may be in use.

CONSISTENCY. Policy consistency is an important benefit of capable SD-WAN offerings, reducing operational complexity. Capable SD-WANs can provide reporting functionality that can make audits simpler.

ISOLATION AND SEGMENTATION. Ensuring that network traffic is properly segmented from remote locations into the network core offers important compliance controls.

Looking Ahead

Organizations have an opportunity to step beyond many of the traditional limitations of security infrastructure by looking to cloud-based security services to deliver compliance controls. In contrast to traditional approaches, cloud-delivered options have important benefits. To start, they can scale in ways that on-premises systems simply can't. Being able to respond rapidly to scale up to meet demand and scale down to manage cost is hard to achieve with fixed infrastructure. Cloud-delivered services also bring the potential to have more performant access to mobile connectivity – an important factor for increasingly mobile and remote users. That access can also have adjacency to SaaS and cloud-based applications, removing networking issues such as traffic hair-pinning. It can put controls in place where they're most effective and in ways that keep users productive.

There are operational aspects as well. The ability to have the overarching control infrastructure that cloud-delivered security capabilities offer can deliver consistent security policies, when they align with existing systems. That consistency can reduce the work required to assure that the controls that are in place match the requirements for their use. Coordinated user identities and application definitions reduce the possibility for error in important segmentation efforts, such as network micro-segmentation. Having the right controls with consistent policies can greatly simplify the tasks of ensuring compliance and reporting requirements. Cloud delivery makes it simpler to do across an entire organization.



Palo Alto Networks, the global cybersecurity leader, offers secure SD-WAN for branches. Our native integration of SD-WAN and security simplifies operations and extends uniform protection from the data center and cloud all the way to the branches. Our global, cloud-native backbone enables high-performance connectivity while providing superior visibility and precise control of your network. For more information, visit <http://www.paloaltonetworks.com/network-security/sd-wan>.