

Abstract Master's thesis (short)

Software and devices relying on software is ubiquitous. With this come vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities are the basis for far reaching consequences, from mundane computer crashes to malicious activity. The Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure process is one of many mitigation strategies to limit possible harmful usage of software vulnerabilities. In this process, vulnerabilities are reported without the prospect of a reward to the party deemed responsible to fix this vulnerability. Before they can be reported they first have to be made actionable. Actor-Network Theory serves as the theoretical lens applied. This theoretical framework is located in the realm of Science-Technology-Studies, an academic field concerned with the interactions between technology and society. ANT investigates different modes of ordering in the world around us. Which boundaries are drawn, what concepts are applied and what makes up the things we take for granted. In this regard, the journey of a vulnerability starts with the people searching for them. Interviews with researchers as well as recipients of reports, holding the position of Chief Information Security Officer, were conducted. This thesis investigates the process of vulnerability research, how reporting is done and how the examination process of reported vulnerabilities looks like. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of how the social world is constructed by minuscule interactions and negotiations performed in the CVD. The results of this thesis suggest that the boundaries of what is considered a vulnerability are quite diffuse and that they are formed as well as upheld by doing (social) work. The "ontological status" of what vulnerabilities are is found to be formed only in relation to outer influences, they are understood as an assemblage. The notion of "matters of care" is invoked, understanding "security" as a continuous effort, the constant mobilization of resources to deal with software vulnerabilities.