



## CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

“ The Weill Medical College and Graduate School of Medical Sciences of Cornell University is among the country’s top-ranked clinical and medical research centers. Founded in 1898 and located in New York City, Weill Cornell serves as a teaching college for NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and maintains major affiliations with Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Hospital for Special Surgery. Its 20 departments focus on clinical medicine; maternity care; and the study, treatment, and prevention of disease. “

Ben Nathan  
Associate Director, Security and Identity Management  
Weill Cornell Medical College

## Weill Cornell Medical College Relies on Rapid7 Nexpose for a Secure Environment

### Diverse and Demanding Computer Operations

With the university’s main campus in Ithaca, the Weill Cornell IT staff has a lot of independence when it comes to managing its operations in New York City. “We have our own administrative departments, and the services that we offer here are specific to our environment, which is an academic medical center, not a generalized university setting,” explains Ben Nathan, Associate Director, Security and Identity Management. “In addition to supporting the college, my group does a lot of work for NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, so we must address the needs of a user community that extends beyond our campus.”

When protecting the school’s complex computer network, Nathan believes in practicing the industry-standard philosophy of “defense in depth,” which means ensuring that the systems are always as protected from threats as possible. “We have to continually find and patch areas of vulnerability,” says Nathan. “At the same time, we need to avoid doing unnecessary patches, because they are invasive and often require rebooting the system, which interrupts services. To maintain maximum up-time, we need a vulnerability scanner that helps us to determine what’s crucial and what can be either postponed to a later date or not done at all because it doesn’t pose a critical risk.”

### Rapid7 Nexpose Software as a Strong Defense

In addition to delivering reliable services, Weill Cornell computer systems must support regulatory security, such as HIPAA requirements, demanded of a first-class medical school. Of paramount importance is identity management for the many electronic user accounts with specifically designated roles and access privileges. Nathan and his team had these requirements in mind when they decided to seek a replacement for their original vulnerability scanner.

“The scanner we had been using didn’t scan all our platforms, nor did it capture as many vulnerabilities as we thought it should,” says Nathan. “Furthermore, we knew that it was not going to be able to support us through our next generation, which was a move from distributed to centralized security management. Because of these shortcomings, we began searching for a full-featured, enterprise-class product that could provide longevity.”

From the start, they were impressed with the Rapid7 Nexpose solution. “We brought in a Rapid7 support team to help with the installation, and we were getting meaningful information about our systems within a week,” says Nathan. “They helped us to create reports that were useful, both at executive and system-administration levels, and, by the end of the first month, we were scanning everything that we needed to scan throughout our network.”

The strengths of the Rapid7 solution include its core functionality, thoroughness, and ability to update itself continually and automatically so as to address the very latest security threats. Weill Cornell platforms include many versions of UNIX, Windows, Mac, Linux, and OS-10 servers. The Rapid7 Nexpose software assesses the vulnerability of all these systems and generates reports that are comprehensive, meaningful, and actionable. “The people responsible for updating our systems use these reports to decide which patches are worth installing. With Rapid7 Nexpose, we have a way to remediate risk in accordance with



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priority,” explains Nathan.

### **Improved Productivity and Security**

The quality of a scanner’s calendaring system is critical to its success, especially at a place like Weill Cornell, where about 1,000 systems are scanned every week and those scans must be conducted at exactly the right time. Before installing Rapid7 Nexpose software, the Weill Cornell systems engineers were doing a lot of manual scans, but now, thanks to the Rapid7 Nexpose calendaring feature, manual scanning is no longer necessary. “We have cut the time it takes to do scans from a few hours a week to nearly zero because Rapid7 Nexpose calendaring works so well,” says Nathan.

Nathan’s group is now helping other Weill Cornell organizations to use the Rapid7 Nexpose product. Because the software updates itself and is hassle-free, it is very appealing to IT groups throughout the campus that need an efficient way to scan their critical systems. As Nathan says, “Making Rapid7 Nexpose available to others has been very easy, and it has improved the general security of our college.”

### **About Rapid 7**

Rapid7 is a leader in vulnerability management and compliance, delivering a single unified solution across an organization’s entire infrastructure. Rapid7 Nexpose is the only solution that includes support for web applications, databases, operating systems, and network devices in a single system. It separates real threats from the noise common to most vulnerability management systems, giving direct, actionable visibility into the real threats to mitigate risk and remain compliant. For more information on Nexpose products and services, visit [www.rapid7.com](http://www.rapid7.com)

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