

Advanced Host Data Protection



John Poffenberger
CEO
Definitive Data Security

CEOCFO: *Mr. Poffenberger, what is the approach for DefiniSec?*

Mr. Poffenberger: We offer advanced host data protection to organizations that have immediate and compelling needs, but aren't well positioned to respond. This comes directly from our Incident Response experience with Advanced Persistent Threat actors. There are a lot of companies that one day find themselves victims of damaging breach events only to discover they haven't invested enough in their security infrastructure to respond effectively. It takes time to close this gap and there aren't a lot of options available in the meantime. By providing data protection with little impact to end-users and low administrative overhead, we offer a high-value, low-cost alternative to a painful series of inefficient reactive measures.

CEOCFO: *How so? How does it work?*

Mr. Poffenberger: Our technologies focus on host-based file protection which applies to both documents and email. We manage end-user actions behind the scenes and inject access control, encryption, and authentication on the fly. We are able to do this without changing existing workflows while retaining a high-degree of protection. When you open a document, for example, no matter what application you're using, we intercept the request, authorize your access, and control the session to insure nothing else can get to the data. Because of the way we go about this, we can offer backup and restore, and allow you to share your work with teammates without changing the way you go about things today.

CEOCFO: *How are you approaching the protection part? What do you know about protection that enables it to really work?*

Mr. Poffenberger: We know that attackers are breaching networks at an alarming rate. We know that they are stealing credentials and operating in a way that appears legitimate. That's hard to accurately and consistently detect. To address this we have to protect data at the source. We do that using a file system driver. We also need proof of physical presence. We do this with 2-factor authentication. It's critical that we offload sensitive operations to isolated and secured environments. We accomplish this by integrating cloud cryptographic offloading with encryption and access control to realize a system that retains protection even if your computer is compromised. We also maintain protection no matter where the data travels, both at-rest and in-transit. We are able to demonstrate each of these concepts and dynamics in minutes.

CEOCFO: *What changed from your initial concept?*

Mr. Poffenberger: Market opportunities. Our approach derives a lot of pull-through value. We can, for example, assess data exposure risks on-demand, for any timeframe, from our secure data access event information. This is critical during Incident Response and for Forensics Investigation. We can also integrate continuous backup and restore for protected files. Great for mitigating Ransomware threats. We automatically authorize shared data access by teammates. This lets us secure file sync and sharing data not just in the cloud, but also on the host. All part of our original vision. But in using the system for the last 5-6 months, we've encountered a number of application opportunities we can capture with very little additional effort. This not only gives us more ways to grow the business, but also increases our value in partner engagements. This is where things get really interesting.

CEOCFO: *Who is using DefiniSec today?*

Mr. Poffenberger: We are very early in the progression of things here. It took us a bit of time to build the foundation, and we have been working in small focus groups with a few selected partners to refine our approach. With the recent formation of our Early Adopter Program and our first formal, public partner activity in May, we will be adding Incident Response and document collaboration engagements almost immediately.

CEOCFO: *How do you break through the noise?*

Mr. Poffenbarger: By empowering others to apply their expertise to solve their problems. Our platform can be extended and specialized to address a broad spectrum of issues. Rather than limiting partners and customers with our version of solutions to their problems, we provide a framework they use to deliver their unique value in the market. Engineers in the field have knowledge that's unmatched, and by helping them more effectively deliver solutions we get a front seat on what we need to do next to remain successful. This is a business model we can scale. On the other hand we could build a dozen different industry solutions ourselves, hire a handful of experts, and grow a dozen different businesses. That doesn't make sense right now – there's a lot more to it than technology. Culture, for one. Conflicting priorities. Effective teams. Our plan is to stay focused on what we do best, and that is data security. We'll work with others to figure out the best way to empower them to extend capabilities in different areas.

CEOCFO: *Would they be licensing your technology?*

Mr. Poffenbarger: In some cases, yes, though we expect to have a mix of licensing opportunities and also value-added reseller relationships we support. But this isn't the extent of our distribution; we have focused endpoint products we deliver as well. It's a mix.

"We build data protections our customers can depend on. We empower our partners and users to make certain and measurable claims. We bring certainty to an uncertain dynamic." - John Poffenbarger

CEOCFO: *How are you ready to go from development to commercialization?*

Mr. Poffenbarger: As I mentioned, we have been using the product in focus groups since last fall. We have a unique set of people with backgrounds building teams, developing channels, growing partnerships, and shipping products – with multiple small companies and startups. Some of us have helped bootstrap several businesses, and most of us are security practitioners who have not only shipped security products, but also provided services such as penetration testing and auditing to those trying to do so. With our Early Adopter Program and partner engagements, we are starting to piece together plans for our formal product launch.

CEOCFO: *Are you funded for the commercialization or looking for investment or partners?*

Mr. Poffenbarger: We have been internally funded up to this point, which has been advantageous because it allowed us the freedom to really lay down the foundation without having to worry too much about the bottom line. Now that we have proven our approach and aligned it with our business model, we are starting to engage institutional investors and expect to do so more aggressively as we come into summer.

CEOCFO: *Put it all together for our readers. Why does DefiniSec stand out?*

Mr. Poffenbarger: The security space is very broad. To have an understanding of all the different elements is rare. Our team has had direct and specific success in all major aspects of data security, in both business execution and technical pursuits. Security products are hard to use, and don't always fulfill their promise. Our goal at DefiniSec is to change that. We build data protections our customers can depend on. We empower our partners and users to make certain and measurable claims. We bring certainty to an uncertain dynamic. With our team's knowledge, experience, and passion, these are the key factors that drive our success.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

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