

Answers by Martin Knobloch

1. If elected, what would be your top three priorities for your first year on the board

1. Working on the maturity of the internal OWASP organization, what I think is the major challenge OWASP does face currently.

As I stated during the interview, OWASP has grown a lot as community and in importance. To be the organization in application security matters does bring a lot of responsibilities as well. In my opinion, OWASP has to grow in organizational maturity to justify the responsibility we gained from the community and sponsors!

2. Enable updating and improving the consistency of the major OWASP guide and tool projects.

Many of our projects are outdated. We had many attempts in updating our guides and website, but it is a huge effort we so far have not succeeded in realizing. To maintain our position in being the organization to consult for application security matters, we need to have up-to-date and consistent materials, in guides and tooling. Not the least, we need to have a website that reflects our professionalism!

3. Outreach strategy to the OWASP external communities, as the developers and universities

The OWASP community has grown a lot over the last few years. Still, there are many in the software development area, that have never heard about OWASP or only know OWASP from the OWASP TopTen.

We need to reach out to the communities outside of the security industry to promote our projects. Furthermore, to listen what they need to develop more secure software!

The earliest where we can reach future security and software development professionals are the universities. OWASP need to work on awareness in the educational institutions. We need to develop a strategy for a most beneficial result!

2. What is your style for dealing with complex situations that may impact many people or where other decision makers hold differing viewpoints?

This is a most difficult question to answer, as a complex situation can imply many possibilities. We need a long term strategy for OWASP and therefore we need to make decisions. We elect the Board as we trust them to make the best decision for the community!

The elected OWASP Foundation Board is obligated to act in the best interest of the OWASP community. Nobody is an expert on every field. To make a good decision on a field we have less experience in, we need to consult others who have been confronted by equal or similar problems.

As many people the community counts, as many opinions you can expect. The board has the obligation to represent the majority of the community, but it is never easy to find out what the conviction of the community is. The loudest voices are easily mistaken as the community's opinion. One of the challenges is to listen to those who are quiet or not that outspoken.

Nevertheless, making a decision does imply not everybody will agree. This can even result in members leaving the community. In my opinion, however, not being able to make decisions is worse as it will result in even more frustration inside and outside community!

As for personal conflicts, there are always two sides to a story. The more serious and personal a conflict between two persons is, the more effort has to be taken to hear both sides and find the cause of the conflict. Even though we are used to web-meetings and conferences, the best way to prevent misunderstanding and to understand a person is to meet in person.

In both situations, whenever a decision has to be made, a transparent process has to be in place how decisions are made. The different possibilities have to be weighed as objective as possible. Other opinions have to be consulted, understood and valued.

To summarize the above:

- Consult those with experience in the subject.
- See the different point of view of others, ask to fully understand their reasoning.
- Listen also to those who are not as outspoken as those who make themselves heard.
- Be transparent in the advantages and disadvantages of the choices and the process of decision making.
- Be able to see flaws in your own reasoning and be honest about it.

3. Describe your experience leading organizations. Were they non-profits or community based? Please explain both your role and the nature of your involvement.

Non-profit:

In my youth, I was involved in the local YMCA in my village, where I was responsible for the 5 to 10 year old. During my time, the group grew from about 15 to more than 30 children. For this group, I organized the weekly get-togethers and vacations.

After I moved to the Netherlands, I was involved in the amateur American Football club in Hilversum. There I was responsible in setting-up the friendship and pre-season games.

Furthermore, I was involved in the organization in tournaments.

More recently, I have successfully rebooted the OWASP Netherlands chapter. The chapter was inactive when I got involved in OWASP in 2006. In 2007 I joined the chapter board. Since 2008, I co-lead this chapter, that has become successful and active with more than 6 chapter meetings a year. Since 2008, we are co-hosting the BeNeLux-Day conference together with the Belgium and Luxembourg chapters. In the Netherlands, OWASP and the Netherlands OWASP chapter has gained a name in the local security community! I represent OWASP and the Netherlands Chapter at security conferences like BlackHat, Hack in the Box and at universities.

Commercial:

At my previous employer, I founded and lead the security practice. We did this bottom-up, without business support in the beginning. After a short time, all software development practices were involved. Before I left that company, the security practice became a department inside the company. I was responsible for business development, customer contact and education.

4. Describe your most successful contribution to the OWASP community (Project, Chapter, Conference, or other).

There have been several OWASP contributions I can say I have done successfully:

Chapter:

Since I have taken an active role at the OWASP Netherlands chapter, we have managed to have more than 6 chapter meetings a year. The OWASP Netherlands chapter had increased in members and has become a known factor in the Dutch security community.

Projects:

CTF: As CTF challenges have been developed for each AppSec conference from scratch, I started the "OWASP CTF" project after the OWASP AppSec conference in New York 2008. This to consistently improve the quality of the CTF challenge. In 2010, Steven van der Baan took over the role of project lead and is improving the CTF ever since!

University Challenge: The University Challenge is a student event during the training days at the AppSec-Eu and AppSec-US conferences. Hopefully, the University Challenge will be a mandatory event at all OWASP AppSec conferences. So far, the student feedback has been great.

Committee:

Education Committee: I have chaired the OWASP Education Committee, during which we as committee were able to set up guidelines for OWASP Educational Material and reach out to different universities, many of which have become educational supporters of OWASP.

Summit 2008 and 2011:

The first OWASP summit in 2008 was a very successful event, I have actively participated in on various project meetings. For the second Summit in 2011 I was one of the first volunteers to organize the Summit, where I was able to contribute in different workshops and discussions.

Others:

Hacking-Lab: I was involved in setting up the Joint-Venture between Hacking-Lab and OWASP, formalizing the terms of engagement. Hacking-Lab now offers free challenges under the OWASP banner, that are related to OWASP. Currently, more than 1600 people have registered for the OWASP HackAdemic challenges and more than 3000 for the OWASP TopTen challenge!

Security Innovations: I was responsible in setting up the agreement of "Security Innovations" and OWASP for the OWASP Team Mentor project, to make this transparent for both sides.