

Chapter Seven

Detective Security Controls for Neuroprosthetic Devices and Information Systems

Abstract. This chapter explores the way in which standard detective security controls (such as those described in *NIST Special Publication 800-53*) become more important, less relevant, or significantly altered in nature when applied to ensuring the information security of advanced neuroprosthetic devices and host-device systems. Controls are addressed using an SDLC framework whose stages are (1) supersystem planning; (2) device design and manufacture; (3) device deployment; (4) device operation; and (5) device disconnection, removal, and disposal.

Detective controls considered include those relating to the establishment of an integrated InfoSec security analysis team; use of all-source intelligence regarding component suppliers; integrity indicators; designing the capacity to detect medical emergencies; integrated situational awareness; establishment of account usage baselines; general monitoring and scanning; auditing of events; threat and incident detection; and proactive detection and analysis methods.

Introduction

In this chapter, we explore a range of standard detective security controls for information systems and identify unique complications that arise from the perspective of information security, biomedical engineering, organizational management, and ethics when such controls are applied to neuroprosthetic devices and larger information systems that include neuroprosthetic components. The text applies such security controls without providing a detailed explanation of their basic nature; it thus assumes that the reader possesses at least a general familiarity with security controls. Readers who are not yet acquainted with such controls may wish to consult a comprehensive catalog such as that found in *NIST Special Publication 800-53, Revision 4*, or *ISO/IEC 27001:2013*.¹

¹ See *NIST Special Publication 800-53, Revision 4: Security and Privacy Controls for Federal Information Systems and Organizations* (2013) and *ISO/IEC 27001:2013, Information technology – Security techniques – Information security management systems – Requirements* (2013).

Approaches to categorizing security controls

Some researchers classify controls as either **administrative** (i.e., comprising organizational policies and procedures), **physical** (e.g., created by physical barriers, security guards, or the physical isolation of a computer from any network connections), or **logical** (i.e., enforced through software or other computerized decision-making).² Other sources have historically categorized controls as either **management**, **operational**, or **technical** controls. As noted in the previous chapter, in this volume we follow the lead of texts such as *NIST SP 800-53*,³ which has removed from its security control catalog the explicit categorization of such measures as management, operational, or technical controls, due to the fact that many controls reflect aspects of more than one category, and it would be arbitrary to identify them with just a single category. We instead utilize a classification of such measures as **preventive**, **detective**, or **corrective and compensating** controls. The previous chapter considered the first type of control; this chapter investigates the second type; and the subsequent chapter will explore the third and final type.

Role of security controls in the system development life cycle

The detective controls discussed here are organized according to the stage within the process of developing and deploying neuroprosthetic technologies when attention to a particular control becomes most relevant. These phases are reflected in a system development life cycle (SDLC) whose five stages are (1) supersystem planning; (2) device design and manufacture; (3) device deployment in the host-device system and broader supersystem; (4) device operation within the host-device system and supersystem; and (5) device disconnection, removal, and disposal.⁴ Many controls relate to more than one stage of the process: for example, the decision to develop a particular control and the formulation of its basic purpose may be developed in one stage, while the details of the control are designed in a later stage and the control's mechanisms are implemented in yet a further stage. Here we have attempted to locate a control in the SDLC stage in which decisions or actions are undertaken that have the greatest impact on the success or failure of the given control. This stage-by-stage discussion of detective controls begins below.

² Rao & Nayak, *The InfoSec Handbook* (2014), pp. 66-69.

³ See *NIST SP 800-53* (2013).

⁴ Various approaches to defining the stages of an SDLC for an information system involving neuroprosthetic components are reviewed in Gladden, "Managing the Ethical Dimensions of Brain-Computer Interfaces in eHealth: An SDLC-based Approach" (2016).

SDLC stage 1: supersystem planning

The first stage in the system development life cycle involves high-level planning of an implantable neuroprosthetic device's basic capacities and functional role, its relationship to its human host (with whom it creates a biocybernetic host-device system), and its role within the larger 'supersystem' that comprises the organizational setting and broader environment within which the device and its host operate. The development of security controls in this stage of the SDLC typically involves a neuroprosthetically augmented information system's designer, manufacturer, and eventual institutional operator.

A. Establishment of an integrated InfoSec security analysis team

While many protective controls are relevant in the planning stage of the SDLC, only one detective control sees its critical moment occur during that stage: the establishment of an integrated InfoSec security analysis team that can detect and analyze vulnerabilities, threats, and incidents that occur throughout the remaining stages of the SDLC. In the case of advanced neuroprosthetic devices, an integrated information security analysis team may need to incorporate not only typical members such as "forensic/malicious code analysts, tool developers, and real-time operations personnel"⁵ but potentially also biomedical engineers, biologists, neuroscientists, psychologists, biocyberneticists, and implantation surgeons.⁶

SDLC stage 2: device design and manufacture

The second stage in the system development life cycle includes the design and manufacture of a neuroprosthetic device and other hardware and software that form part of any larger information system to which the device belongs. The development of security controls in this stage of the SDLC is typically carried out by a device's designer and manufacturer, potentially with instructions or other input from the system's eventual operator. Such controls are considered below.

A. Use of all-source intelligence regarding component suppliers

The potential widespread use of advanced neuroprostheses by the public (including by the employees and customers of an organization's suppliers) may provide organizations with a new element to incorporate into all-source

⁵ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-110.

⁶ See Chapter Three of this text for a discussion of the growing interconnection of information security with fields such as neuroscience and biomedical engineering, especially in the context of advanced neuroprosthetic devices.

intelligence analysis: namely, the thoughts, memories, perceptions, plans, and emotions of individuals associated with current or potential suppliers that are publically shared by these persons through neuroprosthetically enabled social networks. This would represent a potentially deeper and more sophisticated source of information and analysis than can be obtained, for example, from the analysis of contemporary social media posts.⁷

B. Design of integrity indicators

1. Integrity checks for firmware and software

Checking the integrity of a device's operating system or applications⁸ may be difficult or impossible in the case of some neuroprosthetic devices that utilize physical neural networks (and do not execute 'programs' as conventionally understood) or which are passive devices that are directly controlled by their host's cognitive processes, which effectively provide the 'operating system' for the device.⁹ In the case of neuroprosthetic devices that utilize biological components for storing information and performing activities, it may be impossible to require the same level of integrity as that expected with electronic computers, insofar as the biological components may be undergoing gradual but continuous change through the birth, growth, mutation, and death of individual cells.

2. Tamper-detection mechanisms

Tamper-detection seals and anti-tamper coatings¹⁰ may be utilized to prevent unauthorized access to a neuroprosthetic device's internal components or to ensure that if such components *have* been accessed by an unauthorized party, evidence of that unauthorized access will be visible to the next authorized party who conducts routine maintenance operations on or provides other service for the device.¹¹

C. Designing the capacity to detect medical emergencies

A neuroprosthetically augmented information system may not only be able to detect errors and incidents relating to the electronic portion of the system but may also be able to directly or indirectly detect medical incidents

⁷ Regarding all-source intelligence and component system suppliers, see *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-171.

⁸ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-225.

⁹ See Chapter One of this text for a discussion of passive neuroprosthetic devices and Chapter Two for a discussion of integrity as an information security goal and attribute.

¹⁰ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-129.

¹¹ The systems described in Chapter Three of this text for providing audible – rather than visible – alerts to a device's host when attempts are made to wirelessly access the device constitute another kind of anti-tampering mechanism.

and other biological problems affecting to the human host of an implanted neuroprosthesis. For example, Rasmussen et al. have proposed a model of emergency access control for implantable medical devices that relies on ultrasound technology to verify the physical proximity of an external system attempting to gain access to an IMD. Normally the IMD would require an external system to possess a shared cryptographic key before granting the external system access to the IMD; however if the IMD detects that its host is undergoing a medical emergency, it shifts into an ‘emergency mode’ in which any external system is allowed to access the IMD, as long as it is within a certain predefined distance, as measured by the time required for ultrasound communications to travel between the IMD and external system.¹²

SDLC stage 3: device deployment in the host-device system and broader supersystem

The third stage in the system development life cycle includes the activities surrounding deployment of a neuroprosthesis in its human host (with whom it forms a biocybernetic host-device system) and the surrounding organizational environment or supersystem. The development or implementation of security controls in this stage of the SDLC is typically performed by a device’s operator with the active or passive participation of its human host. Such controls are considered below.

A. Fostering of integrated situational awareness

Organizations integrate information obtained “from a combination of physical, cyber, and supply chain monitoring activities”¹³ in order to better detect cyberattacks, which may be multifaceted operations that have both physical and virtual components and which target both an employer’s operation of a neuroprosthesis and the suppliers who designed and produced the device’s hardware and software components. For individual human hosts who operate neuroprostheses that they have purchased or leased as consumer electronics devices, developing such integrated situational awareness relating to their devices can be difficult. For such an individual, the physical monitoring of his or her device may be relatively easy, insofar as the device is always physically present with the host, and in order for unauthorized parties to physically access the device they may need to physically access or manipulate the host’s biological body. Awareness of cyberattacks or other unauthorized

¹² See Rasmussen et al., “Proximity-based access control for implantable medical devices” (2009). Regarding the possibility of IMDs being able to detect a medical emergency that is being experienced by their human host, see Denning et al., “Patients, pacemakers, and implantable defibrillators: Human values and security for wireless implantable medical devices” (2010), pp. 921-22.

¹³ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-222.

electronic access may be more difficult for the host to achieve and may depend on a combination of effective security controls built into the device, its OS, and its applications, as well as personal knowledge of and commitment to InfoSec best practices on the part of the device's host. Full supply chain monitoring may be difficult or impossible for the host to carry out: although he or she may know the identity of the organizations that were responsible for assembling and distributing the finished physical device and its operating system and installed applications, it may be difficult for the host to determine who designed and manufactured individual components within the device or who may have served as a subcontractor writing and testing outsourced portions of the OS and applications on behalf of the primary developer. In the case of open-source software, it may be more difficult to know the true identity of the parties responsible for providing particular elements of code, although it may simultaneously be easier to scrutinize the content of the code itself.

B. Establishing baselines to detect atypical account usage

For some kinds of neuroprosthetic devices, it may be difficult to establish clear baselines and a definition of what constitutes 'typical' and 'atypical' usage,¹⁴ just as it is difficult to clearly define what constitutes 'typical' thoughts, emotions, beliefs, volitions, or use of the imagination. This challenge may be exacerbated when a neuroprosthetic device is used to allow a user to interface with and experience some virtual environment that is, in a sense, already 'atypical' and likely to generate new kinds of activities and experiences.¹⁵

C. Activation of monitoring and scanning systems

1. Continuous monitoring, guards, and alarms

In the case of implantable neuroprosthetic devices, it may be possible to use one device as a 'guard' that monitors physical access to other devices implanted within the same human host.¹⁶

¹⁴ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-10.

¹⁵ For some examples of neuroprosthetic devices that provide their hosts and users, e.g., with the sensorimotor experience of a new body that is (perhaps even radically) 'nonhuman,' see Gladden, "Cybershells, Shapeshifting, and Neuroprosthetics: Video Games as Tools for Posthuman 'Body Schema (Re)Engineering'" (2015).

¹⁶ Regarding continuous guards, alarms, and monitoring, see *NIST SP 800-53*, (2013), p. F-129. See the related discussion in Chapter Three of this text of proposed schemes for emergency access to IMDs that utilize external cloaking devices or gateway devices to mediate, limit, or control access to an implanted device.

2. Specialized devices for information system monitoring

Significant legal, ethical, and practical questions arise regarding an organization's deployment of monitoring devices to observe and scrutinize an organizational information system.¹⁷ Although such monitoring may have the legitimate purpose of detecting or dissuading attacks, it may sometimes also gather personal information on the activities, health, and other characteristics of organizational members or outside parties in ways that is legally and ethically impermissible. External systems (e.g., medical imaging or diagnostic equipment) may be used to monitor the activities of a neuroprosthetic device or host-device system; alternatively, a neuroprosthetic device may itself be used by an organization as a monitoring device to scrutinize the activity of other conventional information systems belonging to the organization (e.g., servers or desktop computers). Other implantable devices that are located within the same organism as a neuroprosthetic device may be used to monitor the activities of the device and its host-device system.¹⁸

3. Vulnerability scans

In some circumstances, even the mere act of scanning an implanted neuroprosthetic device to identify vulnerabilities¹⁹ could be considered an invasive medical procedure and an infringement on the privacy of the human host in whom the device is implanted. In other circumstances, it might potentially be considered medical malpractice for an organization not to utilize all available means in probing neuroprosthetic devices implanted in its personnel to identify device vulnerabilities and the nature and extent of discoverable information within the devices and their connected systems that is potentially available to unauthorized parties.

4. Video surveillance

In the case of some neuroprosthetic devices such as artificial eyes, a device itself may be able to provide video surveillance²⁰ to its operator that records whether anyone has gained physical access to the device – with the caveat that if the device's security has already been compromised through some

¹⁷ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), pp. F-219-20.

¹⁸ For a discussion of ethical and legal aspects relating to such issues, see Kosta & Bowman, "Implanting Implications: Data Protection Challenges Arising from the Use of Human ICT Implants" (2012); McGee, "Bioelectronics and Implanted Devices" (2008); Mak, "Ethical Values for E-Society: Information, Security and Privacy" (2010); McGrath & Scanaill, "Regulations and Standards: Considerations for Sensor Technologies" (2013); Shoniregun et al., "Introduction to E-Healthcare Information Security" (2010); and Brey, "Ethical Aspects of Information Security and Privacy" (2007).

¹⁹ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-153.

²⁰ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-132.

other means (e.g., if it has been hacked through use of software that had been installed on the device through a wireless connection), it may not be possible to trust the accuracy or integrity of any video stream being provided by the device, as that imagery could be fabricated or altered.²¹

An artificial eye may also be able to provide video surveillance that will allow its operators to determine whether any parties have acquired physical access to other neuroprosthetic devices implanted in the same host or, potentially, in other persons who are within the artificial eye's field of vision.

5. Systematic intrusion detection mechanisms

Intrusions *into* neuroprosthetic devices may be detected by standard tools that monitor the electronic components and systems of a device; they may also potentially be detected as alterations in a device's functioning by the human host with whose neural circuitry the device is integrated. Intrusions into conventional information systems committed *using* neuroprosthetic devices may – depending on the nature of the intrusion – be detected by traditional intrusion-detection mechanisms,²² be detected by specialized detection mechanisms designed specifically to recognize the presence and activity of neuroprosthetic devices, or be difficult to detect by any means.²³

6. Surveillance equipment for intrusion detection

Multiple neuroprosthetic devices may be able to create a body area network (BAN) or body sensory network (BSN) in which devices conduct mutual surveillance, monitor one another's status, and identify physical intrusions into their host's body or bodily systems.²⁴

7. Technical surveillance countermeasures surveys

Technical surveillance countermeasures surveys are conducted in order “to detect the presence of technical surveillance devices/hazards and to identify technical security weaknesses that could aid in the conduct of technical penetrations of surveyed facilities.”²⁵ They are generally performed using a combination of intensive electronic testing, visual observation, and physical

²¹ For the possibility that a neuroprosthesis designed to receive raw data from the environment might have that data replaced with other data transmitted from some external information system, see Koops & Leenes, “Cheating with Implants: Implications of the Hidden Information Advantage of Bionic Ears and Eyes” (2012). Regarding the possibility that neuroprostheses could be used to provide false data or information to their hosts or users, see also McGee (2008), p. 221.

²² Regarding system-wide intrusion detection systems, see *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-220.

²³ See Chapter Three of this text for a discussion of neuroprosthetic devices as potential tools for use in launching cyberattacks or other kinds of attacks.

²⁴ Regarding intrusion alarms and surveillance equipment, see *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-131.

²⁵ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-155.

examination of information systems, the facilities in which they are housed, and the surrounding environment.²⁶

In the case of advanced neuroprostheses utilized by an organization, it may not always be legally, ethically, or practically feasible to conduct countermeasures surveys in all of the venues in which a neuroprosthetic device may operate (e.g., within the home of its human host), even with the advance consent of the host. Surveillance countermeasures surveys must also be conducted in a way that does not create a danger of physical or psychological harm for the host of a neuroprosthetic device or for others. Finally, it should be noted that in some cases the efficacy of surveillance countermeasures surveys that are planned and conducted in conjunction with the human host of a neuroprosthetic device may be compromised by the fact that one form of implementing a ‘surveillance device’ by adversaries would involve hacking a host’s existing sensory organs, memory systems, or other cognitive processes in order to gain access to data gathered by or stored in a host’s existing neuroprosthetic device.²⁷ In such a case, the adversary utilizing an existing neuroprosthesis as a surveillance device may – through the device – gain advance notice of planned surveillance countermeasures surveys and be able to evade them through appropriate planning. Moreover, some kinds of technical surveillance countermeasures surveys may be able to detect the presence of a surveillance device that should not have been present at all, but may have more difficulty detecting the fact that a human host’s neuroprosthesis that was known to and whose presence was authorized by the organization had been hijacked or otherwise compromised by an adversary and was being (either temporarily, periodically, or permanently) employed by an unauthorized party as a surveillance device. It may be similarly difficult to detect situations in which an employee whose implanted neuroprosthesis is known to (and perhaps even provided by) his or her employer is being utilized by the employee in an unauthorized way as a surveillance device, particularly if the patterns of device activity reflected in such unauthorized uses are generally consistent with those seen when the device is used for authorized purposes.

8. Methods for detecting indicators of compromise

Organizations may use automated or manual procedures for searching for **indicators of compromise** (IOCs), which are detectable traces created or left within an information system that may indicate that the system has been compromised; such IOCs may include new registry key values or records of

²⁶ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-155.

²⁷ See Chapter Three of this text for a discussion of the possibility of adversaries accessing another individual’s neuroprosthetic device in order to create a surveillance instrument.

network traffic between the system and known command-and-control servers.²⁸ In the case of advanced neuroprosthetic devices, IOCs may potentially take radically new and different forms, such as the presence of unexplained or corrupted memories or memory fragments within the mind of a device's host, the host's display of unusual sensory, motor, emotional, or personality-related behaviors, or the presence of particular hormones, other chemicals, or other objects within the host's bloodstream or body.²⁹

SDLC stage 4: device operation within the host-device system and supersystem

The fourth stage in the system development life cycle involves the activities occurring after a neuroprosthetic device has been deployed in its production environment (comprising its host-device system and broader supersystem) and is undergoing continuous use in real-world operating conditions. The development or execution of security controls in this stage of the SDLC is typically carried out by a device's operator and maintenance service provider(s) with the active or passive participation of its human host. Such controls are considered below.

A. Ongoing general monitoring

1. Device monitoring and tracking

Monitoring and tracking the location³⁰ of an implanted neuroprosthetic device raises complex legal and ethical questions, insofar as this necessarily entails monitoring and tracking the location of the human host in whom it is implanted.

2. Incident monitoring

Conducting incident monitoring³¹ to track and document security incidents may be difficult in the case of neuroprosthetic devices (such as those comprising biological components or nanorobotic swarms) that may lack a centralized mechanism capable of detecting and recording incidents affecting a device's components.³²

²⁸ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-223.

²⁹ For the possibility that an attack on a neuroprosthetic device or its host-device system might produce long-term changes in the neural activity or structures of the device's host, see Denning et al., "Neurosecurity: Security and Privacy for Neural Devices" (2009).

³⁰ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-138.

³¹ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-107.

³² See the discussion of passive neuroprosthetic devices in Chapter One of this text for examples of such devices.

3. Maintenance and scrutiny of visitor access records

It may be appropriate for the organization operating a neuroprosthetic device to record the identities and other details of individuals who gain direct physical access to the device itself; however, it may be legally or ethical questionable for the organization to record and archive details regarding the circumstances and identities of all individuals who gain physical access³³ to the device's host more generally (e.g., through face-to-face meetings or in other ways).

4. Collection and correlation of monitoring information

Given the resources needed for receiving, processing, and transmitting all of the monitoring data from a wide array of sources that is to be correlated,³⁴ such correlation may often be handled best by external systems that are managed by the operators of a neuroprosthetic device. The use of an external system that is housed within a conventional information systems facility avoids the severe limitations on memory storage, processing capacity, and communications bandwidth that affect many implantable neuroprosthetic devices due to their size, power, and operational constraints. Particular insights, conclusions, or instructions that result from the correlation of monitoring information in an external system can then be conveyed to a device or to its host or operator for use as appropriate.

C. Auditing of events

1. Specification of events to be audited

In the case of some neuroprostheses (such as those that utilize a physical neural network or are passive devices controlled by a host's neural circuitry³⁵) it may be difficult to specify particular kinds of auditable events.³⁶

2. Designing a storage system for audit data

Implantable neuroprosthetic devices may possess limited onboard capacity to store audit records generated by a device.³⁷ Offloading audit data to external systems for permanent storage may not be possible, for example, if a neuroprosthetic device includes a physical neural network with billions of neurons whose individual real-time actions have been designated as audit

³³ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-132.

³⁴ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-222.

³⁵ See the device ontology in Chapter One of Gladden, *Neuroprosthetic Supersystems Architecture* (2017), for a discussion of neuroprosthetic devices that utilize a physical neural network and Chapter One of this volume for a discussion of passive neuroprosthetic devices.

³⁶ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), pp. F-41-42.

³⁷ Regarding audit storage capacity, see *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-43.

events but which cannot be recorded and transmitted to external systems using current or foreseeable technologies.

3. Sensitivity of audit data

Monitoring the ways in which its operator or host utilizes a neuroprosthetic device raises legal and ethical questions insofar as such monitoring may capture and record personal medical data, the contents of cognitive processes, or other sensitive data about the status and actions of the device's human host.³⁸

4. Protections for audit data

The use of hardware-enforced write-once media, cryptographic protection, read-only access, and data backup on separate physical systems is beneficial for ensuring information security for a device's audit information.³⁹ However, the use of such technologies and techniques may or may not be possible for a neuroprosthesis. For example, an implanted device may have no means of backing up audit data to external systems.⁴⁰

5. Chain of custody of audit data (non-repudiation)

The chain of custody of audit information⁴¹ may be difficult or impossible to maintain for a neuroprosthetic device that stores audit information within itself (without the possibility of backup to external systems) and which is not stored permanently within a single secured facility belonging to the operator but rather implanted in a human being who brings the device into environments and situations in which unauthorized attempts to access the device may easily be made.

D. Threat and incident detection

1. Inspection of devices and components after deployment

The inspection of a neuroprosthetic device after its implantation may require the express consent of the device's host.⁴² There is a danger that if the

³⁸ Regarding such legal and ethical issues, see, e.g., Hildebrandt & Anrig, "Ethical Implications of ICT Implants" (2012); Kosta & Bowman (2012); McGrath & Scanail (2013); and Shoniregun et al. (2010).

³⁹ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-49.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Four of this text for the distinction between information stored by neuroprosthetic devices in the form of engrams versus exograms; information stored using exograms is typically easier to back up to external systems.

⁴¹ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-50.

⁴² Regarding the inspection of information systems, devices, and components after their deployment, see *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-180.

information security of an already-implanted device has indeed been compromised by an adversary – and the device is able to influence or exercise control over relevant biological or cognitive processes – then the human host may decline to express consent to an inspection not because the host has decided to reject the inspection through an act of his or her autonomous agency and volition but because the adversary has utilized control over the compromised device in a way that blocks the host from expressing agreement to an inspection.⁴³

2. Security function verification during transitional states

In addition to regular ongoing security function verification, it is important to conduct special verification when a system is undergoing transitional states such as being powered on, rebooted, or shut down.⁴⁴ For some kinds of neuroprosthetic devices, key transitional states may also relate to the sensory, cognitive, and motor processes displayed by a device's human host, such as entering or leaving sleep, opening or closing eyelids, or initiating gross motor movements.

3. Non-signature-based detection of malicious code

Heuristic analysis and other approaches or mechanisms can be used to identify malicious code that is polymorphic or metamorphic and which cannot be identified by antivirus software that searches for particular known signatures.⁴⁵ In the case of some kinds of neuroprosthetic devices (e.g., those that utilize certain types of physical neural networks and do not execute programs as traditionally understood), malicious 'code' may not take the form of discrete strings of digital information that can be analyzed to detect particular signatures but may instead take the form of sense data or other forms of environmental phenomena that can affect a neuroprosthetic device or host-device system. In such situations, the use of heuristic analysis and probabilistic methods to identify potentially malicious input may be necessary.⁴⁶

⁴³ See Chapter Three of this text for the related possibility of a neuroprosthetic device that unintentionally traps the mind of its human host within a 'zombie-like' host-device system in which the host is unable to express his or her thoughts or volitions using motor activity.

⁴⁴ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), pp. F-224-25.

⁴⁵ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-218.

⁴⁶ For some such neuroprosthetic systems, the process of detecting a malicious vector may be less like the discrete process of detecting a traditional computer virus (e.g., a kind of binary data file) and more like the ambiguous everyday challenge of identifying a potentially malicious person, a potentially damaging social relationship, or a potentially harmful sensory experience.

4. Analysis of malicious code to ascertain effects

In the case of neuroprosthetic devices that utilize biological components or materials, ‘malicious code’ may potentially take the form of genetic sequences delivered through the use of biological (and not computer) viruses, microorganisms, or other biological vectors.⁴⁷ A sophisticated attack on such a neuroprosthetic device might combine both the use of a computer virus or worm that infects and compromises electronic portions of the device and a biological vector that infects and compromises the biological portions of the device. In the case of a neuroprosthesis that controls, supports, or executes the production of hormones, cells, or other biochemical products within its host’s body, a computer worm or virus or attack that compromises the electronic portion of the device could conceivably be used to generate biochemical agents that would in turn infect and compromise biological components of the neuroprosthetic device or of the host’s natural organism. Conversely, a biological vector or biochemical agent that infects biological components of the host’s organism or of a neuroprosthetic device could conceivably be used to introduce malware into the device’s electronic components, if the device’s electronic components receive and process information or other input from biological or biochemical components or systems within the host’s organism or the neuroprosthetic device.

5. Detection of unauthorized commands

Information systems are often designed to detect unauthorized operating system commands at the level of the kernel application programming interface, block the execution of such commands, and issue an alert.⁴⁸ Such mechanisms are important not just for preventing certain kinds of attacks that are purposefully launched against information systems by adversaries but also for preventing unauthorized commands that may be an unintentional result of some hardware or software failure, quantum-level metastability, or other phenomenon. Guarding against the execution of unauthorized commands is especially important in the case of neuroprosthetic devices with critical health impacts for their human host.

6. Detection of communication or possession of unsanctioned information

Controls may be used, for example, to detect proprietary or classified information whose possession would be unlawful and to block it from being transferred into a host’s memory by his or her neuroprosthetic device.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Regarding malicious code analysis, see *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-219.

⁴⁸ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-218.

⁴⁹ For controls relating to unsanctioned information, see *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-17.

7. Identification and analysis of covert channels

An organization typically identifies ways in which devices or systems emit transmissions, material objects, or other phenomena that could be used as covert channels for communication; determines the maximum bandwidth available through such covert channels for potential unauthorized communications; and attempts to reduce the bandwidth available for covert channels, insofar as this is feasible given the organization's functional needs and operational priorities.⁵⁰ Some kinds of neuroprosthetic devices may not only generate phenomena such as wireless transmissions, magnetic fields, electrical charges, heat, biological or biochemical substances and materials, and other objects or phenomena that can be directly observed by external parties; the devices may also stimulate the body of their human host in a way that causes it to produce physical reactions or behaviors that can be observed by persons or sensors in the external environment and which can potentially serve as covert channels for the communication of information. It may not be legally, ethically, or practically possible to eliminate or minimize the bandwidth of all such channels.

8. Detection of anomalous communications traffic

In the case of general-purpose organizational information systems, anomalous communications traffic may include “large file transfers, long-time persistent connections, unusual protocols and ports in use, and attempted communications with suspected malicious external addresses.”⁵¹

In the case of neuroprosthetic devices, anomalous traffic at the external boundaries of a device may result from unusually intense or numerous environmental stimuli impacting a sensory neuroprosthetic (perhaps reaching the level of sensory overload), unusually intense or complex motor instructions being sent to motor organs (e.g., when attempting to speak, play a musical instrument, or engage in sports activities), or unusually intense, rich, or complex cognitive activities (e.g., caused by or reflected in heightened emotion, a state of dreaming or hallucination, acts of mental calculation, the imagining of new ideas, or the retrieval of distant memories). Note that activities seen as producing ‘anomalous’ communications traffic patterns when viewed in relation to a neuroprosthetic device may appear quite commonplace from the perspective of the device's human host.

⁵⁰ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), pp. F-206-07.

⁵¹ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-221.

9. Detection of wireless intrusions

Organizations may use a wireless intrusion detection system to scan for and detect both the connection of unauthorized wireless devices to the organization's own wireless access points as well as the presence of unauthorized wireless access points within organizational facilities.⁵² Such wireless intrusion detection systems may be used, for example, to identify visitors to organizational facilities who are using nonvisible neuroprosthetic devices to make unauthorized connections to organizational information systems or to identify miniaturized neuroprosthetic devices that may have been implanted in organizational personnel without their knowledge and which are attempting to wirelessly contact command-and-control servers for instructions or to transmit gathered intelligence.⁵³

10. Detection of extrusion and exfiltration attempts

The analysis of traffic to detect and prevent covert exfiltration⁵⁴ may be desirable and necessary even in the case of neuroprosthetic devices whose actions are clearly visible to their human host and which are theoretically engineered to transmit information or perform actions only in accordance with the volition of their host. For example, an advanced neuroprosthetic arm may be controlled by motor impulses originating in its host's brain, and its movements are visible to the eyes of its human host. However, a computer virus or adversary's cyberattack that is able to compromise the device and alter the motor instructions received by the device from its host's brain (or fabricate nonexistent motor instructions) may be able to cause the neuroprosthetic arm to move in minute ways or with subtly altered patterns that are undetectable to the host's natural biological eyes and visual perception but which can be detected and interpreted by external adversarial systems and used to exfiltrate information from the device or its host-device system.⁵⁵ In a sense, such a case would represent a form of **cognitive steganography** or **motor steganography**.

⁵² *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-222.

⁵³ See Chapter Three of this text for a discussion of the reliance on wireless communication demonstrated by many kinds of neuroprosthetic devices.

⁵⁴ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-222.

⁵⁵ Regarding the possibility that a neuroprosthetic limb could be hacked or otherwise compromised by an adversary and that its behavior could be remotely controlled or manipulated, see Denning et al. (2009).

E. Proactive detection and analysis methods

1. Use of devices as active honeyclients

It is theoretically possible to use neuroprosthetic devices (or their constituent components, subsystems, or subnetworks) as honeyclients⁵⁶ that proactively explore the Internet in search of malicious code – either code designed to infect and harm a device itself or (e.g., if the neuroprosthetic device is being used by cyberwarfare personnel within a military organization) designed to infect other kinds of systems that the operator of the neuroprosthetic device has an interest in protecting. However, the legal and ethical implications of such practices must be carefully considered, especially if they create an increased risk that the human host or operator of a neuroprosthetic device may experience physical or psychological damage as a result of the device’s intentional encounter with malicious code.

2. Use of devices as passive honeypots

It may or may not be feasible to provide a neuroprosthetic device itself with the components, subsystems, or subnetworks needed to create a honeypot⁵⁷ that can either simply serve as a decoy that lures the attention of adversaries away from the device’s actual core systems or which potentially allows adversaries’ attacks to be observed and analyzed without creating a danger for the device’s core systems. In many cases, it may not be an effective use of the limited resources that can be included in a small implantable device to create a honeypot within the device itself. Unique legal and ethical issues (including those of liability for possible damages to the host) may also arise through creating within the body of a human host such decoy systems that can attract attacks.

In some cases (e.g., those of neuroprosthetic devices that are composed largely or entirely of biological material, do not have significant mechanisms for communicating with the environment external to their human host, and are not easily detectable using the sort of electronic equipment that is typically used to detect and analyze mobile computers), it may be more prudent, effective, and efficient to attempt to entirely mask and conceal the device’s existence than to create a honeypot which, in a sense, is purposefully designed to attract attention.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-208.

⁵⁷ *NIST SP 800-53* (2013), p. F-202.

⁵⁸ See Chapter Three of this text for proposed approaches that utilize shielding or jamming in an attempt to conceal the existence of a neuroprosthetic device.

SDLC stage 5: device disconnection, removal, and disposal

The fifth stage in the system development life cycle involves a neuroprosthetic device's functional removal from its host-device system and broader supersystem; this may be accomplished through means such as remote disabling of the device or its core functionality, surgical extraction of the device, or the device's physical disassembly or destruction. The stage also includes a device's preparation for reuse or ultimate disposal after removal from its previous human host. The development or execution of security controls in this stage of the SDLC is typically performed by a device's operator or maintenance service provider(s), potentially with the active or passive participation of its human host. In this text, we do not identify any standard detective InfoSec controls as finding their greatest possible relevance during this final stage of the SDLC.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have reviewed a number of detective security controls for information systems and discussed the implications of applying such controls to neuroprosthetic devices and the larger information systems in which they participate, using the lens of a five-stage system development life cycle as a conceptual framework. In the following chapter, a similar analysis of corrective and compensating controls will be undertaken.

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