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Website Security Analysis Using Vulnerability Assessment Method (Case Study: Universitas Internasional Batam)

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital era, ensuring website security is crucial, especially in the education sector, frequently targeted by cyber attacks. This research aims to test the security of the Universitas Internasional Batam (UIB) website using OWASP ZAP and Nessus. The method used in this research was vulnerability assessment. It will involve gathering information using Nmap, whois, and nslookup tools. OWASP ZAP detected 11 vulnerabilities, categorized into 6 medium-level and 5 low-level, including Content Security Policies (CSP) and anti-clickjacking headers. Otherwise, Nessus only detected one medium-level vulnerability, the absence of HTTP Strict Transport Security (HSTS). The difference in detection results from the tools is that OWASP ZAP is better at finding web application weaknesses consistent with the OWASP Top Ten 2021, while Nessus specifically targets server and network configuration. For educational institutions, these results emphasize the importance of conducting regular vulnerability assessments to protect sensitive data. Recommended action includes implementing CSP to prevent Cross-site scripting (XSS) and other injection attacks, enforcing HSTS to secure communication, and updating software to mitigate unknown vulnerabilities. By adopting these measures, institutions can reduce their exposure to cyber-attacks, maintain user trust, and strengthen overall security. This research provides a practical framework for strengthening the security of educational websites against evolving threats. These findings highlight that the importance of using multiple tools can provide a more comprehensive view of security gaps.

1. INTRODUCTION

The number of development websites in Indonesia is currently very high, as the number of internet service users continues to over time. The data from APJII announced that the number of Indonesian internet users in 2024 will reach 221,563,479 out of a total population of 278,696,200 Indonesians in 2023 [1]. Such a large number of internet users can encourage the opening of cybercrime gaps as a medium of attack. Therefore, security is essential in developing web applications to minimize risks such as theft, manipulation, and data loss [2]. The threat of cyber-attacks in 2021, according to the National Cyber and Crypto Agency for the education sector, is the largest threat to others [3]. The main goal of the attacker is to steal the login credentials of the victim so they can perform spam and phishing attacks [4].

The development of web technology can make it easier for the educational sector to introduce or promote the institution [5]. Universitas Internasional Batam (UIB) is one of the universities located in the city of Batam, Riau Island. This university uses the website as a medium for media promotion, academic portal, E-Learning, etc [6]. The university website also contains student identity, lecturer identity, and

various important confidential information [7]. Violating application security for academics is fatal because it will decrease public trust in academics, in this case, the educational sector [8]. Therefore, the information available on the university website should be comprehensively guarded so that it cannot result in integrity violations or data theft. Knowing the security vulnerabilities can be done by utilizing the Vulnerability Assessment method in the hope of knowing the available security gaps.

Understanding security vulnerabilities is key to protecting web applications. This research uses the Vulnerability Assessment (VA) method, which is a systematic process for identifying, analyzing, and evaluating security weaknesses in web applications. It will also be used in one part of the penetration testing method, namely information gathering. This stage is to collect as much information as possible about the device or system, including details such as its IP address, subdomains, and type of CMS in use [9]. The VA phase aims to identify potential threats that malicious actors could exploit. The tools chosen for this study are OWASP ZAP and Nessus, which were widely recognized for their effectiveness in web vulnerability scanning. OWASP ZAP is an open-source penetration testing tool developed by the Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) [10]. OWASP ZAP also offers many various features that allow users to perform automated scanning of vulnerabilities in web applications and provide detailed reports that could help in understanding and fixing such vulnerabilities [11], [12]. Nessus is a vulnerability scanner that can be used to detect security vulnerabilities in host OS, patches, and targeted services; it also shows the ability to propose solutions that can be used to mitigate vulnerabilities [13]. This combination of vulnerability scanner can be used to provide a comprehensive analysis of potential security gaps.

In carrying out this research, several previous studies were collected, which will be used as references in carrying out this research. Previous research done Muh. Adha, Zitnaa Dhiaaul KWA, and Alva Hendi Muhammad [2], in their research, conducted security testing on the University of Mataram website. In his research using the VA method, which also includes Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing Life Cycle (VAPT-LC), the main focus of the research is on VA without conducting penetration testing. The VA process on the university mataram website went well and resulted in the findings of weaknesses or vulnerabilities. Using the OWASP ZAP tool, 14 data points were found for weakness, and OpenVAS found 2 data points for weakness.

Riyan Farismana and Dian Pramadhana did the next research [14] I. Riadi, A. Yudhana, and Y.W [15] and S. A. Putra, A. Budiono, and U. Y. K. S. Hediyanto [16], Focused on VA various systems using different tools. Riyan Farismana and Dian Pramadhana[14], in their research, conducted a comparison VA using OWASP ZAP and Acunetix tools, which was carried out on POLINDRA'S repository information system. The results of the study found that OWASP ZAP detected 22 alerts, and Acunetix detected 10 Alerts. I. Riadi, A. Yudhana, and Y.W [15] in their research testing the security of the OJS version 2.4.7 website. The tool used in this research was OWASP ZAP. The test carried out in this study found 70 high vulnerabilities, 1929 medium vulnerabilities, and 4050 low vulnerabilities. This shows that OJS version 2.4.7 still has a lot of vulnerabilities, and it suggests that the latest version of OJS be used to avoid existing vulnerabilities. S. A. Putra, A. Budiono, and U. Y. K. S. Hediyanto [16] in their research on student final project proposal web using acunetix and Nmap. The results of the study indicate that 12 vulnerabilities were detected on the dashboard website of the final project proposal of students at the Faculty of Industrial Engineering, Telkom University, with 5 medium-risk vulnerabilities and 7 low-risk vulnerabilities. The research was done by S. Eko. Prasetyo and N. Hassanah [17] in their research analyzing websites using the ISSAF method. The results of this study concluded that the security website is quite safe, but the website still can be attacked with DDOS penetration and cause the server to go down temporarily but with an active firewall security backup it is enough to help the server to avoid hacker attacks against subsequent attacks.

Several previous studies summarized above have similar characteristics and have become the foundation for carrying out this research. In this research, the author will test the security of the Universitas Internasional Batam website. The website needs to be tested for vulnerabilities to avoid unwanted or occurring things, such as data manipulation, data theft, or others by people who are not responsible for the website. Therefore, the author conducts research on the website with the aim of knowing the weaknesses that might occur so that these weaknesses can be found and improved.

2. METHOD

The methodology used in this research is Vulnerability Assessment, which involves a systematic process for identifying, analyzing, and evaluating security weaknesses in web applications [18]. This research aims to evaluate the security of Universitas Internasional Batam's main website by using OWASP

ZAP and Nessus as vulnerability scanner tools. Figure 1 shows the methodological steps in the university web application vulnerability assessment.



Figure 1. Web Application Vulnerability Assessment Methodology

2.1. Scope Identification

The first step was to define the limit of the assessment, where it was focusing on the university's main website. The university used this website to promote media and increase knowledge of the university.

2.2. Information Gathering

At this stage, the researcher will collect the relevant information about the target to prepare for the vulnerability assessment. It will use some tools such as Whois and Nmap to gather essential information, including IP addresses, subdomains, and open ports and services.

2.3. Identification Vulnerability

At this stage, the researcher will conduct automated vulnerability scans using two tools, OWASP ZAP and Nessus. In OWASP ZAP, an automated scan will be utilized to find vulnerabilities on a website, and there are also several advantages of the tools, namely traditional spider, AJAX spider, and active scan [19]. In Nessus, a web application test will be utilized to find vulnerabilities. This tool also provides the report with a Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS) v3 score, which is a scoring system obtained from the National Vulnerability Database (NVD) [20].

2.4. Analysis and Validation

At this stage, the identified vulnerabilities will be analyzed to determine their severity and potential for the website. The vulnerabilities found by OWASP ZAP will be organized based on the 2021 OWASP Top Ten categories and will be categorized into risk and confidence, while Nessus will be categorized based on severity and CVSS V3.0 score.

2.5. Reporting

In the final stage, the vulnerabilities found by both vulnerability scanners will be compiled into a comprehensive report. The report will include the vulnerabilities detected during the VA with the vulnerability impact, and it will make recommendations for solutions for each vulnerability detected to improve website security.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The VA process was focused on evaluating the security of the Universitas Internasional Batam (UIB) website. The scope was limited to the primary website used for promotion, ensuring the research remained target and actionable. The results from the tools used OWASP ZAP and Nessus.

3.1. Information Gathering

In conducting the vulnerability assessment, it will be using a Linux-based system with the following specifications:

Type	: Linux
Version	: Debian (64-bit)
Memory	: 6144 MB
Storage	: 100 GB

The next step is the information gathering stage, by using nslookup, whois and Nmap. nslookup will be used to retrieve the IP address of the target website, and using whois; the results will be obtained in the form of registrant information (domain owner company name, physical address, telephone number, and affiliated organization), registration information (domain registration date, next domain renewal date, and registrar name), and technical information (server name used). After determining the ip of the target, the next step is using the Nmap tool, with the command used is nmap -sV -p 21,22,25,80,443,8080 <target ip>; this command is used to identify services running on ports 21,22,25,80,443 and 8080 on the website and is used to see the version of the service contained on the ports mentioned above. The results of scanning the port with Nmap will be shown at Figure 2.

Starting Nmap scar Host is u	Nmap 7.94 n report f up (0.0095	4SVN (http for 172.67 5s latency)	os://nmap.or .68.48).	rg)a	at 2024-11-28	05:55	EST
PORT 21/tcp 22/tcp 25/tcp	STATE filtered filtered filtered	SERVICE ftp ssh smtp	VERSION				
80/tcp 443/tcp 8080/tcp	open open open	http ssl/https http	Cloudflare cloudflare Cloudflare	http http	proxy proxy		

Figure 2. NMAP Scanning Results

3.2. Identification Vulnerability

The next step after information gathering is the identification of vulnerability by using vulnerability scanners such as OWASP ZAP and Nessus to identify security issues on the website. By using the automated vulnerability scanner tool, OWASP ZAP identified 11 types of alerts. With details, there are 6 data at the medium level and 5 data at the low level, while no weaknesses were found at the high level, as shown in Figure 3.

✓
> 🔑 CSP: Wildcard Directive (5)
> 🄑 CSP: script-src unsafe-inline (5)
> 💾 CSP: style-src unsafe-inline (5)
> 💾 Content Security Policy (CSP) Header Not Set
> 💾 Hidden File Found (2)
> 🂫 Missing Anti-clickjacking Header
> P Cross-Domain JavaScript Source File Inclusion (48)
> Parver Leaks Information via "X-Powered-By" HTTP Response Header Field(s) (5)
> P Strict-Transport-Security Header Not Set (9)
> P Timestamp Disclosure - Unix (3)
> P X-Content-Type-Options Header Missing
Figure 3. OWASP ZAP Scanning results

The next vulnerability scanner tool to be used was Nessus. While scanning using Nessus only 1 vulnerability was identified and no vulnerability with critical. High, and low were found. The results of scanning website using Nessus are presented in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Nessus Scanning results

3.3. Analysis and Validation

At this stage every vulnerabilities was found using OWASP ZAP and Nessus will be categorized based on the severity and the potential to the website. The vulnerabilities found by OWASP ZAP will be categorized into alert name, risk, and OWASP Top Ten 2021, the results will be shown at Table 1.

	Table 1. Alert Category based on OWASP	Top Ten 202	1
No	Alert	Risk	Categ
			ory
1	CSP : Wildcard Directive	Medium	A05
2	CSP : script-src unsafe-inline	Medium	A05
3	CSP : style-src unsafe-inline	Medium	A05
4	Content Security Policy (CSP) Header Not Set	Medium	A05
5	Hidden File Found	Medium	A05
6	Missing Anti-clickjacking Header	Medium	A05
7	Cross-Domain JavaScript Source File Inclusion	Low	A08
8	Server Leaks Information via "X-Powered-By"	Low	A01
	HTTP Response Header Field(s)		
9	Strict-Transport-Security Header Not Set	Low	A05
10	Timestamp Disclosure – Unix	Low	A01
11	X-Content-Type-Options Header Missing	Low	A05

While Nessus scanning results will be categorized as the vulnerability name, severity, and CVSS V3.0 score, the results will be shown at Table 2

Tab	le 2. Vulnerability found l	by Nessus w	ith CVSS score
No	Vulnerability	Severity	CVSS V3.0
1	HSTS Missing From	Medium	6.5
	HTTPS Server (RFC 6797)		

3.4. Report

At the final stage the results of the scanning website using OWASP ZAP and Nessus was revealed a significant difference, which OWASP ZAP was detected 11 vulnerabilities with 6 data at the medium-level and 5 data at the low-level, while Nessus only detected 1 vulnerability with the medium-level. The comparison of scanning results will be shown at Table 3.

Table .	3. Comparison	of Scanning Resu	lts
Software		Results	
	High	Medium	Low
OWASP ZAP	0	6	5
Nessus	0	1	0

OWASP ZAP tools were strong in identifying web application vulnerabilities, specifically issues such as CSP, cross-domain misconfiguration, and server misconfiguration. It was focused on detecting vulnerabilities related to the OWASP Top Ten categories, which is highly effective for application-level security. While the Nessus vulnerability scanner doesn't find many vulnerabilities, its primary strength lies in its network-level assessments. The mid-level vulnerabilities that were identified emphasized its narrower focus when used for web application security. Based on the scanning results it shows that relying on a single tool can lead to an incomplete vulnerability assessment. Using a combination of tools such as OWASP ZAP and Nessus can provide a more comprehensive view of security gaps, addressing both application and infrastructure-level vulnerabilities.

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These findings emphasize the importance of regular vulnerability assessments for educational websites. Identified vulnerabilities, such as missing HSTS and poor CSP, can lead to sensitive user data being targeted by attackers such as MiTM and XSS attacks. Mitigating these issues is critical to protecting user trust and ensuring strict compliance with security best practices. Each vulnerability discovery detected by the tools will be explained, along with the impact of the vulnerability and a recommendation for a solution. The vulnerabilities found by OWASP ZAP will be shown in Table 4, while Nessus vulnerabilities will be shown in Table 5.

Table 4. Vulnerability Impact and Recommendation found by OWASP ZAP No Vulnerability Impact Recommendation Alert CSP : Wildcard An overly permissive Content Directive Security Policy (CSP) can allow script execution from any source, including malicious websites. This can lead to many different types of attacks, such as XSS, data theft, and Configure your web server, application redirection. server, load balancer, etc. to set the 2 CSP : script-src Allows execution of scripts Content-Security-Policy header unsafe-inline embedded directly in HTML, which correctly. can be exploited by attackers to inject malicious code. 3 CSP : style-src Allows execution for styles (CSS). unsafe-inline Attackers can inject malicious styles to change the appearance and behavior of the page. 4 Content Security Without CSP, browsers have no clue Make sure the web server, application Policy (CSP) about the resources they are allowed server, load balancer, etc. are set up to Header Not Set include the CSP header. to load, making it easier for attackers to inject malicious content. Evaluate whether the component is 5 Hidden File Found Hidden files that should not be accessible to general users may important in production. If not, deactivate it. If yes, ensure that the contain sensitive information or be utilized as a starting point for further component requires proper authentication and authorization or attacks. restrict access to certain internal systems or source IP. 6 Missing Anti-Clickjacking attacks can trap users Modern web browsers support the CSP clickjacking into clicking on an invisible object, and X-Frame-Options HTTP headers. which allows the perpetrator to Header Always ensure that one of these headers execute actions on their behalf is included on every webpage served by without their knowledge. your website or application. If you anticipate the page will be framed exclusively by a page on your server, use SAMEORIGIN. Cross-Domain The inclusion of JavaScript files from Make sure that the JavaScript source JavaScript Source other domains can lead to XSS files are downloaded from a reliable attacks if the files are not properly File Inclusion source and cannot be manipulated by sanitized. the application's end user. provide Server Leaks These headers can Ensure that the web server, application information about the server software server, load balancer, etc., are set up to Information via "X-Powered-By" being used, which can help attackers trigger the "X-Powered-By" headers. HTTP Response identify specific vulnerabilities. Header Field(s) Without HSTS, browsers will not 9 Strict-Transport-Configure your server infrastructure Security Header automatically redirect all requests to (including web servers, application servers, and load balancers) to enforce Not Set HTTPS, allowing man-in-the-middle attacks. strict transport security (HSTS). 10 Timestamp Accurate timestamp disclosure can Manually verify that the timestamp Disclosure - Unix information is non-sensitive and cannot help attackers perform playback or brute-force attacks. be combined or analyzed in a way that reveals exploitable patterns. 11 X-Content-Type-X-Content-Type-Options Ensure that the web or application If the Options Header header is missing, then the browser server correctly sets the Content-Type Missing will try to guess the content type of header for all responses and applies the X-Content-Type-Options header with a the received file by itself. This opens the door to a variety of attacks, value of 'nosniff' to prevent MIME type including XSS (Cross-Site sniffing on all web pages.

Scripting), Malicious file uploads, and Bypassing security mechanisms.

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No	Name	Vulnerability Impact	Recommendation
1	HSTS	This vulnerability allows attackers to	Configure the remote
	Missing	downgrade the connection from HTTPS to	web server to use
	From	HTTP, opening up opportunities for	HSTS.
	HTTPS	interception and manipulation of sensitive	
	Server (RFC	user data during transmission. Without	
	6797)	HSTS, communication between users and	
	,	websites becomes vulnerable to man-in-	
		the-middle attacks, where attackers can	
		insert malicious code or redirect users to	
		fake sites. Improper HSTS configuration	
		makes websites vulnerable to various types	
		of cyberattacks, including downgrades and	
		man_in_the_middle attacks	

Table 5. Vulnerability Impact and Recommendation found by Nessus

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the vulnerability assessment process on the Universitas Internasional Batam (UIB) website using two vulnerability scanner tools, OWASP ZAP and Nessus. The results revealed significant differences in each tool. Where OWASP ZAP detected 11 vulnerabilities, including 6 at the medium level and 5 at the low level, whereas Nessus only detected 1 medium-level vulnerability, it can be said that OWASP ZAP was strengthened in identifying web application vulnerability, particularly issues related to OWASP Top Ten 2021, while Nessus primary strength lies on network-level assessments.

This research has emphasized the importance of regular and comprehensive vulnerability assessments to protect sensitive data in educational institutions. Vulnerabilities such as HSTS missing configuration and poor CSP can lead to sensitive user data being targeted by attackers, such as MiTM and XSS attacks. Implementing recommended security measures, such as configuring HSTS and strengthening CSP, can significantly reduce these risks. In future research, penetration testing could be conducted to explore the exploitation and impact of vulnerabilities in the real world. Additionally, additional vulnerability scanning tools could be evaluated to look for vulnerabilities in other security systems, such as dynamic testing and network security, to provide greater insight into the effectiveness of different approaches to web security.

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