



AL2024_26 Microsoft Exchange 2016 Reaches Extended End of Support (August 13, 2024)

Description

On August 8, 2024, Microsoft issued a critical reminder that Exchange 2016 will reach its extended end of support on October 14, 2025. This milestone marks the end of official updates, including security patches, leaving organizations running Exchange 2016 vulnerable to potential threats. Exchange 2016 had previously reached its mainstream end date in October 2020, following the lifecycle of its predecessor, Exchange Server 2013, which reached its extended end-of-support (EOS) on April 11, 2023. Microsoft strongly advises organizations to transition from Exchange 2016 to Exchange 2019, the only version that will support in-place upgrades to Exchange SE. This recommendation is crucial for maintaining secure, up to date on-premises email infrastructure. The transition also ensures compatibility with future upgrades, allowing for smoother maintenance and enhanced security.

Attack Details

While no specific attacks are currently associated with the end of support for Exchange 2016, history has shown that unsupported software becomes a prime target for cybercriminals. Once support ends, Microsoft will no longer release security updates, making vulnerabilities in Exchange 2016 increasingly susceptible to exploitation.

Attackers often focus on exploiting known vulnerabilities in outdated software. Without security patches, organizations using Exchange 2016 could be exposed to various cyber threats, including ransomware, data breaches, and unauthorized access. These threats can disrupt business operations, lead to data loss, and result in significant financial and reputational damage.

Remediation

To mitigate the risks associated with the end of support for Exchange 2016, organizations should take the following steps:



- **Upgrade to Exchange 2019:** By upgrading exchange ensures continued access to security updates and the ability to perform in-place upgrades to Exchange SE when available.
- **Update Security Policies:** Review and update security policies and procedures to reflect the changes in infrastructure and ensure robust protection against potential threats.

The Guyana National CIRT recommends that users and administrators review this alert and apply it where necessary.

References

- Gatlan, S. (2024, August 8). Microsoft: Exchange 2016 reaches extended end of support in October. Retrieved from *BleepingComputer*.
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