



Microsoft Cybersecurity Reference Architectures (MCRA)

End to End Security Architecture
following Zero Trust principles



About me



Microsoft
Sr Cloud Solution Architect

13 years of experience

The classic potato

Azure | Identity
EUC | InfoSec

alven.tech

<https://twitter.com/salvestad/>

Ultra runner by night

the illustration has been created by
AI DALL E

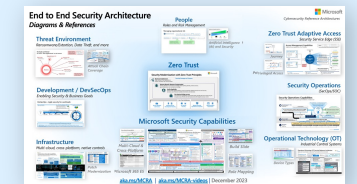
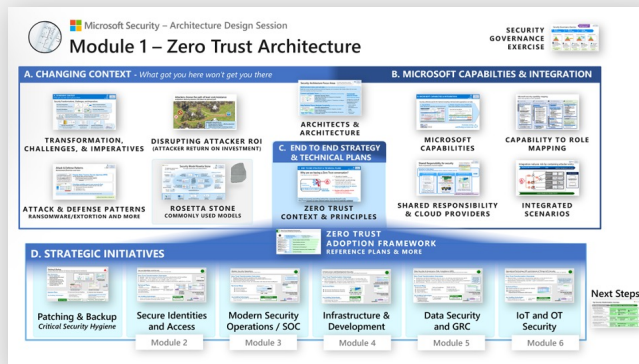
Top End to End Security Challenges

- Incomplete or network-centric architectures aren't agile & can't keep up with continuous change (security threats, technology platform, and business requirements)
- Challenges with
 - Creating integrated end to end architecture
 - Integrating security technologies
 - Planning and prioritizing security modernization initiatives

Agenda

- Overview of Security Adoption Framework and End to End Cybersecurity Architecture
 - **End to End Security:** Consider the whole problem
 - **Ruthlessly Prioritize:** Identify top gaps + quick wins
 - **Get started:** Start somewhere & continuously improve
- Antipatterns and best practices
- Diagrams and references
Applying Zero Trust principles

MCRA is a subset of the full Security Architecture Design Session (ADS) module 1 workshop:





Security Adoption Framework

Align security to business scenarios using initiatives that progressively get closer to full 'Zero Trust'



Business Scenarios
Guiding North Star

1. Strategic Framework

End to End Strategy, Architecture, and Operating Model

1 - I want people to do their job securely from anywhere

2 - I want to minimize business damage from security incidents

3 - I want to identify and protect critical business assets

4 - I want to proactively meet regulatory requirements

5 - I want to have confidence in my security posture and programs



2. Strategic initiatives

Clearly defined architecture and implementation plans



Security Hygiene: Backup and Patching



Secure Identities and Access



Modern Security Operations



Infrastructure and Development



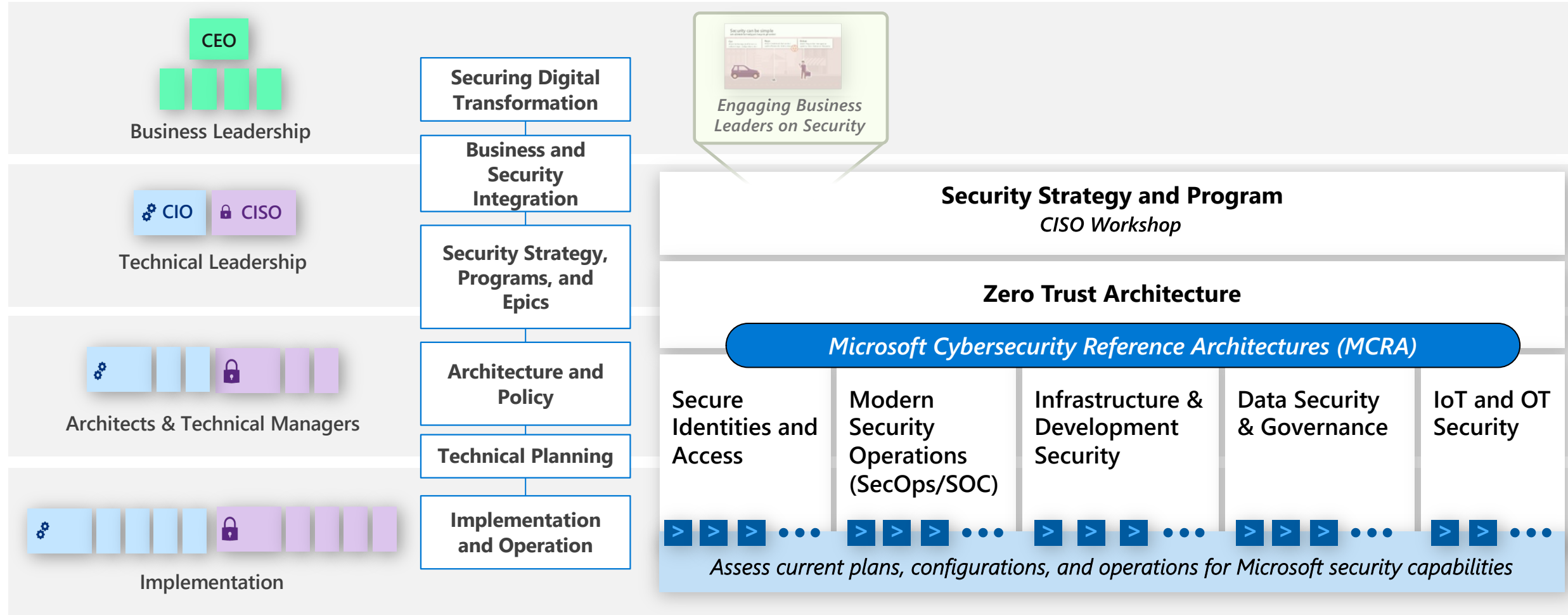
Data Security & Governance, Risk, Compliance (GRC)



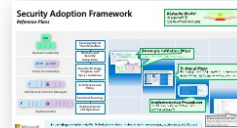
OT and IoT Security

Security Adoption Framework

Reduce risk by rapidly modernizing security capabilities and practices



Includes Reference Plans



Workshops available in the Microsoft Unified catalog

All are holistic for the 'hybrid of everything' technical estate (on-premises, multi-cloud, IoT, OT, etc.)

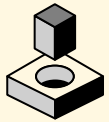
Common Security Antipatterns - Technical Architecture

Common mistakes that impede security effectiveness and increase organizational risk



Skipping basic maintenance

Skipping backups, disaster recovery exercises, and software updates/patching on assets



Securing cloud like on premises

Attempting to force on-prem controls and practices directly onto cloud resources



Wasting resources on legacy

Legacy system maintenance and costs draining ability to effectively secure business assets



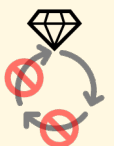
Artisan Security

Focused on custom manual solutions instead of automation and off the shelf tooling



Disconnected security approach

Independent security teams, strategies, tech, and processes for network, identity, devices, etc.



Lack of commitment to lifecycle

Treating security controls and processes as points in time instead of an ongoing lifecycle

Best Practices

Develop and implement an **end to end technical security strategy** focused on durable capabilities and Zero Trust Principles

This workshop helps you define and rapidly improve on best practices across security including:

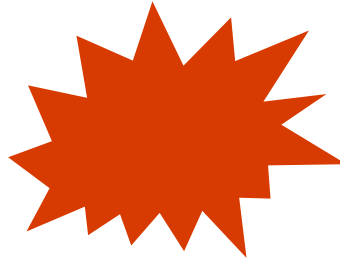
- **Asset-centric security** aligned to business priorities & technical estate (beyond network perimeter)
- **Consistent principle-driven approach** throughout security lifecycle
- **Pragmatic prioritization** based on attacker motivations, behavior, and return on investment
- **Balance investments** between innovation and rigorous application of security maintenance/hygiene
- **'Configure before customize'** approach that embraces automation, innovation, and continuous improvement
- **Security is a team sport** across security, technology, and business teams

Improving Resiliency

Enable business mission while continuously increasing security assurances

'Left of Bang'

Prevent or lessen impact of attacks



'Right of Bang'

Rapidly and effectively manage attacks



The job will never be 'done' or 'perfect', but it's important to keep doing (like cleaning a house)

[NIST Cybersecurity Framework v2](#)

End to End Security

Enable business mission and increasing security assurances with intentional approach

Security Strategy and Program

Zero Trust Architecture

Security Posture Management

Modern Security Operations (SecOps/SOC)

Secure Identities and Access

Infrastructure & Development Security

IoT and OT Security

Data Security & Governance

'Left of Bang'

Prevent or lessen impact of attacks

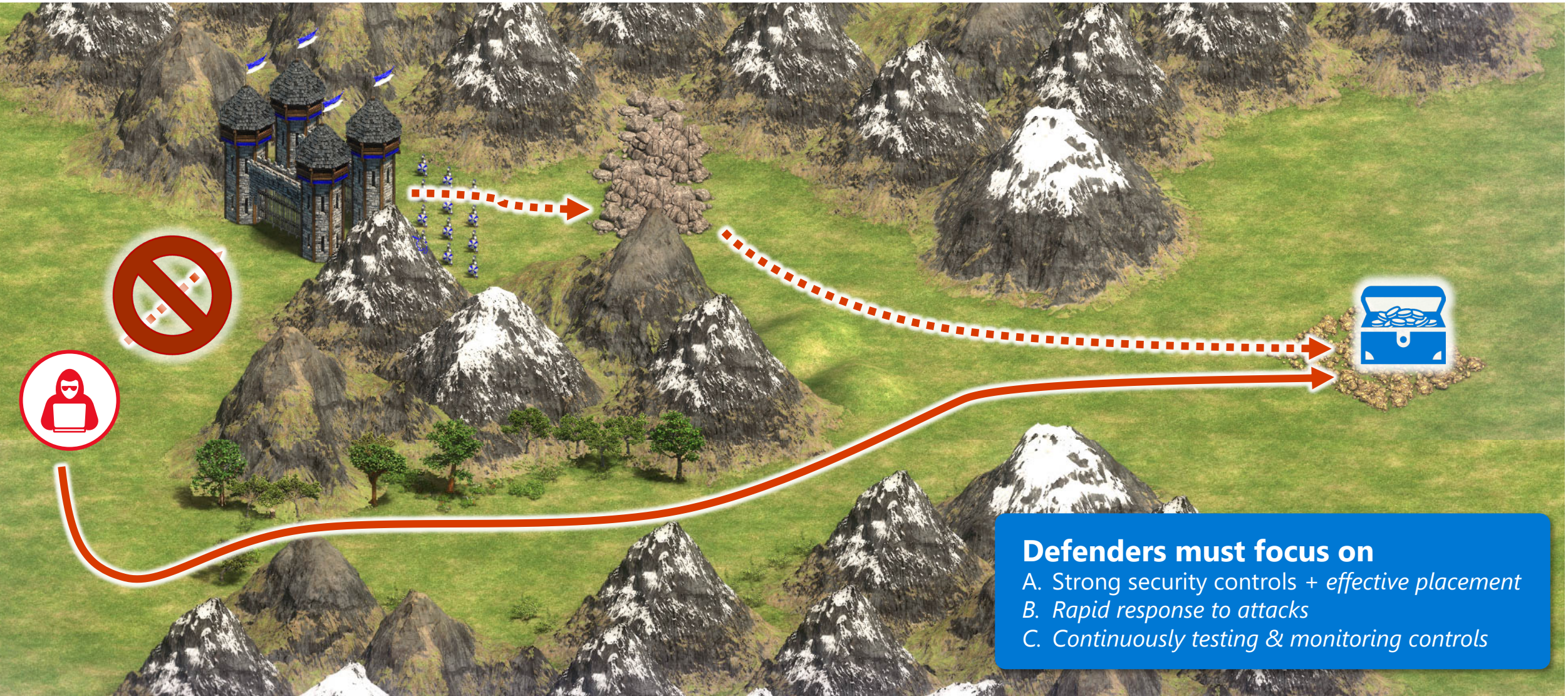
'Right of Bang'

Rapidly and effectively manage attacks



Attackers choose the path of least cost/resistance

Antipattern: Believing attackers will follow the planned path

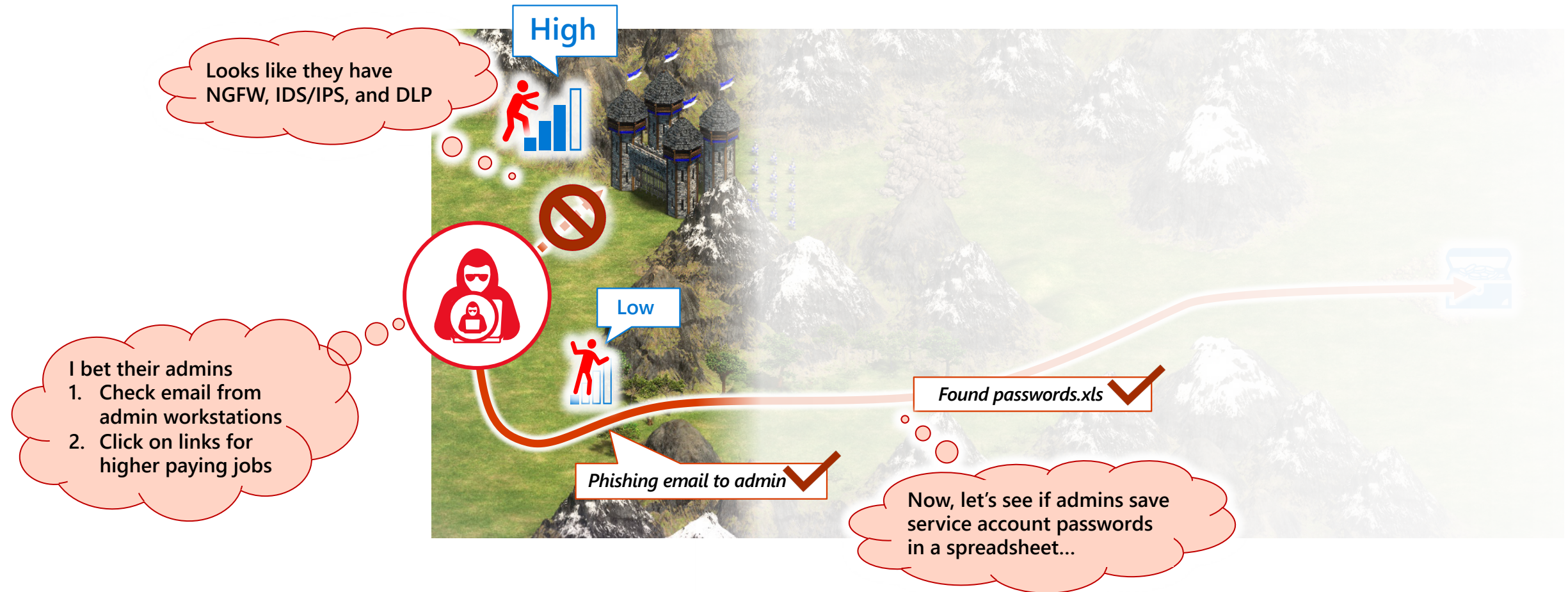


Defenders must focus on

- A. Strong security controls + *effective placement*
- B. *Rapid response to attacks*
- C. *Continuously testing & monitoring controls*

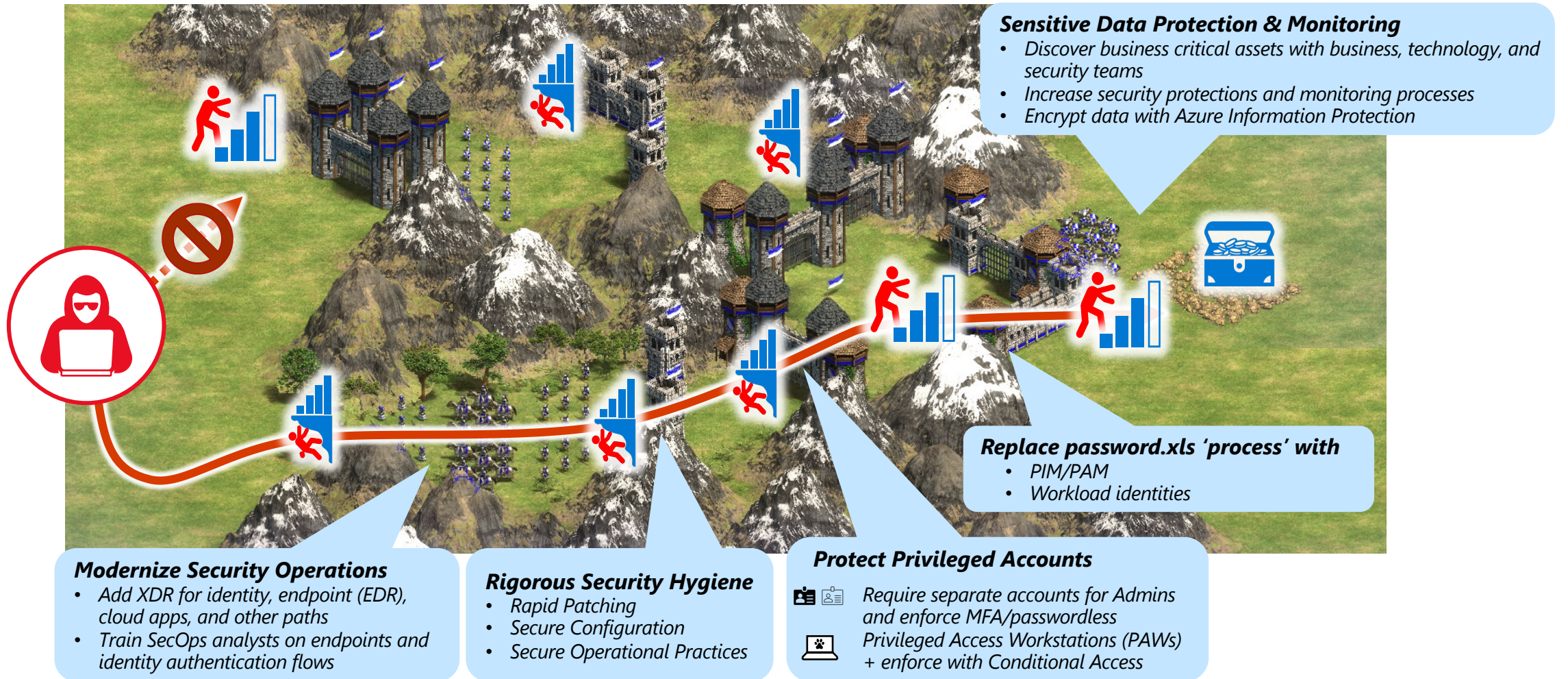
Attacker Perspective: shaped by experience & 'fog of war'

Attackers use what they see, know, and can guess



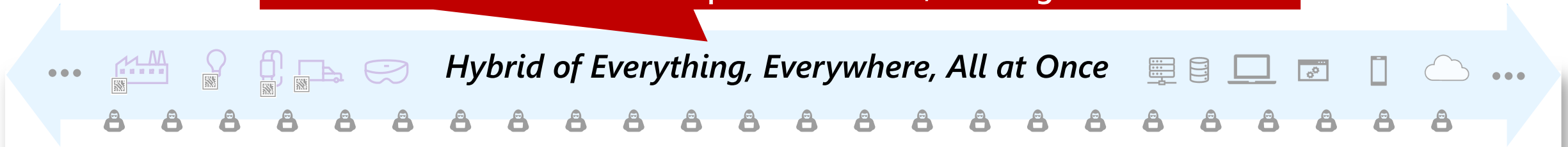
Strategically position security investments

Raise cost and friction on attacker's easiest and highest impact paths



Security is complex and challenging

Attacks can shut all business operations down, creating board level risk



Must secure across everything

- **Brand New** - IoT, DevOps, and Cloud services, devices and products
- **Current/Aging** - 5-25 year old enterprise IT servers, products, etc.
- **Legacy/Ancient** - 30+ year old Operational Technology (OT) systems

Nothing gets retired!

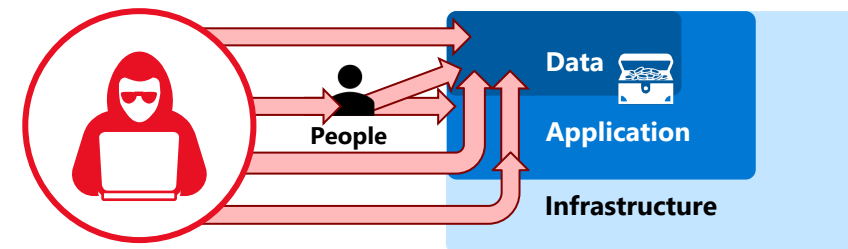
Usually for fear of breaking something (& getting blamed)

'Data swamp' accumulates
managed data + unmanaged 'dark' data



Attackers have a lot of options

- *Forcing security into a holistic complex approach*



- **Regulatory Sprawl** - 200+ daily updates from 750 regulatory bodies
- **Threats** – Continuously changing threat landscape
- **Security Tools** – dozens or hundreds of tools at customers



Goal: Zero Assumed Trust

Reduce risk by finding and removing implicit assumptions of trust

With 30+ years of backlog at most organizations, it will take a while to burn down the backlog of assumed trust

False Assumptions

of implicit or explicit trust

Security is the opposite of productivity

All attacks can be prevented

Network security perimeter will keep attackers out

Passwords are strong enough

IT Admins are safe

IT Infrastructure is safe

Developers always write secure code

The software and components we use are secure



Zero Trust Mitigation

Systematically Build & Measure Trust

Business Enablement

Align security to the organization's mission, priorities, risks, and processes

Assume Compromise

Continuously reduce blast radius and attack surface through prevention and detection/response/recovery

Shift to Asset-Centric Security Strategy

Revisit how to do access control, security operations, infrastructure and development security, and more

Explicitly Validate Account Security

Require MFA and analyze all user sessions with behavior analytics, threat intelligence, and more

Plan and Execute Privileged Access Strategy

Establish security of accounts, workstations, and other privileged entities ([aka.ms/spa](#))

Validate Infrastructure Integrity

Explicitly validate trust of operating systems, applications, services accounts, and more

Integrate security into development process

Security education, issue detection and mitigation, response, and more

Supply chain security

Validate the integrity of software and hardware components from open source, vendors, and others



Zero Trust Security Architecture

End to End Prioritized Execution + Continuous Improvement

1. Look End to End: Consider the whole security problem

OBSERVE, ORIENT



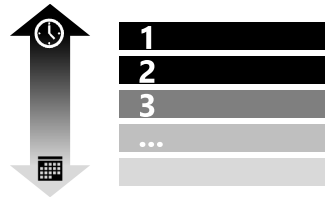
Security is complex and challenging



Resilience required across the lifecycle

2. Ruthlessly Prioritize: Identify top gaps + quick wins

DECIDE



Prioritize backlog of trust assumptions



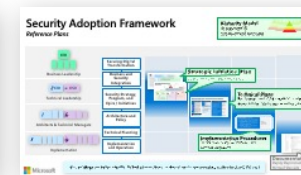
Disrupt attacker return on investment (ROI)

3. Get started: Start somewhere and continuously improve

ACT



Microsoft Security Adoption Framework



Leverage reference plans and architectures

End to End Security Architecture

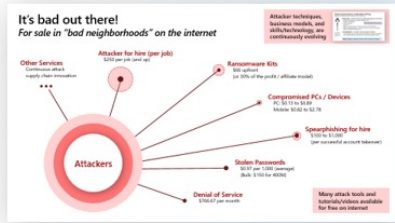
Diagrams & References



Cybersecurity Reference Architectures

Threat Environment

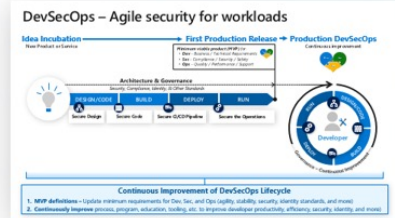
Ransomware/Extortion, Data Theft, and more



Attack Chain Coverage

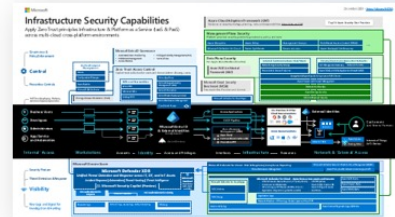
Development / DevSecOps

Enabling Security & Business Goals



Infrastructure

Multi-cloud, cross-platform, native controls



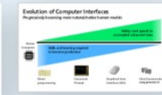
Patch Modernization

Multi-Cloud & Cross-Platform

Microsoft 365 E5

People

Roles and Risk Management

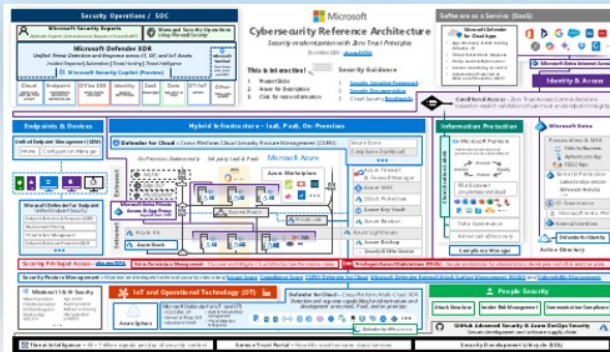


Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Security

Zero Trust



Microsoft Security Capabilities



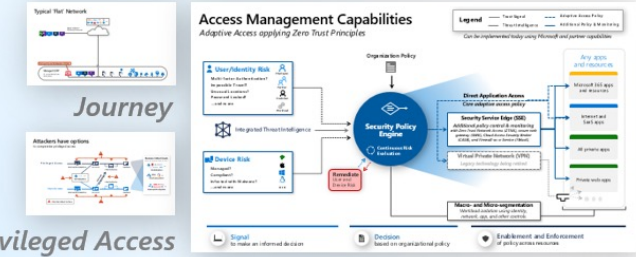
Build Slide



Role Mapping

Zero Trust Adaptive Access

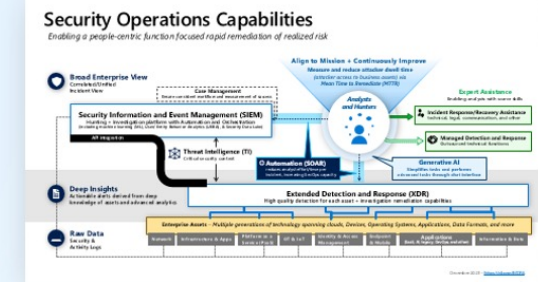
Security Service Edge (SSE)



Privileged Access

Security Operations

(SecOps/SOC)

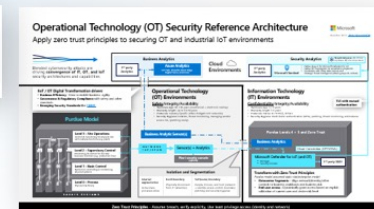


Operational Technology (OT)

Industrial Control Systems



Device Types



Security Modernization with Zero Trust Principles

Security Strategy and Program



Business Enablement

Align security to the organization's mission, priorities, risks, and processes



Assume Breach (Assume Compromise)

Assume attackers can and will successfully attack anything (identity, network, device, app, infrastructure, etc.) and plan accordingly



Verify Explicitly

Protect assets against attacker control by explicitly validating that all trust and security decisions use all relevant available information and telemetry.



Use least-privilege access

Limit access of a potentially compromised asset, typically with just-in-time and just-enough-access (JIT/JEA) and risk-based policies like adaptive access control.

Zero Trust Architecture



Secure Identities
and Access



Infrastructure &
Development Security



IoT and OT
Security



Modern Security
Operations (SecOps/SOC)



Data Security &
Governance

Zero Trust Principles

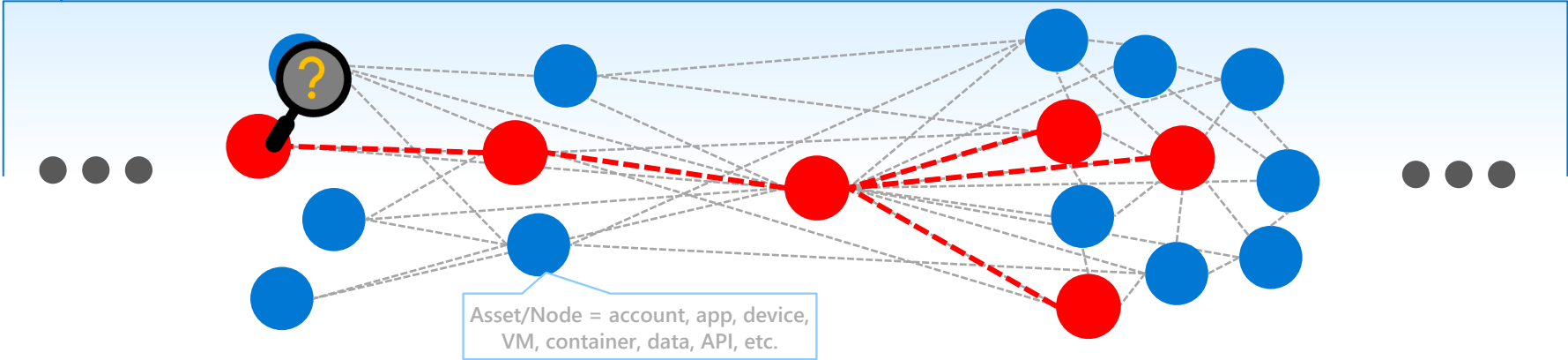
Business Enablement

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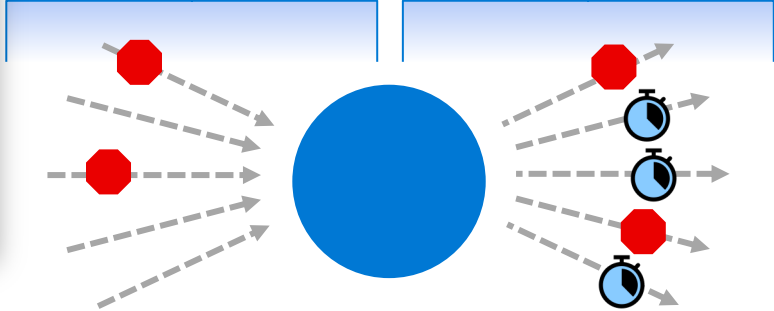
→ *Transforms from "defend the network" to "enable secure productivity on any network"*



Verify explicitly

Protect assets against attacker control by explicitly validating that all trust and security decisions use all relevant available information and telemetry.

→ *Reduces "attack surface" of each asset*



Use least privilege access

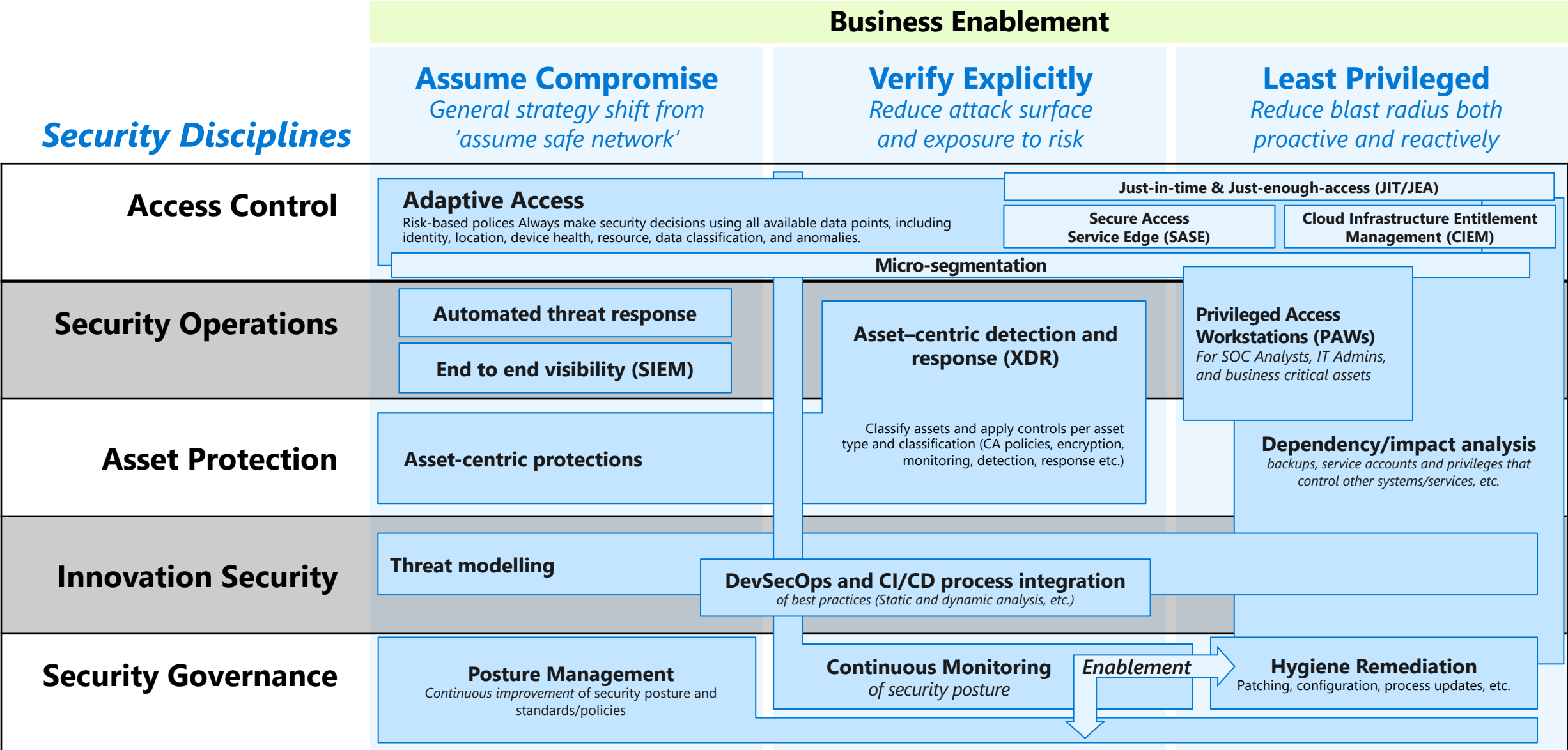
Limit access of a potentially compromised asset, typically with just-in-time and just-enough-access (JIT/JEA) and risk-based policies like adaptive access control.

→ *Reduce "blast radius" of compromises*

Apply Zero Trust principles

Key changes across security disciplines

All elements informed by threat and business intelligence, assisted by security engineering/automation



Key Industry Collaborations



THE *Open* GROUP

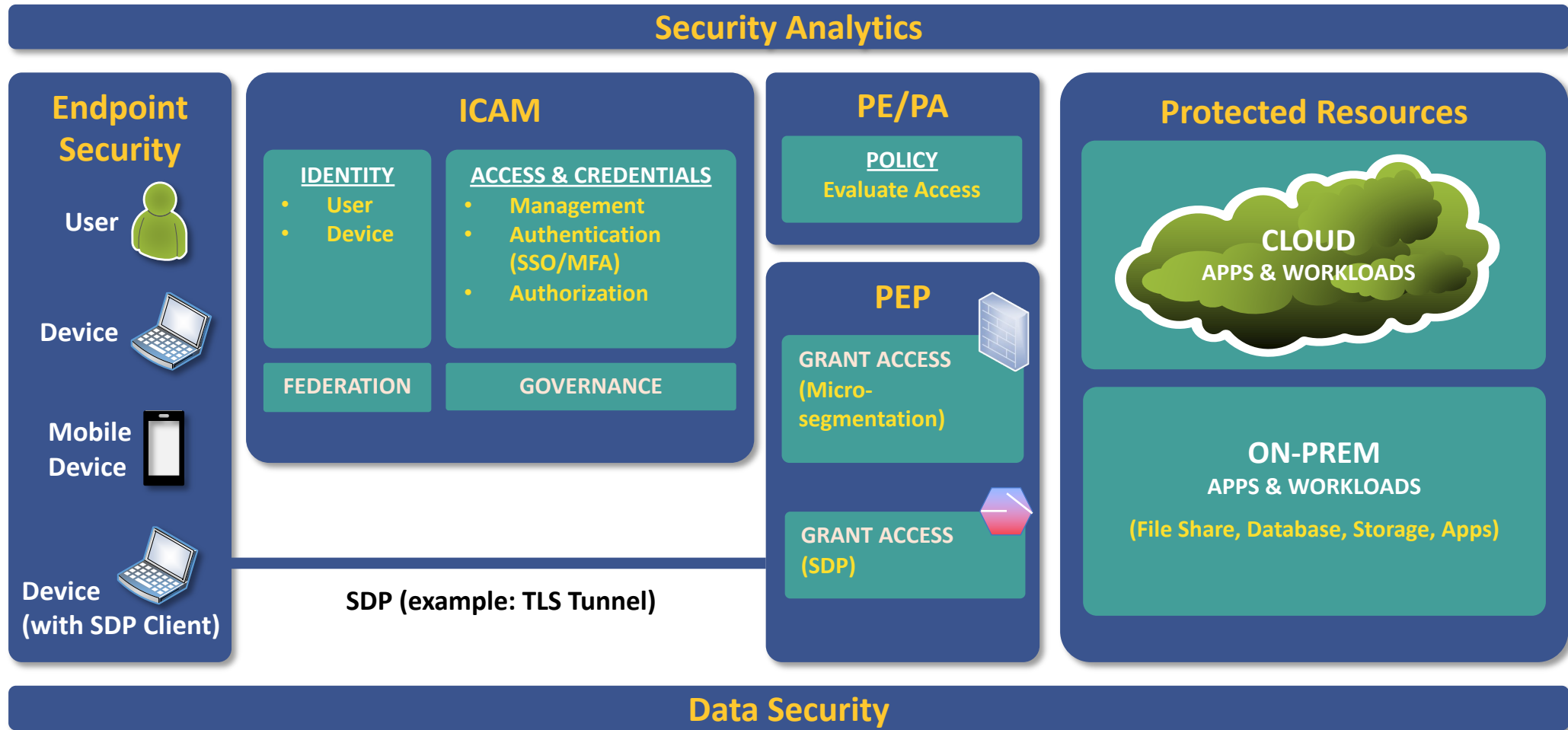
The Open Group
*Focused on integration
with business and
IT/Enterprise/Security
architecture*

NIST

**US National Institute of
Standards and
Technology (NIST)**
*Focused on architecture
and implementation with
available technology*

Many organizations are contributing valuable perspectives and guidance like the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Cloud Security Alliance (CSA), and some technology vendors

Zero Trust Architecture (ZTA)



Microsoft Zero Trust Capability Mapping

Implemented in NCCoE lab
(Summer 2023)



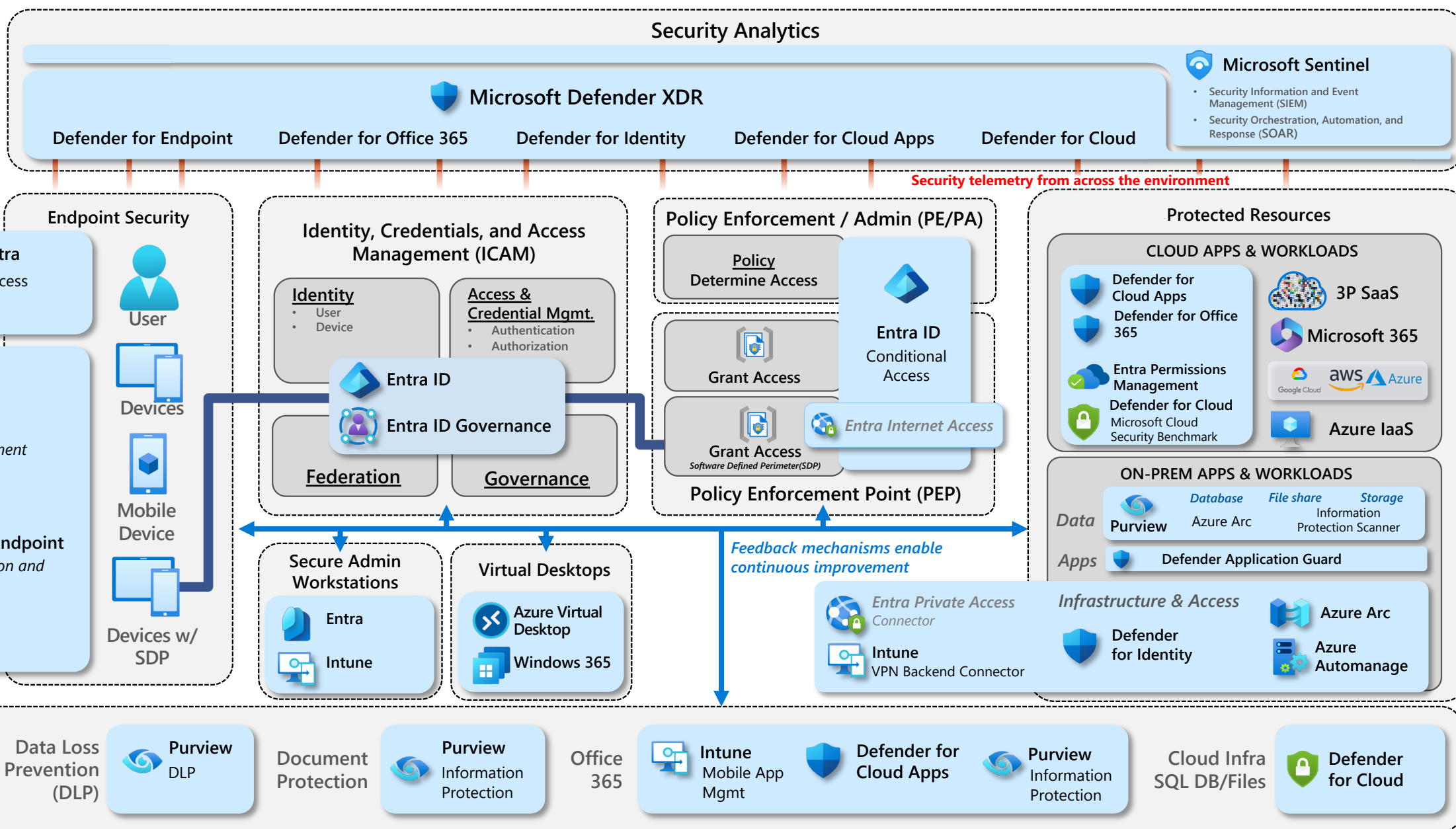
Key

NIST Area

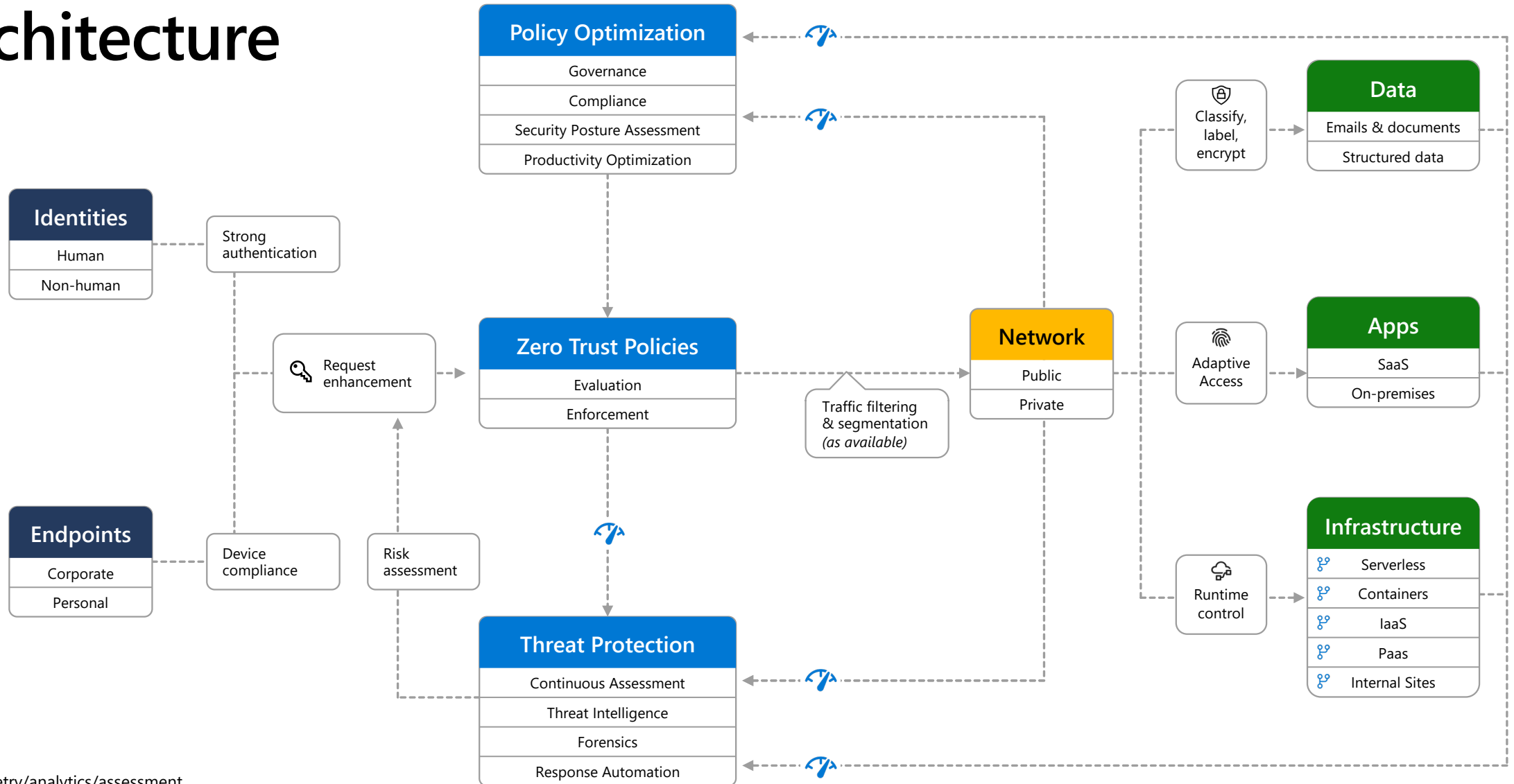
NIST Sub-Area

- Sub-Area

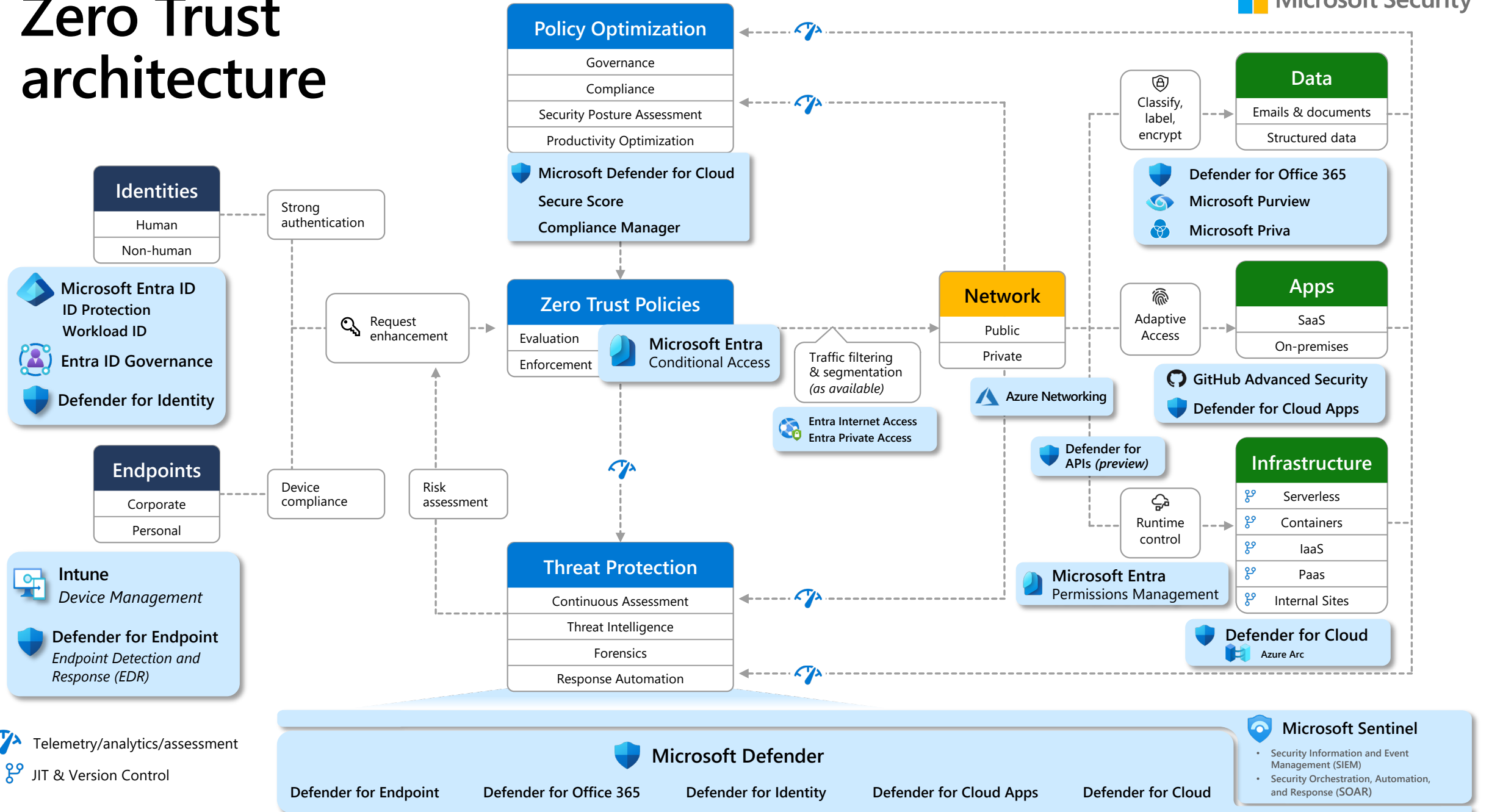
Microsoft Service



Zero Trust architecture



Zero Trust architecture

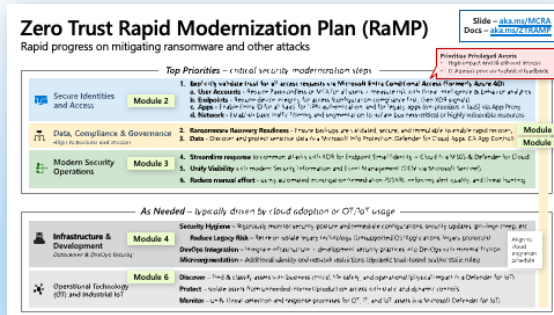


Starting the Security Adoption Framework

Multiple structured ways to accelerate end to end security transformation

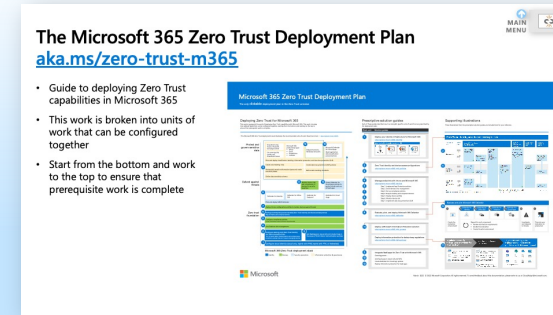
QUICK WINS

across all initiatives with Zero Trust RaMP

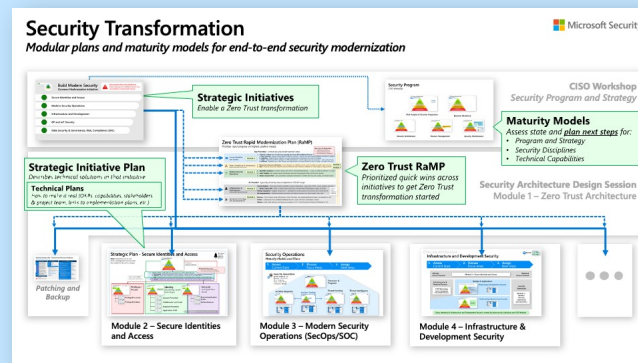


MICROSOFT 365

Implement M365 to support Zero Trust



Full Security Modernization Plans



Actionable & Complete Reference Strategy

→ *6 Strategic Initiatives* driving big outcomes with

→ *2-8 Technical Plans* with

→ Objectives & Key Results (OKRs)

→ Project Teams and Workstreams

→ Links to Implementation Procedures

→ ...and more

Zero Trust Rapid Modernization Plan (RaMP)

Rapid progress on mitigating ransomware and other attacks

Slide – aka.ms/MCRA
Docs – aka.ms/ZTRAMP

Top Priorities – critical security modernization steps

Prioritize Privileged Access

- High impact and likelihood attacks
- IT Admins provide technical feedback



Secure Identities and Access

Module 2

1. **Explicitly validate trust for all access requests via Microsoft Entra Conditional Access (Formerly Azure AD)**
 - a. **User Accounts** - Require Passwordless or MFA for all users + measure risk with threat intelligence & behavior analytics
 - b. **Endpoints** - Require device integrity for access (configuration compliance first, then XDR signals)
 - c. **Apps** - Enable Entra ID for all SaaS, for VPN authentication, and for legacy apps (on-premises + IaaS) via App Proxy
 - d. **Network** - Establish basic traffic filtering and segmentation to isolate business-critical or highly vulnerable resources



Data, Compliance & Governance
Align to business and mission

Module 3

2. **Ransomware Recovery Readiness** - Ensure backups are validated, secure, and immutable to enable rapid recovery
3. **Data** - Discover and protect sensitive data (via Microsoft Info Protection, Defender for Cloud Apps, CA App Control)

Module 1

Module 5



Modern Security Operations

4. **Streamline response** to common attacks with XDR for Endpoint/Email/Identity + Cloud (via M365 & Defender for Cloud)
5. **Unify Visibility** with modern Security Information and Event Management (SIEM via Microsoft Sentinel)
6. **Reduce manual effort** - using automated investigation/remediation (SOAR), enforcing alert quality, and threat hunting

As Needed – typically driven by cloud adoption or OT/IoT usage



Infrastructure & Development

Datacenter & DevOps Security

Module 4

- Security Hygiene** – Rigorously monitor security posture and remediate configurations, security updates, privilege creep, etc.
- Reduce Legacy Risk** – Retire or isolate legacy technology (Unsupported OS/Applications, legacy protocols)
- DevOps Integration** – Integrate infrastructure + development security practices into DevOps with minimal friction
- Microsegmentation** – Additional *identity and network* restrictions (dynamic trust-based and/or static rules)

Align to cloud migration schedule



Operational Technology (OT) and Industrial IoT

Module 6

- Discover** – Find & classify assets with business critical, life safety, and operational/physical impact (via Defender for IoT)
- Protect** – isolate assets from unneeded internet/production access with static and dynamic controls
- Monitor** – unify threat detection and response processes for OT, IT, and IoT assets (via Microsoft Defender for IoT)

The Microsoft 365 Zero Trust Deployment Plan

aka.ms/zero-trust-m365

- Guide to deploying Zero Trust capabilities in Microsoft 365
- This work is broken into units of work that can be configured together
- Start from the bottom and work to the top to ensure that prerequisite work is complete

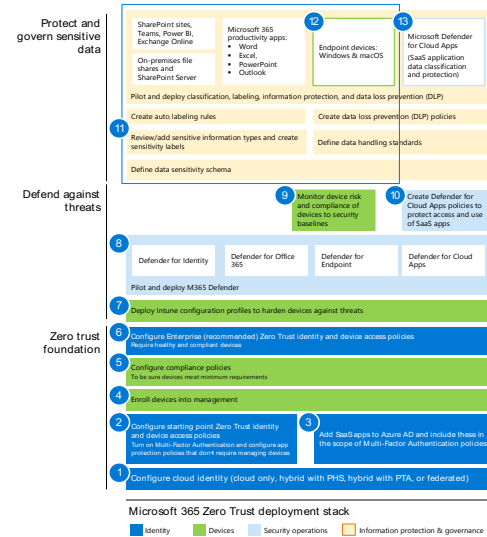
Microsoft 365 Zero Trust Deployment Plan

The only clickable deployment plan in the Zero Trust universe

Deploying Zero Trust for Microsoft 365

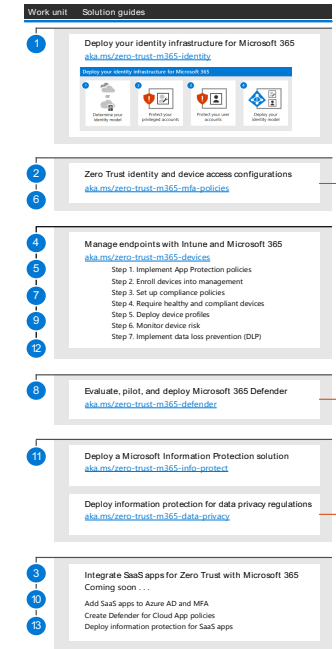
This poster represents the work of deploying Zero Trust capabilities with Microsoft 365. This work is broken into units of work that can be configured together, starting from the bottom and working to the top to ensure that prerequisite work is complete.

This Microsoft 365 Zero Trust deployment stack illustrates the recommended units of work. Read more here — aka.ms/zero-trust-m365



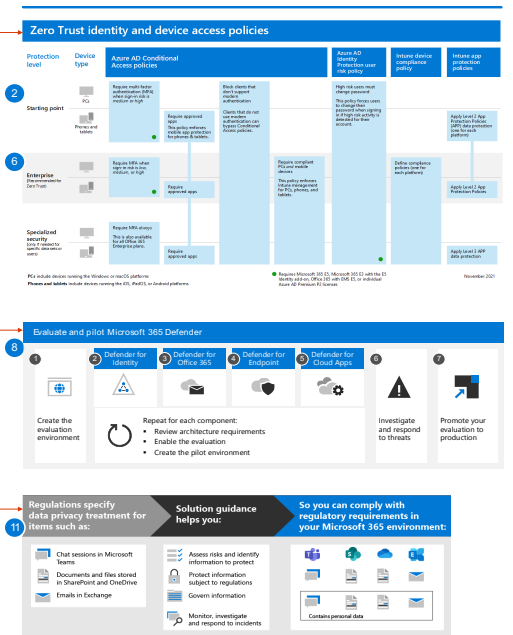
Prescriptive solution guides

Each of these guides describe how to accomplish specific units of work that are prescribed by the deployment plan.



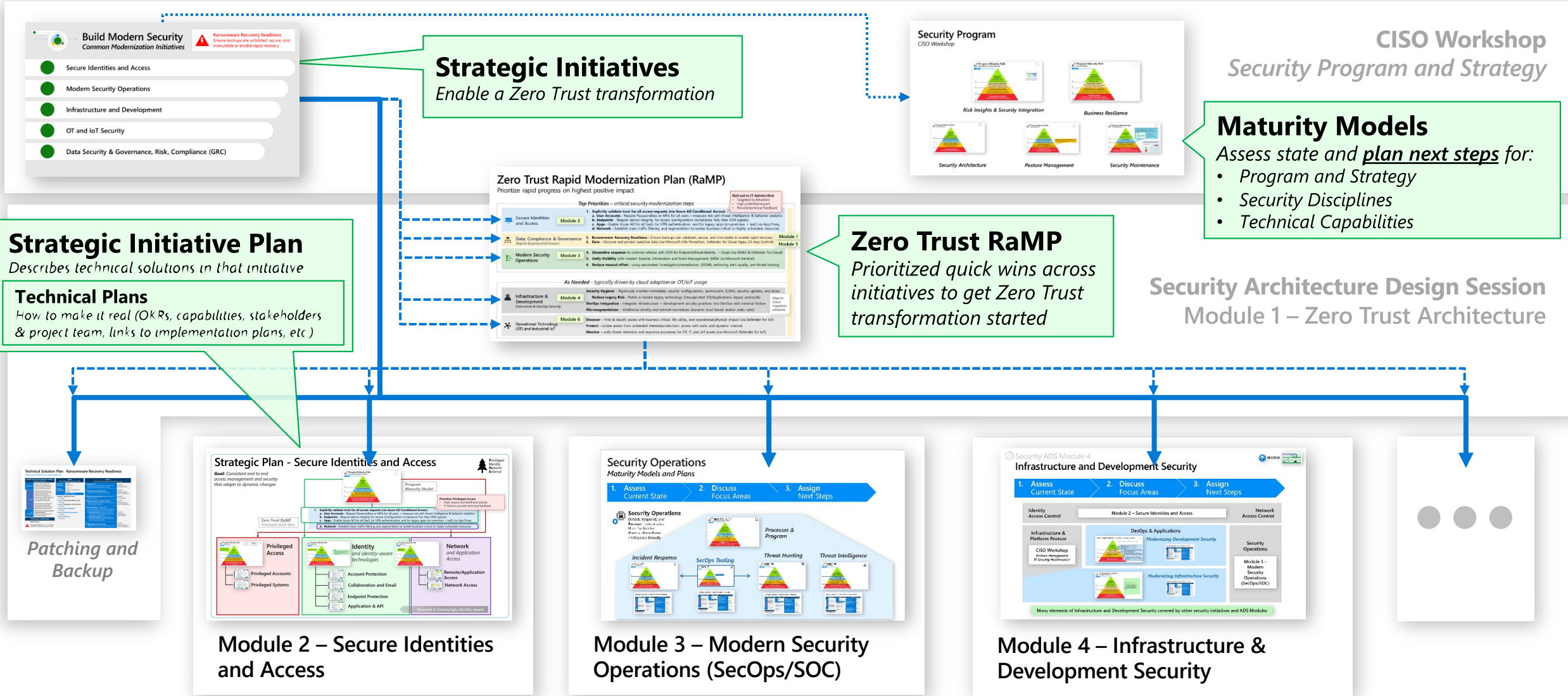
Supporting illustrations

These illustrations from the prescriptive solution guides are included here for your reference.



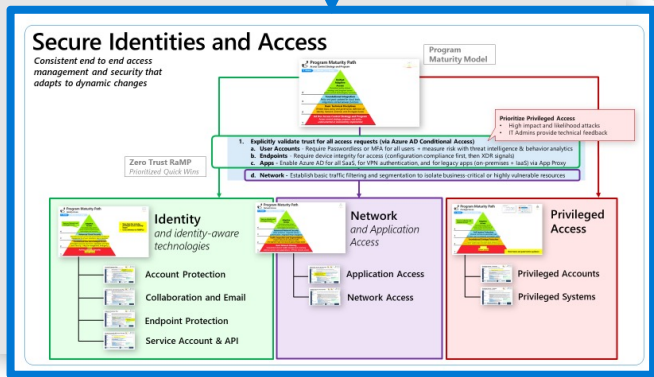
Security Transformation

Modular plans and maturity models for end-to-end security modernization



Plan Structure & Taxonomy

Secure Identities and Access



Strategic Initiative Plan

5 total

Describes technical solutions in that initiative

1 per initiative

Rapid Modernization Plans (RaMPs)

Prioritized steps for quick wins & incremental progress

As needed for complex areas

Zero Trust RaMP
Prioritized Quick Wins across initiatives to get Zero Trust transformation started

Other RaMPs
Provide prioritized quick win guidance for selected topics

Microsoft 365 Zero Trust Deployment Plan

- Deploy Microsoft 365 Zero Trust capabilities
- Grouped into work that can be configured together

Technical Plan - Modernize Patch Management

Normalize rigorous security maintenance for software

OBJECTIVES & KEY RESULTS (OKRs)	WHO	WHAT
OBJECTIVE Reduce organizational risk caused by neglect of basic security maintenance. Extortion/ransomware attacks and theft of IP are often caused by organizations skipping and known security best practices (unpatched vulnerabilities, configuration weaknesses, and insecure operational practices)	EXECUTIVE SPONSOR CEO or Delegate (frequently CFO) PROJECT LEADERSHIP CIO or delegate PROJECT TEAM(S) Business / Application / Cloud Teams + <add name(s)> IT/OT/IT Asset Management + <add name(s)> Purchasing/Vendor Management + <add name(s)> Central and Business Unit IT Infrastructure + <add name(s)> Productivity / End User Teams + <add name(s)> Security, Policy and Standards + <add name(s)> Security Compliance Management + <add name(s)> Security & IT Enterprise Architecture + <add name(s)>	Implementation Workstreams and Leads □ Update Organizational Accountability to reflect organizational nature of risk + <add name(s)> designated by CEO/CFO □ Update Budget and Acquisition policy for accountability and technology lifetime. + <add name(s)> Designated by CFO □ Update Security Patching/Maintenance Policy to reflect accountability model + <add name(s)> □ User Device Patching to apply updated organizational policy + <add name(s)> IT Productivity / End User Teams □ Domain Controller and DNS Patching to apply updated organizational policy + <add name(s)> CSO/CIO and governance team □ Server Infrastructure Patching to apply updated organizational policy + <add name(s)> Server Infra Teams □ Container Patching to apply updated organizational policy + <add name(s)> Server Infra Teams □ Network and Device Patching to apply updated organizational policy + <add name(s)> Server Infra Teams □ Application Patching to apply updated organizational policy + <add name(s)> Multiple Teams □ Penetration and Device Patching to apply updated organizational policy + <add name(s)> Multiple Teams

Technical Plans

How to make it real (OKRs, capabilities, stakeholders & project team, links to implementation plans, etc.)

As needed per strategic initiative (1-8)

Implementation Procedures

Describe how to deploy/configure each technical component

1 or more per Technical Plan

□ **Protect backups and supporting** documents/systems (CADD, network diagrams, etc.) against deliberate erasure and encryption

□ **Strong Protection** - Require out of band status (SMS or PDU) before modifying online backups (e.g. Azure Backup)

□ **Strongest Protection** - Store backups in online immutable storage (Azure Blob info) and/or fully offline/off-site

(names)
(? Operations with Security)

Security Resources



Security Adoption Framework

aka.ms/saf

Security Documentation

aka.ms/SecurityDocs

Security Strategy and Program

- CISO Workshop – aka.ms/CISOworkshop | [-videos](#)
- Cloud Adoption Framework (CAF) – aka.ms/cafsecure

- Driving Business Outcomes Using Zero Trust
 - [Rapidly modernize your security posture for Zero Trust](#)
 - [Secure remote and hybrid work with Zero Trust](#)
 - [Identify and protect sensitive business data with Zero Trust](#)
 - [Meet regulatory and compliance requirements with Zero Trust](#)

Zero Trust Architecture

- Microsoft Cybersecurity Reference Architectures (MCRA) - aka.ms/MCRA | [-videos](#)
- Ransomware and Extortion Mitigation - aka.ms/humanoperated
- Backup and restore plan to protect against ransomware - aka.ms/backup

- Zero Trust Deployment Guidance - aka.ms/ztramp | aka.ms/ztramp

Secure Identities and Access

- Securing Privileged Access (SPA) Guidance
aka.ms/SPA
- [Access Control Discipline](#)
- Ninja Training
 - Microsoft Defender for Identity
aka.ms/mdininja
- MCRA Video
 - [Zero Trust User Access](#)
- Microsoft Entra Documentation
aka.ms/entradoocs

Modern Security Operations (SecOps/SOC)

- Incident Response - aka.ms/IR
- CDOC Case Study - aka.ms/ITSOC
- Ninja Training
 - Microsoft 365 Defender
aka.ms/m365dninja
 - Microsoft Defender for Office 365
aka.ms/mdoninja
 - Microsoft Defender for Endpoint
aka.ms/mdeninja
 - Microsoft Cloud App Security
aka.ms/mcasninja
 - Microsoft Sentinel
aka.ms/mcsentinelninja
- MCRA Videos
 - [Security Operations](#)
 - [SecOps Integration](#)

Infrastructure & Development Security

- Microsoft Cloud Security Benchmark (MCSB)
aka.ms/benchmarkdocs
- Well Architected Framework (WAF)
aka.ms/wafsecure
- Azure Security Top 10
aka.ms/azuresecuritytop10
- Ninja Training
 - [Defender for Cloud](#)
- MCRA Video
 - [Infrastructure Security](#)
- [Defender for Cloud Documentation](#)

Data Security & Governance

- [Secure data with Zero Trust](#)
- Ninja Training
 - Microsoft Purview Information Protection
aka.ms/MIPNinja
 - Microsoft Purview Data Loss Prevention
aka.ms/DLPNinja
 - [Insider Risk Management](#)
- Microsoft Purview Documentation
aka.ms/purviewdocs

IoT and OT Security

- Ninja Training
 - [Defender for IoT Training](#)
- MCRA Videos
 - [MCRA Video OT & IIoT Security](#)
- Defender for IoT Documentation
aka.ms/D4IoTDocs

Product Capabilities

www.microsoft.com/security/business

- Security Product Documentation
[Azure](#) | [Microsoft 365](#)

Microsoft Security Response Center (MSRC)

www.microsoft.com/en-us/msrc

Key Industry References and Resources



The Open Group

- Zero Trust Commandments - <https://pubs.opengroup.org/security/zero-trust-commandments/>
- Zero Trust Reference Model - <https://publications.opengroup.org/security-library>
- Security Principles for Architecture - <https://publications.opengroup.org/security-library>



US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

- Cybersecurity Framework - <https://www.nist.gov/cyberframework>
- Zero Trust Architecture - <https://www.nist.gov/publications/zero-trust-architecture>
 - NCCoE Zero Trust Project - <https://www.nccoe.nist.gov/projects/implementing-zero-trust-architecture>
- Secure Software Development Framework (SSDF) - <https://csrc.nist.gov/pubs/sp/800/218/final>



Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

- Zero Trust Maturity Model - <https://www.cisa.gov/zero-trust-maturity-model>



Center for Internet Security (CIS)

- CIS Benchmarks - <https://www.cisecurity.org/cis-benchmarks/>

