

**RSA**®Conference2022

San Francisco & Digital | February 7 – 10

**TRANSFORM**

# 2022 TRENDS

OBSERVED IN CALL FOR SPEAKERS SUBMISSION REVIEW

**EXPLORE THE TRENDS**

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# RSA<sup>®</sup>C 2022

*Transform.* The RSA Conference 2022 theme captures the past 18+ months, personal and professional. We've been challenged and inspired, frustrated and reborn. Systems have changed, teams have shifted, priorities have evolved, and the attackers have dug in. Oh. And *Executive Order 14028, Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity*, issued in May 2021, has pretty much impacted... everything (superficially or long term, time will tell). We'll start there as we look at cybersecurity trends through the lens of RSA Conference 2022 speaking submissions.

**CLICK BELOW TO SEE WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR OUR INDUSTRY.**

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## ZERO TRUST: WHAT IS "IT"?

Zero Trust-focused submissions have steadily increased over the years, but the May 2021 directive to “adopt Zero Trust cybersecurity principles and adjust [network architectures](#) accordingly” turned up the volume. Vendor-based submissions often seemed rooted in the origin of their primary tool offering—identity, data encryption, network control, endpoint technologies and breadcrumbs of “Zero Trust” could be found far and wide. Debate ensued within the Program Committee as we grappled with where we are on the maturity curve, what problems can be uniquely served with a Zero Trust approach, and what, really, Zero Trust even is, despite the fact that the US Federal Government has been talking about “it” since 2009.

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*“Our enemy is digital, with minimal attribution to a country of origin. Therefore, intelligence professionals need to look at holistic information security program development, information sharing strategies and collaboration with [Information Sharing and Analysis Centers \(ISAC\)](#) and other peer groups.”*

– [Roderick Chambers](#), RSAC 2022  
Program Committee Member

# RSAC<sup>®</sup> 2022

## RIPPLE EFFECTS OF THE SBOM

We had two sessions squarely focused on [SBOM](#) on the 2021 agenda; 2022 submissions were in the dozens, again responding to the EO's requirements on third-party software companies. Submissions explored the challenges SBOM creates, concerns around application lifecycle management, the legalities of what it means when partner code fails, and the challenges to really maintaining code, be it commercial or open-source. We also saw discussions related to insider threats and the potential for an insider posting code from the SBOM. Sessions touch on SBOM across a variety of tracks, from [DevSecOps & Software Integrity](#) to [Open Source Tools](#) to [Protecting Data & the Supply Chain Ecosystem](#).

*There were some topics the RSAC 2022 submissions told us were super important – [Zero Trust All the Things](#), IoT, Quantum and [DevSecOps](#).”*

**– Dan Hauser, RSAC 2022 Program Committee Member**

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*“Some true monsters have reared their heads in the supply chain attack category, and these costly, disruptive attacks are now on every CISO’s mind. Unfortunately, organizations can suffer a supply chain attack even if their security defenses are adequate. And since these attacks pack that sort of punch, they are expected to quadruple over the next year. It is no surprise we received some compelling submissions around this subject.”*

**– [Limor Kessem](#), RSAC 2022 Program Committee Member**

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## SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES

Colonial Pipeline and Kaseya replaced SolarWinds as the main attack callouts. Though the “INAMOIBW” sentiment (it’s not a matter of if but when—introduced in [our 2015 trends blog](#) in response to attitude around breaches) related to ransomware attacks ran heavily in proposals. Submitters explored the challenges relative to NPOs and SMBs in the supply chain and exposure points they can create, as well as providing firsthand accounts of experiences and legal, governance and fiduciary challenges introduced by [cyber-insurance policies](#) related to the “pay or not” question. The cyber-physical connection has continued to grow as our community grapples with growing threats.

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## PASSWORDLESS BREAKS THROUGH

The shadow of the EO also pushed passwordless into the spotlight. Standard activities assisted this enthusiasm as well as enterprise-grade deployments and architectural strategies. Submissions seemed to push past just MFA conversations and explored sustainable operations, interoperability and legacy challenges, and attack vectors and [issues specific to passwordless approaches](#).



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*“There was a continued emphasis on those core challenges that occur exactly at the intersection of humans and computer interaction. Phishing received significant attention, with the focus largely on its evolution over time, including as a [mechanism for delivering ransomware](#). In fact, there were numerous submissions on the interplay of ransomware and phishing and the massive damage incurred by deploying them.”*

*– [Andrea Little Limbago](#), RSAC 2022  
Program Committee Member*

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## BACK TO THE BASICS

A variety of submissions explored a new return to basics, be it how leaders engage with their teams, achieve security with tools and technologies already in place, and establish clear, [consistent hygiene](#) as “fringe cases” became base cases in a pandemic world, and decisions and deployments had to happen fast. Related, we observed an increase in submissions focused on [starting security programs from scratch](#) and the first 90 days in the CISO seat.

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*"We had no shortage of cloud-based submissions, some looking at DevOps, others looking at APIs. Probably the most common were those looking at authentication mechanisms and how they could be compromised. Interestingly, there were also submissions looking at hybrid cloud providers and some specific cloud capabilities, which seems like the next natural double-click down, i.e., what are the slightly less common targets that proven methods in the major cloud provider space can replicate?"*

**– Greg Day, RSAC 2022 Program  
Committee Member**

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## THE EVER-EXPANDING CLOUD

The year 2021 was definitely cloudy, with a perfect [storm of work-from-home](#) immediacy and [digital transformation](#) initiatives colliding with a thunderous jolt. The maturation of submissions this year was significant, with sessions that explored new threat modeling approaches along with a call to action for a common vulnerability database, governance challenges, cloud-focused attacks with systemic consequences, and long-kept secrets from CSPs emerging. [Shift left approaches](#) and Kubernetes successes are positive signs in the cloud space, though security through obscurity seems to be rearing its ugly head.

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## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & MACHINE LEARNING

The [AI/ML-focused sessions](#) took on an interesting business focus this year. Along with submissions about AI-driven hacks (yes, AI appears to be getting smarter), we saw more submissions around ethics and [detecting algorithmic bias](#), along with guidance on how and [when to call BS](#) if you're not a data scientist. Tangible, practical applications emerged alongside [discussions of how the global regulatory landscape is evolving](#).

*"There was a big jump in data-driven analyses that explore human behavior and its impact on security. Leaning on the behavioral and social sciences, the uptick in the introduction of new data sets and analyses that explore human behavior and security was significant—whether the attackers' or defenders' perspective. As we introduce these kinds of new data sets and build upon the learnings from a range of human-focused disciplines, we will better understand how the human element impacts security and customize organizational and technology solutions accordingly, ranging from burnout and mental health to how incentives alter the risk calculus of both defenders and attackers."*

**– Andrea Little Limbago, RSAC 2022  
Program Committee Member**

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## RISK TAKES CENTER STAGE

It's been growing bigger and bigger over the past few years, but this year's discussion of *risk* edged out *security* as we looked across the landscape of our submissions. Would-be presenters explored operational technology and the risks specific to it, as well as the [positive impact BISOs are making within organizations](#), spurring innovation and better business connection for cybersecurity teams. Third-party [risk](#) was a key theme, as was the impact of privacy considerations, as proposals put forward concrete studies with tangible takeaways, KPIs and [metrics tied to business outcomes](#).

*"It's always refreshing to see content that addresses real-world issues organizations are tackling. So many submissions focus on the razzle-dazzle of a super niche topic, while others offer abstracts stuffed with the buzzword du jour."*

– [Jennifer Minella](#), RSAC 2022 Program Committee Member

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*“There is an increasing number of [non-profits helping connect](#) the individuals, teams, vendors, enterprises and other elements of the information and cybersecurity ecosystem. What works well, and what do we need to improve about the way non-profit security-related companies engage the ecosystem to improve security for the whole?”*

*– [Todd Inskip](#), RSAC 2022 Program Committee Member*

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## WHAT DO I REALLY WANT TO BE WHEN I GROW UP?

The past year plus of working from home has clearly been a source of community reflection. We had a myriad of submissions with guidance on how to transition into consulting, being a board member, writing a book, [being a CISO](#), being an advocate, and the list goes on. And this isn't side-hustle talk—this is an itch for a change and a move that seems to have taken on a different tone than we've previously seen. We also seem to be even more aware of the large field of prospective hires... and it's looking a little rosier as we recognize the [power of diversity](#) and non-traditional hires and the positive impact mentorship can have.

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## THERE'S A FRAMEWORK FOR THAT!

We admire [frameworks](#) in cybersecurity; a lot. Maybe it's our roots in math and mapping—if we can plot it on a chart, it makes more sense, and it can be measured. This year the frameworks exploded as we worked on mapping everything to everything, [technical](#) and [non-technical](#). We recognized frameworks as key to helping disparate groups communicate, prioritize, measure and report out. There was also a slight rumbling of the emergence of new paradigms and a tone that seems to encourage shifts away from an over-reliance on military terminology and the use of development terms that could be offensive to some.

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*"We always see a lot of war analogies in cybersecurity activities. But we need new paradigms because this business is about much more than just war and has more strategic components, as we've seen in the past several years with disinformation."*

**– Todd Inskeep, RSAC 2022 Program  
Committee Member**

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## SUMMARY

5G was vulnerable. Quantum was primed to turn the world upside down. [Safe Harbors were intriguing](#). Lizard brains, fuzzing, [unintended consequences](#) and [IOCs](#) all made themselves known in the submissions. [RSA Conference 2022](#), February 7-10 in San Francisco, stands to put forward some of the best content yet to help power our industry. See you there!

[LEARN MORE ABOUT RSAC 2022 >>](#)

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