

Combining Secure Software Development and Managed Services For Cloud Security and Government Accreditation



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CEOCFO: Mr. Ahmed, what is the focus at Earthling Security today?

Mr. Ahmed: We focus on cloud security and secure development of enterprise applications. Our specialization is to move applications and workloads into a secure and compliant cloud environment. We take great interest in complex applications that also require tedious and process driven regulatory compliance. We’re focused on the automation of security and operational controls to simplify deployments and management. The concept is managed secure cloud meets managed compliance. This year we launched our second release of EarthlingCloud™, a managed service for secure cloud environments. The platform provides cloud migration, hosting and compliance as part of the managed offering. Customers can move applications and workloads to a secure and compliant environment in either Amazon Web Services (AWS) or Microsoft Azure.



CEOCFO: Are people, companies or agencies looking specifically for a compliant solution as opposed to looking for a solution and assuming it is compliant; not necessarily the focus?

Mr. Ahmed: Very often, we get customers that start out planning the development of a complex software application, or are initiating a data center consolidation effort or trying to save cost by moving to cloud but end up at a wall with security or compliance requirements. We’ve found that people spend more money by assuming that a cloud platform is compliant for their vertical or assuming that don’t have any security or compliance responsibilities if they host in a cloud that has a specific accreditation. We bundle all of the security controls, compliance packages and prepare our customers for regulatory audits while developing and hosting their applications.

CEOCFO: That sounds like a good idea. Are there many companies that offer that combination or is that a newer area?

Mr. Ahmed: No, not the way we do. We have a full-service catalog that is built on tiers. We have a series of open source, proprietary and commercial tools that are all automated and bundled to ensure a proper fit for our customer’s applications,

environment and budget. We operate in a true secure DevOps manner where we function as a part of our customers' existing team. We also have accredited auditors that review the readiness of an application in preparation of an audit. We all work collaboratively with a unified goal.

CEOCFO: *When did you realize that was something people would gravitate towards, that it made sense to be unified?*

Mr. Ahmed: It evolved through the customer demands and internal innovation. Whenever we would take a project to develop a software application or move a software package over to the cloud, a customer would realize the security or compliance requirements and we'd have a response ready for them. So, it was a natural development. Typically, when people say, "We need to move over a workload to a compliant cloud," there is so much more work to be done after the software has been moved over to that compliant cloud. For instance, with Amazon Web Services provides HIPAA compliance for healthcare organizations or FedRAMP compliant for federal agencies. However, when you move workloads over to AWS (or to Microsoft Azure) there is still quite a bit of work to be done within your cloud space, there is still compliance documentation that needs to be developed and it needs to be relevant. So there is quite a bit that needs to be done. There is also a strategic side of it. Discovering that an organization needs to meet security or compliance requirements can be expensive or it may require federal sponsorship so we help our customers with a variety of strategic issues to ensure they meet their business objectives.

CEOCFO: *How do you stay on top of the regulatory situation so that you can provide the best solutions?*

Mr. Ahmed: I would think that probably the most evolving is the FedRAMP program, because it is a relatively new program. We are part of a various associations and special interest groups that engage in research and continuous learning. We also work within the industry and talk to many of our partners and even our competitors to keep a pulse of changes in the compliance and technology industry. Finally, our team is continuously researching new technologies and security issues, not just on the federal side, but on the healthcare side, on the financial side, on different private sector regulatory requirements and standards.

CEOCFO: *How do you handle some of the challenges working with the government? What have you learned to make it easier?*

Mr. Ahmed: Regulatory compliance and software development can feel like oil and water. We've learned that developing collaborative models and integrating security early in the development lifecycle can potentially prevent huge headaches both in terms of cost as well as project hurdles. Government in general is more process driven than private sector so collaboration and strategy is even more important. Effective planning and experience is key when working on federal projects, especially when they are related to security or cloud. We are continuously researching solutions and strategies; whether it is the cost to get accreditation, or specific contract vehicles or selecting a cloud platform. There is a lot of problem solving that goes into projects that involve regulatory constraints with the federal government. So planning a strategy always comes first.

CEOCFO: *I have probably spoken with thirty or forty different security companies over the last couple of years. Everyone has a different approach. How do you assess what is right for any of your clients in terms of security?*

Mr. Ahmed: It's a balancing act between a client's business mission and how to protect that specific business mission. From a technology perspective, you must perform a risk assessment to ensure that the risk is minimized with specific security controls. Additionally, controls must be implemented and operated without impacting the tactical and long term objectives of the business. Every client is different, the controls may have to be compromised based on where they are as a business, the vertical they are in, the budget they have for security etc. This is why it is such a critical balancing act.

CEOCFO: *Why the name Earthling?*

Mr. Ahmed: It reflects on unity and oneness of people. I'm very interested in collaboration of people and groups. I also thought it was catchy and unique.

CEOCFO: *It is catchy!*

Mr. Ahmed: It's usually a conversation starter. Some people think it's cool. Others are just curious.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out for potential clients? How do you stand out from the crowd when someone is looking for a company to help them?*

Mr. Ahmed: For the federal market, it's brand and reputation through successful projects and networking. We also have a sales and marketing strategy and efforts that is directed at our relevant NIACS codes and our services. We also rely on social media and tech events. Finally, we also get a lot of referrals from our customers and partners. Both our services

and successful projects are quite unique. When discussing our projects and capabilities with clients, they immediately see the value and differentiation. It's in the obsession with strategy, collaboration and quality.

CEOCFO: Are there services you offer that clients or potential clients miss? Are there things people are not taking advantage of that they really should?

Mr. Ahmed: I'd say because FedRAMP is relatively new, our FedRAMP-as-a-Service™ and other Compliance-as-a-Service offerings should be taken advantage of by companies wanting to move an application or workload to the cloud and need FedRAMP certification. With this service customers get bundled and automated cloud migration as well as project strategy, compliance and security consulting. We also had some great successes with our Secure Big Data platform as well. If you have a web application, business application or a work load that needs to be hosted on the cloud our EarthlingCloud™ platform is the perfect way to be secure and cost conscious. If you are a startup, healthcare organization or a system integrator or software company that wants to work with the federal government, you probably have a strategic destination. It probably involves getting your solution compliant and securely hosted sell to potential customers. At the same that needs to get done as fast and as cost effective as possible.

CEOCFO: Do you look to balance enterprise with government or a project is a project and you are happy to do them all?

Mr. Ahmed: We like to focus on secure solutions. Not every customer has security on top of their priority list. We get excited to put together an innovative, creative solution and then merge that into the security requirements that the security goals are. Currently, in terms of regulatory compliance FedRAMP and the government standard for cloud security gives us the most perspective so we're happy to work with all industries.

CEOCFO: What surprised you as Earthling has grown and evolved?

Mr. Ahmed: As a security, professional, it surprises me how often security is neglected, when solutions are put together. As technology evolves, businesses need to utilize bleeding edge but also be aware of the potential risks.

CEOCFO: There are many companies to choose from; not many with the depth of Earthling Security, LLC. Why pick Earthling?

Mr. Ahmed: We are obsessed with strategy, collaboration and quality of a specific solution. The Earthling Team will get its customers to its business destination. We become part of your team and give you a clear set of options to enable your goals. Customers can review our service catalog to select products and services that meet the strategic goal as well as their budget. Our story includes an extensive list of customers with successful projects, technical expertise and a unique set of products and solutions.

