TX-RAMP General Overview for UNT

January 24, 2022

Overview

- A new cybersecurity law, TAC 202.77, is now in effect for cloud computing services.

- Beginning January 1, 2022, the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) must certify all cloud computing services before the university may use the cloud computing service/product.

- Certification is provided through a DIR service called "TX-RAMP", Texas Risk Authorization Management Program.

- This law affects all New and Renewed Cloud Computing Services. These services must be assessed by DIR for compliance with NIST 800-53 (Security and Privacy Controls for Information Systems and Organizations).

- IT computing services (including those that are out-of-scope of TX-RAMP) must be assessed by Information Security for all other data protection laws, implementation of cybersecurity baseline controls, and accessibility, i.e., TAC 202, TAC 206, TAC 213, FERPA, HIPAA, GLBA, etc..

- Cloud Computing Services that are Not Subject to TX-RAMP:
  - See DIR's Out-of-Scope List - Texas Risk and Authorization Management Program Manual, https://dir.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/TX-RAMP%20Manual_0.pdf)
  - Amendments to existing non-expired contracts that are not new agreements or renewals
  - Adding licenses to existing non-expired contracts that are not new agreements or renewals

Certification Process

- Vendors must submit certification requests to DIR based on the level assigned by IT Compliance. Requests must be submitted by the vendor to DIR at the correct level.

- Service/Product will be certified by DIR as Level 1, Level 2, or Provisional
  - Level 1- Service/Product that does not process or store confidential data; criticality is low impact; 36-month certification if approved by DIR
  - Level 2- Service/Product that will process or store confidential data; criticality is medium or high impact; 36-month certification if approved by DIR
  - Provisional- Vendor submits completed UNT System security risk assessment form to IT Compliance and form is submitted to DIR; limited to services that cannot undergo Level 1 or Level 2 certification; 18-month certification if approved by DIR

- FedRAMP, StateRAMP, and other state certifications can be accepted by DIR to satisfy baseline TX-RAMP criteria if the university is acquiring services/products at the level that is certified.

- IT Compliance will provide risk assessment results and TX-RAMP certification results to the requesting department.

- A list of certified products can be found on TX-RAMP website.

- Vendors must remain compliant with TX-RAMP criteria in order to remain certified.

- Products are monitored by DIR for compliance.

Responsibilities of the University

- Confirm that vendors that wish to go under contract with the university to provide cloud computing service are certified through TX-RAMP prior to entering or renewing a cloud computing services contract on or after January 1, 2022.

- Require vendors that provide cloud computing services to the University to maintain compliance and certification with TX-RAMP throughout the term of the contract.

Recommendations

- Initiate the risk assessment review process 1-2 months before the date on which a new cloud computing service is needed.

- Initiate the risk assessment review process 1-2 months before a contract renewal date.

- Make vendors aware of the new TX-RAMP certification requirements well in advance so that they are prepared to meet the program requirements.

References

- **TX-RAMP** (website)
  - TX-RAMP Overview for State Agencies
  - TX-RAMP Overview for Vendors
  - Texas Risk and Authorization Management Program Manual
  - TX-RAMP Security Control Baselines
  - TX-RAMP Certified Cloud Products

- **UNT System Information Security Handbook**

- **UNT System IT Compliance** (website)

Assistance and Support

Direct questions and requests for assistance to
ITCompliance@untsystem.edu