

Unit 42 - Latest Cyber Security Research | Palo Alto Networks

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The 2026 Unit 42 Global Incident Response Report confirms it: The adversary isn't just smarter; they are faster.

Your new threat reality? AI enables threat actors to move from initial access to exfiltration in minutes, effortlessly bypassing traditional defenses.

In the report, you will learn how:

- **Speed now defines risk:** Attacks are 4X faster, with data exfiltration in <1 hour in some cases.
- **Identity accelerates impact:** 65% of initial access is driven by identity-based techniques allowing unauthorized access, privilege escalation and lateral movement.
- **Sprawl expands exposure:** 87% of attacks unfolded across multiple attack surfaces, making it harder to correlate attack signals.

Source: <https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/atoms/windyphoenix/>