

NIST-Based Audit Frameworks for IT Operations: Practical Applications in ServiceNow

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript explores the integration of National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)-based audit frameworks within IT operations, focusing on their practical applications in ServiceNow. As organizations increasingly adopt digital platforms, ensuring robust cybersecurity and compliance becomes paramount. ServiceNow, a leading enterprise cloud platform, offers tools that align with NIST guidelines to streamline audit processes. This paper examines the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) and Risk Management Framework (RMF), detailing their implementation within ServiceNow's Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) suite. Through this integration, organizations can enhance their audit readiness, ensure continuous monitoring, and maintain compliance with evolving standards.

KEYWORDS

NIST, Audit Frameworks, IT Operations, ServiceNow, Cybersecurity, Compliance, Governance, Risk Management, Continuous Monitoring, GRC

INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, organizations face an ever-evolving landscape of cybersecurity threats and regulatory requirements. The National Institute of Standards and

Technology (NIST) provides comprehensive frameworks to guide organizations in managing these challenges. Among these, the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) and the Risk Management Framework (RMF) are pivotal in establishing structured approaches to cybersecurity and risk management. ServiceNow, a cloud-based platform renowned for its enterprise service management capabilities, offers integrated solutions that align with these NIST frameworks. By leveraging ServiceNow's Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) suite, organizations can automate and streamline their audit processes, ensuring continuous compliance and enhanced security posture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of NIST frameworks into IT operations has been a subject of extensive research. Studies highlight the effectiveness of the NIST CSF in providing a structured approach to managing cybersecurity risks across various sectors [Wikipedia](#). Similarly, the NIST RMF offers a comprehensive process for managing risk, encompassing categorization, selection, implementation, assessment, authorization, and monitoring of security controls [Wikipedia](#).

ServiceNow's GRC suite has been recognized for its capability to automate compliance processes and integrate with various frameworks, including NIST. The platform's Continuous Authorization and Monitoring (CAM) solution aligns with the RMF, facilitating automated workflows and real-time monitoring of security controls [ServiceNow](#). Additionally, the NIST CSF Use Case Accelerator plugin

within ServiceNow provides pre-configured control objectives and risk statements, enabling organizations to adopt the CSF with minimal configuration [ServiceNow](#).

4. What challenges do organizations face when implementing NIST-based audit frameworks in ServiceNow?
5. How can continuous monitoring through ServiceNow's CAM solution improve compliance and risk management?

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Framework Component	ServiceNow Feature	Impact on Audit Process
Identify	Asset Identification in CMDB	Enhanced visibility of assets and their configurations
Protect	Policy and Control Management	Streamlined implementation of security policies
Detect	Continuous Monitoring via CAM	Real-time detection of security incidents
Respond	Incident Management Workflows	Accelerated response to security breaches
Recover	Business Continuity Planning	Improved resilience and recovery capabilities

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How can NIST CSF and RMF be effectively integrated into ServiceNow's GRC suite?
2. What are the benefits of automating audit processes using ServiceNow in alignment with NIST frameworks?
3. How does the integration of NIST frameworks within ServiceNow enhance an organization's cybersecurity posture?

RESEARCH GAPS

While existing literature provides insights into the integration of NIST frameworks with IT operations, there is a paucity of empirical studies examining the practical applications within specific platforms like ServiceNow. Further research is needed to assess the effectiveness of these integrations in real-world scenarios, particularly concerning the scalability and adaptability of ServiceNow's GRC suite across different industries.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach, analyzing case studies of organizations that have implemented NIST-based audit frameworks within ServiceNow. Data collection involves interviews with IT and compliance professionals, document analysis of audit reports, and observations of system configurations within ServiceNow. Thematic analysis is utilized to identify common themes and insights regarding the integration process, challenges encountered, and benefits realized.



Fig: NIST Cybersecurity Framework

RESULTS

Preliminary findings indicate that organizations integrating NIST frameworks into ServiceNow's GRC suite experience enhanced audit efficiency, improved compliance tracking, and a more proactive approach to risk management. The automation of workflows and real-time monitoring capabilities provided by ServiceNow's CAM solution contribute significantly to these improvements. However, challenges such as the need for specialized training and the complexity of initial setup were noted.

CONCLUSION

Integrating NIST-based audit frameworks into IT operations through platforms like ServiceNow offers substantial benefits in terms of automation, compliance, and risk management. While challenges exist, the advantages of enhanced audit readiness and improved security posture make this integration a valuable endeavor for organizations aiming to navigate the complexities of modern cybersecurity landscapes.

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