



Report In Brief

U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General

November 2009



Why We Did This Review

The Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA) requires federal agencies to identify and provide security protection of information collected or maintained by it or on its behalf. Inspectors general are required to annually evaluate agencies' information security programs and practices. Such evaluations must include testing of a representative subset of systems and an assessment, based on that testing, of the entity's compliance with FISMA and applicable requirements.

This review covers our evaluation of USPTO's EUS system, which is one of a sample of systems we assessed in FY 2009.

Background

EUS is a general support system that comprises various operating systems and databases. The purpose of this system is to provide a hosting platform and databases that support major USPTO applications.

C&A is a process by which security controls for IT systems are assessed to determine their overall effectiveness. Understanding the remaining vulnerabilities identified during the assessment is essential in determining the risk to the organization's operations and assets, to individuals, to other organizations, and to the nation resulting from the use of the system.

United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

FY 2009 FISMA Assessment of the Enterprise UNIX Services System (OAE-19729)

What We Found

We evaluated certification and accreditation activities for the Enterprise UNIX Services (EUS) system as part of our FY 2009 reporting responsibilities under the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA).

We found that while the security plan was generally adequate, some inaccuracies need to be addressed. Security control assessments were generally adequate but improvements are needed, and our control assessment found some vulnerabilities that require remediation. Despite these deficiencies, the authorizing official received sufficient information to make a credible, risk-based decision to approve system operation.

What We Recommend

In order to ensure the EUS system complies with FISMA requirements, USPTO should resolve the deficiencies we reported. USPTO agrees with our findings, and has identified the corrective actions it needs to take to address our recommendations.