Security by Design

Integrate security into software right from the start

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The importance of security in digital transformation

Software is now embedded in all business processes and forms the basis of modern companies. Security is not an option, but a business-critical obligation. The threat landscape is constantly evolving:

Cyberattacks are becoming more complex, regulatory requirements more stringent, and the impact of security incidents can cause lasting damage to companies.

Security is still treated as an optional extra in many software projects. This approach regularly leads to costly rectifications and avoidable security gaps. Security by Design takes a fundamentally different approach: security is understood as an integral part of the entire development process. This enables the development of more robust products, minimizes risks, and strengthens the trust of customers and business partners.

Understanding security by design

Security by design describes a holistic approach in which security aspects are incorporated into software development right from the start of a project. This approach encompasses technical, organizational, and procedural dimensions.

Key principles

- Security as a core function: Security requirements are treated on an equal footing with functional requirements and performance targets.
- Proactive risk management: Potential threats are identified, assessed, and addressed at an early stage.
- Defense-in-depth: Multi-layered security mechanisms prevent a single vulnerability from compromising the entire system.
- Zero-trust policy: Users and system components are only granted the permissions necessary for their function.
- Security by default: Systems are configured securely by default, without the user having to make manual adjustments.
- Continuous review: Regular tests and audits ensure ongoing security.

Why security by design? An overview of the advantages

Cost savings through early error detection

According to various studies, fixing security vulnerabilities during development is up to 30 times more cost-effective than making corrections after the product has gone live. Early security integration therefore means significant cost savings.

Quality and trust

Secure software is characterized by greater reliability, resilience, and stability. This has a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction and strengthens market position.

Compliance and regulatory requirements

Legal requirements such as the GDPR or industry standards such as ISO 27001 require comprehensive data protection measures. Security by Design greatly simplifies compliance with these requirements.

Competitive advantage

In an increasingly security-conscious market environment, robust security concepts are becoming a decisive competitive advantage. Companies are positioning themselves as trustworthy partners.

Why security by design? An overview of the advantages

Prevention pays off

The latest IBM Cost of a Data Breach Report impressively demonstrates how expensive data breaches can be for companies: The average cost of a data leak has risen by 10% worldwide and now stands at US$4.88 million – the highest figure since the survey began. The main drivers of this increase are the costs of business interruptions and measures and support following an incident.

The report emphasizes that these costs rise particularly when companies react too late or neglect preventive security measures.
The key recommendations therefore include:

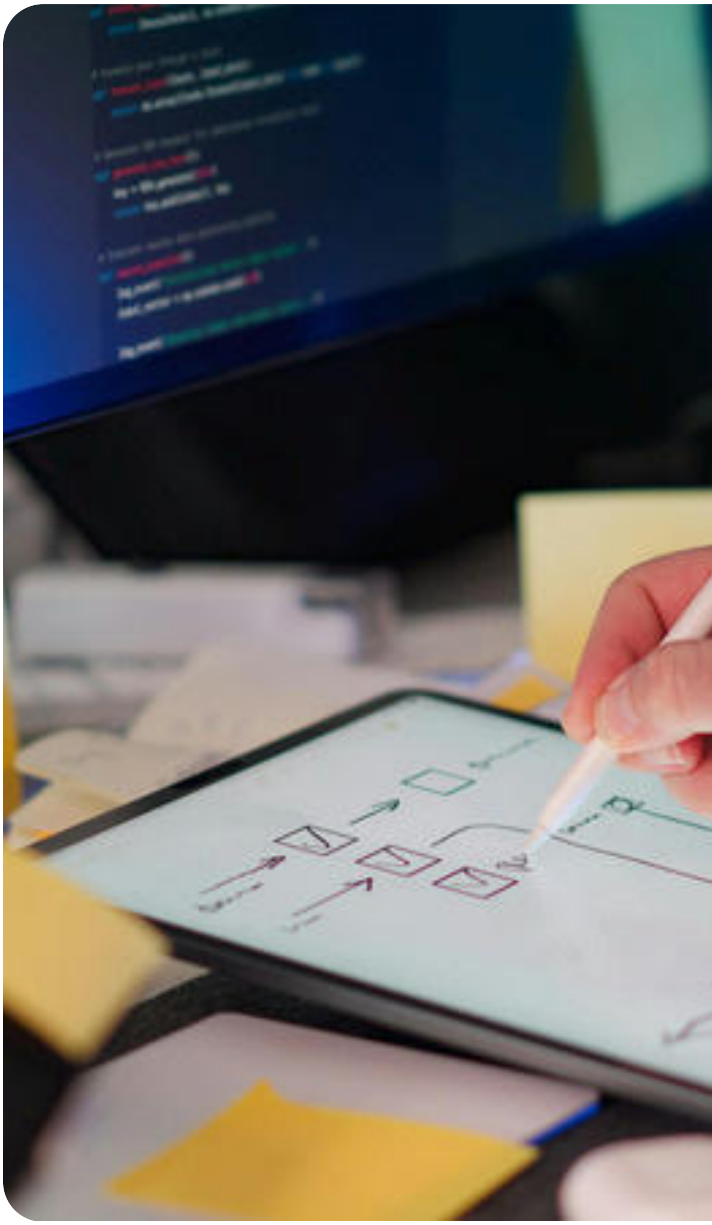
- Early investment in security measures.
- The development of robust security architectures.
- And the integration of security into all phases of the software life cycle.

Companies that consider security from the outset (security by design) can significantly reduce the risk and financial impact of data breaches.

Security by Design im Entwicklungsprozess: Ein praxisnaher Ablauf

The successful integration of security by design requires a structured approach across all development phases.

With over 20 years of project experience, we have developed a proven approach that efficiently embeds security without slowing down development processes.

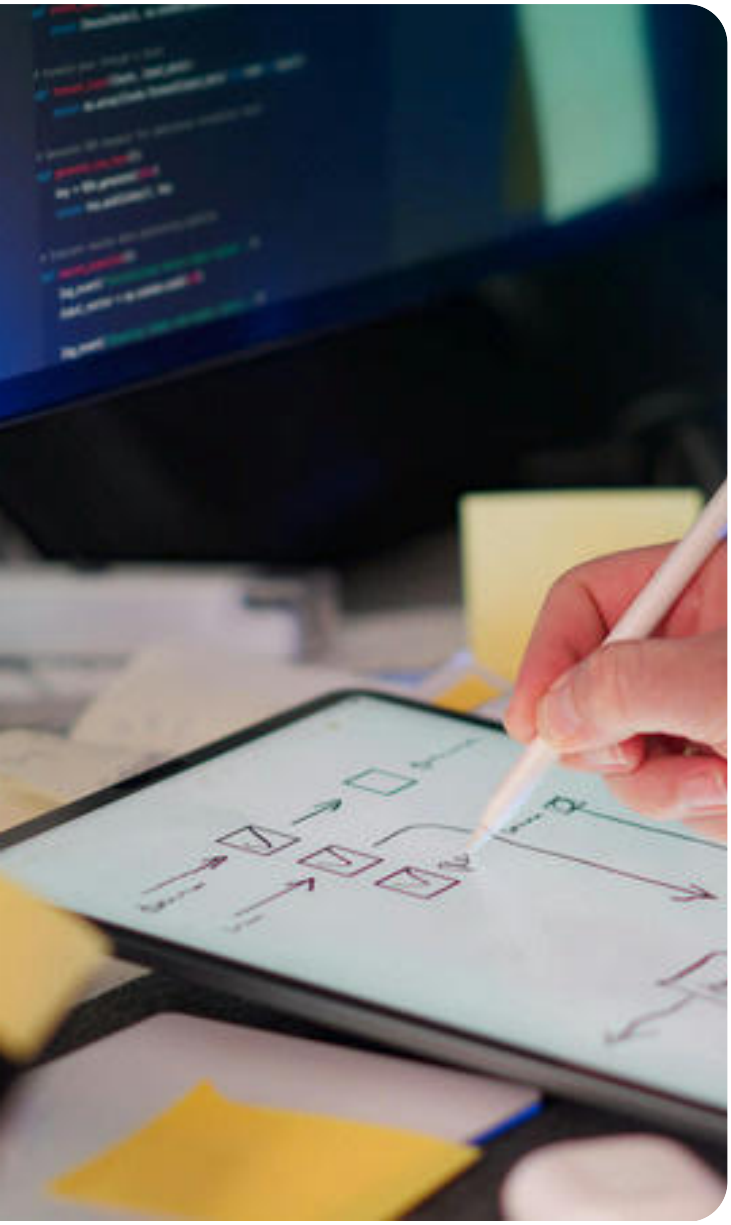


Phase 1: Requirements analysis & security definition

Define security requirements: In addition to functional requirements, security objectives (confidentiality, integrity, availability) must also be defined.

- Risk assessment: Identification and prioritization of threats and vulnerabilities.
- Compliance check: Review of relevant legal and industry-specific requirements.

Security by Design in the Development Process: A Practical Approach



Phase 2: Architecture & Design

- Threat modeling: Systematic and continuous analysis of potential attack vectors (spoofing, tampering, repudiation, information disclosure, denial of service, elevation of privilege).
- Security architecture: Planning tailored to identified threats, design of authorization and authentication mechanisms.
- Design principles: Modularity, separation of responsibilities, and redundancy.

Phase 3: Implementation

- Secure coding: Compliance with security guidelines and use of secure frameworks, as well as their selection and continuous monitoring (software composition analysis – SCA).
- Code reviews: Peer reviews with a focus on security aspects.
- Automated security testing: Static and dynamic code analysis (SAST, DAST).

Security by Design in the Development Process: A Practical Approach

Phase 4: Testing & Quality Assurance

- Penetration testing: Simulated attacks to identify vulnerabilities.
- Fuzz testing: Inputting random or unexpected data to detect errors.
- Mutation testing: Targeted code changes to verify the effectiveness and quality of security-related tests.
- Security regression testing: Ensuring that new features do not introduce security vulnerabilities.

Phase 5: Deployment & Operation

- Security by default: Secure default settings and minimal attack surface.
- Monitoring & logging: Real-time monitoring and logging of security-related events.
- Incident response: Preparation for security incidents with clear processes.
- DevSecOps: Automated security checks in build, test, and deployment processes for early detection of vulnerabilities.

Phase 6: Maintenance & Further Development

- Batch management: Rapid remediation of security vulnerabilities.
- Regular security reviews: Adaptation to new threats.
- Training: Ongoing training for developers and administrators.

Practical experience from successful projects

Cloud platform in the financial sector

When developing a cloud platform for financial service providers, data protection and access control were defined as key requirements from the outset. Consistent threat modeling and automated security testing enabled critical vulnerabilities to be identified and remedied at an early stage. The resulting platform meets the highest regulatory standards and enjoys a high level of customer trust.

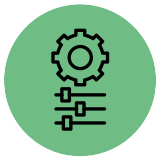
Example 2: Customer portal for genetic analysis service providers

A genetic analysis service provider required a customer portal with the highest security standards for processing genetic data. The development team implemented a zero-trust architecture in which each access is individually authenticated and authorized. The security architecture comprises several layers of defense in depth: next-generation firewalls, intrusion detection and prevention systems (IDS/IPS), and multi-factor authentication (MFA). Continuous automated static application security testing (SAST) and regular penetration tests identify vulnerabilities at an early stage. The result: a fully GDPR-compliant solution that protects genetic data in accordance with Art. 9 GDPR (special categories of personal data) and sustainably strengthens customer confidence in the handling of highly sensitive health information.

Checklist: Security by Design in Your Software Project

Category	Measure	Status (✓/✗)
Requirements 	Security requirements are documented and prioritized	
	Compliance requirements are analyzed	
	Risk assessment	
	Consider negative use cases (misuse)	
	Regular architecture reviews with a focus on security (dual control principle)	
Design & Architecture 	Threat modeling was performed	
	Architecture follows the least privilege principle	
	Multi-layered security mechanisms are defined	

Checklist: Security by Design in Ihrem Softwareprojekt

Category	Measure	Status (✓/✗)
Implementation 	Secure coding standards are implemented	
	Code reviews with a focus on security are conducted regularly	
	Automated security testing is integrated into CI/CD	
Testing & Quality Assurance 	Penetration tests and fuzz tests were performed	
	Security regression tests are established	
Deployment & Operation 	Systems are configured securely by default (security by default)	
	Monitoring and logging are implemented and GDPR-compliant	

Checklist: Security by Design in Ihrem Softwareprojekt

Category	Measure	Status (✓/✗)
Maintenance & Training 	Regular security updates and patches are installed.	
	Developers and operating personnel receive ongoing training.	

Tools and methods for security by design

- Threat modeling tools: Microsoft Threat Modeling Tool, OWASP Threat Dragon
- Static application security testing (SAST): SonarQube, Checkmarx, Veracode
- Dynamic application security testing (DAST): OWASP ZAP, Burp Suite
- Software composition analysis (SCA): Black Duck, Snyk – for checking third-party libraries
- CI/CD Security Integration: Jenkins, GitLab CI with security plugins
- Security Frameworks: OWASP ASVS (Application Security Verification Standard), NIST Cybersecurity Framework

Challenges in implementation and how to overcome them

1. Lack of security expertise within the team

Solution: The lack of security expertise in the team can be bridged by targeted training and the temporary involvement of external specialists. Regular workshops and pair programming with security experts accelerate knowledge transfer.

2. Time and cost pressures

Solution: Security by design may initially appear to be an additional expense. However, by integrating it into existing development processes and using automated tools, security becomes a natural part of everyday work.

3. Complexity of modern systems

Solution: Security by design may initially appear to be an additional expense. However, by integrating it into existing development processes and using automated tools, security becomes a natural part of everyday work.

Further sources:

- OWASP Foundation: OWASP Secure Coding Practices
- NIST Special Publication 800-64: Security Considerations in the System Development Life Cycle
- ISO/IEC 27034: Application Security Management
- Microsoft Security Development Lifecycle (SDL): Microsoft SDL
- BSI IT-Grundschutz-Kompendium: BSI IT-Grundschutz
- CISA Secure by Design Principles: CISA Guidelines
- Fraunhofer-Institut: Whitepaper zu Security by Design in der Softwareentwicklung
- Secure Code Warrior: Ressourcen und Trainings zu Secure Coding

How we support Security by Design

Expansion of development capacities

When internal teams are busy or lack specific security expertise, we reinforce the development department with experienced security experts. Whether as a dedicated team or integrated into existing structures, we adapt to existing processes while contributing best practices from over 20 years of project experience.

Taking on complete development projects

From conception to go-live, we take care of the entire development process for security-critical software solutions. This involves close cooperation with the specialist departments and transparent communication throughout all project phases. Control remains with the client; we deliver the secure solution.

Establishment of security processes

Security by design only works with the right processes. We advise and assist with the sustainable integration of security into development processes—from tool selection and CI/CD pipeline adjustments to the establishment of security gates.

Long-term development partnership

Many customers appreciate our ongoing collaboration. As a reliable partner, we take care of the further development and maintenance of business-critical applications. Dedicated knowledge transfer ensures that companies remain capable of acting at all times.

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Security by design is a must—with professionals at your side

Security by design is more than just a technical concept—it is a strategic decision for sustainable business success. The consistent integration of security aspects into every stage of development not only reduces risks and costs, but also creates a clear competitive advantage. Implementation requires experience, a structured approach, and modern tools. As a specialized software company, we support organizations in implementing security by design in a practical and efficient manner.

Together, we develop sustainable solutions that meet current and future security requirements.

We are happy to provide individual consultation, security assessments, or the development of customized security-by-design concepts. Together, we make security an integral part of your project's success.

Contact

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