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SECURITY DIALOGUES
No. 3 · 19 August 2026
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The Fix Is Available

Seven gaps between a published fix and a fleet that runs it

Publishing a fix is not the same as fixing a fleet. A product manager for connected industrial equipment shows how an advisory can say "fixed" while a third of the installed base still runs the vulnerable build. The answer the four of them reach is a fleet-coverage number, reported next to the fix.

FLEET COVERAGE
Say how much of the fleet runs the fix.

1. How many are out there?

2. Did they install the fix?

3. Whose job is installation?

GAPS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

1	**A fleet nobody can count** The real number of units was forty percent higher than sales said.	Cross-check the sales figure against warranty registrations and distributor stock movements. Put a serial-number check into support intake. You cannot patch a fleet you cannot count.
2	**One word, two facts** "Fixed" covers both a corrected version existing and that version running.	Report both. Add a field to the advisory: known deployment coverage, X percent, as of this date, with the source. "Unknown" is allowed as an honest answer. It tells a customer or regulator to ask.
3	**Reasons it does not install** No connectivity, a customer's change control, a technician needed on site.	Sort the unpatched part of the fleet by reason before you call it neglect. Neglect exists, but it is the minority explanation. Do not put "just add telemetry" or "just push an update" in an advisory as if it were a patch.
4	**A decision reported as a failure** Accepted risk and end of support get filed as "patch management".	Ask why the patch is not there and who decided. Label a customer's signed risk acceptance and a contractual end of support differently from a customer who never got the email.
5	**Faster is not free** A fix rushed to beat a researcher bricked a subset of units.	Compare the same kind of number on both sides. A guaranteed cost against an unmeasured exposure is a bet, not an analysis. Fast and safe are one request only if someone paid for the validation.
6	**No budget to see the fleet** Telemetry loses against projects with a return attached.	Keep asking for the budget. Know that the oldest hardware may not take a connectivity retrofit, and that approval often comes only after an incident.
7	**An unowned link in the chain** A distributor never forwarded an advisory for eighteen months.	Make advisory forwarding a term in every distributor agreement, in writing, with a name attached. Old contracts need renegotiating. Ask for the distribution logs before an auditor does.

THREE THINGS TO TAKE AWAY

Publish the coverage number
Point to it as the real answer, not a footnote. Update it as it changes. If it stays low, it should be embarrassing.

Name an owner for every link
From vendor to distributor to customer, in writing. Start with the link that has had the longest time to notice nobody was checking.

Reopen what you cut
Revisit the roadmap items you dropped in triage, before someone else finds the gap the way a regulator would.

Listen to the episode
The Fix Is Available and the rest of the series.
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