FACING YOUR 3 BIGGEST SECURITY FEARS USING ON-DEMAND TALENT

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FACING YOUR 3 BIGGEST SECURITY FEARS ABOUT USING ON-DEMAND TALENT

If this is your first time engaging on-demand talent through a crowdsourcing platform, here are the most important things you should know:

TOPCODER IS MORE SECURE THAN TRADITIONAL METHODS

Since we're an alternative way to access talent, we go above and beyond your traditional vendors to deliver securely.

WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR 20 YEARS

We're enterprise focused, and we've worked in data sensitive industries like healthcare, banking, cybersecurity, and the public sector.

WHEN YOU LOOK AT OUR HOLISTIC APPROACH

Covering people, processes, and platform—you should walk away with confidence that you're working with a secure partner.

With that in mind, and to help you feel confident going into these conversations internally, we want to prepare you with answers to the 3 most common security fears that come up.

Real quick before we start, you should know about the 2 main ways customers engage with Topcoder and how they relate to security:

1. ENTERPRISE CROWDSOURCING

in which customers tap Topcoder to do part or all of a technology project.

2. FREELANCERS ON-DEMAND

which we call TaaS or Talent as a Service.

Our discussions below relate mainly to enterprise crowdsourcing. Check out the end of this paper to learn more about security for Freelancers on Demand (TaaS).

HOW CAN I TRUST THE PEOPLE IN TOPCODER'S COMMUNITY?

IDENTITY VERIFICATION

Topcoder members do not get paid until they verify their identity. Every Topcoder member that wins a challenge goes through identity verification with a global service provider—Trulioo—that verifies the authenticity, as well as the information on a given identity type (passport, drivers license etc.). There are very few providers that can verify identities globally and Trulioo is one of them.

NDAs

Most Topcoder challenges require an NDA. You can use our NDA or have candidates sign your own. Topcoder is part of a global company —Wipro—so having a global GSI as part of our parent company makes it easier to enforce a global NDA. When a Topcoder member registers to compete in a challenge, they confirm the terms and conditions, and acknowledge that anything they see or learn on that challenge is part of the property of the challenge runner (you).

ATOMIZATION PROTECTS YOU

Often we hear things like, "I can't let random people in my systems, I just can't do that." We agree. And, these folks are not random. Enterprise crowdsourcing isn't letting people into your systems, it's making sure that you can describe your systems well enough so that people can build for it. We call this atomization and you don't have to be good at it because we're great at it. By breaking projects down into these smaller parts, you're automatically more protected because there's less visibility.

WHAT ABOUT HACKERS AND BAD ACTORS?

Part of what hackers rely on is anonymity—A hacker can sit behind a digital wall and nobody would ever know. Since Topocder verifies identity, that wall is gone. It's a high bar to get over. Imagine this: someone goes through the trouble of registering for the platform and then tries to submit a code that has nefarious intent. Even if they're able to do that, the next thing we'll do is try and verify their identity. We're not going to accept your bad code if you can't prove who you are. Beyond that, most hackers are trying to target something, and because we abstract or obfuscate who the customer is and who the code is for, it just makes it that much harder for people to do anything shady.

HOW DO I KNOW THE CODE IS ANY GOOD?
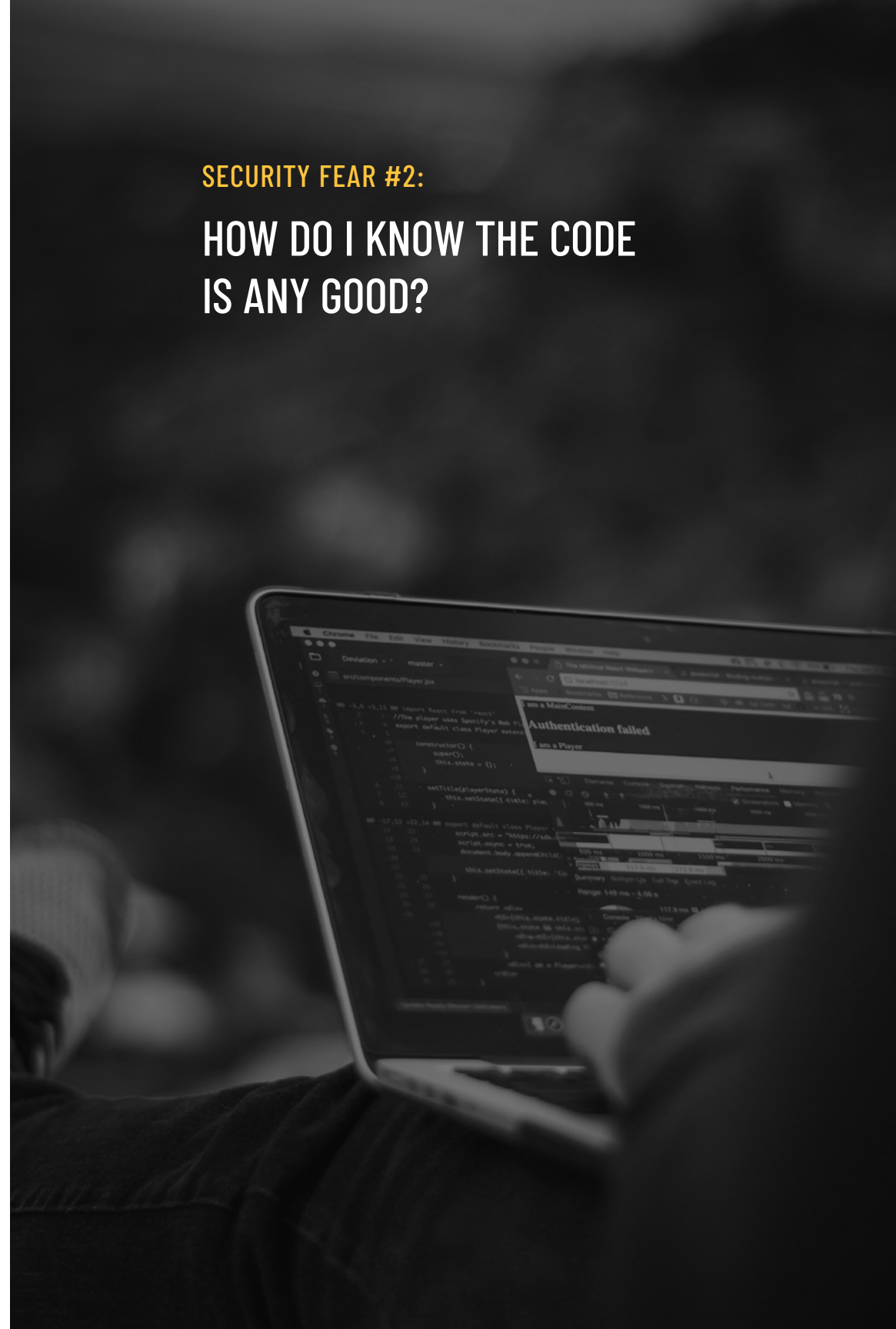
PEOPLE PROCESSES

Before any code is handed over to a customer, human reviewers test and validate its function. If it's something that's installable, they'll go verify that they can install it and run it themselves. So already, you have people outside of your environment that are verifying the integrity of what's been set up. Oftentimes, in order to win a challenge, you have to demonstrate what your outcome is—you have to document a plan and say, "Here's how you install it. Here's how we test, here's how you verify." From there, the reviewers on the challenge have to go perform those steps, so they have to be repeatable, understandable, and verifiable by people that might not use the same language. So the code has to be well documented.

Topcoder is built on a community of developers, designers, and data scientists. Our community members aspire to be in positions that enable them to demonstrate their skills and abilities above and beyond just the competitions. One of those positions is reviewer, and to become a reviewer, you have to successfully compete in and consistently win challenges for the types of reviews that you're going to do. Topcoder reviewers pride themselves on the ability to provide detailed feedback on how their code is performed during the review. And we pay reviewers really, really well for the important service they provide in ensuring that code is good. It's something most other platforms or company's don't do. It's one of many ways Topcoder is more thorough and secure than traditional methods.

TECHNOLOGY PROCESSES

We have a number of technology processes in place to verify that the coding is good. Every submission that gets uploaded to Topcoder's platform is automatically scanned by antivirus, and flagged for nefarious code. Additional scanning and security tools we use include:

- **Providence Technology** - verifies that the code is theirs
- **Black Duck** - ensures that we understand what the licensing of any technology is
- **Checkmarx** - performs static code analysis

Any technology security professional you talk to will bring up the concept of **defense in depth**, meaning you're never going to have one silver bullet that's going to solve everything for security. Planning and scanning is one thing we do (in addition to the other processes) to ensure that a submission is good and the code is quality. When you take all these processes together and see the outcomes that Topcoder produces, you'll see they are typically better than what you find in enterprises.

HOW DO I PROTECT MY IP AND KEEP MY ORGANIZATION SAFE?

POLICIES AND TECHNOLOGIES THAT PROTECT YOUR IP

The core of what Topcoder does is serve as an intellectual property broker. Our contracts and our terms are all around the transfer of intellectual property at the conclusion of an engagement. For all winning submissions, the member acknowledges in the terms that they remove all rights from the submitted property, and that it is now the property of Topcoder. Through our contractual agreements with the customer, once you pay for the property, we transfer the rights to you.

OBFUSCATION

We mentioned atomization is a process that helps protect customer IP, and to reiterate, breaking information down to the smallest possible parts to do the work is part of how enterprise crowdsourcing at Topcoder works. Oftentimes, we also provide some level of obfuscation for customers. Sometimes that's creating a code name that we use throughout the project, which may span multiple challenges. We've found that making it easier for members to understand and engage in related challenges has resulted in higher participation and better outcomes.

OTHER PROTECTIONS

For design challenges, members are required to disclose any intellectual property that they use outside of what they create. We also have technology that determines and verifies the source of imagery used.

SECURITY FOR FREELANCERS ON DEMAND (TAAS)

If you're using Talent as a Service (TaaS), that means you're managing the work directly, so it's exactly the same as working with any other 3rd party for talent. You could credentialize them individually, they can sign your NDA or our NDA. Whatever your code review processes are, fire away. The guarantee is that you're paying a flat, transparent weekly rate for really high caliber talent. Topcoder's fulfillment rate is very high and as a proof point, the overwhelming majority of TaaS customers extend or increase their usage of TaaS for their organization. If the talent wasn't good, and trustworthy, this would not be the case.

CLOUD COMPUTING HAS CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE OF TECHNOLOGY FOREVER OVER THE LAST 10-20 YEARS. THE NEXT WAVE IS THE HUMAN CLOUD AND THE FREELANCER ECONOMY.

With 20 years of experience, Topcoder is committed to being the simplest, most secure way to access and execute with digital talent. We welcome any and all conversations around the topic of security. We mean it. Talk directly to our VP of Security, **John Wheeler**.

Go to https://go.topcoder.com/talksecurity/

topcoder

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