

# Technology Cos. Tap AttackIQ To Beef Up Infrastructure, Security

## STARTUP: Co. Launched In EvoNexus and Employs 100 Staffers

■ BY FRED GRIER

**AttackIQ**, a cybersecurity company which protects against vulnerabilities in software, has launched its latest security optimization platform and is doubling down on partnerships and the greater practice of threat-informed defense.

Founded in 2013, AttackIQ was founded by Chief Technology Officer **Stephan Chenette** and Chief Architect **Rajesh Sharma**. They sought to create a tool to let companies measure and test their cybersecurity tools, so they could reduce their risk of an attack.

Launched in the La Jolla-based **EvoNexus** technology incubator, within four years, the company has since grown from a 12-person team to roughly 100 staffers. The company now has moved its headquarters to Santa Clara and maintains a large presence in San Diego.

### Increased Cyber Attacks

Cybersecurity has seen a massive boost in activity in the last few months due to the global health pandemic which caused more interactions and transactions moving online. As a result, more cyber attacks are happening than ever.

**Brett Galloway**, AttackIQ's chief executive said the company has seen two growing trends this past year: tighter cybersecurity budgets and siege of attacks across tech-heavy industries.

For example, recent high-profile software breaches have occurred at **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Uber** and even the **US Postal Service**, exposing millions of users' private data.



AttackIQ operates as a highly distributed company, with teams in San Diego, Australia, Barcelona and Silicon Valley.

"COVID-19 has been a game changer for cybersecurity practitioners," said Galloway. "CISOs are under a siege of attacks, while spending is undergoing increased scrutiny. We're in a new era that requires an optimization strategy for better insights, better decisions, and real business impact. We are addressing the most overlooked cybersecurity issue: control effectiveness."

### Improved Security

The problem is that the majority of cybersecurity teams



Brett Galloway

generally have no idea if their controls are working. According to **Verizon**, about 82% of successful enterprise breaches should have been stopped by existing controls, but weren't.

"Security controls are complex systems composed of technologies, people, and processes that fail silently," said Galloway. "The only way to know if they are working is to actively test them in an automated and continuous way."

This is where the cybersecurity startup comes into play, in particular AttackIQ runs simulated "attacks" to test companies' security systems, and then provides them information on which controls failed.

AttackIQ offers prepackaged tests as well as enables companies to customize

security threats they are likely to face in their particular industry. The tests also let customers validate that their security systems are actually working.

**Jeremy Phelps**, director of Information Security at **Akin Gump** said AttackIQ's platform has been a vital way to ensure top-notch level security as their teams navigate the COVID-19 era and beyond.



Jeremy Phelps

"Security optimization is absolutely paramount in today's cybersecurity operating environment," said Phelps. "The new normal of measuring program effectiveness will be directly tied to better insights and better decisions that create value for the business."

Notable technology partnerships that AttackIQ has formed include **Microsoft**, **MITRE**, **Carbon Black**, **CrowdStrike**, **Palo Alto Networks**, and **Splunk**, among several others.

### Educated 1,600 Students

In addition to launching its security optimization platform, the company has introduced AttackIQ Academy, which offers free instructor-led courses that helps organizations bolster their defenses through its advanced cybersecurity curriculum. To date, more than 1,600 students have registered for Academy courses since its launch in April.

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# DNAVisit

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do that. If someone wants to work full time they can do that too. We wanted to make it flexible and interesting for the clinicians, but also to make it so we can quickly scale.”

Other features include a streamlined scheduling platform which incorporates both automated email and human-based phone scheduling enabling them to make scheduled consultations with every patient with ease.

In addition, the software assists clinicians in completing clinical consultation notes, and even incorporates a variant classification tracking program, where patients and physicians can receive notifications from their clinicians if variant reclassification events occur.

## Partnership

In January, DNAVisit formed a partnership with Scripps Research who is incorporating their AI-enabled platform for

its polygenic risk study. A spokesperson at Scripps said DNAVisit’s platform has exceeded expectations in regards to genetic counseling between its research participants.

“They have a remarkably effective digital platform and team to administer genetic counseling, which has helped connect the dots for our research participants,” said **Ali Torkamani**, director of Genome Informatics at Scripps Research.

Throughout the collaboration with Scripps, DNAVisit is assisting with counseling for participants and helping participants make the findings as actionable as possible.

DNAVisit’s business model has two components. Offering its solutions as a software-as-a-service where clients pay a monthly or fixed price. The other side is the actual genetic counseling service provided by the clinicians.



Ali Torkamani

## \$14B Market

Estimates for the genetic testing market range from \$8 to \$18 billion, with help from giant DNA genetic testing and analysis companies such as **Ambry, Invitae, Myriad and 23andMe**.

Analysts predict the industry will grow into a \$25 billion market by 2025. More interestingly, the genetic counseling component is expected to grow even more rapidly. DNAVisit has also been uniquely positioned to also provide services around pharmacogenetics counseling, which is often conducted by pharmacists rather than genetic counselors, but sometimes both. This is one of the areas where DNAVisit is experiencing the highest adoption.

DNAVisit is currently running several pilots with smaller employers with hopes to expand into working with larger ones. Names were not disclosed.

El-kalliny said the company is uncertain on whether the startup should raise venture capital from investors to scale more quickly or continue to grow organically.

“We have a couple of choices, to take our time to grow organically or we can

raise money and be more aggressive about expanding at a faster pace.”

Initially, the team raised a small seed round from friends and family to get the business off the ground, El-kalliny said, the startup has been cashflow positive ever since. Revenues were not disclosed.

Looking forward, DNAVisit aims to expand their current population health programs, where they are currently running a number of pilots with employers, to a few hundred employers. In the short-term, the company will continue to grow its clinical lab and healthcare provider client base. ■

**DNAVisit** **DNAVisit**

**FOUNDED:** 2018  
**CEO:** Ahmed El-kalliny  
**HEADQUARTERS:** La Jolla  
**BUSINESS:** Telegenomics technology and service company.  
**EMPLOYEES:** 9  
**WEBSITE:** dnavisit.com  
**NOTABLE:** Scripps Research is using its AI platform for its polygenic risk study.



The Island at Carlsbad is among the shopping centers owned by Capstone Advisors

Photos courtesy of Capstone Advisors

# Tenants

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Adjusting inventory also helps – selling more casual attire like sweat pants and tops, for example.

Restaurants might pivot to feature family meals instead of individual servings and offering third party delivery would help, she said.

**Susan Haywood**, owner of **Ogi’s Restaurant** in Carmel Plaza said Capstone Advisors helped her by letting her expand outdoors. “They’ve been great as far as helping me out with patio seating,” Haywood said.

When the pandemic began in March, “They were kind enough to give me one month’s free rent and give me 50 % off the second month,” Haywood said.

She said Capstone Advisors offered her a third month at half rent, but she declined the offer because she said she’d eventually have to repay the half she didn’t pay.

Business also had picked up, Haywood said, although she said it’s been down in July.

“It’s just a roller coaster ride, it’s up, then it’s down,” Haywood said.

## Think Long Term

Cicerone urges restaurant and other business owners to think long term.

“We cannot make up the money we lost today or tomorrow. We have to look at changing and actually rebuilding our business in a more dynamic and digitally focused way,” Cicerone said.

Zikakis declined to say how many of Capstone Advisors’ tenants haven’t been paying their rent, but he said that the national average is that about 20 percent of retailers haven’t.

“The vast majority of our tenants are paying some rent,” Zikakis said, adding that “a sizable percentage of renters do need some assistance at this time.”

“We’re being pretty liberal with rent deferral,” Zikakis said.

**Brian Melekian**, owner of **Stretch Zone** in Encinitas, was among those whose rent was deferred by Capstone Advisors.

“The pandemic hit in mid-March. Within a week, they had proactively contacted all of us tenants and without even being asked, issued a forbearance, forgave our rent for April,” Melekian said. “They want us to succeed because then they succeed. If we fail, then they fail.” ■

**Capstone Advisors** **CAPSTONE ADVISORS**

**FOUNDED:** 1996  
**CEO:** Alex Zikakis  
**BUSINESS:** Real estate investment, development and asset management company  
**HEADQUARTERS:** Carlsbad  
**EMPLOYEES:** 16  
**WEBSITE:** capstoneadvisors.com  
**NOTABLE:** Purchased about 5 million square feet of multi-tenant retail, office and industrial properties and has been the equity investor in more than \$2 billion of residential development projects.

# AttackIQ

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Galloway said the immediate effect of COVID-19 on its business was mildly negative. “We had accounts in the pipeline that were either deeply affected by the economic situation and they are not so inclined to buy new stuff,” he said. “What we’re starting to see however is the change in the budget situation which is starting to accelerate our business.”

In the second half of 2020, the company is now seeing much larger deals, Galloway said, as decision makers are realizing that this is not a testing tool — it’s a strategic platform for optimization. Annual revenue was not disclosed, although the company expects to double its revenue again this year.

Galloway joined as the company’s CEO in November. He had previously served as a senior vice president for **Cisco**, and before that, had also taken his own company public. His IT startup, **Packeteer**, was acquired by **Blue Coat Systems**, which was later acquired by **Symantec**.

“I joined AttackIQ to build a multi-billion dollar revenue business. We’re still growing aggressively,” said Galloway. “The overall business outlook is generally cautionary. I can’t predict the future. I can only prudently manage the business, align with our market opportunity and further our mission.”

In the long run, AttackIQ hopes to continue to grow the company toward an IPO. A now highly distributed company, it has teams in San Diego, Australia, Barcelona and Silicon Valley.

In 2019, AttackIQ raised \$17.6 million in a Series B round, led by **Khosla Ventures**, the venture capital firm started by **Sun Microsystems** co-founder **Vinod Khosla**. In total, the company has raised \$35 million in funding. ■

**AttackIQ** **ATTACKIQ**

**FOUNDED:** 2013  
**CEO:** Brett Galloway  
**HEADQUARTERS:** Santa Clara with large presence in San Diego  
**BUSINESS:** Cybersecurity startup  
**FUNDING:** Raised \$35M, to date.  
**EMPLOYEES:** 100  
**WEBSITE:** attackiq.com  
**NOTABLE:** Co. recently launched new software platform and online academy for customers.