THE EFFECTIVE BUG BOUNTY PLAYBOOK

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO FINDING HIGH-IMPACT VULNERABILITIES

AMIR ZOLANSKI

The Effective Bug Bounty Playbook

A Systematic Approach to Finding High-Impact Vulnerabilities

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A Systematic Approach to Finding High-Impact Vulnerabilities

This book is a comprehensive guide to modern bug bounty hunting, written for security researchers who want to move beyond opportunistic scanning and develop a disciplined, repeatable methodology. It covers the full lifecycle of vulnerability research: from reconnaissance and attack surface mapping through advanced exploitation techniques, chaining low-severity findings into critical impacts, and professional report writing. Every chapter is grounded in real-world case studies, publicly disclosed vulnerabilities, and the decision-making frameworks used by experienced hunters. Whether you are an intermediate researcher looking to improve your consistency or an advanced practitioner seeking to deepen your methodology, this book provides the technical rigor and practical structure needed to find high-impact vulnerabilities reliably.

Introduction: The Hunter's Mindset

In August 2019, a former AWS employee exploited a misconfigured web application firewall at Capital One and exfiltrated the personal data of over 100 million customers. The vulnerability was not an unknown zero-day. It was Server-Side Request Forgery, a well-documented flaw that had been discussed in security circles for years. What made the difference between this being another CVE entry and one of the largest financial data breaches in history was not the novelty of the bug, but how it connected to other weaknesses in the environment: an AWS metadata service accessible from the compromised server, IAM credentials with excessive permissions, and S3 buckets holding sensitive data. The attacker chained these elements into a devastating exploit path.

This story captures everything important about effective bug bounty hunting. Success is not about discovering exotic vulnerabilities that nobody has ever seen before. It is about understanding how systems are supposed to work, recognizing where assumptions fail, and connecting individual weaknesses into meaningful attack paths. The most impactful findings consistently come from researchers who approach their targets systematically rather than opportunistically.

What Bug Bounty Hunting Actually Is

Bug bounty hunting is crowdsourced vulnerability research conducted within authorized scope. Organizations publish programs on platforms such as HackerOne, Bugcrowd, and Intigriti, defining which assets are in scope and offering monetary rewards for valid security findings. The model has matured significantly: HackerOne paid out $81 million to researchers over fiscal year 2025, a 13 percent increase from the prior year [1]. Google distributed $11.8 million to 660 researchers in 2024 alone, with the highest single reward reaching $100,115 [2].

These numbers tell an important story. Bug bounty hunting is no longer a fringe activity for hobbyists. It is a legitimate profession for skilled practitioners who treat it as one. The top five percent of hunters capture the vast

majority of payouts, and they do so through disciplined methodology rather than luck or brute force.

Bug bounty programs differ from traditional penetration testing in several key ways. Penetration tests are typically time-bound engagements with defined objectives, conducted by a single team against a specific scope. Bug bounties are continuous programs that leverage a global community of researchers working independently, often around the clock. This creates both advantages and challenges: the diversity of perspectives can uncover vulnerabilities that structured tests miss, but it also means individual hunters face intense competition and must differentiate themselves through deeper analysis rather than broader scanning.

Understanding this distinction matters because it shapes how you should approach your work. In a penetration test, you are paid for your time and effort regardless of findings. In bug bounty hunting, you are paid exclusively for outcomes: demonstrable vulnerabilities within scope that meet the program's severity thresholds. This outcome-based model rewards efficiency and precision. Every hour spent on activities that do not directly contribute to finding valid bugs is an hour not earning a payout.

The Myth of the Lucky Find

There is a persistent narrative in security communities about hunters who stumble upon critical vulnerabilities through random clicking or serendipitous discovery. Social media amplifies these stories: screenshots of five-figure bounties posted without context, implying that extraordinary rewards come from extraordinary luck. This narrative is harmful because it sets unrealistic expectations and obscures the actual work behind successful hunting.

Every vulnerability has causes and conditions that make it discoverable. When an experienced researcher finds a bug, it rarely happens by accident. They have built mental models of how applications behave, they understand common failure patterns, and they know where to look based on their knowledge of the target's architecture and business logic. What looks like luck from the outside is usually pattern recognition honed through deliberate practice.

Consider business logic vulnerabilities. These flaws arise when developers make assumptions about user behavior that attackers can violate. A discount code limited to one use per account might be validated before the transaction

is committed, creating a race condition window. A referral program might credit rewards based on email matching without verifying account ownership. These vulnerabilities cannot be found by automated scanners because they require understanding the intended business rules and then systematically testing whether those rules are enforced correctly. Finding them demands human intelligence, domain knowledge, and creative thinking.

The reality is that consistent success in bug bounty hunting requires:

- Deep technical knowledge of web technologies, protocols, and common vulnerability classes
- Systematic reconnaissance to identify the full attack surface
- Threat modeling skills to prioritize where vulnerabilities are most likely
- Persistence through long periods without findings
- Continuous learning to stay current with emerging technologies and attack patterns
- Strong report writing to communicate findings effectively

None of these qualities develop overnight. They are built through sustained effort and deliberate practice. The good news is that they are learnable. This book exists to accelerate that learning process by sharing the frameworks, techniques, and mental models used by effective hunters.

Systems Over Tools: The Core Philosophy

One of the most common mistakes among aspiring bug bounty hunters is an obsession with tools. New scanners emerge constantly, each promising faster and deeper vulnerability discovery. Hunters collect toolkits like trading cards, assuming that having more tools will automatically produce more findings. This approach has fundamental flaws.

Tools are force multipliers, not substitutes for understanding. A scanner can identify known vulnerability patterns based on signatures and heuristics, but it cannot understand business logic, recognize unusual behavior in a specific application's workflow, or chain multiple low-severity issues into a high-impact exploit. These capabilities require human analysis. When you rely primarily on tools without developing your own analytical skills, you will find the same vulnerabilities that everyone else finds with the same tools. Those findings are likely duplicates by the time you submit them.

The effective hunter builds systems rather than collecting tools. A system is a repeatable process that guides your work from initial reconnaissance through final report submission. It includes:

- A structured approach to discovering and mapping attack surfaces
- Prioritization criteria for deciding which assets and features deserve the most attention
- Testing checklists tailored to specific vulnerability classes and target types
- Note-taking practices that capture findings, hypotheses, and observations
- Methods for validating discoveries before submission
- Templates and workflows for writing clear, compelling reports

These systems evolve over time as you gain experience. You refine your reconnaissance based on what yields the best results. You adjust your testing priorities based on which vulnerability classes prove most fruitful. You develop specialized expertise in areas where you naturally excel or where market demand is highest. The goal is not to have a perfect system from day one, but to have a system that gets better with every engagement.

Bugcrowd's analysis of hunting approaches identifies two broad categories: systemic and manual [3]. Systemic hunters rely heavily on automation, running reconnaissance and scanning pipelines across many programs simultaneously. This approach can generate volume but often produces lower-impact findings and higher noise. Manual hunters focus on deep, human-driven analysis of specific targets, understanding business context and testing logic thoroughly. This approach yields higher-quality findings but requires more time per target. The most effective practitioners blend both: they use automation for discovery and initial triage, then apply manual analysis to the most promising areas.

How to Use This Book

This book is structured as a progressive journey from foundational concepts to advanced techniques. It assumes you already have basic familiarity with web technologies and some exposure to security testing. You should understand what HTTP requests look like, know how to use a proxy tool such as Burp

Suite, and have a general sense of common vulnerability types. If you are completely new to cybersecurity, consider building that foundation first through resources like PortSwigger Web Security Academy or similar platforms.

The chapters build on each other logically. The early chapters establish the reconnaissance and methodology foundations that underpin all successful hunting. The middle chapters dive deep into specific technical areas: web application vulnerabilities, API security, authentication flaws, business logic testing, client-side attacks, and cloud infrastructure. The later chapters cover advanced topics like vulnerability chaining, professional practices, automation strategies, and long-term career development.

You do not need to read this book linearly from start to finish if you already have experience in certain areas. Use the chapter structure as a map to find the topics most relevant to your current needs. However, even experienced hunters will benefit from reviewing the methodology chapters, because effective processes are universal regardless of technical specialization.

Throughout the book, you will encounter:

- Technical explanations of vulnerability classes, including how they arise and how to test for them
- Real-world case studies based on publicly disclosed vulnerabilities
- Practical techniques and testing methodologies you can apply immediately
- Decision frameworks for prioritizing targets and focusing your efforts
- Discussions of trade-offs between different approaches
- References to additional resources for deeper study

The goal is not to overwhelm you with every possible tool, payload, or technique. The goal is to give you a coherent framework for thinking about vulnerability research that you can adapt and extend as your skills grow. If you internalize the mental models and systematic approaches presented here, you will be equipped to discover vulnerabilities that others miss, regardless of what new tools or technologies emerge.

The path to becoming an effective bug bounty hunter is challenging. It requires technical depth, creative thinking, persistence through frustration, and continuous learning. But it is also one of the most intellectually rewarding careers in cybersecurity. You get to solve puzzles that real attackers are trying to solve, you contribute directly to making systems more secure, and you build

skills that transfer to virtually any security role. This book will not guarantee you a payout on every target or a six-figure income. But it will give you the knowledge, frameworks, and methodologies needed to approach bug bounty hunting as the disciplined, systematic practice it is meant to be.

Let us begin.

Chapter 1: Foundations — Reconnaissance and Attack Surface Mapping

Reconnaissance is the foundation of everything that follows in bug bounty hunting. It determines what you will test, where you will find vulnerabilities, and how efficiently you can work. Poor reconnaissance leads to wasted effort on assets other hunters have already exhausted. Good reconnaissance reveals overlooked subdomains, forgotten staging environments, misconfigured cloud storage, and shadow IT that has never been properly secured. The quality of your recon directly determines the quality of your findings.

This chapter establishes the reconnaissance methodology that underpins effective hunting. You will learn how to discover and map attack surfaces systematically, distinguish between passive and active techniques, identify technology stacks at scale, and build repeatable pipelines that work across multiple targets.

The Reconnaissance Philosophy

Before discussing specific tools and techniques, it is essential to understand the philosophy that guides effective reconnaissance. Reconnaissance is not about collecting as much data as possible. It is about collecting the right data efficiently and using it to make informed decisions about where to focus your testing efforts.

Three principles should guide every recon operation:

Signal over noise. The goal of reconnaissance is to identify testable assets with genuine security risk, not to accumulate lists of domains and IPs. A list of 100 live, reachable subdomains running interesting technologies is far more valuable than a list of 5000 subdomains most of which are dead or irrelevant. Effective recon includes filtering and prioritization at every stage.

Passive before active. Passive reconnaissance gathers information from third-party sources without sending traffic directly to the target. Active reconnaissance involves probing targets directly with requests, scans, and queries. Always begin with passive techniques because they are undetectable, scalable, and often reveal significant findings. Active techniques should be used selectively once you have identified promising targets, and always within program scope and rules of engagement.

Continuous over one-time. Attack surfaces change constantly. New subdomains appear, services are deployed and decommissioned, cloud configurations drift. A single reconnaissance sweep provides only a snapshot in time. The most effective hunters implement continuous or periodic recon that alerts them to changes on their targets. New assets often mean new vulnerabilities: freshly deployed services have not been hardened, forgotten staging environments lack proper security controls, and misconfigurations accumulate over time.

Wiz's Bug Bounty Masterclass outlines a five-phase reconnaissance workflow designed to map a target's attack surface in thirty to sixty minutes: passive discovery, DNS resolution filtering, active subdomain brute-forcing, root domain expansion through acquisitions and corporate relationships, and finally service probing [4]. This structured approach exemplifies the philosophy above: start wide and passive, narrow down aggressively, then probe intelligently.

The table below compares passive and active reconnaissance techniques across key dimensions:

Technique	Type	Detectability	Coverage	Speed	Best Use Case
Certificate transparency logs	Passive	None	High (TLS-enabled assets)	Fast	Discovering new subdomains
DNS databases / passive sources	Passive	None	Medium-High	Fast	Initial subdomain enumeration

Technique	Type	Detectability	Coverage	Speed	Best Use Case
Search engine dorking	Passive	None	Low-Medium	Medium	Finding exposed files, configs
Shodan / Censys	Passive	None	High (Internet-facing services)	Fast	Infrastructure discovery
GitHub recon	Passive	None	Variable	Medium	Code, credentials, IaC analysis
DNS resolution filtering	Active	Low	N/A (validation only)	Fast	Cleaning passive data
HTTP probing	Active	Low-Medium	High (web assets)	Fast	Identifying live web services
Port scanning	Active	Medium-High	Complete (target host)	Slow-Medium	Full service enumeration
Directory brute-forcing	Active	Medium	Variable (depends on wordlist)	Medium	Hidden path discovery

The key insight from this comparison is that passive techniques provide breadth and stealth, while active techniques provide depth and validation. Effective reconnaissance combines both in sequence, using passive data to identify candidates and active probing to validate and enrich findings.

Passive Reconnaissance Techniques

Passive reconnaissance leverages publicly available data sources to discover information about a target without interacting with its systems directly. These

techniques are critical because they leave no trace on the target's infrastructure and can often reveal assets that active scanning would miss.

Subdomain enumeration from passive sources. The most fundamental passive recon task is discovering subdomains associated with a target domain. Multiple tools query certificate transparency logs, DNS databases, search engines, and other public repositories to compile comprehensive lists.

Subfinder is one of the most widely used tools for this purpose. It queries over twenty passive sources simultaneously and returns results quickly without sending traffic to the target [5]. Amass offers similar functionality with additional capabilities for active enumeration and network mapping. Both tools can be integrated into automated pipelines that run continuously against your targets.

Certificate transparency logs are particularly valuable because they reveal subdomains whenever TLS certificates are issued. Even if a subdomain is not publicly linked or discoverable through search engines, its certificate issuance will appear in these logs. The crt.sh website provides a searchable interface, and the data can be queried programmatically.

Search engine reconnaissance. Search engines index vast amounts of information about organizations, including documentation, API references, employee profiles, configuration files accidentally left public, and internal tools inadvertently exposed. Advanced search operators allow you to target specific file types, domains, and content patterns.

Google dorking remains a powerful technique despite its age. Queries such as site:target.com filetype:pdf or site:target.com inurl:admin can reveal sensitive documents, administrative interfaces, and configuration details. Similar techniques apply to Bing, DuckDuckGo, and specialized search engines like Shodan and Censys.

Shodan and Censys. These Internet-of-Things search engines index devices and services reachable from the public Internet. They provide information about open ports, running services, technology versions, and geographical locations. For bug bounty hunters, they are invaluable for discovering infrastructure associated with a target organization that might not be linked to known domains.

Shodan allows searches by IP range, hostname, ASN, organization name, and service banners. You can identify all devices belonging to a target company's ASN, find exposed databases or administrative panels, and discover services

running outdated software. Censys offers similar capabilities with a focus on certificate data and network scanning information.

GitHub and code repository reconnaissance. Organizations frequently expose sensitive information in public code repositories: API keys, internal URLs, configuration files, infrastructure-as-code templates, and documentation revealing system architecture. Searching GitHub, GitLab, and Bitbucket for references to a target organization can yield significant intelligence.

Effective GitHub recon goes beyond simple text searches. Look for repositories belonging to the target organization or its employees. Search for hardcoded credentials, AWS access keys, internal domain names, and API endpoints. Examine infrastructure-as-code files such as Terraform templates or Kubernetes manifests to understand the target's cloud architecture and identify potential misconfigurations.

Corporate intelligence. Understanding a target organization's business structure reveals additional attack surface. Acquisitions often result in forgotten assets: acquired companies' domains may still be active but no longer monitored, their applications may integrate with the parent company's systems through poorly secured APIs, and their infrastructure may use different security controls.

Tools like Crunchbase provide information about corporate acquisitions, funding rounds, and partnerships. Reverse WHOIS lookups reveal all domains registered by an organization. Social media profiles of employees can expose internal tool names, project codenames, and technology choices.

Active Reconnaissance and Discovery

Once passive reconnaissance has identified a list of potential targets, active techniques validate what is live, reachable, and worth testing further. Active recon involves sending traffic directly to the target and analyzing responses. This phase must be conducted carefully to remain within program scope and avoid triggering detection or causing disruption.

DNS resolution and validation. Passive subdomain enumeration often produces lists containing invalid or non-resolving domains. Filtering these out is essential before investing time in further testing. Tools like puredns and dnsx perform rapid DNS resolution, keeping only domains that resolve to valid IP addresses [6].

This step typically reduces a large passive list by twenty to forty percent. The remaining live subdomains represent your testable attack surface and deserve closer examination.

HTTP probing. Not all live subdomains host web applications. Some may run internal services, mail servers, or DNS infrastructure. HTTP probing identifies which hosts respond to web traffic and what they serve.

The httpx tool from Project Discovery is a standard for this task. It sends HTTP requests to discovered hosts, captures response codes, content types, technology fingerprints, and response sizes. You can filter results by status code (looking for 200 OK responses), content type (identifying JavaScript files, APIs, or HTML pages), or word count (spotting detailed error pages versus minimal responses).

A common workflow chains subdomain enumeration with resolution and HTTP probing:

```
subfinder -d target.com | puredns resolve - | httpx
```

This pipeline produces a list of live web assets ready for deeper analysis.

Port scanning. Web applications are not the only attack surface. Services running on non-standard ports or internal-facing services inadvertently exposed to the Internet can harbor significant vulnerabilities. Port scanning identifies all open services on discovered hosts.

Nmap remains the industry standard for port scanning, offering flexible options for speed, stealth, and service detection. For bug bounty hunting, a balanced approach is important: aggressive full scans may trigger intrusion detection systems and violate program rules, while overly conservative scans may miss critical services. A common strategy is to scan the top one thousand ports quickly using nmap -sV -T4 —top-ports 1000, then perform deeper scans on interesting targets.

Key services to look for include SSH (port 22), databases (MySQL on 3306, PostgreSQL on 5432, MongoDB on 27017), Redis (6379), Kubernetes APIs (6443), and any services running on unusual ports that might indicate custom applications.

Directory and file enumeration. Web applications often expose functionality through specific URL paths that are not linked from the main site. Directory

enumeration discovers these hidden paths by systematically requesting common filenames and directory names.

Tools like ffuf, gobuster, and dirsearch perform this task efficiently. The effectiveness of directory enumeration depends heavily on wordlists: generic lists catch common patterns, but custom wordlists based on the target's technology stack, industry conventions, and observed naming patterns yield far better results.

Key directories to discover include administrative interfaces (/admin, /dashboard), API endpoints (/api/v1, /graphql), staging environments (/staging, /dev), documentation sites (/docs, /wiki), and backup files (/backup, /old).

Attack Surface Mapping Methodologies

Attack surface mapping is the systematic process of identifying, cataloging, and analyzing every digital asset and entry point that an attacker could target. For bug bounty hunters, a well-mapped attack surface provides a structured testing roadmap and reveals overlooked areas where vulnerabilities are likely to exist.

The layered approach. Effective attack surface mapping operates at multiple layers:

1. **External reachability layer:** What assets are accessible from the public Internet? This includes all live subdomains, open ports, exposed APIs, and cloud services.
2. **Application layer:** What applications run on those assets? What technologies do they use? What features and endpoints do they expose?
3. **Internal connectivity layer:** How do these assets connect to each other and to internal systems? Where are the trust boundaries?
4. **Identity and access layer:** What authentication mechanisms protect each asset? What user roles exist? How is authorization enforced?

Mapping at each layer reveals different types of vulnerabilities. External reachability mapping finds forgotten assets and exposed services. Application mapping identifies technology-specific weaknesses. Internal connectivity mapping reveals SSRF opportunities and lateral movement paths. Identity mapping exposes authentication and authorization flaws.

Asset classification and prioritization. Not all assets are equally valuable targets. Classifying assets by business criticality, exposure level, and technology stack helps you prioritize testing effort where it matters most.

High-priority assets typically include:

- Customer-facing applications handling sensitive data (payment processing, personal information)
- Administrative interfaces and control panels
- API endpoints serving mobile apps or third-party integrations
- Recently deployed or acquired services that may not be fully secured
- Assets running outdated software or known vulnerable technologies

Lower-priority assets might include:

- Static content sites with no interactive functionality
- Marketing pages with no authentication or data processing
- Assets already extensively tested by other researchers (visible through public disclosures)

Wiz's attack surface mapping framework emphasizes continuous discovery through cloud APIs and audit logs, layered visibility across external reach and lateral attack paths, and validation through safe-by-design probes that confirm exploitability without causing disruption [7]. While this describes enterprise ASM platforms, the principles apply equally to individual hunters: discover continuously, understand connections, validate findings.

Shadow IT and forgotten assets. One of the most reliable sources of high-impact findings is discovering shadow IT: assets deployed by business units without security team involvement, or legacy systems that were never decommissioned. These assets often lack proper security controls because they exist outside formal governance processes.

Acquisitions are a prime source of shadow IT. When Company A acquires Company B, the integration process takes months or years. During this period, Company B's assets may remain active with their original configurations, connected to Company A's systems through hastily built integrations that bypass standard security reviews. Researchers who systematically check acquired company domains and subdomains frequently find misconfigurations and vulnerabilities.

Staging and development environments are another common source. These environments often mirror production systems but lack the same security hardening. They may use weaker authentication, expose debugging interfaces, or contain test data that reveals internal architecture. Domain patterns like staging.company.com, dev.company.com, or test-api.company.com are worth investigating on every target.

Technology Fingerprinting at Scale

Understanding what technologies a target uses is essential for effective vulnerability testing. Different frameworks, libraries, and services have different vulnerability profiles. Knowing that a target runs a specific version of an application framework allows you to focus on known vulnerabilities and common misconfigurations associated with that technology.

Automated fingerprinting. Modern tools perform technology detection automatically as part of reconnaissance pipelines. httpx includes basic technology identification based on response headers and content. Wappalyzer is a widely used tool available as a browser extension and command-line utility that identifies over one thousand technologies including frameworks, CMS platforms, analytics tools, and JavaScript libraries [8].

For deeper analysis, tools like whatweb and builtwith provide comprehensive technology stacks. When combined with subdomain enumeration and HTTP probing, these tools can generate technology profiles for hundreds of assets in a single run.

Key technologies to identify. Certain technologies consistently appear in vulnerability reports because they are widely used and prone to specific classes of misconfiguration:

- **Web frameworks:** React, Angular, Vue.js, Django, Rails, Spring Boot, Express.js. Each has known vulnerability patterns and common configuration mistakes.
- **API technologies:** GraphQL endpoints, REST API frameworks, gRPC services. APIs represent a massive attack surface and often have weaker security controls than web interfaces.
- **Cloud infrastructure:** AWS S3 buckets, Azure Blob Storage, Google Cloud Storage. Cloud storage misconfigurations remain among the most common and impactful vulnerability classes.

- **Authentication systems:** OAuth providers, identity platforms (Auth0, Okta, Keycloak), JWT implementations. Authentication flaws consistently yield high-severity findings.
- **CDNs and WAFs:** Cloudflare, Akamai, AWS WAF. Understanding what protection layers exist helps you assess whether certain attacks are likely to be blocked.

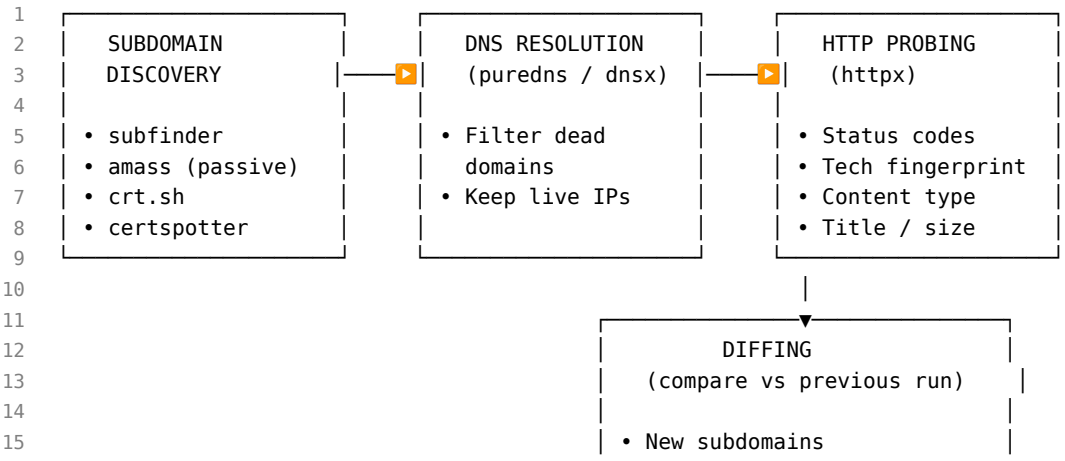
Version detection and vulnerability correlation. When fingerprinting reveals specific software versions, correlate them with known vulnerabilities using databases like the National Vulnerability Database (NVD) or commercial services. A target running an outdated version of a widely used library may have exploitable CVEs that can be tested within scope.

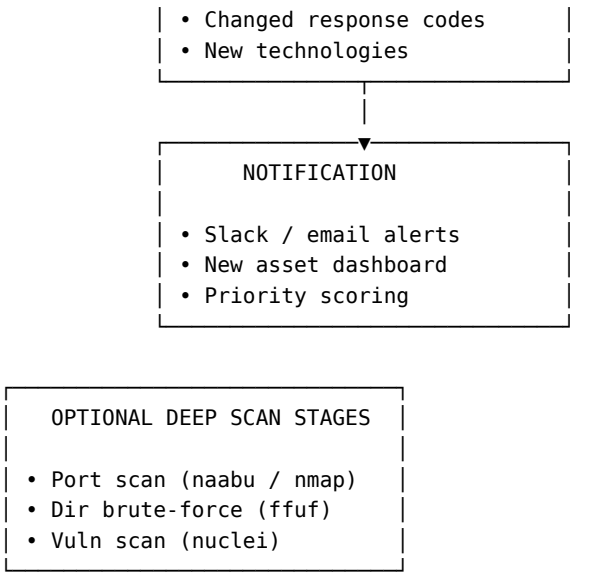
However, exercise caution: reporting a vulnerable version without demonstrating actual exploitability is often rejected as informational. The value comes from showing how the vulnerability can be exploited in the specific context of the target application.

Building Your Reconnaissance Pipeline

The most effective hunters do not perform reconnaissance manually for every target. They build automated pipelines that run continuously, producing fresh intelligence on a schedule and alerting them to changes worth investigating further.

Pipeline architecture. A basic recon pipeline includes these stages:





This pipeline architecture emphasizes progressive filtering: each stage reduces the dataset while increasing confidence in what remains. The diffing stage is critical because it transforms raw data into actionable intelligence by highlighting changes that warrant investigation.

More advanced pipelines add stages for directory enumeration on promising targets, technology-specific vulnerability scanning using tools like Nuclei, and integration with bug bounty platforms to track which findings have already been reported.

Tools and integrations. Project Discovery's ecosystem provides many of the building blocks needed for an effective pipeline: subfinder for subdomain discovery, httpx for HTTP probing, nuclei for vulnerability scanning, and naabu for port scanning. These tools are designed to work together through standard input/output piping.

GitHub Actions, cron jobs, or dedicated VPS instances can automate pipeline execution. Many hunters maintain their pipelines as open-source repositories, allowing easy updates and community contributions.

Avoiding automation pitfalls. Automation is powerful but dangerous if misused. Common mistakes include:

- Running aggressive scans that violate program rules and get you banned

- Submitting findings discovered purely by automated tools without manual validation
- Focusing entirely on automation at the expense of developing manual testing skills
- Generating excessive noise that overwhelms triage teams

The best approach uses automation for discovery and initial triage, then applies human analysis to validate and deepen findings. Automated tools tell you what exists; your expertise determines what matters.

A well-designed reconnaissance pipeline does not find bugs automatically. It tells you where bugs are most likely to exist so you can focus your manual testing effort efficiently. The combination of systematic automated discovery and skilled human analysis is what separates effective hunters from the rest.

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Server-Side Request Forgery Patterns

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Avoiding Automation Pitfalls

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