

2025 Cybersecurity Person Of The Year: Nir Zuk, Palo Alto Networks Founder & CTO

Once-in-a-generation founder is retiring from PAN after 20+ years, pioneering the next-generation firewall and revolutionizing the cybersecurity industry

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The editors at Cybercrime Magazine named Nir Zuk, founder and Chief Technology Officer and board member at Palo Alto Networks (NASDAQ: PANW) "Cybersecurity Person of the Year" for his outstanding contributions to the industry in 2025.

On Aug. 18 of this year, [PAN announced](#) that Zuk has retired after more than 20 years of contributing to the company's success. He founded PAN in 2005, pioneering the next-generation firewall and revolutionizing the cybersecurity industry.



Zuk said he could step away because the original blueprint he drew 20 years earlier of a single, unified cybersecurity platform spanning every major defensive category an enterprise might need, was finally complete, [reports Calcalist](#), Israel's premier daily financial newspaper and online media platform.

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*Steve Morgan, founder of
Cybersecurity Ventures*

PAN's founder can retire in peace after his company announced its intention to acquire CyberArk for approximately \$25 billion, which added to a long list of acquisitions in Israel (and globally), joining the likes of

Talon Cyber Security and Dig Security, which were acquired for a combined \$1 billion in 2023,

according to Calcalist.

“Nir is a legend in cybersecurity, and his contributions are forever etched in our history books,” said PAN’s Chairman and CEO Nikesh Arora.

In a PAN [blog post](#) late last year, Zuk predicted that “The cybersecurity industry will experience tectonic shifts in 2025, unlike any we’ve seen in years past. These historic transformations will see the convergence of AI, data and platform unification, altogether changing how both cybersecurity defenders and attackers will operate and innovate.” In retrospect, Zuk was spot-on.

“Nir Zuk is a once-in-a-generation founder whose innovation has redefined cybersecurity and elevated the entire industry. His achievements will resonate for decades” said Richard Seewald, Founder & Managing Partner at Evolution Equity Partners, a prominent venture capital firm and lead investor in Talon Cyber Security and Protect AI, two companies who were acquired by PAN.

Prior to co-founding PAN, Zuk was CTO at NetScreen Technologies, which was acquired by Juniper Networks in 2004. Prior to NetScreen, Zuk was co-founder and CTO at OneSecure, a pioneer in intrusion prevention and detection appliances. Zuk was also a principal engineer at Check Point Software Technologies, and was one of the developers of stateful inspection technology.

“Nir Zuk is a hero, someone who young technologists and aspiring entrepreneurs look up to as a role model for what they might accomplish in the future,” said Steve Morgan, founder of Cybersecurity Ventures and Editor-in-Chief at Cybercrime Magazine. “He may not realize it, but in 2025 Zuk’s retirement announcement shined a light on the enormous opportunity that lies ahead for our next generation of cybersecurity leaders.”

Previous recipients of the “Cybersecurity Person of the Year” include: George Kurtz, CEO and Co-Founder of CrowdStrike (2024); General Paul Nakasone, commander, U.S. Cyber Command and director, National Security Agency/Chief, Central Security Service (2023); Claire O’Neill, Australia’s Minister for Cyber Security (2022); Jen Easterly, Director of (U.S.) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (2021); Dr. Ambareen Siraj, founder of WiCyS (Women In Cybersecurity) (2020); Craig Newmark, philanthropist and founder of craigslist (2019); and Sylvia Acevedo, rocket scientist and former CEO at Girl Scouts of the USA (2018).

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