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startups. The list of information security companies also includes RedSeal Systems; Reversing Labs; SafeWeb, now part of Symantec; Cleversafe; and Oculis.

In-Q-Tel's investments aren't limited to security, however. The company also has made investments in big-data-related companies such as Palentir and Cloudera and file-sharing and collaboration platforms such as Huddle. In-Q-Tel provided funding to biotechnology firms as well.

Amit Yoran, who served a brief stint as CEO of In-Q-Tel in 2006, said the firm is an invaluable way for the CIA to tap into the private sector for innovative technologies. Yoran also spent a year as director of the Department of Homeland Security's National Cyber Security Division, where he helped build out the capabilities of the United States Computer Emergency Response Team.

"Government procurement practices are challenging and In-Q-Tel is trying to get over the high walls of the intelligence community, which is even more challenging, to help identify startups with technologies that would never make their way into the government or the intelligence community through the typical procurement practices," Yoran said.

Yoran has a relatively long history in the security industry, having co-founded network security company RipTech, which was acquired by Symantec in 2002. He was CEO of NetWitness, which was acquired in 2011 by RSA, the Security Division of EMC, and is currently senior vice president and general manager of the security management and compliance business unit at RSA.

"In-Q-Tel is less about the investment. as the core to its mission is to find commercially available capabilities and help them make their way into the intelligence community," Yoran said.

The innovation brought on by the government and, more specifically, In-Q-Tel, fosters innovation across the entire security spectrum, said Jim Butterworth, a former intelligence official who currently serves as chief information security officer of HBGary, which provides incident response and malware analysis.

"They would rather find a commercial entity and throw money at it to develop it than have the government create a huge research lab and innovate on its own," Butterworth said. "I don't think these guys can develop and research like a free market can."

Butterworth pointed to advances in data analytics and the potential for combining threat data with business data for contextual awareness as one of the areas being fostered by In-Q-Tel funding and other federal sources with seed money. Advances in behavioral analysis and malware functionality also are receiving funding.

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