Lecture 28 – Web Security

Ryan Cunningham
University of Illinois
ECE 422/CS 461 – Fall 2017
Security News

- Tor Browser vulnerability “Tormoil” patched. Allowed leak of true IP address of users.
- Google patched vulnerability in bug tracking database. Allowed attackers to get access to unpatched vulns.
Security on the web

Risk #1: we want data stored on a web server to be protected from unauthorized access
Risk #2: we don’t want a malicious (or compromised) sites to be able to trash files/programs on our computers
Risk #3: we don’t want a malicious site to be able to spy on or tamper with my information or interactions with other websites
RISK #1 WEB SERVER SECURITY
Security on the web

• Risk #1: we want data stored on a web server to be protected from unauthorized access
• Defense: server-side system/network security
Code Injection

```
<?php
echo system("ls " . $_GET["path"});
```

GET /?path=/home/user/ HTTP/1.1

HTTP/1.1 200 OK
...
Desktop
Documents
Music
Pictures
Code Injection

```
<?php

echo system("ls " . $_GET["path"]);
```

GET /?path=$(rm -rf /) HTTP/1.1

```
<?php

echo system("ls $(rm -rf /")");
```
Code Injection

• Confusing **Data** and **Code**
  – Programmer thought user would supply data, but instead got (and unintentionally executed) code

• Common and dangerous class of vulnerabilities
  – Shell Injection
  – SQL Injection
  – Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)
  – Control-flow Hijacking (Buffer overflows)
SQL

- **Structured Query Language**
  - Language to ask ("query") databases questions:

- How many users live in Ann Arbor?
  
  "SELECT COUNT(*) FROM `users` WHERE location = 'Ann Arbor'"

- Is there a user with username "bob" and password "abc123"?
  
  "SELECT * FROM `users` WHERE username='bob' and password='abc123'"

- Burn it down!
  
  "DROP TABLE `users`"
SQL Injection

• Consider an SQL query where the attacker chooses $city$:

```
SELECT * FROM `users` WHERE location='\$city'
```

• What can an attacker do?

```$city = "Ann Arbor"; DELETE FROM `users` WHERE 1='1"
```

```
SELECT * FROM `users` WHERE location='Ann Arbor'; DELETE FROM `users` WHERE 1='1'
```
SQL Injection Defense

• Make sure **data** gets interpreted as **data**!
• Basic approach: escape control characters (single quotes, escaping characters, comment characters)
• Better approach: Prepared statements – declare what is data!

```php
$pstmt = $db->prepare(
   "SELECT * FROM `users` WHERE location=?";
$pstmt->execute(array($city)); // Data
```
Shellshock
a.k.a. Bashdoor / Bash bug
(Disclosed on Sep 24, 2014)

Acknowledgement: slides from Prof. Bruce Maggs
• First, need to understand:
  1. Bash shell
  2. CGI scripting
Bash Shell

• Released June 7, 1989.

• Unix shell providing built-in commands such as cd, pwd, echo, exec, builtin

• Platform for executing programs

• Can be scripted
Environment Variables

Environment variables can be set in the Bash shell, and are passed on to programs executed from Bash

`export VARNAME=“value”`

(use `printenv` to list environment variables)
Stored Bash Shell Script

• An executable text file that begins with
• #!program
• Tells bash to pass the rest of the file to program to be executed.

• Example:
  
  #!/bin/bash
  STR="Hello World!"
  echo $STR
Hello World! Example
Background

• First, need to understand:
  1. Bash shell
  2. CGI scripting
Dynamic Web Content Generation

- Web Server receives an HTTP request from a user
- Server runs a program to generate a response to the request
- Program output is sent to the browser
Common Gateway Interface (CGI)

- Oldest method of generating dynamic Web content (circa 1993, NCSA)

- Operator of a Web server designates a directory to hold scripts (typically PERL) that can be run on HTTP GET, PUT, or POST requests to generate output to be sent to browser.
CGI Input

PATH_INFO environment variable holds any path that appears in the HTTP request after the script name

QUERY_STRING holds key=value pairs that appear after ? (question mark)

Most HTTP headers passed as environment variables

In case of PUT or POST, user-submitted data provided to script via standard input
CGI Output

Anything the script writes to standard output (e.g., HTML content) is sent to the browser.
Example Script (Wikipedia)

Bash script that evokes PERL to print out environment variables

```perl
#!/usr/bin/perl

print "Content-type: text/plain\r\n\r\n";
for my $var ( sort keys %ENV ) {
    printf "\%s = \"%s\"\r\n", $var, $ENV{$var};
}

Put in file /usr/local/apache/htdocs/cgi-bin/printenv.pl

Accessed via http://example.com/cgi-bin/printenv.pl
Windows Web server running cygwin

http://example.com/cgi-bin/printenv.pl/foo/bar?var1=value1&var2=with%20percent%20encoding

DOCUMENT_ROOT="C:/Program Files (x86)/Apache Software Foundation/Apache2.2/htdocs"
GATEWAY_INTERFACE="CGI/1.1"
HOME="/home/SYSTEM"
HTTP_ACCEPT="text/html,application/xhtml+xml,application/xml;q=0.9,*/*;q=0.8"
HTTP_ACCEPT_CHARSET="ISO-8859-1,utf-8;q=0.7,*;q=0.7"
HTTP_ACCEPT_ENCODING="gzip, deflate"
HTTP_ACCEPT_LANGUAGE="en-us,en;q=0.5"
HTTP_CONNECTION="keep-alive"
HTTP_HOST="example.com"
HTTP_USER_AGENT="Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; WOW64; rv:5.0) Gecko/20100101 Firefox/5.0"
PATH="/home/SYSTEM/bin:/bin:/cygdrive/c/progra~2/php:/cygdrive/c/windows/syst em32:...
PATH_INFO="/foo/bar"
QUERY_STRING="var1=value1&var2=with%20percent%20encoding"
Background

• First, need to understand:
  1. Bash shell
  2. CGI scripting
Shellshock Vulnerability

Bash function definitions are passed as environment variables that begin with ()

Error in environment variable parser executes “garbage” after function definition.
Example

```
Bruce@Maggs-PC ~
$ export X="() { ::}; echo vulnerable"

Bruce@Maggs-PC ~
$ bash -c "echo hello"
vulnerable
hello

Bruce@Maggs-PC ~
$ |
```
Crux of the Problem

• Any environment variable can contain a function definition that the Bash parser will execute before it can process any other commands.

• Environment variables can be inherited from other parties, who can thus inject code that Bash will execute.
Web Server Exploit

Send Web Server an HTTP request for a script with an HTTP header such as HTTP_USER_AGENT set to

'() { ::}; echo vulnerable'

When the Bash shell runs the script it will evaluate the environment variable HTTP_USER_AGENT and run the echo command

curl -H "User-Agent: () { :: }; echo vulnerable"
http://example.com/
RISK #2 BROWSER/CLIENT SECURITY
Security on the web

• Risk #2: we don’t want a malicious (or compromised) sites to be able to trash files/programs on our computers
  – Browsing to awesomevids.com (or evil.com) should not infect my computer with malware, read or write files on my computer, etc.

• Defense: Javascript is sandboxed; try to avoid security bugs in browser code; privilege separation; automatic updates; etc.
The Ghost In The Browser Analysis of Web-based Malware

Niels Provos
Dean McNamee
Panayiotis Mavrommatis
KeWang
Nagendra Modadugu
Introduction

• Internet essential for everyday life: ecommerce, etc.
• Malware used to steal bank accounts or credit cards
  – underground economy is very profitable
• Internet threats are changing:
  – remote exploitation and firewalls are yesterday
• Browser is a complex computation environment
• Adversaries exploit browser to install malware
Introduction

• To compromise your browser, we need to compromise a web server you visit
• Very easy to set up new site on the Internet
• Very difficult to keep new site secure
  – insecure infrastructure: Php, MySql, Apache
  – insecure web applications: phpBB2, Invision, etc.
Detecting Malicious Websites

• Malicious website automatically installs malware on visitor’s computer
  – usually via exploits in the browser or other software on the client (without user consent)

• Authors use Google’s infrastructure to analyze several billion URLs
Detecting Malicious Websites

- Web Page Repository
- MapReduce Heuristical URL Extraction
- Virtual Machine (Internet Explorer)
- Monitor Execution Analysis
- Malicious Page Repository

URL → Result
Processing Rate

• The VM gets about 300,000 suspicious URLs daily
• About 10,000 to 30,000 are malicious
Content Control

• what constitutes the content of a web page?
  – authored content
  – user-contributed content
  – advertising
  – third-party widgets

• ceding control to 3rd party could be a security risk
Web Server Security

• compromise web server and change content directly
  – many vulnerabilities in web applications, apache itself, stolen passwords
  – templating system

<!-- Copyright Information -->
<div align='center' class='copyright'>Powered by
<a href="http://www.invisionboard.com">Invision Power Board</a>(U)
v1.3.1 Final &copy; 2003 &nbsp;
<a href='http://www.invisionpower.com'>IPS, Inc.</a></div>
</div>
<iframe src='http://wsfgdgrtyhgfd.net/adv/193/new.php'></iframe>
<iframe src='http://wsfgdgrtyhgfd.net/adv/new.php?adv=193'></iframe>
Advertising

- by definition means ceding control of content to another party
- web masters have to trust advertisers
- sub-syndication allows delegation of advertising space
- trust is not transitive
- “malvertising”
Third-Party Widgets

• to make sites prettier or more useful:
  – calendaring or stats counter

• search for praying mantis
  – linked to free stats counter in 2002 via Javascript
  – Javascript started to compromise users in 2006

http://expl.info/cgi-bin/ie0606.cgi?homepage
http://expl.info/demo.php
http://expl.info/cgi-bin/ie0606.cgi?type=MS03-11&SP1
http://expl.info/ms0311.jar
http://expl.info/cgi-bin/ie0606.cgi?exploit=MS03-11
http://dist.info/f94msIrfum67dh/winus.exe
Malware Trends and Statistics

• Avoiding detection
  – obfuscating the exploit code itself
  – distributing binaries across different domains
  – continuously re-packing the binaries
Exploiting Software

• To install malware **automatically** when a user visits a web page, an adversary can choose to exploit flaws in either the **browser** or automatically launched **external programs** and **extensions**.
  – i.e., drive-by-download

• Example (of Microsoft’s Data Access Components)
  – The exploit is delivered to a user’s browser via an **iframe** on a compromised web page.
  – The iframe contains **Javascript** to instantiate an **ActiveX** object that is not normally safe for scripting.
  – The Javascript makes an **XMLHTTP** request to retrieve an executable.
  – Adodb.stream is used to **write** the executable **to disk**.
  – A Shell.Application is used to **launch** the newly written executable.
Tricking the User

• A common example are sites that display thumbnails to adult videos

• Clicking on a thumbnail causes a page resembling the Windows Media Player plug-in to load. The page asks the user to download and run a special “codec”

• This “codec” is really a malware binary. By pretending that its execution grants access to pornographic material, the adversary tricks the user into accomplishing what would otherwise require an exploitable vulnerability
Malware Classifications
Remotely Linked Exploits

- Exploits are leveraged across many sites
- Popular exploits are linked from over 10,000 URLs