# Sniffing overview

• Capturing data packets on a network using a program or a device.

## **Networking concepts**

### Network adapter

- Can enable Wi-Fi (wireless, WLAN) and Ethernet (wired, LAN) connection.
- Can be a **NIC** (Network interface card)
  - Physical card that connects to an expansion slot in a computer
- Modern systems has usually an integrated network adapter (e.g. on motherboard).
- As default it discards messages that's not destined to it
  - See promiscuous mode for the opposite behavior.

#### Promiscuous mode

- Allows sniffing the packets after connecting to an access point
- Provided interface controller pass all traffic it receives, rather than only destined ones.
- Works on both wired and wireless connections
- See also libpcap | Sniffing tools Turning on promiscuous mode | Wireshark

#### Monitor mode

- Allows sniffing the packets in the air without connecting (associating) with any access point.
- Wireless connection only

## **Sniffing types**

## Passive sniffing

- Does not require any packets to be sent
- Monitors and captures incoming packets
- Used in networks which use hubs i.e. shared ethernets
  - o A hub forwards every frame to all ports but the sources filters

### **Active sniffing**

- Require a packet to have a source and destination addresses in order to be sent to its destination
- Used in networks which use switches i.e. switched ethernets
  - A switch maps MAC addresses into ports, based on source addresses
  - o A switch operates at data link layer (2) to forward data to MAC addresses
    - Some switches can run on network layer (3) with additional routing functionality.
      - Also known as layer-3 switches, or multilayer switches.
- E.g.
  - o Port mirroring where each packet is also sent to a port that attacker listens to
  - Lawful interception where electronic surveillance on a target is authorized by a judicial or administrative order.

#### Port mirroring

- Used on a network switch
- Sends copy of network packets seen on one switch port (or an entire VLAN) to another port
- Often used in Intrusion Detection Systems.
- Also known as span port
  - o In Cisco system, it's commonly referred as Switched Port Analyzer (SPAN)
- See also STP attack for an exploitation

## Sniffer

- Packet sniffing programs
- Designed to capture packets that contain information such as passwords, router configuration, traffic.
- Works at data link layer (2) of the OSI model where MAC addresses work
  - It may then translate frames to higher level packets.
- Allows attackers to access the network traffic from a single point.
- Turns the network adapter into promiscuous mode or monitor mode

## Wiretapping

- Also known as telephone tapping or wire tapping
- Monitoring of telephone and Internet-based conversations by a third party.
- Legal wiretapping by a government agency is also called lawful interception (LI)
- Active wiretapping: Alters communication by e.g. interjecting something.
- Passive wiretapping: Only monitors or records the traffic.
- SA wiretaps Internet going through using out-of-band signaling with their tool called PRISM

- Out-of-band vs In-band signaling
  - o In-Band signaling: Method where signalling is sent over the voice/data circuit.
  - **Out-of-band signaling**: Data transmission through different channels (or frequencies) than normal ones.

## **Sniffing countermeasures**

- Restrict the physical access to the network media
- Encryption is, by far, the best option.
  - E.g. SSH instead of Telnet Secure Copy (SCP) instead of FTP SSL for email connection •
    HTTPS instead of HTTP SFTP instead of FTP WPA2 or WPA3 for wireless traffic
  - See also encrypting communication
- If Use Access Control Lists (ACLs) on router/firewall to only allow authorized devices/IP ranges.
- Permanently add the MAC address of the gateway to the ARP cache.
- Use static IP addresses and static ARP tables
- Use switch instead of hub as switch delivers data only to the intended recipient.
- Use PGP and S/MIPE VPN IPSec SSL/TLS Secure Shell (SSH) One-time passwords (OTP).
- Retrieve MAC directly from NIC instead of OS to prevent MAC address spoofing.
- Use tools to determine if any NICs are running in the promiscuous mode.

# **Sniffing tools**

- Also known as sniffer packet analyzer protocol analyzer network analyzer
- Protonly used for hacking but also for troubleshooting by e.g. system administrators

## Cain and Abel

- Also known as Cain & Abel or Cain
- Recovery of various kind of passwords by sniffing the network
- Can also do
  - ARP poisoning
  - sniffing
  - recording VoIP conversations
  - o password cracking with e.g. dictionary attacks, brute-force etc.
- See also Cain and Abel | Wireless threats and attacks Cain and Abel | Web server threats and attacks • ARP poisoning attack steps | ARP poisoning

## libpcap

- Packet capture library for Linux/macOS
  - See Turning on promiscuous mode for Windows alternatives
- Used by most sniffers including Wireshark Snort tcpdump TCPflow Cain and Abel
   Kismet Nmap
- Maintained and developed by tcpdump

## **TCPflow**

- Open-source TCP/IP packet demultiplexer.
- Stores data in a way that makes it convenient for debugging and analysis
- Like tcpdump however, separate files for each direction are created, making things easier to read.
- Uses libpcap

## tcpdump

- Proceed to Show all TCP traffic from all interfaces live.
- Built-in for all Unix systems, has a Windows clone called WinDump
- Developed and maintains libpcap
- See man page | tcpdump.org

## Wireshark

- Also known as **Ethereal** (old name)
- **Transport** tshark: Terminal-based Wireshark like tcpdump
- Can be started from Window managers or command line

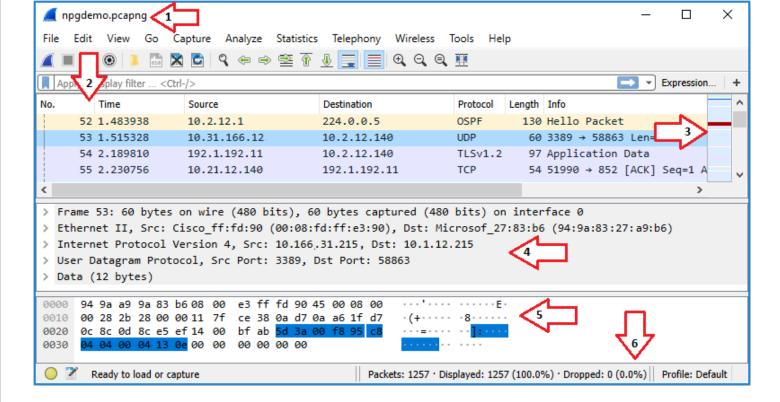
## Turning on promiscuous mode

- Allows capturing all traffic, see Promiscuous mode | Sniffing
- On Linux/macOS it's done through libpcap
- On Windows a driver is required:
  - o npcap: Driver from Nmap developers
  - WinPcap: Discontinued driver
  - AirPcap: Obsolete, propriety USB dongle used when there was no open-source Windows driver

### Wireshark non-root installation

- Running wireshark as root is not safest
  - You're receiving traffic from an unknown location
  - o If anything goes wrong, people can gain root access
- Install wireshark by e.g. apt-get install wireshark-gtk (varies by OS)
- usermod -a -G wireshark <user-name> to install it as non-root user
  - Adds wireshark to user account.





#### 1. Title Bar

- Shows the name of the interface you're capturing until you save your capture
- Then it shows the name of the capture dump

#### 2. Packet List Pane

- You can add/remove/reorder columns
- Selecting a packet will show more details in the Packet Details Pane and Packet Bytes Pane

#### 3. Intelligent Scrollbar

- Mini-map of packets
- o Depends on the height of the list and your physical display's specifications.

#### 4. Packet Details Pane

- Displays protocol fields
- Generated Fields
  - Enclosed in brackets ([ ])
  - Contains info such as TCP analysis, response time, checksum validation, and IP geolocation.

#### Links

- Wireshark will generate a link if it detects relationships between packets.
- Formatted blue with an underline.
- Double-clicking on the link will jump you to the related packet.

#### 5. Packet Bytes Pane

- Hexdump style with each line displaying the data offset
  - 16 hexadecimal bytes, and 16 ASCII bytes

#### 6. The Statusbar

Informational messages

## Wireshark filtering

• Capture filters (like tcp port 80) are not to be confused with display filters (like tcp.port == 80)

#### **Display filters**

- Control which packets are displayed
- Uses search and match operators such as contains and matches
  - E.g. http contains hello : TCP packets containing string "hello"
- Uses search comparisons
  - Such as
    - Equal: eq | ==
    - Not equal: ne | !=
    - Greater than: gt | >
    - Less than: 1t | <
    - Greater than or equal to: ge | >=
    - Less than or equal to: le | <=
  - ∘ **?** E.g.
    - tcp.port eq 21 or ssh : show only FTP (port 21) or SSH traffic.
    - ip.addr == 192.168.1.1 : examine all traffic from and to 192.168.1.1 s

#### Capture filters

- Also known as PCAP filters
- Same syntax as tcpdump or any other application using libpcap
- Much more limited than display filters
- Reduce the size of a raw packet capture, set before capturing
- E.g.
  - Only from traffic to / from specific host: host 172.18.5.4
  - Only from a range of IP addresses: src net 192.168.0.0/24

## **Kismet**

- Kismet is an open-source wireless network and device detector, passive network sniffer, wardriving tool, and WIDS (Wireless Intrusion Detection system) framework.
- Can export in a compatible format for
  - o cracking with aircrack-ng for deep packet analysis with a tool like Wireshark / tshark.
- Kismet can discover wireless networks that are not sending beacon frames.
  - Even if the security admin turns beaconing off (so no one can supposedly search for the SSIDs)

### Kismet vs Wireshark

- Both looks at the contents of the packets and decodes them but presents them differently
  - o Wireshark is packet oriented: digs into specifics of each packet
  - Kismet is device oriented: more device details, association with client.
- Both are passive-monitoring tools i.e. works without sending any loggable packets.
- Kismet is Wi-Fi only while Wireshark can also sniff on wired networks.

## Mobile tools

- Wi.cap. Network Sniffer Pro for Android
- FaceNiff for Android (rooted only)
- PacketCapture for android

# Sniffing attacks overview

- Spoofing attacks
- ARP posioning

## **MAC** flooding

#### **MAC**

- MAC address is a unique identifier of a network node.
- E.g. 52:54:00:e5:83:bb
  - First three sets (52:54:00): Manufacturers signature
  - Last three sets is set in different ways depending on manufacturers
- Embedded in the device (firmware or some read-only part of the device)
- In a network, each device has its own MAC address
  - o Associates the device with a physical port
- If your MAC address is logged, police can use it to contact the manufacturer to ask who purchased the device.
  - Difficult to trace it if it was paid by cash.
- P P You may have free WiFi forever if you can change your MAC address.
  - o Usually checked in public places e.g. in an airport when they give you free WiFi.

### Content Addressable Memory (CAM) table

- Used by switches
- Stores all available MAC addresses and their virtual LAN parameters for each port.
- Possible to sniff by flooding it.

### MAC flooding attack

- Flooding the switch with thousands of MAC address mappings such that it cannot keep up.
  - When the table can't keep up it starts sending every message out to every port.
  - I.e. switch is forced to behave as a hub.
- Allowed by the fixed size of the CAM table.
- Steps:
  - i. Send large number of fake MAC addresses to the switch until CAM table becomes full

- ii. Switch enters fail-open mode
  - where it broadcasts the incoming traffic to all ports on the network
- iii. Attacker (with promiscuous mode) starts sniffing the traffic passing through the network.
- Can be followed up using ARP spoofing to retain access to data after switches recover.
- See also MAC spoofing

### **DHCP** attacks

#### **DHCP** introduction

- DHCP: Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol
- Client/server protocol
- Used by routers as they start a DHCP server
- Server provides following to DHCP-enabled clients:
  - o IP addresses
  - Configuration information
  - o Time period of the lease offer
- A possible way to drop connection of others in network is to brute-force DHCP server with "returning lease" messages.
  - o It'll force everybody to lose connection and request IP addresses again

### **DHCP** snooping

- Layer 2 security feature
- Built into operating system of a capable network switches
- Filters, rate-limits suspicious DHCP traffic
- Builds and maintains the DHCP snooping binding database
  - Also known as DHCP snooping binding table
  - Stores MAC + assigned IP + VLAN and switch ports
  - Uses to validate subsequent requests from untrusted hosts.
- Dynamic ARP Inspection (DAI)
  - Defense against too many incoming ARP broadcasts.
  - o Each port on VLAN is untrusted by default
  - Each IP to MAC conversion is validated using DHCP snooping binding database.

### **DHCP** starvation

- Exhaust all available addresses from the server
- Exploits that DHCP has a limited number of ip addresses to lease.
- A type of Denial of Service attack
- Flow

- i. Starve it, and no new clients will be able to connect
  - a. Attacker broadcasts large number of DHCP REQUEST messages with spoofed source MAC addresses.
  - b. Available IP addresses in the DHCP server scope becomes depleted.
  - c. DHCP server becomes unable to allocate configurations to new clients and issue any IP addresses
- ii. Set-up rogue (fake server) to respond to the discovery requests
  - a. Attacker sets up a roque DHCP server to respond to DHCP discovery requests.
  - b. If a client accepts the rogue server as its DHCP server, then the attacker can listen to all traffic going from or to the client.
- Tools
  - o yersinia
    - Start UI using yersinia -G then click on "Start attack"
  - o DHCPstary

#### **DHCP** starvation countermeasures

- Authentication
- Configure DHCP snooping
- Trusted sources
  - Vulnerable to mimicing them

#### Port security

- Allows traffic from a specific MAC address to enter to a port
- Only allowing one MAC through a port
- Only one IP at a time can be requested
- Vulnerable to spoofing MAC addresses

## **DNS** poisoning

#### **DNS** introduction

- Domain Name Server
- Protocol that resolves domain names into IP addresses using default port 53.
- Stores domain name and IP address pairs in a DNS table.

## DNS poisoning attack

- Also known as DNS cache poisoning and DNS spoofing
- Manipulating the DNS table by replacing a legitimate IP address with a malicious one
  - E.g. redirecting cloudarchitecture.io to attackers IP address.

- Used for internet censorship in many countries.
- Flow
  - i. Attacker makes DNS request to target
  - ii. DNS server asks the root name server for the entry
  - iii. Attacker floods the DNS server with a fake response for the targeted domain until legitimate response from root server is ignored
  - iv. The poisoned entry remains in cache for hours and even days
- Can be used after ARP poisoning through DNS spoof plugin of Ettercap.
- Can be followed up with e.g. man-in-the-middle attacks website defacement attacks

### **DNS** poisoning countermeasures

- Active monitoring
  - Monitor DNS data for new patterns such as new host
  - E.g. by using intrusion detection system (IDS)
- Keep DNS servers up-to-date
  - Updated versions have port randomization and cryptographically secure transaction IDs against attackers.
- Randomize source and destination IP, query IDs, during name requests
  - Makes harder for attackers to send spoofed responses as it'd be harder to guess the address and query ID.
- Use HTTPS and/or TLS for securing the traffic
  - Also known as DNS over HTTPS (DoH) and DNS over TLS (DoT)
  - SSL and TLS use certificates to verify the identity of the other party.
  - So although they do not protect against cache poisoning itself, the certificates help to protect against the results

### **DNSSEC (Domain Name System Security Extension)**

- Developed by The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF)
  - o Open standards organization, which develops and promotes voluntary Internet standards
- Help verifying the true originator of DNS messaging
- Provides secure DNS data authentication by using digital signatures and encryption.
  - o Adds cryptographic signatures to existing DNS records, stored in DNS name servers.
- Widely considered one of the greatest cache poisoning prevention tool as a defense
- Allows verifying that a requested DNS record comes from its authoritative name server and wasn't altered, opposed to a fake record injected in a man-in-the-middle attack.
- Chain of trust: E.g. cloudarchitecture.io 's signature is verified by .io signature that is verified by root certificate (signed by IANA)
  - IANA: Centrally coordinates Internet for DNS Root, IP addressing, and other Internet protocol resources.

## **VLAN** hopping

#### **VLAN**

- | Allows multiple separate LANs/networks on same switch through logical grouping
- Provides network separation
  - Hosts one one VLAN does not see hosts on other one
- Port-based VLAN
  - i. Designate set of ports on the switch
    - account department VLAN, shipping department VLAN...
  - ii. Connect devices to right ports each group is a VLAN
- Tag-based VLAN aka IEEE 802.1q VLANs
  - Basically a tags frames with which VLAN it belongs to
    - Frame = Primitive packet on layer 2
  - Tagged frame = IEEE 802.1q frame
  - Can tag/assign based on e.g. 802.1x
- Trunk (=802.1q link)
  - Allows sharing VLANs (VLAN IDs) between switches

### **VLAN** hopping attack

- Attacking host on a VLAN to gain access to traffic on other VLANs
- E.g. using Frogger
- Switch spoofing
  - Attacking host imitates a trunking switch
- Double tagging
  - o Attacker prepends two VLAN tags to frames
  - Second tag is the target host
  - o First switch removes first innocent VLAN tag and sends packet to second switch.
  - Allows bypassing security mechanisms and reaching the target hosts.
  - o Replies are not forwarded to the attacker host

## **OSPF** attacks

- Forms a trusted relationship with the adjacent router
- Usually these attacks go undetected
- Remote attacks: caused by misconfigurations

## **OSPF: Open Shortest Path First**

Most popular routing protocol for IP networks

- Dynamically discovers neighbors like RIPv2 and BPG (Border Gateway Protocol)
- Used by e.g. internet service providers (ISP) and cloud providers for hybrid communication

## Compromised router attacks

- Placing a rogue router in target network e.g. remote branch/headquarters
- Allows attacker to inject routes to redirect traffic for MITM attacks or DoS attacks.
- Attacker learns about that entire routing domain such network types, links etc

#### **OSPF** attacks countermeasures

- Configure OSPF to authenticate every OSPF message
  - o Routers must pass the authentication process before becoming OSPF neighbors.
- Monitor OSPF neighbors for eavesdropping through e.g. a SIEM

# Spoofing attacks

- Entails changing a computer's identity
- Allow the bypassing of access control lists on servers or routers
- Allows hiding a device on network by impersonating another network device / system.

## IP address spoofing

- Used most commonly in DDoS attacks.
- Helps with overcoming authentication based on IP addresses
  - Usually in corporate networks where trust between devices exists
  - E.g. accessing intranet without any password.
- The response is sent to the spoofed IP address instead of the spoofer.

## IP address spoofing countermeasures

- Packet filtering by a gateway
  - o Ingress: block packets from outside of the network having an IP address within the network.
  - Egress: block outgoing packets from inside with a source address that is not inside
- Opening network protocols and services so that they do not rely on the source IP address for authentication.
- Sequence number
  - Used by upper layer TCP
  - Negotiated to ensure that arriving packets are part of an established connection.
  - Must be guessed in order to hijack the connection

## **MAC** spoofing

- Response is received to spoofing party as opposed to IP address spoofing
- See also MAC | MAC flooding | Sniffing attacks

## MAC spoofing use-cases

- New hardware for existing Internet Service Providers (ISP) where ISP charges per device.
- Fulfilling software requirements where one software can only be installed on a single device.

- Identity masking for pushing responsibility for other users.
- MAC address randomization: Implemented in Android, Linux, iOS, and Windows to prevent third parties from using the MAC address to track devices

## MAC spoofing attack

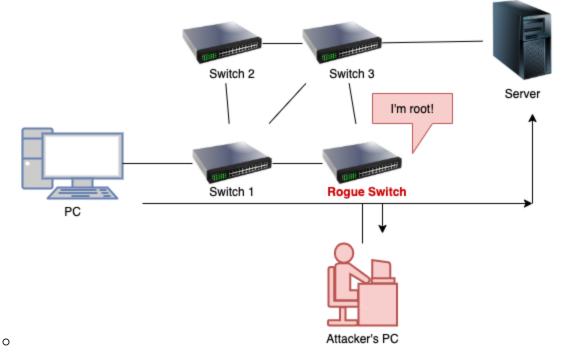
- Flow
  - i. Attacker sniffs the network for MAC addresses of legitimate users
  - ii. Spoofs one of those addresses
  - iii. The attacker receives the traffic intended for that user
- Effective against MAC filtering
- E.g. using ifconfig
  - i. ifconfig to get name of network interface e.g. eth0
  - ii. ifconfig eth0 down to deactivate it to be able to change it (will lose connection)
  - iii. ifconfig eth0 hw ether 88:88:88:88:88 to change the MAC address
  - iv. ifconfig eth0 up to change the MAC address
- E.g. using macchanger
  - o -r to get a random MAC address e.g. macchanger -r eth0
  - o -m set specify MAC address manually to pretend to be someone else

## STP spoofing

- STP: Spanning tree protocol
  - Layer 2 link management protocol
  - Provides path redundancy while preventing loops in the network
- Allows intercepting traffic when attacker emulates a device with a (lower) root switch identifier

## STP spoofing attack

- Also known as *STP manipulation attack*, *STP attack* or *STP root role attack*.
- Flow
  - i. Attacker introduces a roque switch
  - ii. Switch advertises superior BPDUs to force a STP recalculation
    - BPDU = Bridge Protocol Data Units (BPDUs)
      - Frames that contain information about STP that's between exchanged switches
  - iii. Rouge router becomes elected as root switch
    - All the traffic will cross this switch giving the attacker possibility to sniff all traffic in the company



Allows for

#### DoS attacks

- Recalculation of STP have interruption on the system as the root bridge changes
- Just sending BPDU messages would be enough as becoming root is not needed.

#### MITM attacks

- Also known as dual-homing (dual-homed)
- Attacker uses two interfaces, one to win the root other to send data to the attacker.
- Attacker can configure one of the switch ports as a SPAN port to receive copy of the traffic.

#### Mitigations

- Enable Root Guard to not forward traffic to port with superior BPDUs
- Enable BPDU Guard to enforce the STP domain borders.

## IRDP spoofing

- IRDP: ICMP Router Discovery Protocol
  - Protocol for computer hosts to discover routers on their IPv4 local area network.
  - ICMP router discovery messages are called "Router Advertisements" or "Router Solicitations"
- Vulnerable as it does not have any validation
- Attacker needs to be in the same network as the victim.
- Attacker adds bad route entries into a victim's routing table redirecting victim traffic to malicious address.
- Allows
  - Passive sniffing through rerouting victim machine to attacker machine
  - Man-in-the-middle where attacker acts as proxy
  - o DoS by flooding wrong entries

## • Countermeasures

- o Disable IRDP
- Use digital signatures
- o Block all type 9 and type 10 ICMP packets.

# **ARP** poisoning

### **ARP**

- ARP stands for "Address Resolution Protocol"
- In charge of resolving IP addresses to MAC addresses
- Can be used for obtaining MAC addresses of devices on the network
- Packets are ARP\_REQUEST and ARP\_REPLY
- Commands
  - o arp -a: displays current ARP cache
  - o arp -d \* : clears ARP cache

#### **ARP** table

- Used to map MAC addresses to ip addresses
- Every network interface has its own ARP table
- If no ARP entry exist:
  - i. Computer A broadcasts an APR request in network asking for the MAC address from a specific IP.
  - ii. Computer B replies its MAC and IP address
  - iii. Computer A inserts it to its ARP table for future use

## ARP poisoning attack

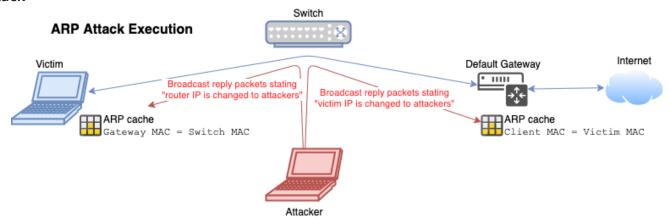
- Also known as ARP spoofing ARP spoofing ARP cache poisoning ARP poison routing ARP cache flooding ARP flooding.
- Man in the middle attack between the victim and switch.
- Floods the target machines ARP cache with forged requests and responses.
- Exploits ARP not verifying the device authenticity
- If ARP cache becomes full, different behaviors can be observed depending on the manufacturer/implementation:
  - May force switch to operates in fail-safe mode
    - Behaves as a hub i.e. sends packets to every to all hosts
    - Same behavior is also seen in MAC flooding

- In Linux it may:
  - Drop the oldest / most stale entry from the table (by garbage collector)
  - Reject new entries

## ARP poisoning attack steps

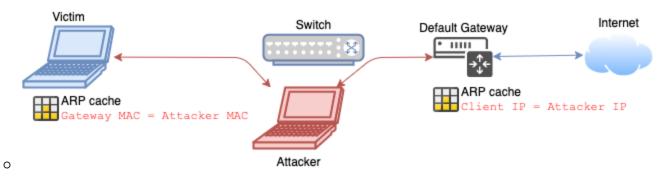
- 1. Gather information
  - i. Get victim IP address, e.g. 192.168.122.183
    - E.g. through host discovery using nmap e.g. nmap -sn 192.168.0.0/24
  - ii. Get default gateway IP, e.g. 192.168.122.1
    - Usually IP of the machine ending with .1
    - Usually same for everyone on same network
    - Default gateway is the forwarding host (router) to internet when no other specification matches the destination IP address of a packet.
- 2. Enable forwarding mode to sniff the traffic
  - echo 1 > /proc/sys/net/ipv4/ip\_forward in Linux.
  - Otherwise no traffic is going through and you're just DOSing.

#### 3. Attack



- Deceive the victim device through flooding ARP reply packets to it.
  - Change gateways MAC address is to the attackers
- Ise an ARP spoofing tool e.g.
  - arpspoof
    - arpspoof -t <victim-machine-ip> <default-gateway-ip>
    - arpspoof -t <default-gateway-ip> <victim-machine-ip>
  - ettercap
    - Also sniffs passwords automatically
    - ettercap -NaC <default-gateway-ip> <victim-machine-ip>
      - N: make it non-interactive
      - a : arp posion
      - c: parse out passwords and usernames.
  - Cain and Abel (Cain & Abel) on Windows

#### After ARP spoofing



#### 4. Sniff

- Now you sniff the traffic between two devices.
  - If through HTTPS & SSL you can only see basic data such as User Agent and domain names.
- Can use e.g. wireshark or dsniff

## ARP poisoning attack countermeasures

- Configure DHCP snooping
- Add static IP-MAC entries to the cache.
  - Then it will not process any ARP Replies received unlike a dynamic ARP cache.
- Use Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS)

## ARP poisoning countermeasures

- ARP spoofing detection and prevention
  - Relies on some form of certification or cross-checking of ARP responses
  - o Can be implemented on individual hosts, hypervisors or switches
  - E.g. DHCP snooping feature on switch OS can activate **Dynamic ARP Inspection** with an internal database.
  - Not possible if any host holds a static IP, and static ARP entries must be used.
- Static ARP entries
  - Manually mapping IP addresses to MAC addresses (maintaining ARP entries)
  - A lot of administrative overhead
  - Provides only basic security
- OS security
  - Linux ignores unsolicited replies, behavior can often be configured in other OSes