

HTML Injection Attack

HTML Injection

- When hosting static pages
 - You control all the content
 - Limited opportunity for attackers
- When hosting user-submitted content
 - You lose that control
 - Must protect against attacks
 - **Never trust your users!!**

Never Trust Your Users!

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Seriously. NEVER.

Never Trust Your Users

- You may want to think your users will all act in good faith
 - For most users, this may be true
- Besides your intended users, who else can access your app?

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- You may want to think your users will all act in good faith
 - For most users, this may be true
- Besides your intended users, who else can access your app?
 - EVERYONE!

Never Trust Your Users

- Do you trust **literally everyone**??

HTML Injection

- You are now handling user data and sending it to other users
- You're building a form that accepts user data and serves it to all other users
- What happens when a user enters this:
 - "<script>maliciousFunction()</script>"

HTML Injection

- "<script>maliciousFunction()</script>"
- This attack is called an HTML injection attack
 - This string is uploaded to your server
 - Your server stores this string
 - Your server sends this string to all users who use your app
 - Their browsers render the injected HTML
 - Their browsers runs the injected JS

HTML Injection

- To prevent this attack:
 - Escape HTML when handling user submitted data
- Escape HTML
 - Replace &, <, and > with their HTML escaped characters
 - '&' -> &
 - '<' -> <
 - '>' -> >

HTML Injection

- The escaped characters & < > will be rendered as characters by the browser
- Browser does not treat these as HTML

HTML Injection

- Replace &, <, and > with their HTML escaped characters
- `<script>maliciousFunction()</script>`
 - becomes
- `<script>maliciousFunction()</script>`
 - and is rendered as a string instead of interpreted as HTML

HTML Injection

- Replace &, <, and > with their HTML escaped characters
- Order is important!
 - Always escape & first
 - If & is escaped last you'll get:
- `&lt;script&gt;maliciousFunction()&lt;/script&gt;`
- Which will not render the way you intended

Demos