Use SMB signing to enhance network security

ONTAP 9

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Table of Contents

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Use SMB signing to enhance network security overview

SMB signing helps to ensure that network traffic between the SMB server and the client is not compromised; it does this by preventing replay attacks. By default, ONTAP supports SMB signing when requested by the client. Optionally, the storage administrator can configure the SMB server to require SMB signing.

How SMB signing policies affect communication with a CIFS server

In addition to the CIFS server SMB signing security settings, two SMB signing policies on Windows clients control the digital signing of communications between clients and the CIFS server. You can configure the setting that meets your business requirements.

Client SMB policies are controlled through Windows local security policy settings, which are configured by using the Microsoft Management Console (MMC) or Active Directory GPOs. For more information about client SMB signing and security issues, see the Microsoft Windows documentation.

Here are descriptions of the two SMB signing policies on Microsoft clients:

- `Microsoft network client: Digitally sign communications (if server agrees)`

  This setting controls whether the client's SMB signing capability is enabled. It is enabled by default. When this setting is disabled on the client, the client communications with the CIFS server depends on the SMB signing setting on the CIFS server.

- `Microsoft network client: Digitally sign communications (always)`

  This setting controls whether the client requires SMB signing to communicate with a server. It is disabled by default. When this setting is disabled on the client, SMB signing behavior is based on the policy setting for `Microsoft network client: Digitally sign communications (if server agrees)` and the setting on the CIFS server.

> If your environment includes Windows clients configured to require SMB signing, you must enable SMB signing on the CIFS server. If you do not, the CIFS server cannot serve data to these systems.

The effective results of client and CIFS server SMB signing settings depends on whether the SMB sessions uses SMB 1.0 or SMB 2.x and later.

The following table summarizes the effective SMB signing behavior if the session uses SMB 1.0:

Client	ONTAP—signing not required	ONTAP—signing required
Signing disabled and not required	Not signed	Signed

Client	ONTAP—signing not required	ONTAP—signing required
Signing enabled and not required	Not signed	Signed
Signing disabled and required	Signed	Signed
Signing enabled and required	Signed	Signed

Older Windows SMB 1 clients and some non-Windows SMB 1 clients might fail to connect if signing is disabled on the client but required on the CIFS server.

The following table summarizes the effective SMB signing behavior if the session uses SMB 2.x or SMB 3.0:

For SMB 2.x and SMB 3.0 clients, SMB signing is always enabled. It cannot be disabled.

Client	ONTAP—signing not required	ONTAP—signing required
Signing not required	Not signed	Signed
Signing required	Signed	Signed

The following table summarizes the default Microsoft client and server SMB signing behavior:

Protocol	Hash algorithm	Can enable/disable	Can require/not require	Client default	Server default	DC default
SMB 1.0	MD5	Yes	Yes	Enabled (not required)	Disabled (not required)	Required
SMB 2.x	HMAC SHA-256	No	Yes	Not required	Not required	Required
SMB 3.0	AES-CMAC.	No	Yes	Not required	Not required	Required

Microsoft no longer recommends using `Digitally sign communications (if client agrees)` or `Digitally sign communications (if server agrees)` Group Policy settings. Microsoft also no longer recommends using the `EnableSecuritySignature` registry settings. These options only affect the SMB 1 behavior and can be replaced by the `Digitally sign communications (always)` Group Policy setting or the `RequireSecuritySignature` registry setting. You can also get more information from the Microsoft Blog.http://blogs.technet.com/b/josebda/archive/2010/12/01/the-basics-of-smb-signing-covering-both-smb1-and-smb2.aspx[The Basics of SMB Signing (covering both SMB1 and SMB2)]

Performance impact of SMB signing

When SMB sessions use SMB signing, all SMB communications to and from Windows clients experience a performance impact, which affects both the clients and the server (that is, the nodes on the cluster running the SVM containing the SMB server).

The performance impact shows as increased CPU usage on both the clients and the server, although the amount of network traffic does not change.

The extent of the performance impact depends on the version of ONTAP 9 you are running. Beginning with ONTAP 9.7, a new encryption off-load algorithm can enable better performance in signed SMB traffic. SMB signing offload is enabled by default when SMB signing is enabled.

Enhanced SMB signing performance requires AES-NI offload capability. See the Hardware Universe (HWU) to verify that AES-NI offload is supported for your platform.

Further performance improvements are also possible if you are able to use SMB version 3.11 (supported with Windows 10 and Windows Server 2016), which supports the much faster GCM algorithm.

Depending on your network, ONTAP 9 version, SMB version, and SVM implementation, the performance impact of SMB signing can vary widely; you can verify it only through testing in your network environment.

Most Windows clients negotiate SMB signing by default if it is enabled on the server. If you require SMB protection for some of your Windows clients, and if SMB signing is causing performance issues, you can disable SMB signing on any of your Windows clients that do not require protection against replay attacks. For information about disabling SMB signing on Windows clients, see the Microsoft Windows documentation.

Recommendations for configuring SMB signing

You can configure SMB signing behavior between SMB clients and the CIFS server to meet your security requirements. The settings you choose when configuring SMB signing on your CIFS server are dependent on what your security requirements are.

You can configure SMB signing on either the client or the CIFS server. Consider the following recommendations when configuring SMB signing:

If…	Recommendation…
You want to increase the security of the communication between the client and the server	Make SMB signing required at the client by enabling the `Require Option (Sign always)` security setting on the client.
You want all SMB traffic to a certain storage virtual machine (SVM) signed	Make SMB signing required on the CIFS server by configuring the security settings to require SMB signing.

See Microsoft documentation for more information on configuring Windows client security settings.

Guidelines for SMB signing when multiple data LIFS are configured

If you enable or disable required SMB signing on the SMB server, you should be aware of the guidelines for multiple data LIFS configurations for an SVM.

When you configure a SMB server, there might be multiple data LIFs configured. If so, the DNS server contains multiple `A` record entries for the CIFS server, all using the same SMB server host name, but each with a unique IP address. For example, a SMB server that has two data LIFs configured might have the following DNS `A` record entries:

```
10.1.1.128 A VS1.IEPUB.LOCAL VS1
10.1.1.129 A VS1.IEPUB.LOCAL VS1
```

The normal behavior is that upon changing the required SMB signing setting, only new connections from clients are affected by the change in the SMB signing setting. However, there is an exception to this behavior. There is a case where a client has an existing connection to a share, and the client creates a new connection to the same share after the setting is changed, while maintaining the original connection. In this case, both the new and the existing SMB connection adopt the new SMB signing requirements.

Consider the following example:

1. Client1 connects to a share without required SMB signing using the path `O:\`.
2. The storage administrator modifies the SMB server configuration to require SMB signing.
3. Client1 connects to the same share with required SMB signing using the path `S:\` (while maintaining the connection using the path `O:\`).
4. The result is that SMB signing is used when accessing data over both the `O:\` and `S:\` drives.

Enable or disable required SMB signing for incoming SMB traffic

You can enforce the requirement for clients to sign SMB messages by enabling required SMB signing. If enabled, ONTAP accepts SMB messages only if they have valid signatures. If you want to permit SMB signing, but not require it, you can disable required SMB signing.

About this task

By default, required SMB signing is disabled. You can enable or disable required SMB signing at any time.

SMB signing is not disabled by default under the following circumstances:

1. Required SMB signing is enabled, and the cluster is reverted to a version of ONTAP that does not support SMB signing.
2. The cluster is subsequently upgraded to a version of ONTAP that supports SMB signing.

   Under these circumstances, the SMB signing configuration that was originally configured on a supported version of ONTAP is retained through reversion and subsequent upgrade.

When you set up a storage virtual machine (SVM) disaster recovery relationship, the value that you select for the `-identity-preserve` option of the `snapmirror create` command determines the configuration details that are replicated in the destination SVM.

If you set the `-identity-preserve` option to `true` (ID-preserve), the SMB signing security setting is replicated to the destination.

If you set the `-identity-preserve` option to `false` (non-ID-preserve), the SMB signing security setting is not replicated to the destination. In this case, the CIFS server security settings on the destination are set to the default values. If you have enabled required SMB signing on the source SVM, you must manually enable required SMB signing on the destination SVM.

Steps

1. Perform one of the following actions:

If you want required SMB signing to be…	Enter the command…
Enabled	`vserver cifs security modify -vserver` *`vserver_name`* `-is-signing-required true`
Disabled	`vserver cifs security modify -vserver` *`vserver_name`* `-is-signing-required false`

2. Verify that required SMB signing is enabled or disabled by determining whether the value in the `Is Signing Required` field in the output of the following command is set to the desired value: `vserver cifs security show -vserver` *`vserver_name`* `-fields is-signing-required`

Example

The following example enables required SMB signing for SVM vs1:

```
cluster1::> vserver cifs security modify -vserver vs1 -is-signing-required
true

cluster1::> vserver cifs security show -vserver vs1 -fields is-signing-
required
vserver  is-signing-required
-------- -------------------
vs1      true
```

Determine whether SMB sessions are signed

You can display information about connected SMB sessions on the CIFS server. You can use this information to determine whether SMB sessions are signed. This can be helpful in determining whether SMB client sessions are connecting with the desired security settings.

Steps

1. Perform one of the following actions:

If you want display information about…	Enter the command…
All signed sessions on a specified storage virtual machine (SVM)	`vserver cifs session show -vserver` *`vserver_name`* `-is-session-signed true`
Details for a signed session with a specific session ID on the SVM	`vserver cifs session show -vserver` *`vserver_name`* `-session-id integer -instance`

Examples

The following command displays session information about signed sessions on SVM vs1. The default summary output does not display the “Is Session Signed” output field:

```
cluster1::> vserver cifs session show -vserver vs1 -is-session-signed true
Node:    node1
Vserver: vs1
Connection Session                                    Open         Idle
ID         ID      Workstation      Windows User    Files        Time
---------- ------- ---------------- ------------- ------- ------------
3151272279 1       10.1.1.1         DOMAIN\joe          2          23s
```

The following command displays detailed session information, including whether the session is signed, on an SMB session with a session ID of 2:

```
cluster1::> vserver cifs session show -vserver vs1 -session-id 2 -instance
                        Node: node1
                     Vserver: vs1
                  Session ID: 2
               Connection ID: 3151274158
Incoming Data LIF IP Address: 10.2.1.1
                 Workstation: 10.1.1.2
    Authentication Mechanism: Kerberos
                Windows User: DOMAIN\joe
                   UNIX User: pcuser
                 Open Shares: 1
                  Open Files: 1
                  Open Other: 0
              Connected Time: 10m 43s
                   Idle Time: 1m 19s
           Protocol Version: SMB3
      Continuously Available: No
           Is Session Signed: true
       User Authenticated as: domain-user
                NetBIOS Name: CIFS_ALIAS1
       SMB Encryption Status: Unencrypted
```

Related information

Monitoring SMB signed session statistics

Monitor SMB signed session statistics

You can monitor SMB sessions statistics and determine which established sessions are signed and which are not.

About this task

The `statistics` command at the advanced privilege level provides the `signed_sessions` counter that you can use to monitor the number of signed SMB sessions. The `signed_sessions` counter is available with the following statistics objects:

- `cifs` enables you to monitor SMB signing for all SMB sessions.
- `smb1` enables you to monitor SMB signing for SMB 1.0 sessions.
- `smb2` enables you to monitor SMB signing for SMB 2.x and SMB 3.0 sessions.

> SMB 3.0 statistics are included in the output for the `smb2` object.

If you want to compare the number of signed session to the total number of sessions, you can compare output for the `signed_sessions` counter with the output for the `established_sessions` counter.

You must start a statistics sample collection before you can view the resultant data. You can view data from the

sample if you do not stop data collection. Stopping data collection gives you a fixed sample. Not stopping data collection gives you the ability to get updated data that you can use to compare against previous queries. The comparison can help you identify trends.

Steps

1. Set the privilege level to advanced: `set -privilege advanced`
2. Start a data collection: `statistics start -object {cifs|smb1|smb2} -instance instance -sample-id sample_ID [-node node_name]`

   If you do not specify the `-sample-id` parameter, the command generates a sample identifier for you and defines this sample as the default sample for the CLI session. The value for `-sample-id` is a text string. If you run this command during the same CLI session and do not specify the `-sample-id` parameter, the command overwrites the previous default sample.

   You can optionally specify the node on which you want to collect statistics. If you do not specify the node, the sample collects statistics for all nodes in the cluster.
3. Use the `statistics stop` command to stop collecting data for the sample.
4. View SMB signing statistics:

If you want to view information for…	Enter…
Signed sessions	`show -sample-id sample_ID -counter signed_sessions|node_name [-node node_name]`
Signed sessions and established sessions	`show -sample-id sample_ID -counter signed_sessions|established_sessions|node_name [-node node_name]`

   If you want to display information for only a single node, specify the optional `-node` parameter.
5. Return to the admin privilege level: `set -privilege admin`

Examples

The following example shows how you can monitor SMB 2.x and SMB 3.0 signing statistics on storage virtual machine (SVM) vs1.

The following command moves to the advanced privilege level:

```
cluster1::> set -privilege advanced

Warning: These advanced commands are potentially dangerous; use them only
when directed to do so by support personnel.
Do you want to continue? {y|n}: y
```

The following command starts data collection for a new sample:

```
cluster1::*> statistics start -object smb2 -sample-id smbsigning_sample
-vserver vs1
Statistics collection is being started for Sample-id: smbsigning_sample
```

The following command stops the data collection for the sample:

```
cluster1::*> statistics stop -sample-id smbsigning_sample
Statistics collection is being stopped for Sample-id: smbsigning_sample
```

The following command shows signed SMB sessions and established SMB sessions by node from the sample:

```
cluster1::*> statistics show -sample-id smbsigning_sample -counter
signed_sessions|established_sessions|node_name

Object: smb2
Instance: vs1
Start-time: 2/6/2013 01:00:00
End-time: 2/6/2013 01:03:04
Cluster: cluster1

    Counter                                                  Value
    -------------------------------- ------------------------
    established_sessions                                         0
    node_name                                                node1
    signed_sessions                                              0
    established_sessions                                         1
    node_name                                                node2
    signed_sessions                                              1
    established_sessions                                         0
    node_name                                                node3
    signed_sessions                                              0
    established_sessions                                         0
    node_name                                                node4
    signed_sessions                                              0
```

The following command shows signed SMB sessions for node2 from the sample:

```
cluster1::*> statistics show -sample-id smbsigning_sample -counter
signed_sessions|node_name -node node2

Object: smb2
Instance: vs1
Start-time: 2/6/2013 01:00:00
End-time: 2/6/2013 01:22:43
Cluster: cluster1

    Counter                                                 Value
    -------------------------------- ------------------------
    node_name                                               node2
    signed_sessions                                             1
```

The following command moves back to the admin privilege level:

```
cluster1::*> set -privilege admin
```

Related information

Determining whether SMB sessions are signed

Performance monitoring express setup

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