

Defense-in-Depth Engineering

John Poulin
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Talk Outline

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Technical Content
 - ▶ *Designing for Incidents*
 - ▶ *Preventing Regression*
 - ▶ *Designing for Extensibility*
 - ▶ *Understand your Libraries*
- ▶ Wrap Up



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John Poulin

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- ▶ CTO, Cloud Security Partners
- ▶ Previously: Manager, Product Security Engineering @ GitHub
 - ▶ *I managed teams who hacks things*
- ▶ Consultant
 - ▶ *I hacked things*
- ▶ Software engineer
 - ▶ *I made things that were hacked*



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A04:2021 – Insecure Design

- Focuses on risks related to design and architectural flaws, with a call for more use of threat modeling, secure design patterns, and reference architectures.”



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Defense in Depth?

“Also known as layered defense, defense in depth is a security principle where single points of complete compromise are eliminated or mitigated by the incorporation of a **series or multiple layers of security** safeguards and risk-mitigation countermeasures

Have diverse defensive strategies, so that if one layer of defense turns out to be inadequate, another layer of defense will hopefully prevent a full breach.”

- ▶ Controls that may be overlooked
- ▶ Easier to solve during design phase



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Designing for Incidents

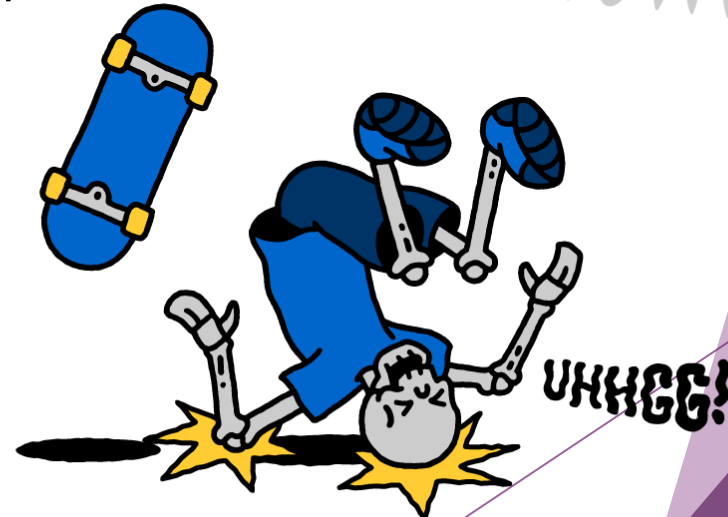
Becoming friends with your incident response team.



Understand risk of the system

- ▶ What is the riskiest data in your system?
 - ▶ *Billing Info, PII, etc.*
- ▶ Is all sensitive data documented?
 - ▶ *Can IR teams discover these classifications?*
- ▶ Are there data flow diagrams?

ARE YOU AT RISK?



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Build a plan of action

- ▶ Work with the team to understand logging desires
 - ▶ *What data should be logged?*
 - ▶ *What data shouldn't be logged?*
 - ▶ *How long should logs live?*
- ▶ Understand their expectations from engineering during IR
 - ▶ *Will you be in the war room?*
 - ▶ *Will there be public communication?*
- ▶ Engineering will need to take ownership
- ▶ Build playbooks to understand logging infrastructure



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Be prepared to own the outcome!

On March 8, we shared that, out of an abundance of caution, [we logged all users out of GitHub.com due to a rare security vulnerability](#). We believe that transparency is key in earning and keeping the trust of our users and want to share more about this bug. In this post we will share the technical details of this vulnerability and how it happened, what we did to respond to it, and the steps we are taking to ensure this does not happen again.

<https://github.blog/2021-03-18-how-we-found-and-fixed-a-rare-race-condition-in-our-session-handling/>



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Investigations will happen



Use the plan of action!

- ▶ Build employee trust by focusing on post-mortem improvement.
- ▶ Take a breath – this is a team effort
- ▶ Blameless IR process



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SUPPORT CUSTOMERS

Customers have incidents too.



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Supporting Customers

Customers want to know:

- ▶ What / When was data accessed?
- ▶ Gaps in coverage means support inquiries and/or unhappy customers.

Providing this data:

- ▶ Self-Service Logs
 - ▶ *Audit Logging*
 - ▶ *Sanitization*
- ▶ Dedicated playbooks for customer support team



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Audit all the things

- Ensure every state-changing request is audited

```
1  class ApplicationController < ActionController::Base
2    after_action :require_audit_trail
3
4    private
5    def require_audit_trail
6      unless ["GET","HEAD"].include?(request.request_method)
7        raise "RequestNotAudited" unless audited?
8      end
9    end
10
11    def audited?
12      Rails.cache.read('audited', raw: true)
13    end
14  end
```



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Improve the Things

```
def destroy
  AuditLogEntry.event(
    event: event_for_auditing("Carts#Destroy"),
    actor_id: actor_for_auditing,
    target: target_for_auditing(@cart),
    ip_address: ip_for_auditing
  )

  @cart.product_info = JSON.dump([])
  @cart.save
end
```

```
def require_audit_trail
  unless ["GET", "HEAD"].include?(request.
    request_method)
    unless audited?
      if Rails.env.production?
        AuditLogEntry.event(
          event: event_for_auditing
            ("AuditTrail#Missing"),
          actor_id: actor_for_auditing,
          target: request.path,
          ip_address: ip_for_auditing
        )
      else
        raise "RequestNotAudited"
      end
    end
  end
end
```



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Audit Logs Wall of Shame

A list of vendors that don't prioritize high-quality, widely-available audit logs for security and operations teams.

<https://audit-logs.tax/>



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Preventing Regression

Never waste a good incident!



How can we prevent regression?

1

Root Cause Analysis (RCA) during IR process to drive solutions

2

Perform thorough variant analysis

3

Utilize tests to prevent regression



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READY FOR A TEST?



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GOAL?

```
13 scenario "attack" , js: true do
14   login(normal_user)
15
16   legit_file = File.join(Rails.root, "public", "data", "legit.txt")
17   File.open(legit_file, "w") { |f| f.puts "totes legit" }
18
19   visit "/users/#{normal_user.id}/benefit_forms"
20   Dir.mktmpdir do |dir|
21     hackety_file = File.join(dir, "test; cd public && cd data && rm -f * ;")
22     File.open(hackety_file, "w") { |f| f.print "mwahaha" }
23     within(".new_benefits") do
24       attach_file "benefits_upload", hackety_file
25       find(:xpath, "//input[@id='benefits_backup']", visible: false).set "true"
26     end
27     click_on "Start Upload"
28   end
29
30   expect(File.exist?(legit_file)).to be_truthy
31 end
32 end
```

<https://github.com/OWASP/railsgoat>



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Potential Improvements

- ▶ Utilize **unit testing** when possible, to validate underlying implementation
- ▶ Consider alternative payloads
 - ▶ *Sleep*
- ▶ Consider alternative encodings
 - ▶ *URL Encoded, Unicode*
- ▶ Happy Path?
- ▶ False Negatives?
 - ▶ *Race Condition*

```
13 scenario "attack" , js: true do
14   login(normal_user)
15
16   legit_file = File.join(Rails.root, "public", "data", "legit.txt")
17   File.open(legit_file, "w") { |f| f.puts "totes legit" }
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19   visit "/users/#{normal_user.id}/benefit_forms"
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26     end
27     click_on "Start Upload"
28   end
29
30   expect(File.exist?(legit_file)).to be_truthy
31 end
32 end
```



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ONE LAST TEST



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GOAL?

```
26
27     context 'given text containing script tags' do
28       let(:text) { '<script>alert("Hello")</script>' }
29
30       it 'strips the scripts' do
31         is_expected.to_not include '<script>alert("Hello")</script>'
32       end
33     end
34
35     context 'given text containing malicious classes' do
36       let(:text) { '<span class="mention status__content__spoiler-link">Show more</span>' }
37
38       it 'strips the malicious classes' do
39         is_expected.to_not include 'status__content__spoiler-link'
40       end
41     end
```

<https://github.com/mastodon/mastodon>



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Prevent rendering of script tags

- ▶ What if input is lowercased, normalized, etc?
- ▶ What if comparison is for equality, and not substring/match?
- ▶ Are there tests for other attributes?
- ▶ What about malicious ID's?
- ▶ Which are the legitimate classes?

```
26
27   context 'given text containing script tags' do
28     let(:text) { '<script>alert("Hello")</script>' }
29
30     it 'strips the scripts' do
31       is_expected.to_not include '<script>alert("Hello")</script>'
32     end
33   end
34
35   context 'given text containing malicious classes' do
36     let(:text) { '<span class="mention status__content__spoiler-link">Show more</span>' }
37
38     it 'strips the malicious classes' do
39       is_expected.to_not include 'status__content__spoiler-link'
40     end
41   end
```



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Advice for designing tests



Ensure tests are utilized, and a part of the development and deployment process.



Focus test on a specific issue

Integration test XSS on user profile



Determine method to make test reusable

Can we instrument test helpers with common XSS payloads that can be reused across the app?



Establish tests as close to the logic as possible.

Unit test for validating comparison mechanisms.



Focus on testing for *permutations*.



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Permutations: An Easy Win

- ▶ Reusable solution to test for encoding concerns
- ▶ Reduce risk of input-transformation causing false negatives.
- ▶ Should be used as both input and output tests

```
# Find permutations of data
def permutations_of(input)
  permutations = [input]
  permutations << Base64.encode64(input)
  permutations << URI.encode(input)
  permutations << URI.decode(input)
  permutations << input.upcase
  permutations << input.downcase
end

def assert_no_permutation(needle, haystack)
  permutations_of(needle).each do |p|
    assert_no_match(Regexp.new(p), haystack)
  end
end
```



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Designing for Extensibility

Product will change, prepare for exceptions.



USE PARAMETERIZED QUERIES!

SELECT password FROM users WHERE
id=\$id



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```
SELECT createdAt FROM $tablename  
WHERE country='de'
```

- What's the solution here?



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Parameterized Queries Won't Mitigate Risk

- ▶ Table name cannot be parameterized.
- ▶ An alternative: **allow-listing** known table names.



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Solution

- ▶ Utilize framework controls or middleware to introspect parameters.
- ▶ Better: Additionally filter at the method level to provide better traceability.

```
2  before_filter :set_table
3  VALID_TABLES = %w(analytics, reports)
4
5  def index
6    query = "SELECT createdAt FROM #{@current_table} WHERE country='DE'"
7    results = ActiveRecord::Base.connection.execute(sql)
8  end
9
10 private
11 def set_table
12   raise "InvalidTable" unless VALID_TABLES.include?(params[:table])
13
14   @current_table = params[:table]
15 end
16
17 end
```



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Accept the reality: insecure code patterns will be used.

- ▶ Provide a supported exception process
- ▶ Annotate insecure code
 - ▶ *Link to discussion, exception, etc.*
 - ▶ *Train AI models to ignore insecure code?*
- ▶ Regularly review exceptions and prioritize based on risk.

Key is being able to **document** and **audit** for these decisions.

```
# INSECURE: Potential Mass assignment
def create
  product = Product.find(params[:review][:product])

  review = Review.create(
    content: params[:review][:content],
    product: product,
    user: current_user || User.first
  )

  redirect_to product
end
```



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Annotation for CI



```
#!/bin/bash
EXPECTED_COUNT=3

OUT=`rails notes --annotations TODO|wc -l`

if [ $OUT -ne $EXPECTED_COUNT ]; then
  echo "Expected $EXPECTED_COUNT TODOs, found $OUT"
  exit 1 # https://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/linux-bash-exit-status
fi
```

```
class CartsController < ApplicationController
  before_action :set_cart_for_user, only: [:show, :
  def index
    # INSECURE: Used for debugging
    @carts = Cart.all
    render json: @carts
  end
```



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BUILD PAVED PATHS FOR EXTENSIBILITY



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Security headers are the new bank-grade encryption

- ▶ Content-Security-Policy
- ▶ Strict-Transport-Security
- ▶ X-Frame-Options
- ▶ X-Content-Type-Options
- ▶ Referrer-Policy
- ▶ Permissions-Policy



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Content-Security-Policy

Huge help in *reducing the risk* of Cross-Site Scripting

- ▶ Easiest to roll out early in app. Lifecycle.
- ▶ Start with `default-src 'self'` and iterate adding exceptions.
 - ▶ *Script-src*
 - ▶ *Connect-src*



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BUT WHAT IF...?

We want to run A/B tests utilizing
a new vendor?



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CSP can be set per-page

- ▶ Utilize one site-wide, default policy
- ▶ Add exceptions at a per-page basis
 - ▶ *Exceptions should be reviewed by security.*
- ▶ Tighten the policy while providing developers the ability to seek exception

```
class ApplicationController < ActionController::Base
  SecureHeaders::Configuration.default do |config|
    config.csp = {
      default_src: %w('self'),
      script_src: %w(example.org)
    }
  end

  # override default configuration
  SecureHeaders::Configuration.override(:script_from_otherdomain_com) do |config|
    config.csp[:script_src] << "otherdomain.com"
  end
end

class MyController < ApplicationController
  def index
    # Produces default-src 'self'; script-src example.org otherdomain.com
    use_secure_headers_override(:script_from_otherdomain_com)
  end

  def show
    # Produces default-src 'self'; script-src example.org otherdomain.org evenanot
    use_secure_headers_override(:another_config)
  end
end
```

https://github.com/github/secure_headers



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A clear example

GitHub.com/readme

```
content-security-policy: default-src 'none'; base-uri 'self';
block-all-mixed-content; child-src github.com/assets-cdn/worker/
gist.github.com/assets-cdn/worker/; connect-src 'self'
uploads.github.com objects-origin.githubusercontent.com
www.githubstatus.com collector.github.com
raw.githubusercontent.com api.github.com github-
cloud.s3.amazonaws.com github-production-repository-file-
5c1aeb.s3.amazonaws.com github-production-upload-manifest-file-
7fdce7.s3.amazonaws.com github-production-user-asset-
6210df.s3.amazonaws.com cdn.optimizely.com
logx.optimizely.com/v1/events *.actions.githubusercontent.com
wss://*.actions.githubusercontent.com
online.visualstudio.com/api/v1/locations github-production-
repository-image-32fea6.s3.amazonaws.com github-production-
release-asset-2e65be.s3.amazonaws.com insights.github.com
insights-api-staging.service.iad.github.net
wss://alive.github.com; font-src github.githubassets.com; form-
action 'self' github.com gist.github.com objects-
origin.githubusercontent.com; frame-ancestors 'none'; frame-src
viewscreen.githubusercontent.com notebooks.githubusercontent.com;
img-src 'self' data: github.githubassets.com identicons.github.com
github-cloud.s3.amazonaws.com secured-user-
images.githubusercontent.com/ github-production-user-asset-
6210df.s3.amazonaws.com customer-stories-feed.github.com
spotlights-feed.github.com *.githubusercontent.com
images.ctfassets.net/s5uo95nf6njh/; manifest-src 'self'; media-src
github.com user-images.githubusercontent.com/ secured-user-
images.githubusercontent.com/ github.githubassets.com
assets.ctfassets.net/s5uo95nf6njh/
downloads.ctfassets.net/s5uo95nf6njh/; script-src
github.githubassets.com; style-src 'unsafe-inline'
github.githubassets.com; worker-src github.com/assets-cdn/worker/
gist.github.com/assets-cdn/worker/; report-uri
https://api.github.com/_private/browser/errors
```



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GitHub.com/forced-request

```
content-security-policy: default-src 'none'; base-uri 'self';
block-all-mixed-content; child-src github.com/assets-cdn/worker/
gist.github.com/assets-cdn/worker/; connect-src 'self'
uploads.github.com objects-origin.githubusercontent.com
www.githubstatus.com collector.github.com
raw.githubusercontent.com api.github.com github-
cloud.s3.amazonaws.com github-production-repository-file-
5c1aeb.s3.amazonaws.com github-production-upload-manifest-file-
7fdce7.s3.amazonaws.com github-production-user-asset-
6210df.s3.amazonaws.com cdn.optimizely.com
logx.optimizely.com/v1/events *.actions.githubusercontent.com
wss://*.actions.githubusercontent.com
online.visualstudio.com/api/v1/locations github-production-
repository-image-32fea6.s3.amazonaws.com github-production-
release-asset-2e65be.s3.amazonaws.com insights.github.com
insights-api-staging.service.iad.github.net
wss://alive.github.com; font-src github.githubassets.com; form-
action 'self' github.com gist.github.com objects-
origin.githubusercontent.com; frame-ancestors 'none'; frame-src
viewscreen.githubusercontent.com notebooks.githubusercontent.com;
img-src 'self' data: github.githubassets.com identicons.github.com
github-cloud.s3.amazonaws.com secured-user-
images.githubusercontent.com/ github-production-user-asset-
6210df.s3.amazonaws.com customer-stories-feed.github.com
spotlights-feed.github.com *.githubusercontent.com; manifest-src
'self'; media-src github.com user-images.githubusercontent.com/
secured-user-images.githubusercontent.com/; script-src
github.githubassets.com; style-src 'unsafe-inline'
github.githubassets.com; worker-src github.com/assets-cdn/worker/
gist.github.com/assets-cdn/worker/; report-uri
https://api.github.com/_private/browser/errors
```



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Implementation



```
before_action :csp_override
```

```
def csp_override  
  use_secure_headers_override(:stripe)  
end
```

```
106 SecureHeaders::Configuration.override(:dompurify) do |config|  
107   config.csp[:script_src] << "https://cdnjs.cloudflare.com"  
108 end  
109  
110 SecureHeaders::Configuration.override(:stripe) do |config|  
111   config.csp[:script_src] << "https://js.stripe.com"  
112 end
```



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Edge cases in XSS

Output encoding is not a silver bullet.



Use CSP, *don't* rely on it.

“Content Security Policy (CSP) is **an added layer of security** that helps to detect and mitigate certain types of attacks, including Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) and data injection attacks. These attacks are used for everything from data theft, to site defacement, to malware distribution.”

<https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/HTTP/CSP>



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Output encoding is still key

- ▶ Frameworks generally perform output encoding by default
 - ▶ *Largest concern is with exemption (I.e., Rails' .html_safe)*
 - ▶ *Most likely not context specific*
- ▶ Attribute injection is relatively common
 - ▶ *Many WAF's look for <brackets>*
 - ▶ *Unquoted attributes are dangerous*
 - ▶ `<p data-id=<%= params[:id] %>>`
- ▶ Input validation is helpful, but is defense-in-depth



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BUT WHAT IF...?

We want to allow users to use
some HTML tags?



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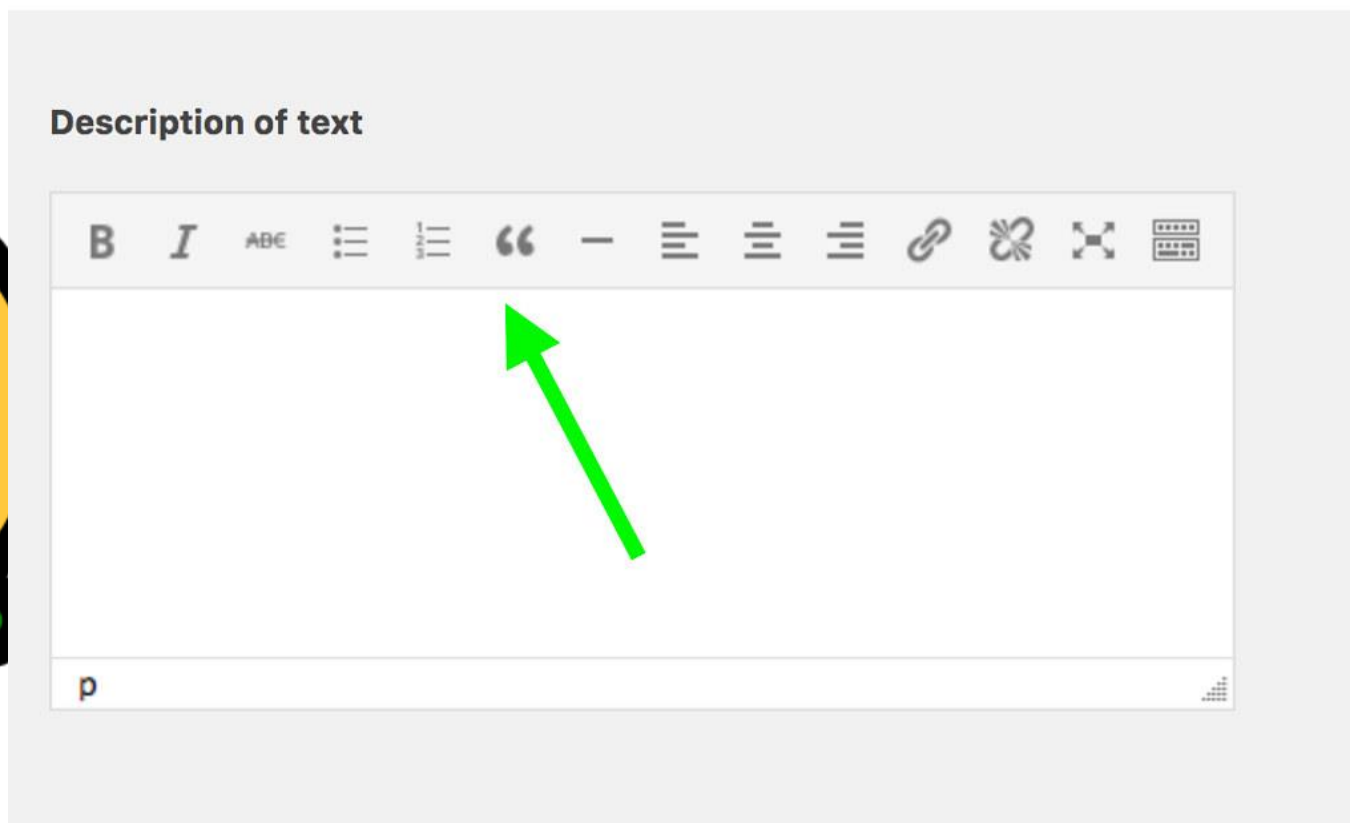


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Goes back to exceptions

Problem:

- ▶ Output encoding is likely insufficient now.
 - ▶ *Our secure coding policies won't work*
- ▶ Developers will look to the framework's way of disabling output encoding.



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Solution:

- ▶ Have a plan
 - ▶ *Identify list of tags that need to be supported*
 - ▶ *Identify list of attributes that need to be supported*
 - ▶ *Understand the context in which the tags will be rendered*
- ▶ Utilize a trusted sanitizer
 - ▶ *Spend the time to understand the library*



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DOMPURIFY IS BAE



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How do I use it?

It's easy. Just include DOMPurify on your website.

Using the unminified development version

```
<script type="text/javascript" src="src/purify.js"></script>
```

Using the minified and tested production version (source-map available)

```
<script type="text/javascript" src="dist/purify.min.js"></script>
```

Afterwards you can sanitize strings by executing the following code:

```
let clean = DOMPurify.sanitize(dirty);
```



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Know your libraries

*“Note that by default,
we permit HTML,
SVG and MathML”*

The resulting HTML can be written into a DOM element using `innerHTML` or the DOM using `document.write()`. That is fully up to you. Note that by default, we permit HTML, SVG and MathML. If you only need HTML, which might be a very common use-case, you can easily set that up as well:

```
let clean = DOMPurify.sanitize(dirty, { USE_PROFILES: { html: true } });
```



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What *is* default behavior?

- ▶ Will HTML tags be rendered as HTML, removed, or encoded??
 - ▶ *Roughly 110 tags will be evaluated as HTML.*
<https://github.com/cure53/DOMPurify/blob/main/src/tags.js>
- ▶ Are attributes supported?
 - ▶ *Yes, over 100. <https://github.com/cure53/DOMPurify/blob/main/src/attrs.js>*
- ▶ Does it utilize an AllowList or Denylist approach?
 - ▶ *AllowList, with ability to explicitly deny tags*



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What's the expectation?

```
1 ▾ $(".eventTrigger").on("click", () => {  
2   let payload = '<a href="https://site.com" class="link" data-url="https://malicious.com">Test</a>';  
3   let clean = DOMPurify.sanitize(payload);  
4   document.getElementById("sandbox").innerHTML = clean;  
5 })
```

```
▸ <div id="banner-message">_</div>  
▾ <div id="sandbox">  
  <a data-url="https://malicious.com" class="link" href="https://site.com">Test</a>  
</div>
```

<https://jsfiddle.net/bwLokh75/17/>



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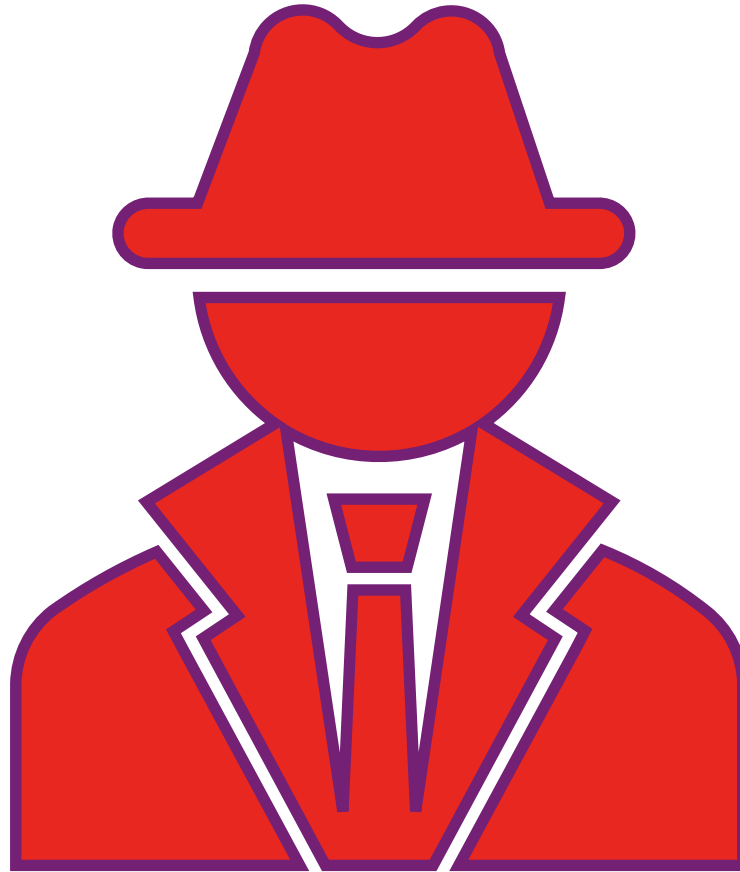


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Major Takeaway

- ▶ We can inject:
 - ▶ *Classes*
 - ▶ *ID*
 - ▶ *Data Attributes*
 - ▶ *More..*
- ▶ Event Handlers?



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1. Button clicked, triggers .eventTrigger
2. Event handler sanitizes payload, injects to the DOM.
3. DOM element contains findReviews class, which when clicked triggers another callback.
4. Invokes showReviews function
5. Performs HTTP request. Response is injected directly into the DOM

<https://jsfiddle.net/1ntcuvLx/53/>



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```
1 <div id="banner-message">
2   <button class="eventTrigger">Click here to execute</button>
3   Payload: <input type="text" id="payload">
4 </div>
5
6 <div id="sandbox"></div>
7 <div id="reviews"></div>|

3 ▾ $(".eventTrigger").on("click", () => {
4   var payload = $("#payload").val();
5   document.getElementById("sandbox").innerHTML = DOMPurify.sanitize(clean)
6 })
7
8 ▾ $(document).on("click", ".findReviews", function () {
9   var itemId = $(this).data("item-id");
10  // Perform GET request
11 });
12
13 ▾ function showReviews(itemId) {
14   $.get(apiEndpoint, function(data) {
15     document.getElementById("reviews").innerHTML = data;
16   });
17 }
18
19 // <div class="findReviews" data-item-id="22">asdfasdf</div>
```

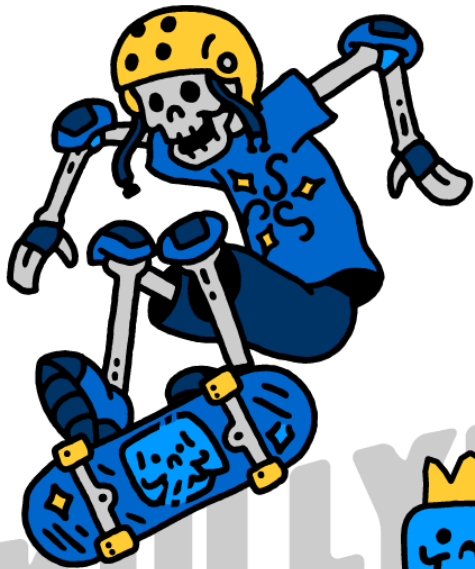


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DOM XSS IS NEARLY
IMPOSSIBLE TO
INVESTIGATE



Example



SKULLY'S
Skate &!

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```
<script>
  function fetchData() {
    console.log("Fetching updated data.");
    const productId = document.getElementById("reviews").dataset.productId;
    const xhr = new XMLHttpRequest();
    xhr.open("GET", "/reviews/" + productId, true);
    xhr.onload = () => {
      cleanData = DOMPurify.sanitize(xhr.responseText, {
        USE_PROFILES: {html: true},
        FORBID_ATTR: ['style', 'class', 'id']
      });
      document.getElementById("reviews").innerHTML = cleanData;
    };
    xhr.send();
  }

  fetchData()
</script>
```



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Key Takeaways

- ▶ Incidents Happen – Design to improve incident response.
- ▶ Prevent Regression – Never waste a good incident. Write tests!
- ▶ Support Extension and Exemption – Exceptions will be needed, design for them.
- ▶ Understand your libraries and compensating controls



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