

Cybersecurity Incident Report

Section 1: Identify the type of attack that may have caused this network interruption

The website is experiencing timeout error for any user that tries to establish connection and complete the TCP handshake. The log indicates hundreds of requests from the same IP address initiating a TCP handshake by spamming SYN requests; this has precluded other users from establishing connections to our website and receiving a timeout error because the server fails to complete all the handshakes required for a TCP connection. This event is likely a SYN Denial of Service attack given that it is the same IP that has attempted to flood the server with SYN requests.

Section 2: Explain how the attack is causing the website to malfunction

When website visitors try to establish a connection with the web server, a three-way handshake occurs using the TCP protocol. Explain the three steps of the handshake:

1. SYN - the first handshake, the client asks the server if it has any open connections
2. SYN ACK - If the server has open ports, it sends back a SYN-ACK packet that includes its SYN and the ACK number. The server also allocates resources for the connection and generates its own SYN sequence number.
3. ACK - The client sends a final ACK message

Explain what happens when a malicious actor sends a large number of SYN packets all at once: The client requests will get ignored because there are no open connections.

Explain what the logs indicate and how that affects the server: The log indicated that the attacker using IP address 192.0.2.1 has been requesting SYN handshakes every 0.3 seconds or so and that has gradually caused the server to shut down any other requests.