Introduction to Malware Cheat Sheet

Malware Definition and Types:

- Malware (Malicious Software): Software designed to cause harm to a computer system, network, or
 its users without their consent.
- · Types:
 - Viruses: Require a host program to spread and replicate.
 - Worms: Self-replicating and can spread autonomously across networks.
 - Trojans: Disguise themselves as legitimate software to gain access.
 - Ransomware: Encrypts files and demands a ransom for their decryption.
 - Spyware: Secretly monitors user activity and collects information.
 - Adwere: Displays unwented advertisements.
 - Revokits: Conceal malicious processes and files from detection.
 - Keyloggers: Record keystrokes.
 - Backdoors: Frovide unauthorized remote access.
 - Bots: Software robots controlled remotely, often in botnets.

Malware Analysis:

 The process of examining malware samples to understand their functionality, behavior, origin, and potential impact.

Forensic Importance of Malware Analysis:

- Incident Response: Understanding how malware breached a system and its actions helps in containment, eradication, and recovery.
- Attribution: Identifying the threat actor or group behind the malware.
- Evidence Collection: Malware and its artifacts can serve as crucial digital evidence.
- Vulnerability Assessment: Analyzing exploited vulnerabilities can improve security posture.
- Threat Intelligence: Contributing to the understanding of emerging threats.

Introduction to Different Analysis Techniques:

Static Analysis: Examining the malware code and structure without executing it.

- Dynamic Analysis: Executing the malware in a controlled environment to observe its behavior.
- Hybrid Analysis: Combining static and dynamic analysis techniques.

Malware Behavior:

- Persistence Mechanisms: How malware ensures it runs after a system reboot (e.g., registry keys, startup folders, scheduled tasks).
- Communication: How malware communicates with command and control (C2) servers.
- Data Exfiltration: How malware steals sensitive information.
- Lateral Movement: How malware spreads within a network.
- System Modification: Changes made to the operating system or installed applications.
- Defense Evasion: Techniques used to avoid detection by security software.

Setting up Malware Analysis Laboratory:

- Isolated Network: Preventing malware from spreading to production systems.
- Virtual Machines (VMs): Providing a safe and easily restorable environment for execution.
- Snapshotting Capabilities: Allowing rollback to a clean state after analysis.
- Analysis Tools: Installing necessary software for static and dynamic analysis.
- Internet Simulation: Controlled network environment to observe network communication.

Static Analysis:

- Hashing: Calculating cryptographic hashes (MD5, SHA-1, SHA-256) to uniquely identify malware
- Finding Strings: Extracting human-readable text from the malware binary, which can reveal URLs, IP addresses, function names, and other indicators.
- Decoding Obfuscated Strings Using FLOSS (FireEye Labs Obfuscated String Solver): Automatically identifying and decoding obfuscated strings.
- PE Files Headers and Sections (Portable Executable): Understanding the structure of Windows executable files:
 - o Headers: Contain metadata about the file (e.g., entry point, size, timestamps).
 - o Sections: Contain different parts of the program code and data (.text, .data, .rdata, .rsrc, etc.).
- PE View: A tool for examining the PE file structure.
- Linked Libraries and Functions: Identifying external libraries and functions the malware uses, revealing its capabilities.
- Dependency Walker: Visualizes the dependency tree of Windows modules.

- CFF Explorer (PE Editor): A more advanced tool for examining and modifying PE files.
- Resource Hacker: Allows viewing and modifying resources within PE files (e.g., icons, dialogs,
- Malware Signature and Clam AV Virus Signature: Understanding how antivirus software identifies malware based on unique patterns or sequences of bytes.
- YARA Signatures: Rule-based language for creating patterns to identify malware families based on textual or binary characteristics.

Dynamic Analysis:

- Sandboxes: Isolated environments that allow safe execution and monitoring of malware behavior (e.g., Cuckoo Sandbox, Any.Run).
- Running and Monitoring a Malware: Executing the malware within a sandbox or controlled VM and observing its actions.
- Process Manitor (ProcWon): Windows Sysinternals tool for monitoring real-time file system, registry, and process activity.
- Process Explores (ProcExp): Windows Sysinternals tool providing detailed information about running processes.
- RegShot: Compares registry snapshots before and after malware execution to identify changes.
- Faking a Network (INetSim): Simulating network services to observe how malware interacts with the
- Using Wireshark for Packet Analysis: Capturing and analyzing network traffic generated by the malware to understand its communication patterns.

Assembly and Reverse Engineering Cheat Sheet

Introduction to x86 Assembly and CPU Registers:

- x86 Assembly: Low-level programming language representing machine code instructions for Intel x86 processors.
- CPU Registers: Small, high-speed storage locations within the CPU used to hold data and control information during program execution.
 - General-Purpose Registers:
 - EAX (Accumulator): Used for arithmetic operations and function return values.
 - EBX (Base): Often used as a base pointer for memory addressing.
 - ECX (Counter): Used as a loop counter.
 - EDX (Data): Used in I/O operations and with EAX for larger arithmetic.
 - 16-bit equivalents: AX, BX, CX, DX.
 - # 8-bit lower/upper halves: AL, AH, BL, BH, CL, CH, DL, DH.
 - Segment Registers: Define memory segments (less common in modern flat memory model).
 - cs (Code Segment): Points to the segment containing instructions.
 - DS (Data Segment): Points to the segment containing data.
 - SS (Stack Segment): Points to the segment containing the stack.
 - ES , FS , GS (Extra Segment Registers): Additional segment pointers.
 - o Pointer Registers:
 - EIP (Instruction Pointer): Holds the address of the next instruction to be executed. (IP in 16-bit).
 - ESP (Stack Pointer): Points to the top of the stack. (SP in 16-bit).
 - EBP (Base Pointer): Often used to reference local variables on the stack. (BP in 16-bit).
 - o Flags Register (EFLAGS): Contains status flags (e.g., Zero Flag, Carry Flag, Sign Flag) and control flags.

Overview of the Stack:

- LIFO (Last-In, First-Out) Data Structure: Used for temporary storage of data during function calls.
- Stack Pointer (ESP): Points to the current top of the stack (lowest memory address in the stack segment).
- Push Operation: Decrements ESP and places data onto the stack.
- Pop Operation: Retrieves data from the stack and increments ESP.

- Function Calls:
 - o Arguments are often pushed onto the stack before a call.
 - o The return address (address of the instruction after the call) is pushed onto the stack.
 - o Local variables are allocated on the stack within a function's stack frame.
- Stack Frames: Dedicated area on the stack for each function call, containing arguments, return address, local variables, and saved registers.

IDA Pro with its Functions and Features:

- Disassembler: Converts machine code into human-readable assembly language.
- Decompiler (F5): Attempts to convert assembly code into higher-level pseudo-C code, aiding in understanding program logic.
- Interactive Disassembly: Allows renaming variables and functions, adding comments, defining data types, and creating cross-references.
- Graph View: Visual representation of code flow, making it easier to understand program structure.
- Debugger: Allows step-by-step execution of the program, examining registers and memory.
- Plugins and Scripts (IDC, Python): Extend IDA's functionality for specialized tasks.
- Signature Analysis (FLIRT): Identifies known library functions, simplifying analysis.
- Hex View: Allows direct examination and modification of the raw binary data.
- Cross-References: Shows where variables, functions, and code locations are used.

Understanding of C Code Construct in Assembly:

- Variables: Local variables are typically allocated on the stack. Global variables reside in the data segment.
- Control Flow:
 - o if/else: Translated into conditional jump instructions (je , jne , jg , jl , etc.).
 - o for/while loops: Implemented using comparison and jump instructions to repeat code blocks.
 - o switch statements: Often compiled into jump tables for efficient branching.
- Functions:
 - o Arguments passed via registers or the stack.
 - Return address pushed onto the stack.
 - o Stack frame setup (push ebp , mov ebp , esp).
 - Local variables allocated by adjusting the stack pointer (sub esp, «size»).
 - Return value placed in EAX.
 - o Stack frame teardown (mov esp, ebp, pop ebp, ret).

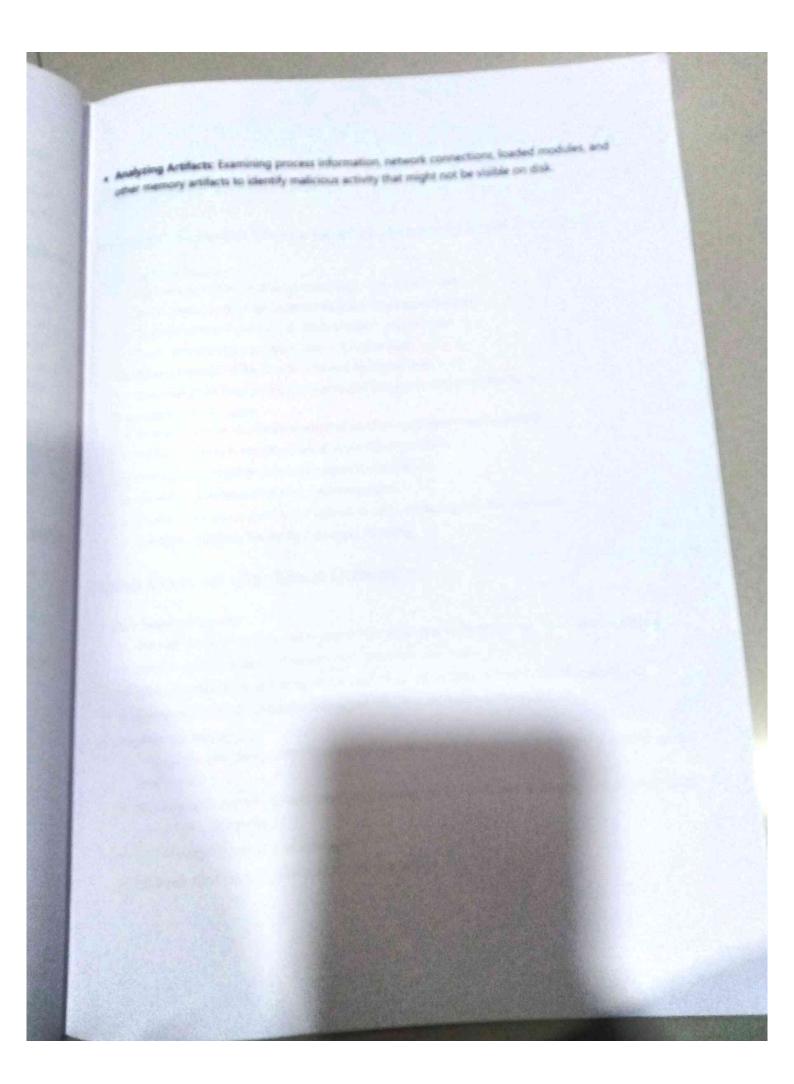
- Pointers: Represented as memory addresses. Dereferencing a pointer involves accessing the data at
- Arrays: Contiguous blocks of memory. Accessing elements involves calculating offsets.
- Structures: Contiguous blocks of memory where members are accessed at specific offsets.

Analyzing Malicious Windows Programs:

- Identifying Entry Point: The first instruction executed when the program runs (often found in the PE
- Tracing API Calls: Monitoring calls to Windows API functions to understand the program's interactions with the OS (e.g., file operations, network communication, registry modifications).
- Analyzing Control Flow: Understanding the sequence of instructions and how the program makes
- Identifying Malicious Behavior: Looking for patterns associated with malware (e.g., network connections to suspicious IPs, file encryption routines, persistence mechanisms).
- Unpacking: Dealing with packed or obfuscated malware that hides its true code.
- Reverse Engineering Aigorithms: Understanding how malware implements its malicious functionality.

Live Memory Analysis using Volatility:

- Volatility: An open-source memory forensics framework for extracting digital artifacts from volatile
- Profiles: Volatility requires a profile that matches the operating system and architecture of the memory dump.
- Key Plugins:
 - pslist / pstree : Lists running processes.
 - psscan: Scans memory for process structures (can find hidden or terminated processes).
 - dlllist: Lists loaded DLLs for a process.
 - handles: Lists open handles for a process (files, registry keys, etc.).
 - netscan: Scans for network connections and listening ports.
 - registry: Allows interaction with the registry hives present in memory.
 - filescan: Scans for file objects in memory.
 - procdump: Dumps the executable image of a process from memory.
 - malfind: Identifies injected code or hidden modules.
 - o yarascan: Scans memory for YARA signatures.
 - apihooks: Detects API hooking by malware.



Debugging Cheat Sheet

Difference between Source Level vs. Assembly Level Debugger:

- . Source Level Debugger:
 - o Operates on the original source code (e.g., C++, Python, Java).
 - o Allows stepping through code line by line in the source language.
 - o Displays variables and data structures in their original types.
 - o Easier to understand program flow at a higher level.
 - o Requires access to the source code and debug symbols.
 - o Examples: GDB (with source), Visual Studio Debugger, PyCharm Debugger.
- Assembly Level Debugger:
 - o Operates directly on the disassembled machine code (assembly language).
 - o Allows stepping through individual assembly instructions.
 - o Displays CPU registers, memory contents, and flags.
 - o Provides a low-level view of program execution.
 - Useful when source code is unavailable or when analyzing low-level behavior.
 - Examples: OllyDbg, Immunity Debugger, WinDbg.

Kernel Mode vs. User Mode Debugger:

- User Mode Debugger:
 - Debugs applications running in user mode, which has restricted access to system resources.
 - Cannot directly access kernel-level data structures or code.
 - Most common type of debugger for application development and malware analysis.
 - Examples: GDB, Visual Studio Debugger, OllyDbg, Immunity Debugger.
- Kernel Mode Debugger:
 - Debugs the operating system kernel and device drivers, which have privileged access to system resources.
 - Allows examining kernel data structures, tracing system calls, and analyzing kernel-level issues (e.g., BSODs, driver bugs).
 - Requires special setup and privileges.
 - Example: WinDbg (can also debug user mode).

Debugger Common Features:

- stepping: Executing the program one instruction (assembly level) or one line (source level) at a time. O Step Over: Executes the current function call without stepping into its instructions.
 - o Step Into: Steps into the instructions of the current function call.
 - o Step Out: Executes the remaining instructions of the current function and returns to the caller.
- , Breakpoints: Specific locations in the code where program execution will pause, allowing inspection of the program state.
 - o Software Breakpoints: Inserted by the debugger by modifying the code (e.g., replacing an instruction with an interrupt instruction).
 - o Hardware Breakpoints: Supported by the CPU, allowing breakpoints on code execution, data access, or data write without modifying the code. Limited number available.
 - o Conditional Breakpoints: Break only when a specific condition is met (e.g., a variable reaches a
- Watch Variables: Monitoring the values of specific variables as the program executes.
- Call Stack: Shows the sequence of function calls that led to the current point of execution.
- Memory View: Allows examining the contents of memory at specific addresses.
- Register View: Displays the current values of CPU registers.
- Disassembly View: Shows the disassembled machine code (in assembly level debuggers).
- Expression Evaluation: Allows evaluating expressions involving variables and operators.

Breakpoints:

- Purpose: Pause program execution at a point of interest for inspection.
- Types: Software, Hardware, Conditional (as described above).
- Setting Breakpoints: Typically done by clicking in the code editor margin or using a debugger command.
- Managing Breakpoints: Enabling, disabling, deleting breakpoints.

Exceptions:

- Definition: Events that occur during program execution that disrupt the normal flow of instructions (e.g., division by zero, invalid memory access).
- Debugger Handling: Debuggers can be configured to break when specific exceptions occur,
- First-Chance Exceptions: The debugger intercepts the exception before the program's exception handlers.

- second-Chance Exceptions: The debugger intercepts the exception if the program's handlers don't handle it.
- Ignoring Exceptions: Debuggers can be configured to ignore certain exceptions.

Modification of Program Execution:

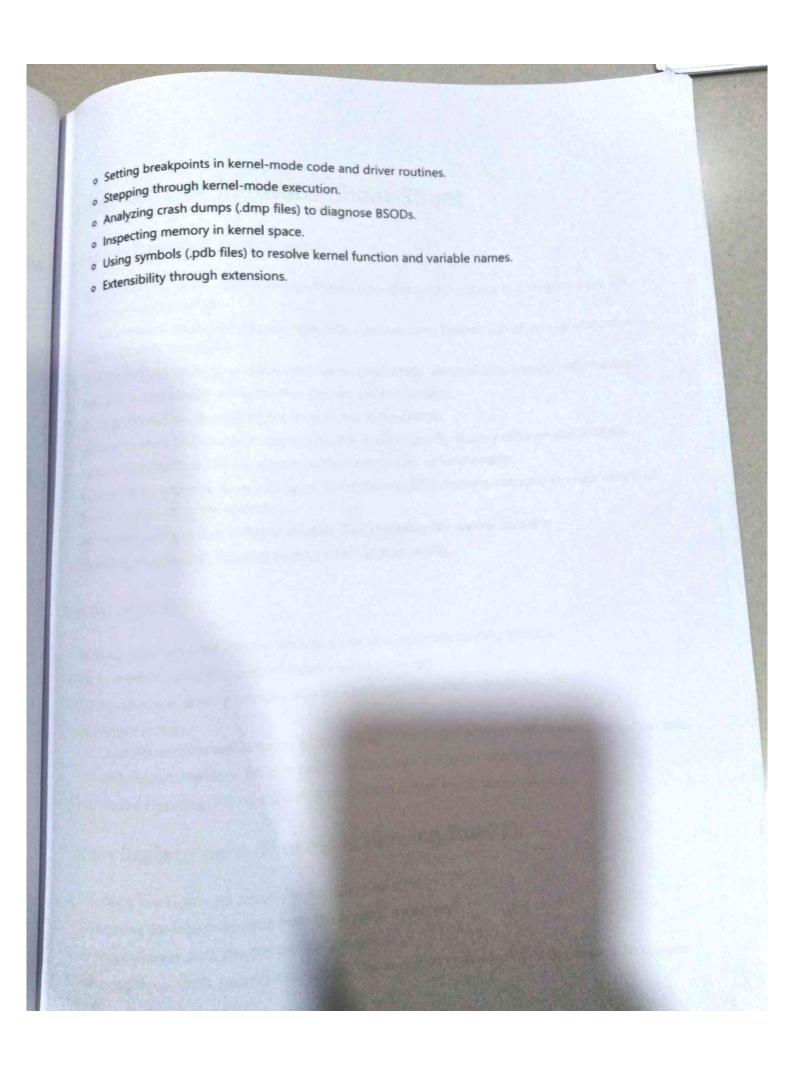
- Changing Variable Values: Altering the contents of variables during debugging to test different scenarios or bypass certain conditions.
- Modifying Memory: Directly changing values in memory.
- , patching Instructions: Replacing assembly instructions to alter program behavior (often used in reverse engineering and malware analysis).
- Forcing Return Values: Specifying the return value of a function before it actually returns.
- Skipping Instructions: Bypassing certain parts of the code.

Working with OllyDbg and Immunity Debugger:

- OllyDbg (Windows, x86): A user-mode assembly level debugger popular for malware analysis.
 - o User-friendly interface with disassembly, registers, memory, and stack views.
 - o Powerful breakpoint features (software, hardware, conditional).
 - Plugin support for extending functionality.
 - Tracing capabilities to record instruction execution.
- Immunity Debugger (Windows, x86): Another user-mode assembly level debugger, built on top of OllyDbg with a focus on exploit development.
 - Includes Python scripting capabilities for automation and custom commands (PyCommands).
 - Integrates well with exploit development tools.
 - Shares many core features with OllyDbg.

Kernel Debugging with WinDbg (Windows):

- Purpose: Debugging the Windows kernel and device drivers.
- Setup: Requires a separate debugging machine or a virtual machine setup with kernel debugging enabled. Communication is typically via serial cable, named pipes, or network.
- Commands: Uses a command-line interface with a wide range of commands for inspecting kernel data structures, tracing execution, setting breakpoints in kernel code, and analyzing crashes (BSODs).
- Key Features:
 - Examining kernel objects (processes, threads, drivers).



gehaviours of Malware Cheat Sheet

common Behavior of Malware:

- persistence: Mechanisms to ensure the malware runs after system restarts (e.g., registry keys, startup folders, scheduled tasks).
- Communication: Establishing connections with Command and Control (C2) servers for instructions, data exfiltration, or updates.
- , Data Exfiltration: Stealing sensitive information (credentials, personal data, financial information).
- , Lateral Movement: Spreading to other systems within a network.
- , privilege Escalation: Gaining higher-level access to the system.
- , Defense Evasion: Techniques to avoid detection and analysis by security software and analysts.
- , System Modification: Altering system configurations, files, or functionality.
- , Resource Consumption: Overloading system resources (CPU, memory, network) to cause denial of service or slow down the system.
- Destructive Actions: Corrupting or deleting files, rendering the system unusable.
- Spreading/Replication: Copying itself to other systems or files.

Process Injection:

- Injecting malicious code into the address space of a legitimate running process.
- Allows malware to hide its activity within a trusted process.
- Can bypass some security software that monitors specific malware processes.
- Techniques include:
 - CreateRemoteThread: Creating a new thread in the target process and running malicious code.
 - WriteProcessMemory: Writing malicious code into the target process's memory.
 - Thread Hijacking: Taking control of an existing thread in the target process.

Process Replacement (Process Hollowing/RunPE):

- Creating a new legitimate process in a suspended state.
- Unmapping the legitimate code from the process's memory.
- Writing malicious code into the process's memory.
- Resuming the process, causing it to execute the malicious code instead of the original legitimate code.

Hook Injection:

- , Modifying the normal execution flow of a program by intercepting function calls (hooks).
- Malware can install hooks in various parts of the system (e.g., user-mode APIs, kernel-mode
- , Allows malware to monitor user input, intercept network traffic, or modify system behavior.
- Techniques involve altering function pointers or using API hooking frameworks.

pata Encoding:

- Transforming data into a different format to make it less readable or to bypass simple detection mechanisms.
- Common encoding achemes include Base64, hexadecimal, and simple XOR.
- Often used for C2 communication, storing configuration data, or hiding malicious payloads.
- Requires decoding to understand the actual data.

Anti-Disassembly:

- Techniques used to make it harder for analysts to disassemble and understand the malware's code.
- Examples:
- Junk Code: Inserting irrelevant instructions to clutter the disassembly listing.
 - Opaque Predicates: Conditional jumps where the outcome is always the same, confusing disassemblers' control flow analysis.
 - Self-Modifying Code: Altering the malware's code during runtime, making static analysis difficult.
 - o Control Flow Obfuscation: Making the program's execution path difficult to follow.

Anti-Debugging:

- Techniques used to detect and evade debugging environments, hindering dynamic analysis.
- Examples:
 - o API Checks: Calling functions like IsDebuggerPresent or CheckRemoteDebuggerPresent .
 - o Timing Checks: Measuring the time taken for certain operations, which might be longer under a
 - Breakpoint Detection: Checking for software breakpoints.
 - Exception Handling: Using exceptions to detect debugger presence.
 - Hardware Breakpoint Detection: Attempting to set more hardware breakpoints than available.

Emulator/Sandbox Detection: Checking for artifacts or behaviors common in virtualized or sandboxed environments.

Anti-Virtual Machine Techniques:

- Methods used by malware to detect if it's running in a virtual machine and alter its behavior or terminate to avoid analysis.
- Examples:
 - o Registry Checks: Looking for specific registry keys associated with virtualization software (e.g., VMware, VirtualBox).
 - File Checks: Checking for the presence of VM-specific files or directories.
 - o Process Checks: Looking for VM-related processes.
 - o Hardware Checks: Detecting virtualized hardware characteristics (e.g., MAC addresses, serial numbers).
 - o Timing Anomalies: Detecting differences in instruction execution speed in VMs.
 - o Mouse/Keyboard Activity: Checking for human interaction, which might be absent in automated analysis environments.

Packers and Unpacking:

- Packers: Software used to compress and/or encrypt executable files to reduce their size and hinder static analysis. The original code is typically hidden within the packed file.
- Unpacking: The process of reversing the packing mechanism to reveal the original malicious code. This often involves dynamic analysis to observe the malware unpacking itself in memory.
- Common Packers: UPX, PECompact, ASPack.
- Unpacking Techniques: Manual analysis using debuggers to find the original entry point (OEP) after unpacking, or using automated unpacking tools.

Other Platform Malware Cheat Sheet

Introduction to Linux Malwares:

- Less Prevalent than Windows Malware: Due to Linux's diverse distributions, permission model, and lower desktop market share.
- , Growing Threat: Increasing use of Linux in servers, cloud environments, and IoT devices makes it a more attractive target.
- Types: ELF executables, shell scripts, rootkits, web server malware, ransomware targeting servers.
- Focus: Often targets server infrastructure for data theft, botnet recruitment, or disruption.

Linux Binary Architecture (ELF - Executable and Linkable Format):

- Header: Contains metadata about the file (e.g., entry point, program headers, section headers).
- Program Headers: Describe segments (loadable regions) of the file for execution.
- Section Headers: Describe sections containing code, data, symbols, etc. (used during linking and debugging).
- Sections: .text (executable code), .data (initialized data), .bss (uninitialized data), .rodata (read-only data), symbol table, relocation table, etc.
- Dynamic Linking: Relies on shared libraries (.so files).

Analysis of Linux Malware:

- Static Analysis:
 - Hashing: Identify known malware.
 - Strings: Look for readable text (URLs, commands, function names).
 - o File Format Analysis (ELF): Use tools like readelf, objdump, file to examine headers, sections, and symbols.
 - Dependencies: Use 1dd to list required libraries.
 - Disassembly: Use tools like objdump -d or IDA Pro (Linux support) to view assembly code (x86,
 - YARA Rules: Create signatures to identify Linux malware families.
- Dynamic Analysis:
- Sandboxing: Use tools like Cuckoo Sandbox (Linux support) or custom chroot environments.
 - System Call Tracing: Use strace to monitor system calls made by the malware.

- Network Analysis: Use topdump or Wireshark to capture network traffic
- process Monitoring: Use tools like ps , top , htop .
- Memory Analysis: Use tools like Volatility (Linux profiles) to examine memory dumps.

Indroid Architecture:

- Linux Kernel: Underlying operating system.
- Hardware Abstraction Layer (HAL): Interfaces between the kernel and hardware.
- Android Runtime (ART/Dalvik): Executes applications.
- Libraries: C/C++ libraries used by various Android components.
- Application Framework: Provides APIs for application development (Activity Manager, Content providers, etc.).
- , Applications: User-installed and system applications.

Android Permissions:

- Mechanism for Restricting Access: Applications must declare permissions they need to access sensitive resources or perform certain actions (e.g., internet access, reading contacts, sending SMS).
- · User Consent: Users are typically prompted to grant permissions during installation or runtime (depending on the Android version and permission type).
- Types of Permissions: Normal, Dangerous, Signature, SignatureOrSystem. Dangerous permissions require explicit user consent.
- Malware Exploitation: Malware often requests excessive or unnecessary permissions to carry out malicious activities.

Types of Android Malware:

- * SMS Trojans: Send premium SMS messages without user consent.
- Spyware: Steal personal information (contacts, SMS, call logs, location).
- Banker Trojans: Steal banking credentials.
- Ransomware: Encrypt files or lock devices and demand ransom.
- Adware: Display intrusive advertisements.
- Rooting Malware: Attempts to gain root privileges on the device.
- Botnets: Recruit devices into botnets for various malicious purposes.
- Mobile Ransomware: Locks the device or encrypts files, demanding payment.

lysis and Reverse Engineering of Android Malware:

cquisition: Obtaining the APK (Android Package Kit) file.

tatic Analysis:

- APK Disassembly: Use tools like apktool to decompile the APK and access the Dalvik bytecode (smali).
- Manifest Analysis (AndroidManifest.xml): Examine requested permissions, components, entry points, and intent filters.
- o Code Review (Smali): Analyze the disassembled code for malicious logic.
- o String Analysis: Look for suspicious URLs, IP addresses, or keywords.
- o Resource Analysis: Examine images, layouts, and other resources for indicators.
- Signature Analysis: Check the app's signature.
- YARA Rules: Create signatures for Android malware families.

Dynamic Analysis:

- Emulators/Simulators: Use Android emulators (e.g., Android Studio Emulator, Genymotion) for safe execution.
- o Real Devices (with caution): Use isolated test devices.
- Sandboxing: Utilize Android sandbox environments.
- Log Analysis (Logcat): Monitor system logs for malicious activity.
- Network Analysis (tcpdump, Wireshark): Capture network traffic.
- Behavioral Analysis: Observe the app's actions during runtime.

Several Engineering Tools:

- o apktool : Decompiles and rebuilds APKs.
- o dex2jar : Converts Dalvik bytecode (.dex) to Java bytecode (.jar).
- o jd-gui, Luyten: Java bytecode decompilers.
- o AndroGuard: Comprehensive Android reverse engineering and analysis tool.
- o Frida: Dynamic instrumentation toolkit for injecting code and monitoring function calls.
- o IDA Pro (with Dex plugin): Professional disassembler with Android support.