APT28 group is rushing to exploit recent CVE-2017-11292 Flash 0-Day before users apply the patches

October 22, 2017 By Pierluigi Paganini

The APT28 group is trying to exploit the CVE-2017-11292 Flash zero-day before users receive patches or update their systems.

Security experts at Proofpoint collected evidence of several malware campaigns, powered by the Russian APT28 group, that rely on a Flash zero-day vulnerability that Adobe patched earlier this week.

According to the experts who observed attacks on organizations across Europe and in the US, the APT28 group is trying to exploit the CVE-2017-11292 zero-day before users receive patches or update their systems.

The state-sponsored hackers focused their attacks on state departments and private-sector businesses in the aerospace industry.

"On Tuesday, October 18, Proofpoint researchers detected a malicious Microsoft Word attachment exploiting a recently patched Adobe Flash vulnerability, CVE-2017-11292. We attributed this attack to APT28 (also known as Sofacy), a Russian state-sponsored group." states the report published by Proofpoint.

"Targeting data for this campaign is limited but some emails were sent to foreign government entities equivalent to the State Department and private-sector businesses in the aerospace industry. The known geographical targeting appears broad, including Europe and the United States. The emails were sent from free email services."

The patch was released on Monday, October 16, at that time Kaspersky detected attacks leveraging the CVE-2017-11292 allegedly conducted by the BlackOasis APT group.

Researchers believe that APT28 was also in possession of the exploit (whether purchased, discovered on their own, or reverse engineered from the BlackOasis attack), and is trying to use it in targeted attacks.

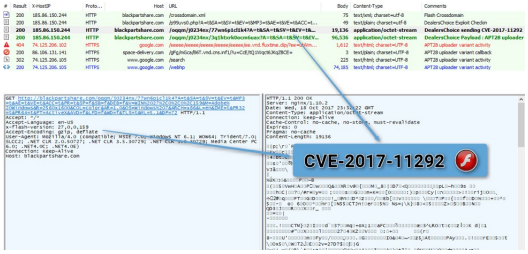
The APT28 rushed to assemble the exploit and the distribution campaign, reusing code from past attacks, the APT28 hackers did the same in May after Microsoft patched three zero-days flaws exploited by the Russian APT group.

Back to the present, researchers believe the APT28 found a way to exploit the CVE-2017-11292, it is unclear if they purchased the zero-day or reverse engineered it from the BlackOasis attack.

The researchers noticed that the recent attacks exploiting the CVE-2017-11292 flaw employed the same old DealersChoice malware, a Flash exploit framework also used by the APT28 group against Montenegro.

When the target user opens these the weaponized files, DealersChoice contacts the remote server to download the CVE-2017-11292 exploit code and execute it.

"The document "World War 3.docx" contacts DealersChoice.B, APT28's attack framework that allows loading exploit code on-demand from a command and control (C&C) server. DealersChoice has previously been used to exploit a variety of Flash vulnerabilities, including CVE-2015-7645, CVE-2016-1019, CVE-2016-4117, and CVE-2016-7855 via embedded objects in crafted Microsoft Word documents." continues the report.



The Proofpoint researcher Kafeine, confirmed his company currently trying to take down C&C servers associated with the DealersChoice attack framework used in the CVE-2017-11292 attacks.

"APT28 appears to be moving rapidly to exploit this newly documented vulnerability before the available patch is widely deployed. Because Flash is still present on a high percentage of systems and this vulnerability affects all major operating systems, it is critical that organizations and end users apply the Adobe patch immediately. " concluded Proofpoint.

Further technical details are available in the report published by Proofpoint, including the IOCs.

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(Security Affairs – APT28, cyber espionage)

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