

Ethical Hacking

Report Prepared by :

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1. Cross-site scripting

Summary

Severity:	Medium
Confidence:	Firm
Host:	http://testphp.vulnweb.com/
Path:	/robots.txt

Issue detail

The name of an arbitrarily supplied URL parameter is copied into the HTML document as plain text between tags. The payload `<script>alert(1)</script>` was submitted in the name of an arbitrarily supplied URL parameter. This input was echoed unmodified in the application's response.

This behavior demonstrates that it is possible to inject new HTML tags into the returned document. An attempt was made to identify a full proof-of-concept attack for injecting arbitrary JavaScript but this was not successful. You should manually examine the application's behavior and attempt to identify any unusual input validation or other obstacles that may be in place.

Issue background

Reflected cross-site scripting vulnerabilities arise when data is copied from a request and echoed into the application's immediate response in an unsafe way. An attacker can use the vulnerability to construct a request that, if issued by another application user, will cause JavaScript code supplied by the attacker to execute within the user's browser in the context of that user's session with the application.

The attacker-supplied code can perform a wide variety of actions, such as stealing the victim's session token or login credentials, performing arbitrary actions on the victim's behalf, and logging their keystrokes.

Users can be induced to issue the attacker's crafted request in various ways. For example, the attacker can send a victim a link containing a malicious URL in an email or instant message. They can submit the link to popular web sites that allow content authoring, for example in blog comments. And they can create an innocuous looking web site that causes anyone viewing it to make arbitrary cross-domain requests to the vulnerable application (using either the GET or the POST method).

The security impact of cross-site scripting vulnerabilities is dependent upon the nature of the vulnerable application, the kinds of data and functionality that it contains, and the other applications that belong to the same domain and organization. If the application is used only to display non-sensitive public content, with no authentication or access control functionality, then a cross-site scripting flaw may be considered low risk. However, if the same application resides on a domain that can access cookies for other more security-critical applications, then the vulnerability could be used to attack those other applications, and so may be considered high risk. Similarly, if the organization that owns the application is a likely target for phishing attacks, then the vulnerability could be leveraged to lend credibility to such attacks, by injecting Trojan functionality into the vulnerable application and exploiting users' trust in the organization in order to capture credentials for other applications that it owns. In many kinds of application, such as those providing online banking functionality, cross-site scripting should always be considered high risk.

Issue remediation

In most situations where user-controllable data is copied into application responses, cross-site scripting attacks can be prevented using two layers of defenses:

- Input should be validated as strictly as possible on arrival, given the kind of content that it is expected to contain. For example, personal names should consist of alphabetical and a small range of typographical characters, and be relatively short; a year of birth should consist of exactly four numerals; email addresses should match a well-defined regular expression. Input which fails the validation should be rejected, not sanitized.
- User input should be HTML-encoded at any point where it is copied into application responses. All HTML metacharacters, including < > ' ' and =, should be replaced with the corresponding HTML entities (< > etc).

In cases where the application's functionality allows users to author content using a restricted subset of HTML tags and attributes (for example, blog comments which allow limited formatting and linking), it is necessary to parse the supplied HTML to validate that it does not use any dangerous syntax; this is a non-trivial task.

References

- Cross-site scripting
- Reflected cross-site scripting
- Using Burp to Find XSS issues

Vulnerability classifications

- CWE-79: Improper Neutralization of Input During Web Page Generation ('Cross-site Scripting')
- CWE-80: Improper Neutralization of Script-Related HTML Tags in a Web Page (Basic XSS)
- CWE-116: Improper Encoding or Escaping of Output
- CWE-159: Failure to Sanitize Special Element

Request

```
POST /search.php?test=query HTTP/1.1
Host: testphp.vulnweb.com
Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate
Accept: */*
Accept-Language: en-US,en-GB;q=0.9,en;q=0.8
User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML,
like Gecko) Chrome/88.0.4324.150 Safari/537.36
Connection: close
Cache-Control: max-age=0
Referer: http://testphp.vulnweb.com/index.php
Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded
Content-Length: 61

searchFor=<script>alert (document.domain) </script>&goButton=go
```

Response

