**Operating System - Security**

Security refers to providing a protection system to computer system resources such as CPU, memory, disk, software programs and most importantly data/information stored in the computer system.

If a computer program is run by an unauthorized user, then he/she may cause severe damage to computer or data stored in it.

So a computer system must be protected against unauthorized access, malicious access to system memory, viruses, worms etc.

* Authentication
* One Time passwords
* Program Threats
* System Threats
* Computer Security Classifications

## **Authentication**

Authentication refers to identifying each user of the system and associating the executing programs with those users. It is the responsibility of the Operating System to create a protection system which ensures that a user who is running a particular program is authentic. Operating Systems generally identifies/authenticates users using following three ways −

* **Username / Password** − User need to enter a registered username and password with Operating system to login into the system.
* **User card/key** − User need to punch card in card slot, or enter key generated by key generator in option provided by operating system to login into the system.
* **User attribute - fingerprint/ eye retina pattern/ signature** − User need to pass his/her attribute via designated input device used by operating system to login into the system.

## **One Time passwords**

One-time passwords provide additional security along with normal authentication. In One-Time Password system, a unique password is required every time user tries to login into the system. Once a one-time password is used, then it cannot be used again. One-time password are implemented in various ways.

* **Random numbers** − Users are provided cards having numbers printed along with corresponding alphabets. System asks for numbers corresponding to few alphabets randomly chosen.
* **Secret key** − User are provided a hardware device which can create a secret id mapped with user id. System asks for such secret id which is to be generated every time prior to login.
* **Network password** − Some commercial applications send one-time passwords to user on registered mobile/ email which is required to be entered prior to login.

## **Program Threats**

Operating system's processes and kernel do the designated task as instructed. If a user program made these process do malicious tasks, then it is known as **Program Threats**. One of the common example of program threat is a program installed in a computer which can store and send user credentials via network to some hacker. Following is the list of some well-known program threats.

* **Trojan Horse** − Such program traps user login credentials and stores them to send to malicious user who can later on login to computer and can access system resources.
* **Trap Door** − If a program which is designed to work as required, have a security hole in its code and perform illegal action without knowledge of user then it is called to have a trap door.
* **Logic Bomb** − Logic bomb is a situation when a program misbehaves only when certain conditions met otherwise it works as a genuine program. It is harder to detect.
* **Virus** − Virus as name suggest can replicate themselves on computer system. They are highly dangerous and can modify/delete user files, crash systems. A virus is generatlly a small code embedded in a program. As user accesses the program, the virus starts getting embedded in other files/ programs and can make system unusable for user

## **System Threats**

System threats refers to misuse of system services and network connections to put user in trouble.

System threats can be used to launch program threats on a complete network called as program attack. System threats creates such an environment that operating system resources/ user files are misused. Following is the list of some well-known system threats.

* **Worm** − Worm is a process which can choked down a system performance by using system resources to extreme levels. A Worm process generates its multiple copies where each copy uses system resources, prevents all other processes to get required resources. Worms processes can even shut down an entire network.
* **Port Scanning** − Port scanning is a mechanism or means by which a hacker can detects system vulnerabilities to make an attack on the system.
* **Denial of Service** − Denial of service attacks normally prevents user to make legitimate use of the system. For example, a user may not be able to use internet if denial of service attacks browser's content settings.

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