

### Context Recap

Mark is under the suspicion from the company as he was seen working on unusual hours and browsing random websites recently. A day before he left, John reported a missing USB storage drive and was suspicious of Mark. HR decided to initiate an investigation and we got Mark's registry hives and other files from Marks computer.



## Our hypothesis:

#### **Hypothesis 1 (Suspicious)**

- He accessed confidential document from an internal FTP server, accessed a thumb drive and created an Admin account on his laptop at an unusual hour.

#### **Hypothesis 2 (Not suspicious)**

- Someone is pretending to be Mark and is trying to sabotage him by creating a computer account under his name and performing all the aforementioned suspicious actions.

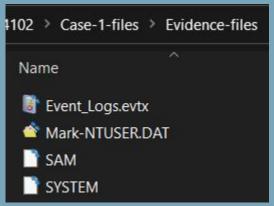
## Mark's Computer System Information

Field	Values
Computer Name	WIN-8NQK06IH20A
Processor's architecture	AMD64
Computer Time Zone	Eastern Standard Time
Computer's DHCP-based IP address	192.168.67.145
Network Mask	255.255.255.0

Our team will be using the **EST time** for this investigation.

## Evidence Analyzed

4 evidence files from Mark's computer, consisting of registry hives and event logs.



Evidence No.	Evidence Name	Hash Values (MD5)	Size
00	Event_Logs.evtx	14ac1ef1a31aa42cf5fd3a4eac942f 90	1092 KiB
01	Mark-NTUSER.D AT	1a5a665b3f3cfb6dc150b26b87c1f 17b	512 KiB
02	SAM	297d8a862ad079f7c5da48f96a71 151d	32 KiB
03	SYSTEM	e64992f9baaca0a728050677bac3 8ca4	9272 KiB

### Tools used

### **Registry Analysis**

Multiple tools used to ensure consistency:



Registry Editor Version 21H2 (OS Build 22000. 1455)

RegRipper Ver 3.0





**WRR64** Ver 3.1.1.0

#### **Event Log Analysis**

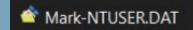


**Event Viewer** Ver 1.0

### Evidences found - website visited

"Mark was seen working on unusual hours and browsing random websites recently"

File analyzed:



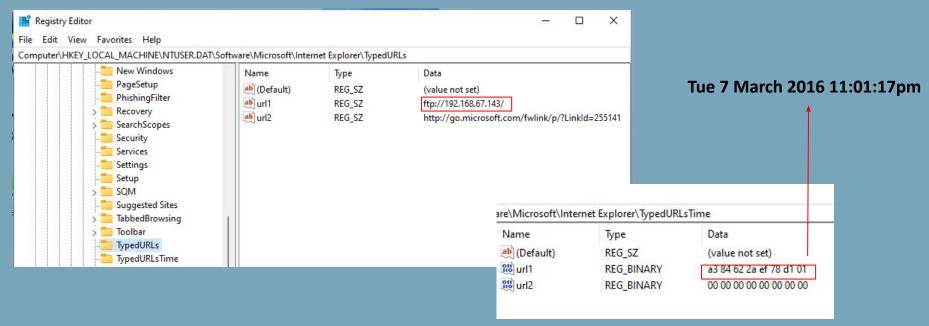
#### Registry location:

- Finding out recent URLs:
   NTUSER.DAT\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\TypedURLs
- 2) Finding out recent URLs time: NTUSER.DAT\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\TypedURLsTime

### Evidences found - website visited

"Mark was seen working on unusual hours and browsing random websites recently"

A notable **FTP server** was accessed by Mark:



### Evidences found - website visited

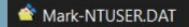
"Mark was seen working on unusual hours and browsing random websites recently"

#### Same finding using RegRipper:

```
Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\TypedPaths has no values.
typedurls v.20200526
(NTUSER.DAT) Returns contents of user's TypedURLs key.
TypedURLs
Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\TypedURLs
LastWrite Time 2016-03-08 04:01:177
  url1 -> ftp://192.168.67.143/
  url2 -> http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?LinkId=255141
typedurlstime v.20200526
(NTUSER.DAT) Returns contents of user's TypedURLsTime key.
TypedURLsTime
Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\TypedURLsTime
LastWrite Time 2016-03-08 04:01:17Z
  url1 -> 2016-03-08 04:01:17Z (ftp://192.168.67.143/)
  url2 -> 0
```

### Evidences found - files accessed

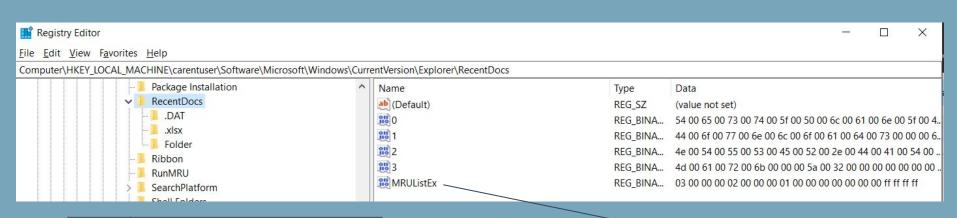
File analyzed:



#### Registry location:

- Finding out recently accessed documents
   NTUSER.DAT\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion \Explorer\RecentDocs
- 2) NTUSER.DAT\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion \Applets\Wordpad\Recent File List

### Evidences found - files accessed



MRU	Docs name			
0	Test_Plan_Confidential.xlsx			
1	Downloads (folder)			
2	NTUSER.DAT			
3	Mark (folder)			

Accessed at 7/3/2016, 11:03PM, after FTP server access (11:01PM) previously.

Checking MRUListEx (Most Recently Used list), he accessed the docs in the following order:

Mark folder  $\rightarrow$  Downloads folder  $\rightarrow$  Test Plan Confidential.xlsx



### Evidences found - files accessed

Mark folder  $\rightarrow$  Downloads folder  $\rightarrow$  Test\_Plan\_Confidential.xlsx

#### What does the order of the docs tell us?

- Mark possibly downloaded the suspicious file Test\_Plan\_Confidential.xlsx
   ( from FTP server ).
- Whenever we download a file, the file is default saved under:
   C:\Users\<Name>\Downloads\<downloaded file>

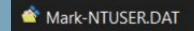
So:

Mark\Downloads\Test\_Plan\_Confidential.xlsx

## Evidences found - applications accessed

Can use UserAssist registry keys to track GUI-based programs launched from desktop.

File analyzed:



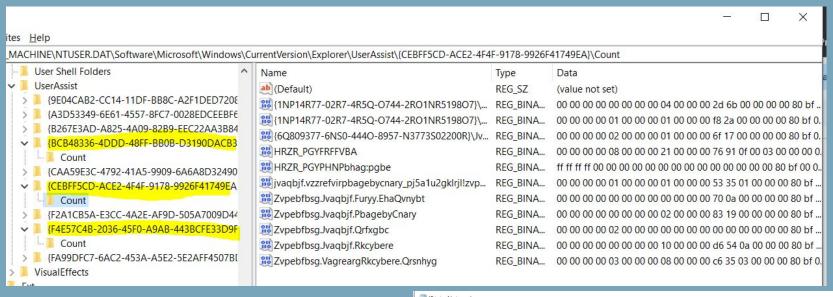
#### Registry location:

1) Finding GUI opened

NTUser.DAT\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\UserAssist\{GUID}\Count

## Evidences found - applications accessed

Found 3 UserAssist keys with values inside it's Count keys:



Upon checking the key timings, these GUI programs were accessed on around the same day the suspicious file
Test\_plan\_confidential.xlsx was accessed.

## Evidences found - applications accessed

These are ROT13 encoded names:

Therefore, applications Mark may have opened are:

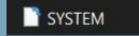
- Internet Explorer (for FTP)
- Wordpad
- CMD (nothing notable found)



### Evidences found - USB access

"A day before he left, John reported a missing USB storage drive and was suspicious of Mark."

File analyzed:



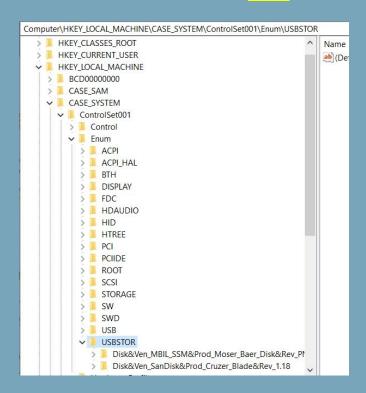
#### Registry location:

 Finding out USB plugged into computer before: SYSTEM\ControlSet001\EnumUSBSTOR



### Evidences found - USB access

"A day before he left, John reported a missing USB storage drive and was suspicious of Mark."

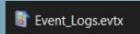


USB Device	Last Write Time	
SanDisk Cruzer Blade USB Device	7/3/2016 - 11:10 PM EST	
MBIL SSM Moser Baer Disk USB Device	7/3/2016 - 11:57 PM EST	

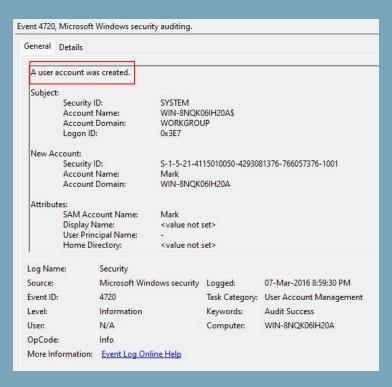


#### Relation between USB & sensitive file access time

Last write time of Test\_Plan\_Confidential.xlsx is at **7/3/2016 - 11:03 PM**. USB write time is updated whenever data are written or removed from the device. Both USB devices are plugged and written after this timing, hence, **both USB devices are suspicious** as files could have been written to it.



We look at notable important findings from the event logs



At **8:59:30 PM on 7 March 2016,** an account called "Mark" was created.

The other subsequent logs shows changes to this new user account (e.g. changes to User Access Control)

Event 4624, Microsoft Windows security auditing.

General Details

An account was successfully logged on.

Subject:

Security ID:

SYSTEM

Account Name: Account Domain: WIN-8NOK06IH20A\$ WORKGROUP

Logon ID:

0x3E7

Logon Type:

Impersonation Level:

Impersonation

New Logon:

Security ID:

S-1-5-21-4115010050-4293081376-766057376-1001 Mark

Account Name:

WIN-8NQK06IH20A Account Domain: 0xCC278

Logon ID:

Logon GUID:

Log Name: Security

Source:

Microsoft Windows security Logged:

07-Mar-2016 10:27:34 PM

Event ID:

4624

Task Category: Logon

Keywords:

Audit Success

User:

Level:

N/A

Information

Computer:

WIN-8NOK06IH20A

OpCode: Info

More Information: Event Log Online Help

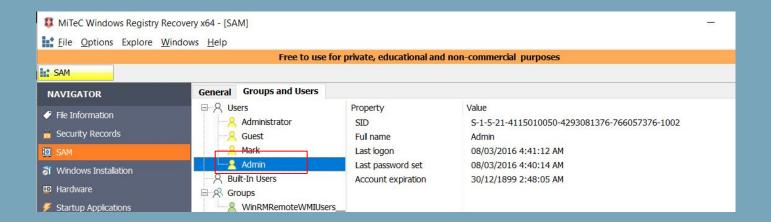
At 10:27:34 PM on 7 March 2016, someone logged into Mark's account

General Detai	ls			
A user accou	nt was created.			
Subject: Security ID: Account Name: Account Domain: Logon ID:		S-1-5-21-4115010050-4293081376-766057376-1001 Mark WIN-8NQK06IH20A 0xCC254		
Acc	t: urity ID: ount Name: ount Domain:	S-1-5-21-4115010050-4293081376-766057376-1002 Admin WIN-8NQK06IH20A		
Attributes:  SAM Account Name:  Display Name:  User Principal Name:  Home Directory:  Home Drive:  Script Path:		Admin <value :<br="" not=""><value :<br="" not=""><value :<br="" not=""><value :<="" not="" td=""><td>set&gt;</td><td></td></value></value></value></value>	set>	
Log Name: Source: Event ID: Level: User:	Security Microsoft Win 4720 Information N/A	ndows security		07-Mar-2016 11:40:14 PM User Account Management Audit Success WIN-8NQK06IH20A
OpCode: More Informa	Info tion: Event Log On	line Help		

At 11:40:14 PM on 7 March 2016, Mark created an account called "Admin".

This is a suspicious time as this is the time after Mark has accessed the sensitive file (accessed Test\_Plan\_Confidential at 11:03PM on same day).





If we check the SAM registry hive with WRR, we see that "Admin" is part of the computer users in Mark's computer.

6-1001			
5-1001			
5-1001			
Mark			
WIN-8NQK06IH20A 0xCC254			
S-1-5-21-4115010050-4293081376-766057376-1002 Admin WIN-8NQK06IH20A			
1:40:14 PM			
User Account Managemen			
H20A			

Old UAC Value: 0x15 New UAC Value: 0x210

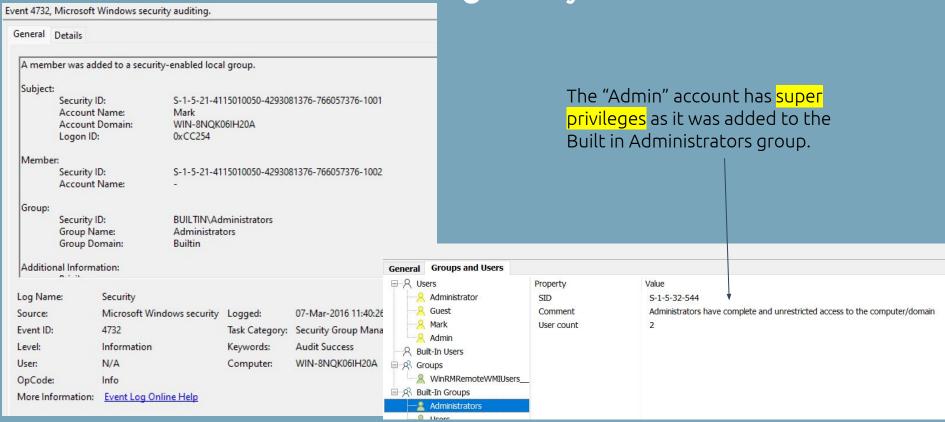
User Account Control:

Account Enabled 'Password Not Required' - Disabled 'Don't Expire Password' - Enabled After which, certain changes were made to the "Admin" account such as the user access control (0x15  $\rightarrow$  0x210).

This means account changed from "Account disabled, password not required" to "Account enabled, password never expires."

#### **Possibility:**

Person who created this account would want to log into this account in the future and doesn't want anyone to log into it or change its password by setting a password that never expires.



Event 4624, Microsoft Windows security auditing.

General Details

An account was successfully logged on.

Subject:

Security ID: SYSTEM

Account Name: WIN-8NQK06IH20A\$
Account Domain: WORKGROUP

Logon ID: 0x3E7

Logon Type:

Impersonation Level: Impersonation

New Logon:

Security ID: S-1-5-21-4115010050-4293081376-766057376-1002

Account Name: Admin

Account Domain: WIN-8NQK06IH20A

Logon ID: 0x1F31F0

Logon GUID: {00000000-0000-0000-00000000000000}

Log Name: Security

Source: Microsoft Windows security Logged: 07-Mar-2016 11:41:12 PM

 Event ID:
 4624
 Task Category:
 Logon

 Level:
 Information
 Keywords:
 Audit Success

 User:
 N/A
 Computer:
 WIN-8NQK06IH20A

OpCode: Info

More Information: Event Log Online Help

Finally at **11:41:12 PM on 7 March 2016**, someone logged into the "Admin" account.

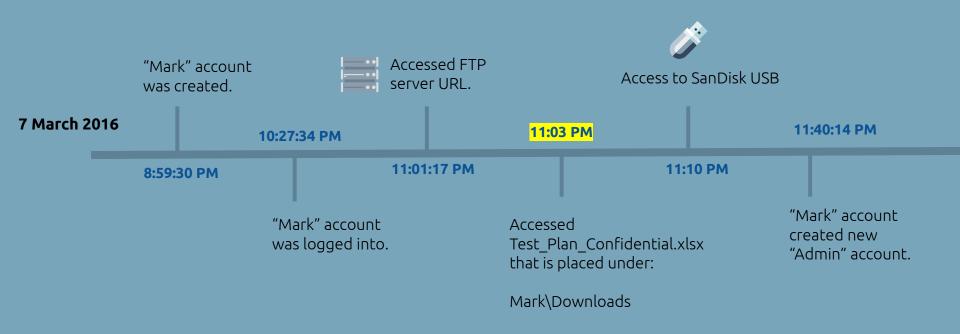
Possibly to test out that the account can be logged into.

A user ass								
A user acci	ount was changed.							
Subject:								
	ecurity ID:	SYSTEM						
Account Name:		WINDOWS-MRT14B2\$						
1	ccount Domain:	WORKGROUP						
L	ogon ID:	0x3E7	0x3E7					
Target Acc	ount:							
	ecurity ID:	S-1-5-21-41	15010050-429308	31376-766057376-500				
	ccount Name:	Administrat						
A	ccount Domain:	WINDOWS-	MRT14B2					
Changed A	Attributes:							
	AM Account Name:	_						
Display Name: User Principal Name: Home Directory: Home Drive: Script Path:		•						
							rofile Path:	0
		1	ser Workstations:	_				
1 7	assword Last Set:	_						
A	ccount Expires:	-						
	rimary Group ID: -							
	llowedToDelegateTo:	5.2						
	ld UAC Value: lew UAC Value:	0x211						
1 00	ser Account Control:	0x211						
U	ser Parameters: -	-						
Log Name:	Security							
Source:	Microsoft Wir	dows security	Logged:	07-Mar-2016 11:58:51 PM				
Event ID:	4738		Task Category:	User Account Management				
Level:	Information		Keywords:	Audit Success				
User:	N/A		Computer:	windows-mrt14b2				
OpCode:	Info							

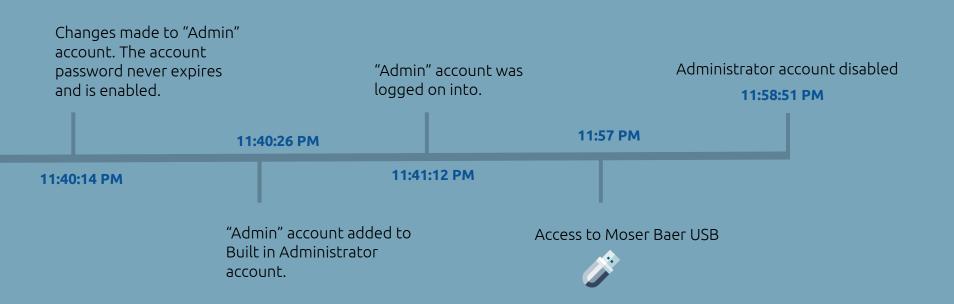
Additionally, we noticed at a later time on the **same day at 11:58:51 PM**, the administrator account in Mark's laptop was disabled.

Such action is especially suspicious because it seems like the individual do not want anyone to be the most privileged user.

### Final Timeline



### Final Timeline



## Our hypothesis:

#### Hypothesis 1 (Guilty) - Our main hypothesis

- He accessed confidential document from a FTP server, accessed a thumb drive and created an Admin account on his laptop at an unusual hour.

#### **Hypothesis 2 (Not guilty)**

- Someone is pretending to be Mark and is trying to sabotage him by creating a computer account under his name and performing all the aforementioned suspicious actions.

### Hypothesis #1: GUILTY

- 1) The timeline started with an account called "Mark" being created. We assume that the case creator has created this.
- 2) Definite evidence that he has indeed worked at **unusual hours** (e.g.after usual work hours at more than 8pm).
- There is evidence that he accessed an FTP server and downloaded a file (as he accessed his Downloads folder at that day). The file downloaded and accessed has somewhat a **suspicious** name "Test\_Plan\_Confidential.xlsx". Perhaps trying to steal company secrets.
- 4) He has definitely accessed and plugged in **USB drives** into his computer.

### Cont'd

- 5) He has created an **"Admin"** account in his computer even though there is already an existing "administrator" account.
  - He has named this account "Admin", similar to the "administrator" account. This might indicate that he is trying to make this account sound **less suspicious** to users who might takeover his computer. Users might think nothing of it.
  - The account has a password that never expires. This shows that he wants no one to access this account (by setting a password) and also wants to have **persistency** with a password that never expires.
  - The account has **super privileges** similar to administrator.
  - The administrator account was then subsequently deactivated

The most suspicious and crucial action that shows that Mark is guilty

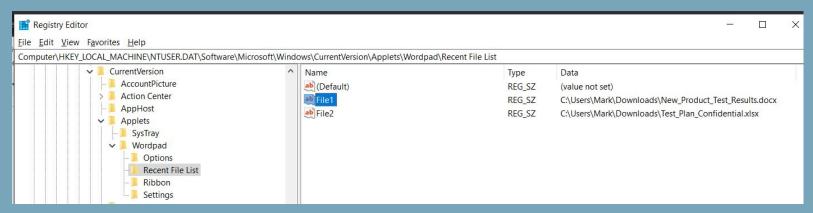
## Hypothesis #2: NOT guilty

- 1) The timeline started with an account called "Mark" being created. We assume that some **rogue individual** has created this in order to sabotage Mark. If this is the case, then Mark is not guilty as someone else has pretended to be him doing the suspicious actions.
- 2) As mentioned, "Test\_Plan\_Confidential.xlsx" sounds like a suspicious filename. However, there is no way to conclude that it is 100% suspicious as we are unable to check its content. We only deem it as suspicious based on its filename. If we are able to check its content, then Mark is suspicious.
- 3) There are USB drives plugged into Mark's computer. However, we **cannot conclude that it has been stolen** as there is no indication to show that it does.

## Other Interesting Findings - files accessed

A notable finding: **Wordpad.exe** was used to open **TWO** files (a docx and xlsx file). Can find information under

NTUSER.DAT\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ Applets\Wordpad\Recent File List



However, New\_Product\_Test\_Result.docx wasn't found in RecentDocs registry key for recently accessed files even though it's under RecentFileList for Wordpad. It could have been deleted or renamed.

## Other Interesting Findings - Event Logs

We found another computer "windows-mrt14b2", accessing Mark's computer (WIN-8NQK061H20A). Upon analyzing the logs, many events are network related (e.g. creating Remote Desktop Users - possibly to remote into the computer after Mark leaves.) But none of this could be confirmed if it is related to the timeline/case.

Log Name: Security Microsoft Windows security Logged: 26-Mar-2016 10:25:33 PM Source: 4797 Event ID: Task Category: User Account Management Level: Information Keywords: Audit Success WIN-8NOK06IH20A N/A Computer: User: OpCode: Info More Information: Event Log Online Help



### Conclusion

Mark is **suspicious.** Mainly due to the event logs (e.g. purpose of creating Admin account).

However, we **cannot guarantee** that Mark is fully suspicious with confidence as there are some uncertainty to some of the evidences found, as mentioned (USB drives and Test\_Plan\_Confidential file).

Unless more evidence from Mark's computer is given, we can be more certain that Mark is indeed suspicious.

### Recommendations

Additional evidence/information we need to be certain that Mark is indeed guilty:

- 1) **An image of Mark's laptop.** This is to look through the file system and access the contents of "Test\_Plan\_Confidential.xlsx". If the contents are indeed suspicious, then Mark is suspicious as he has a suspicious file in his computer.
- 2) Inventory list of company's USB devices
- 3) John's **SYSTEM registry hive.** To compare the values of the USBSTOR plugged into Mark's system.
- 4) **More event logs**. The event log file given for this case seems limited and is for security events. More event logs that provides information about PnP (Plug and Play devices) like USB plug ins could be provided.
- 5) More comprehensive description of the case (e.g. date when Mark left the company so that we can match it with the timeline, company's SOP).
- 6) The physical USB device

# Thank you!

QNA

