

MALWARE ANALYSIS REPORT ON MELISSA MALWARE

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Overview

In this document, I have taken a malware sample and through various means of Static and dynamic malware analysis techniques, I have tried to identify the malware family and come up with the name, which is Melissa Malware. I have tried to cover the entire malware analysis process in this document including the basic characteristics of Melissa Malware.

Introduction

The Melissa virus was a mass-mailing macro virus released on or around March 26, 1999. The naming of the malware was done by Smith for a stripper in Florida, started by taking over victims' Microsoft Word program disabling a number of safeguards in Word 97 or Word 2000. Then a macro has been used to hijack their Microsoft Outlook email system and send messages to the first 50 addresses in their mailing lists. Those messages, in turn, tempted recipients to open a virus-laden attachment by giving it such names as "sexxy.jpg" or "naked wife" or by deceitfully asserting, "Here is the document you requested ... don't show anyone else ;-)."

Technical Details

Melissa works with Microsoft Word 97, Microsoft Word 2000, and Microsoft Outlook 97 or 98 email client. One doesn't need to have Microsoft Outlook to receive the virus in email, but it will not spread itself further without it.

Melissa will not work under Word 95 and will not spread further under Outlook Express.

Melissa can infect Windows 95, 98, NT and Macintosh users. If the infected machine does not have Outlook or internet access at all, the virus will continue to spread locally within the user's own documents.

Propagation of Malware

Melissa arrives in an attachment to an e-mail note with the subject line "Important Message from [the name of someone]," and body text that reads "Here is that document you asked for...don't show anyone else ;-)". The attachment is often named LIST.DOC. If the recipient clicks on or otherwise opens the attachment, the infecting file is read to computer storage. The file itself originated in an Internet alt.sex newsgroup and contains a list of passwords for various Web sites that require memberships. The file also contains a Visual Basic script that copies the virus-infected file into the normal.dot template file used by Word for custom settings and default macros. It also creates this entry in the Windows registry:

```
HKEY_CURRENT_USERSoftwareMicrosoftOffice"Melissa?"="...by Kwyjibo"
```

The virus then creates an Outlook object using the Visual Basic code, reads the first 50 names in each Outlook Global Address Book, and sends each the same e-mail note with virus attachment that caused this particular infection. The virus only works with Outlook, not Outlook Express.

The email looked like this:

- From: (name of infected user)
- Subject: Important Message From (name of infected user)
- To: (50 names from alias list)
- Body: Here is that document you asked for ... don't show anyone else ;-)
- Attachment: LIST.DOC

We must remember that Melissa can arrive in any document, not necessarily just in this LIST.DOC where it was spread initially.

Most of the recipients are likely to open a document attachment like this, as it usually comes from someone they know.

Infection by Malware

After sending itself out, the virus continues to infect other Word documents. Eventually, these files can end up being mailed to other users as well. This can be potentially disastrous, as a user might inadvertently send out confidential data to outsiders.

The virus activates if it is executed when the minutes of the hour match the day of the month; for example, 18:27 on the 27th day of a month. At this time the virus will insert the following payload of text into the current open document in Word:

- *"Twenty-two points, plus triple-word-score, plus fifty points for using all my letters. Game's over. I'm outta here".*

This text, as well as the alias name of the author of the virus, "Kwyjibo", are all references to the popular cartoon TV series called "The Simpsons".

Impact

Email servers at more than 300 corporations and government agencies worldwide became overloaded, and some had to be shut down entirely, including at Microsoft. Approximately one million email accounts were disrupted, and Internet traffic in some locations slowed to a crawl.

The collective damage was enormous: an estimated \$80 million for the cleanup and repair of affected computer systems.

How to Avoid Melissa Malware attack

If we get an e-mail note with the subject, "Important Message from [the name of someone]," and it has an e-mail attachment (usually a 40-kilobyte document named LIST.DOC), simply DO NOT OPEN (for example, do not click on) the attachment. We need to rite down the e-mail address of the person it came from and then delete the message. Then we can send a note to the sender so that they know that their computer has been infected.

File Signature validation

We have checked the binary file for the selected malware in hexed.it. We have considered the first few bytes for signature validation. Below is the snapshot of the webpage :

The screenshot shows the hexed.it interface. The top menu includes New file, Open file, Save as, Undo, Redo, Tools, Settings, and Help. The main area is divided into two panes. The left pane, titled 'File Information', shows details for 'sample_lab6_18_sep': File Name, File Size (45,056 bytes (44 KiB)), and a 'Data Inspector (Little-endian)' section with various data types like 8-bit Integer, 16-bit Integer, 24-bit Integer, 32-bit Integer, 64-bit Integer (+), 64-bit Integer (±), 16-bit Float, 32-bit Float, 64-bit Float, LEB128 (+), LEB128 (±), MS-DOS DateTime, OLE 2.0 DateTime, UNIX 32-bit DateTime, Macintosh HFS DateTime, Macintosh HFS+ DateTime, and Binary. The right pane shows the hex data and its ASCII representation. The first few bytes are D0 CF 11 E0 A1 B1 1A E1, which correspond to the ASCII string 'D0CF11E0A1B11AE1'.

Validating file signature from Wikipedia file signature scheme:

D0 CF 11 E0 A1 B1 1A E1	0x00000000	0	doc xls ppt msg	Compound File Binary Format, a container format used for document by older versions of Microsoft Office. ^[27] It is however an open format used by other programs as well.
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We can Assume the file to be any of the above file types. To get a clear-cut idea, we have checked other static analysis tools such as PESTudio, VirusTotal etc.

Static Analysis using PEStudio Tool

From this snapshot, we can confirm that the sample is Microsoft Office Word file.

The screenshot shows the Malware Analysis Tool (pestid) interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with icons for file, settings, about, and a search icon. Below the sidebar, the file path is displayed as "c:\users\jeuser\downloads/sample/sample_lab6_18.exe".

	encoding (2)	size (bytes)	file offset	blacklist (0)	hint (13)	group (0)	value (547)
indicators (8)	ascii	4	0x00009713	-	utility	-	at.id
virusotal (50/61)	ascii	12	0x0000A5D6	-	utility	-	CreateObject
strings (547)	ascii	5	0x0000A4D6	-	utility	-	Login
	ascii	4	0x0000A768	-	utility	-	Send
	unicode	64	0x0000324C	-	size	-	si przez cudzoziemca w rozumieniu ustawy z dnia 24 marca 1920r.
	ascii	21	0x00005554	-	office	-	Microsoft Office Word
	ascii	13	0x0000A49E	-	office	-	Document_Open
	unicode	10	0x00007600	-	office	-	Root Entry
	unicode	18	0x00007782	-	office	-	SummaryInformation
	unicode	26	0x00007B02	-	office	-	DocumentSummaryInformation
	unicode	6	0x00007880	-	office	-	Macros
	ascii	5	0x000095C7	-	keyboard	-	Space
	ascii	19	0x00008B11	-	file	-	Outlook.Application
	ascii	4	0x00000222	-	-	-	bjhj
	ascii	4	0x00001946	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x00001950	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x00001958	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x00001970	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x00001986	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x00001998	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x000019AE	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x000019C2	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x000019CE	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x000019DC	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x000019F2	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x00002FE6	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	4	0x00002FF4	-	-	-	h7IS
	ascii	42	0x00003EDA	-	-	-	urn:schemas-microsoft-com:officesmarttags
	ascii	15	0x00003FD6	-	-	-	metricconverter
	ascii	7	0x00003F7E	-	-	-	1132...?

At the bottom, there are fields for sha256 hash (B3D734F08B01361EDCE0BD55F382187BEFCDF7B44278909E8614C67CFDBF), signature (n/a), and a status field (OK).

We can get an idea about the Hash Values, first bytes and entropy of the sample file as below

[illegible]

Here are few other strings which we are going to use while creating the Yara rule.

perstudio 9.15 - Malware Initial Assessment - www.winbox.com [c:\users\user\downloads\sample\sample_lab6_18_sep]

file settings about

c:\users\user\downloads\sample\sample_lab6_18_sep

indicators (0)

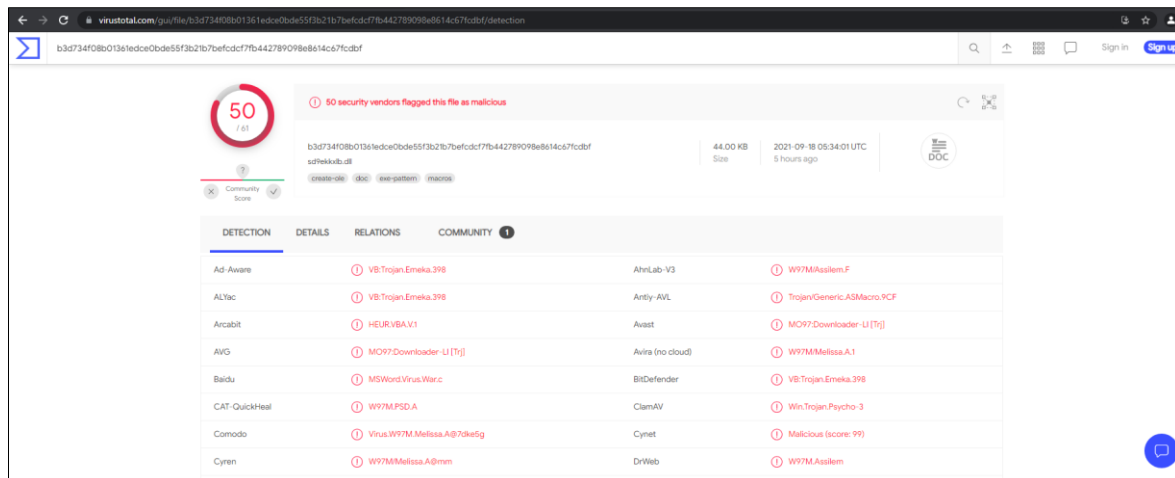
virustotal (50/61)

strings (547)

encoding (2)	size (bytes)	file-offset	blacklist (0)	hint (13)	group (0)	value (547)
ascii	14	0x00008899	-	-	-	... by Kwojibo
ascii	7	0x000088B3	-	-	-	Outlook
ascii	7	0x000088C7	-	-	-	profile
ascii	9	0x000088D3	-	-	-	password
ascii	23	0x00008CD7	-	-	-	Important Message From...
ascii	67	0x00008D07	-	-	-	Here is that document you asked for ... don't show anyone else :-)
ascii	14	0x00008DAF	-	-	-	... by Kwojibo
ascii	44	0x00008DC5	-	-	-	HKCY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Office\
ascii	9	0x00008DF5	-	-	-	Melissa!
ascii	7	0x00008E87	-	-	-	Melissa
ascii	7	0x00008ED7	-	-	-	Melissa
ascii	7	0x00008F07	-	-	-	Melissa
ascii	7	0x00008F57	-	-	-	Melissa
ascii	28	0x00008FEF	-	-	-	Private Sub Document_Close()
ascii	27	0x000090D7	-	-	-	Private Sub Document_Open()
ascii	9	0x00009199	-	-	-	Document=
ascii	9	0x000091D8	-	-	-	Document=
ascii	31	0x00009209	-	-	-	WORD\Melissa written by Kwojibo
ascii	35	0x00009231	-	-	-	Works in both Word 2000 and Word 97
ascii	62	0x00009261	-	-	-	Word! Macro Virus? Word 97 Virus? Word 2000 Virus? You Decide!
ascii	59	0x000092A9	-	-	-	Word -> Email I Word 97 <-> Word 2000 ... it's a new age!
ascii	119	0x00009301	-	-	-	Twenty-two points, plus triple-word-score, plus fifty points for using all my letters
ascii	8	0x00009397	-	-	-	Attribut
ascii	8	0x000093A0	-	-	-	e VB_Nam
ascii	8	0x000093A9	-	-	-	e = "Mel
ascii	9	0x000093B0	-	-	-	issa"\n
ascii	5	0x000093C0	-	-	-	x1Nor
ascii	4	0x000093C6	-	-	-	mal
ascii	9	0x000093CC	-	-	-	Cre atabi
ascii	4	0x000093D6	-	-	-	Dr+4

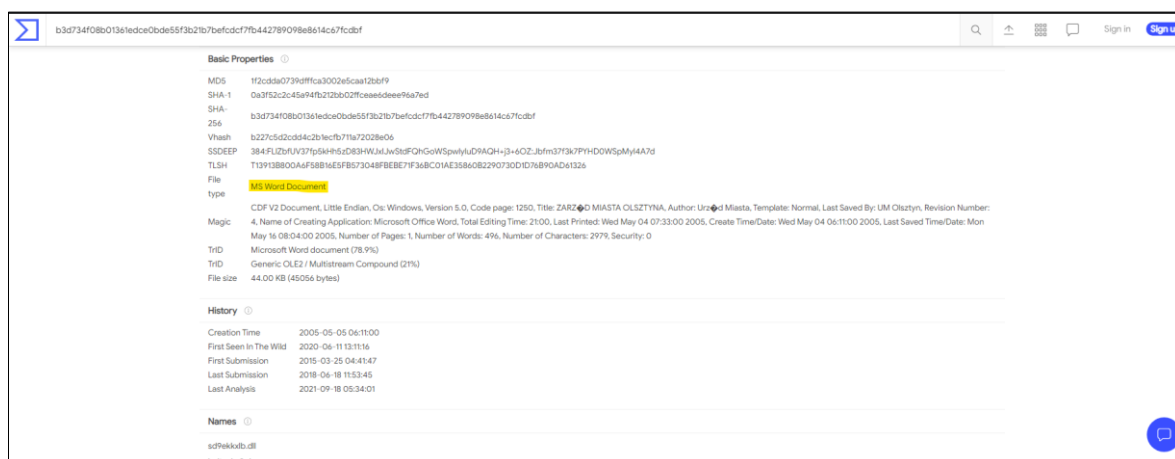
Static Analysis using VirusTotal

We can confirm the hash and file type from the below snapshots



The screenshot shows the VirusTotal detection results for a file. At the top, a red circle with the number 50 indicates that 50 security vendors flagged this file as malicious. Below this, the file's SHA-256 hash is displayed: b3d734f08b01361edce0bde55f3b21b7befcdcf7fb442789098e8614c67fcdcf. The file size is 44.00 KB, and it was uploaded 5 hours ago. The file type is identified as a Microsoft Word document (DOC). A table lists the detections from various vendors, including Ad-Aware, ALYac, Arcabit, AVG, Baidu, CAT-QuickHeal, Comodo, and Cyren, all of which have detected the file as malicious.

DETECTION	DETAILS	RELATIONS	COMMUNITY
Ad-Aware	VB:Trojan.Ereka.398	AhnLab-V3	W97M/Asslem.F
ALYac	VB:Trojan.Ereka.398	Antiy-AVL	Trojan.Generic.ASMacro.9CF
Arcabit	HEUR:VBA.V1	Avast	MO97/Downloader-U[Tri]
AVG	MO97/Downloader-U[Tri]	Avira (no cloud)	W97M/Melissa.A.1
Baidu	MSWord.Virus.Warc	BitDefender	VB:Trojan.Ereka.398
CAT-QuickHeal	W97M.FSD.A	ClamAV	Win.Trojan.Psycho-3
Comodo	Virus.W97M.Melissa.A@73e5g	Cynet	Malicious (score: 99)
Cyren	W97M/Melissa.A@mm	DrWeb	W97M/Asslem



The screenshot shows the basic properties of the file. The file is identified as a Microsoft Word document (DOC) with a file size of 44.00 KB. The MD5 hash is 1f2cdd5a0739dfffca3002e5caat2bbf9, and the SHA-1 hash is 0a3f52c2c45a94fb272b02f9ceaddeef9a7ed. The file was created on 2005-05-05 06:11:00. The file type is identified as a Microsoft Word document (DOC). The file is flagged as malicious by 50 security vendors.

Basic Properties

MD5: 1f2cdd5a0739dfffca3002e5caat2bbf9
SHA-1: 0a3f52c2c45a94fb272b02f9ceaddeef9a7ed
SHA-256: b3d734f08b01361edce0bde55f3b21b7befcdcf7fb442789098e8614c67fcdcf
Vhash: b227c5d3d5d4c2b9ecf71a72028e06
SSDEEP: 384:FLI2fVJv71p5hH6sD83HJLJw5kF0HGoWSpwlyu9A2H++J1+6OZ:bfm373k7PH1DOWSpMy4A47d
TLSH: T139138800aF5881e5F8573048F8EBE7F3a8C01AE358a08290730D1D7b890Ad61326
File type: Microsoft Word document (DOC)
File size: 44.00 KB (45056 bytes)


History

Creation Time: 2005-05-05 06:11:00
First Seen in The Wild: 2020-06-11 13:11:16
First Submission: 2015-03-25 04:41:47
Last Submission: 2018-06-18 11:53:45
Last Analysis: 2021-09-18 05:34:01

Names

sdPhekkub.dll
balturca2.doc

In the below snapshots, we can confirm that the sample file is using embedded macro (bundled VBA file).



The screenshot shows the bundled files section of the VirusTotal analysis. It displays a table with columns for Scanned, Detections, File type, and Name. The file is identified as a Microsoft Word document (DOC) with a file size of 44.00 KB. The file is flagged as malicious by 50 security vendors. The bundled files section shows that the file contains a VBA macro, which is identified as a Microsoft Word document (DOC) with a file size of 44.00 KB.

Scanned	Detections	File type	Name
2020-11-11	44 / 61	VBA	d5892bb247d8d28ca9b426eb5a079239306007d02b8abd93c6da9ff97a85e874

Graph Summary

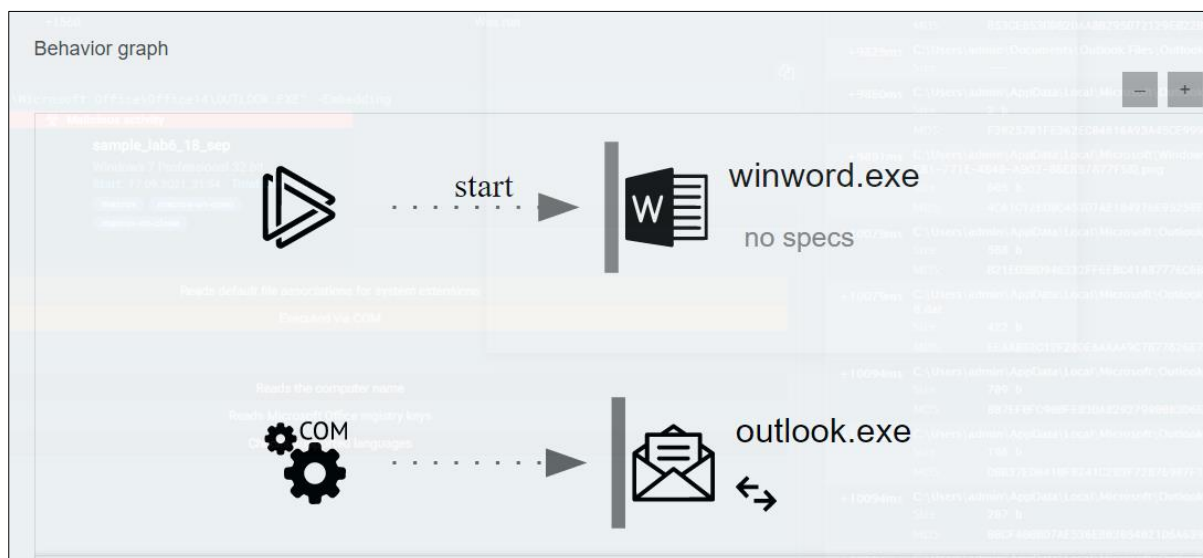
1 bundled files

Dynamic Analysis using Any.Run

The sample file has been run under sandboxed environment. Below are few details from the website: (Please note: currently the trial version allows the malware to run only for 1 minute). We have taken a few snapshots for analysis purpose.

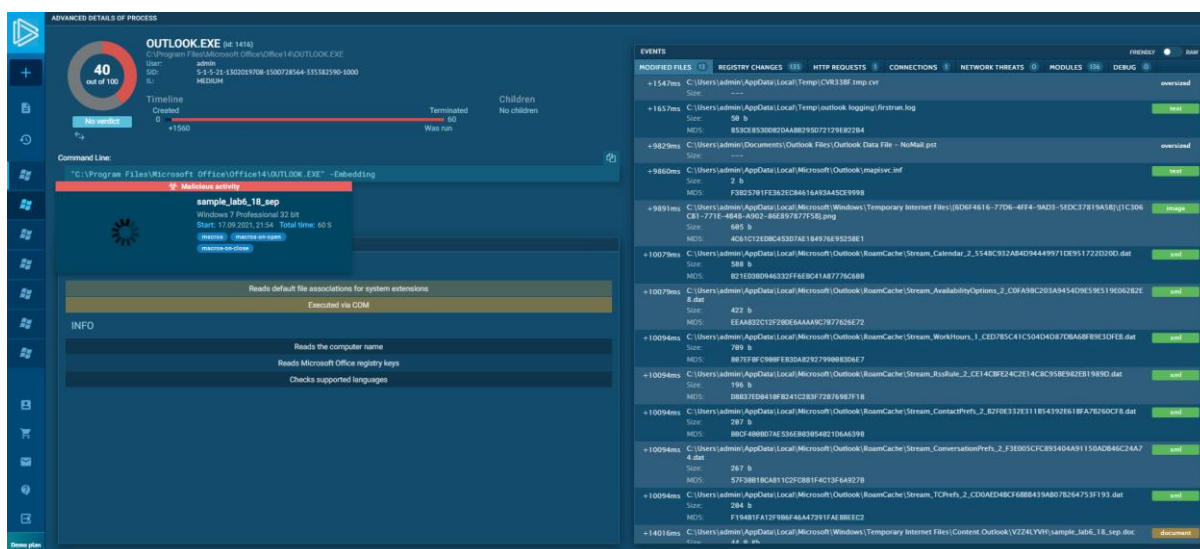
Behavior Graph

We can see that the word file is calling the embedded VBA macro script to open Outlook and then it will read the first 50 address in the address book and try to send the malicious code.



Process Graph

Here, it is clearly visible that the execution of outlook.exe has been listed as a warning and malicious activity.



Dropped Files

Dropped files			
PID	Process	Filename	Type
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Temp\CVR33BF.tmp.cvr MD5: — SHA256: —	—
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook\mapisvc.inf MD5: F3B25701FE362EC84616A93A45CE9998 SHA256: B3D510EF04275CA8E698E5B3CBB0ECE3949EF9252F0CDC839E9EE347409A2209	text
3596	WINWORD.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Temp\CVR2E41.tmp.cvr MD5: — SHA256: —	—
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\I224LYVH\sample_lab6_18_sep.doc MD5: 1F2CDDA0739DFFCA3002E5CAA12BB... SHA256: B3D734F08B01361EDCE0BDE55F3B21B7BEFCDCF7FB442789098E8614C67FCD8F	document
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook\RoamCache\Stream_ContactPrefs_2_B2F0E332E311B54392E61BFA7B260CF8.dat MD5: BBCE400BD7AE536EB03054021D6A6398 SHA256: 383020065C1F31F4FB09F448599A6D5E532C390AF4E5B8AF0771FE17A2322AD	xml
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook\RoamCache\Stream_ConversationPrefs_2_F3E005CFC893404A91150ADB46C24A74.dat MD5: 57F30B1BCA811C2FCB81F4C13F6A927B SHA256: 612BAD93621991CB09C347FF01EC600B46617247D5C041311FF459E247D8C2D3	xml
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook\RoamCache\Stream_WorkHours_1_CED7B5C41C504D4D87DBA6BFB9E3DFEB.dat MD5: 807EF0FC900FEB3DA82927990083D6E7 SHA256: 4411E7DC978011222764943081500FF0E43CBF7CCD44264BD1AB6306CA68913	xml
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook\RoamCache\Stream_AvailabilityOptions_2_C0FA98C203A9454D9E59E519E062B2E8.dat MD5: EEAA832C12F20DE6AAA9C7B77626E72 SHA256: C4C9A90F2C961D9EE79CF08FBE647ED7DE020228E876C7BAAD00F4CA29CA16	xml
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\Documents\Outlook Files\Outlook Data File - NoMail.pst MD5: — SHA256: —	—
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook\RoamCache\Stream_Calendar_2_5548C932AB4D94449971DE951722D20D.dat MD5: B21ED3BD946332FF6EBC41A87776C6BB SHA256: B1AAC4E817CD10670B785EF8E5523C4A883F44138E50486987DC73054A46F6F4	xml
3596	WINWORD.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Temp\VBEMSFMSForms.exd MD5: 6E3B7226F8E54D42D2143FA836C2BFEB SHA256: 24039B2A80386AFDD57EE1301B5AC5629A6EE144C284F8AE323BA257CC3E8132	tlb
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Temp\outlook logging\firstun.log MD5: 853CE853DD82DAA8B295D72129E022B4 SHA256: E4BF8FD5E1E40D86D6599C9149DAD08C90DDC3D8CA8A50A7A419F4F7DE58A901	text
1416	OUTLOOK.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\{6D6F4616-77D6-4FF4-9AD3-5EDC37819A5B}\{1C306CB1-771E-4B4B-A902-86E897877F5B}.png MD5: 4C61C12EDBC453D7AE184976E95258E1 SHA256: 296526F9A716C1AA91BA5D6F69F0EB92FDF79C2CB2CFC0CEB2B7CCBC27035F	image
3596	WINWORD.EXE	C:\Users\admin\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Templates\~\$Normal.dotm	pgc

Below is the execution report and full analysis link of ANY.RUN website:

<https://any.run/report/47f4d62c59b9643f5dbb6d7447570ed98ccd77e0ef77e5ba870e3b978ae8fec5/1009cc31-902e-4bc7-8aa0-893aefde09e8#screenshots>

Dynamic Analysis using Olevba Tool

Olevba tool has been used to perform dynamic analysis of the selected malware sample in flare VM environment and snapshot of Execution report generated is as below :

Type	Keyword	Description
AutoExec	Document_Close	Runs when the Word document is closed
AutoExec	Document_Open	Runs when the Word or Publisher document is opened
Suspicious	CreateObject	May create an OLE object
Suspicious	sample	May detect Anubis Sandbox
Suspicious	VBProject	May attempt to modify the VBA code (self-modification)
Suspicious	VBAComponents	May attempt to modify the VBA code (self-modification)
Suspicious	CodeModule	May attempt to modify the VBA code (self-modification)
Suspicious	AddFromString	May attempt to modify the VBA code (self-modification)
Suspicious	System	May run an executable file or a system command on a Mac (if combined with libc.dylib)
Suspicious	Base64 Strings	Base64-encoded strings were detected, may be used to obfuscate strings (option --decode to see all)
Suspicious	VBA Stomping	VBA Stomping was detected: the VBA source code and P-code are different, this may have been used to hide malicious code

Below is the full report from InQuest Lab Deep File Inspection (DFI):

<https://labs.inquest.net/dfi/hash/b3d734f08b01361edce0bde55f3b21b7befcdcf7fb442789098e8614c67fcdbf>

YARA Rule Execution

Yara Rule has been uploaded in GitHub

(https://github.com/SayanKantiMukherjee/ThreatIntelligenceLab/blob/main/Lab_6_Melissa_Malware/Melissa_Malware_Yara_Rule.yara)

Below is the execution in flare VM with samples:

```
FLARE Sat 09/18/2021 4:09:02.72
C:\Users\IEUser\Desktop>yara32 C:\Users\IEUser\Desktop\melissa.yar C:\Users\IEUser\Downloads\sample
Melissa C:\Users\IEUser\Downloads\sample\0a56baab11a888b2741bffc5fe7a52596b58f1d8e842770b21de82bd12a20484
Melissa C:\Users\IEUser\Downloads\sample\ff05182a14ea139b331217159f327a24cf826ef1173262ae47823df7cbfa747c
Melissa C:\Users\IEUser\Downloads\sample\sample_lab6_18_sep
```

Reference

- 1) <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/melissa-virus-20th-anniversary-032519>
- 2) <https://searchsecurity.techtarget.com/definition/Melissa-virus>
- 3) <https://www.f-secure.com/v-descs/melissa.shtml>