

# APK Reverse Engineering and Tampering Detection

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- Semil Jain and Pranjal Patil

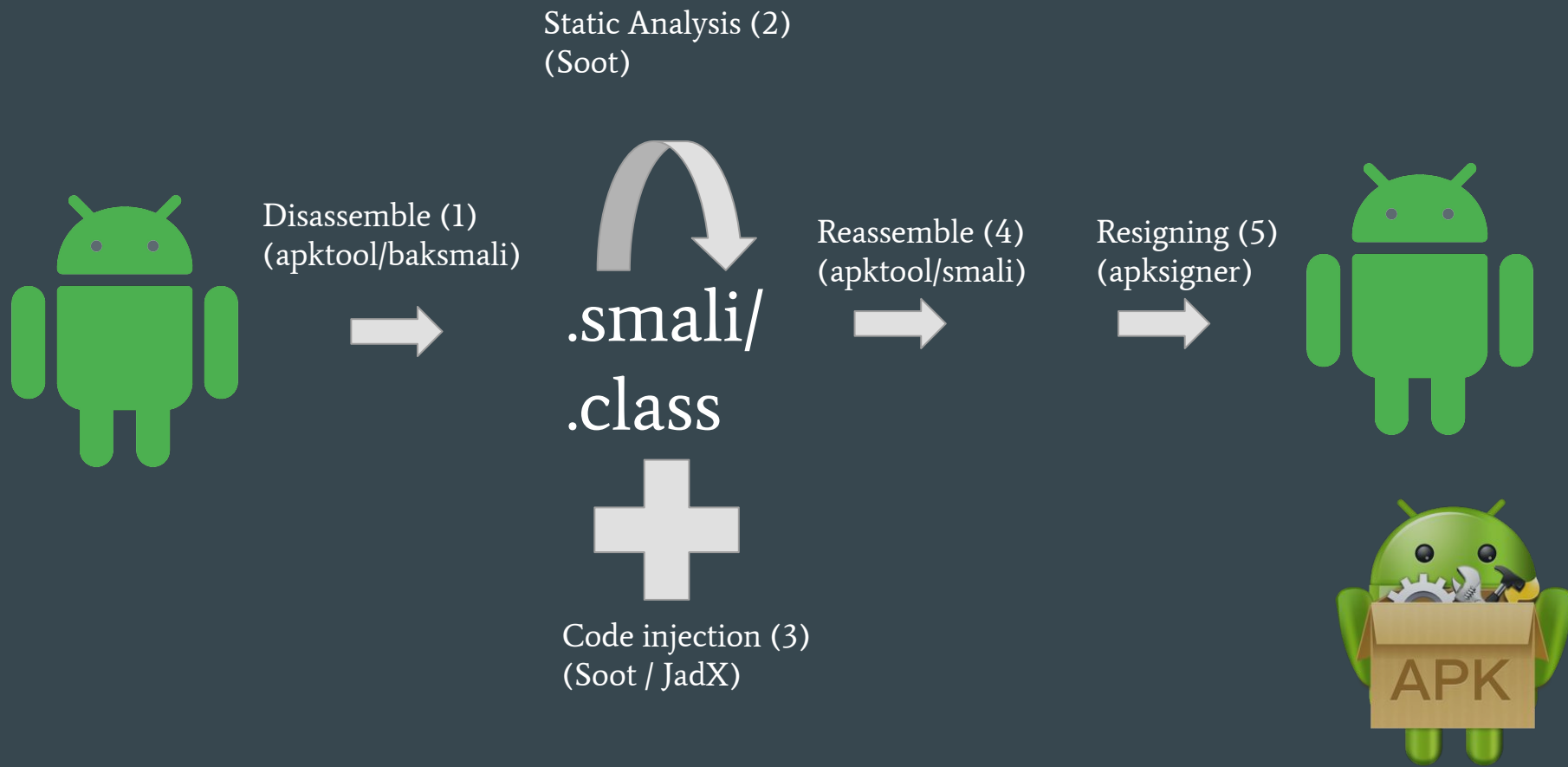


# Part 1: APK Reverse Engineering

## Part 2: Anti-Tampering Analysis



# Part 1



# Lets Begin Hacking\* ...

\*Only for Project purpose



# 1. Working with Soot - A Java optimization framework

What did we hack?

- Instrumented an Android app using Soot
- Which application? - A simple calculator apk
- Printed the logs in the adb shell on every method call in the app



# Implementation

- AndroidLogger.Java

```
private final static String USER_HOME = System.getProperty(key:"user.home");  
private static String androidJar = USER_HOME + "/Library/Android/sdk/platforms";  
static String androidDemoPath = System.getProperty(key:"user.dir") + File.separator + "demo" + File.separator + "Android";  
static String apkPath = androidDemoPath + File.separator + "/calc.apk";  
static String outputPath = androidDemoPath + File.separator + "/Instrumented";
```

Setting properties



# Implementation

- AndroidLogger.Java

```
@Override
protected void internalTransform(Body b, String phaseName, Map<String, String> options) {
    // First we filter out Android framework methods
    if(AndroidUtil.isAndroidMethod(b.getMethod()))
        return;
    JimpleBody body = (JimpleBody) b;
    UnitPatchingChain units = b.getUnits();
    List<Unit> generatedUnits = new ArrayList<>();
```

Getting methods and  
creating Jimple body



# Implementation

- AndroidLogger.Java

```
// The message that we want to log
String content = String.format(format:"%s Beginning of method %s", InstrumentUtil.TAG, body.getMethod().getSignature());
// In order to call "System.out.println" we need to create a local containing "System.out" value
Local psLocal = InstrumentUtil.generateNewLocal(body, RefType.v(className:"java.io.PrintStream"));
// Now we assign "System.out" to psLocal
SootField sysOutField = Scene.v().getField(fieldSignature:"<java.lang.System: java.io.PrintStream out>");
AssignStmt sysOutAssignStmt = Jimple.v().newAssignStmt(psLocal, Jimple.v().newStaticFieldRef(sysOutField.makeRef()));
generatedUnits.add(sysOutAssignStmt);

// Create println method call and provide its parameter
SootMethod printlnMethod = Scene.v().grabMethod(methodSignature:"<java.io.PrintStream: void println(java.lang.String)>");
Value printlnParamter = StringConstant.v(content);
InvokeStmt printlnMethodCallStmt = Jimple.v().newInvokeStmt(Jimple.v().newVirtualInvokeExpr(psLocal, printlnMethod.makeRef(),
generatedUnits.add(printlnMethodCallStmt);

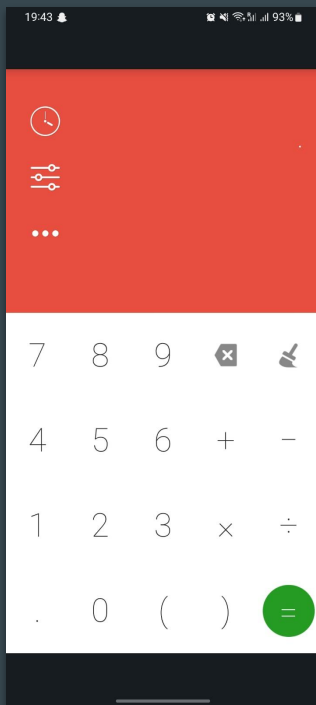
// Insert the generated statement before the first non-identity stmt
units.insertBefore(generatedUnits, body.getFirstNonIdentityStmt());
// Validate the body to ensure that our code injection does not introduce any problem (at least statically)
b.validate();
```

Creating println calls  
and adding to methods





# Results



```
04-24 18:59:56.584 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.ColorButton: void onDraw(android.graphics.Canvas)>
04-24 18:59:56.584 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.ColorButton: void onDraw(android.graphics.Canvas)>
04-24 18:59:56.584 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.ColorButton: void onDraw(android.graphics.Canvas)>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.Calculator: void onPause()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.Logic: void updateHistory()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.Logic: java.lang.String getText()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.CalculatorDisplay: java.lang.String getText()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.CalculatorDisplay: com.numix.calculator.view.AdvancedDisplay getAdvancedDisplay()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.ScrollableDisplay: com.numix.calculator.view.AdvancedDisplay getView()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.AdvancedDisplay: java.lang.String getText()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.CalculatorEditText: java.lang.String toString()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.History: void update(java.lang.String)>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.History: com.numix.calculator.HistoryEntry current()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.HistoryEntry: void setEdited(java.lang.String)>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.Logic: int getDeleteMode()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.Persist: void setDeleteMode(int)>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.BaseModule: com.numix.calculator.BaseModule$Mode getMode()>
04-24 18:59:56.614 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.Persist: void setMode(com.numix.calculator.BaseModule$Mode)>
04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.Persist: void save()>
04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.History: void write(java.io.DataOutput)>
04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.HistoryEntry: void write(java.io.DataOutput)>
04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.HistoryEntry: void write(java.io.DataOutput)>
04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.HistoryEntry: void write(java.io.DataOutput)>
04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.ColorButton: void onDraw(android.graphics.Canvas)>
04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.ColorButton: void onDraw(android.graphics.Canvas)>
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04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.ColorButton: void onDraw(android.graphics.Canvas)>
04-24 18:59:56.615 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.view.ColorButton: void onDraw(android.graphics.Canvas)>
04-24 18:59:56.631 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.Calculator: void onSaveInstanceState(android.os.Bundle)>
04-24 18:59:56.632 26721 26721 I System.out: <SOOT_TUTORIAL> Beginning of method <com.numix.calculator.CalculatorPagerAdapter: android.os.Parcelable saveState()>
```

## ADB Shell Logs



## 2. Working with Apktool, Smali files and JADX

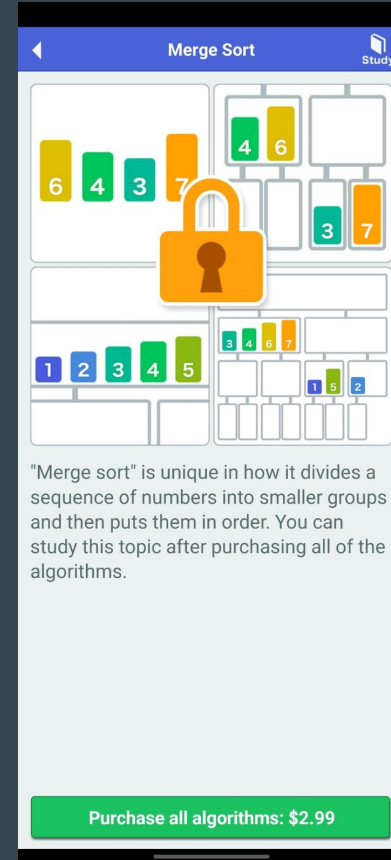
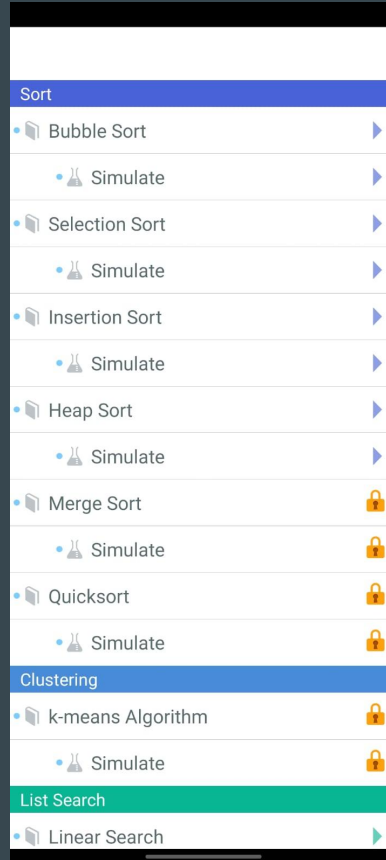
What did we hack?

- Application features altering
- Which application? - Algorithms teaching application (On Playstore)
- Removed the Premium lock on videos and made it free



# Implementation

Algorithms.apk



# Implementation

## Decompile with Apktool

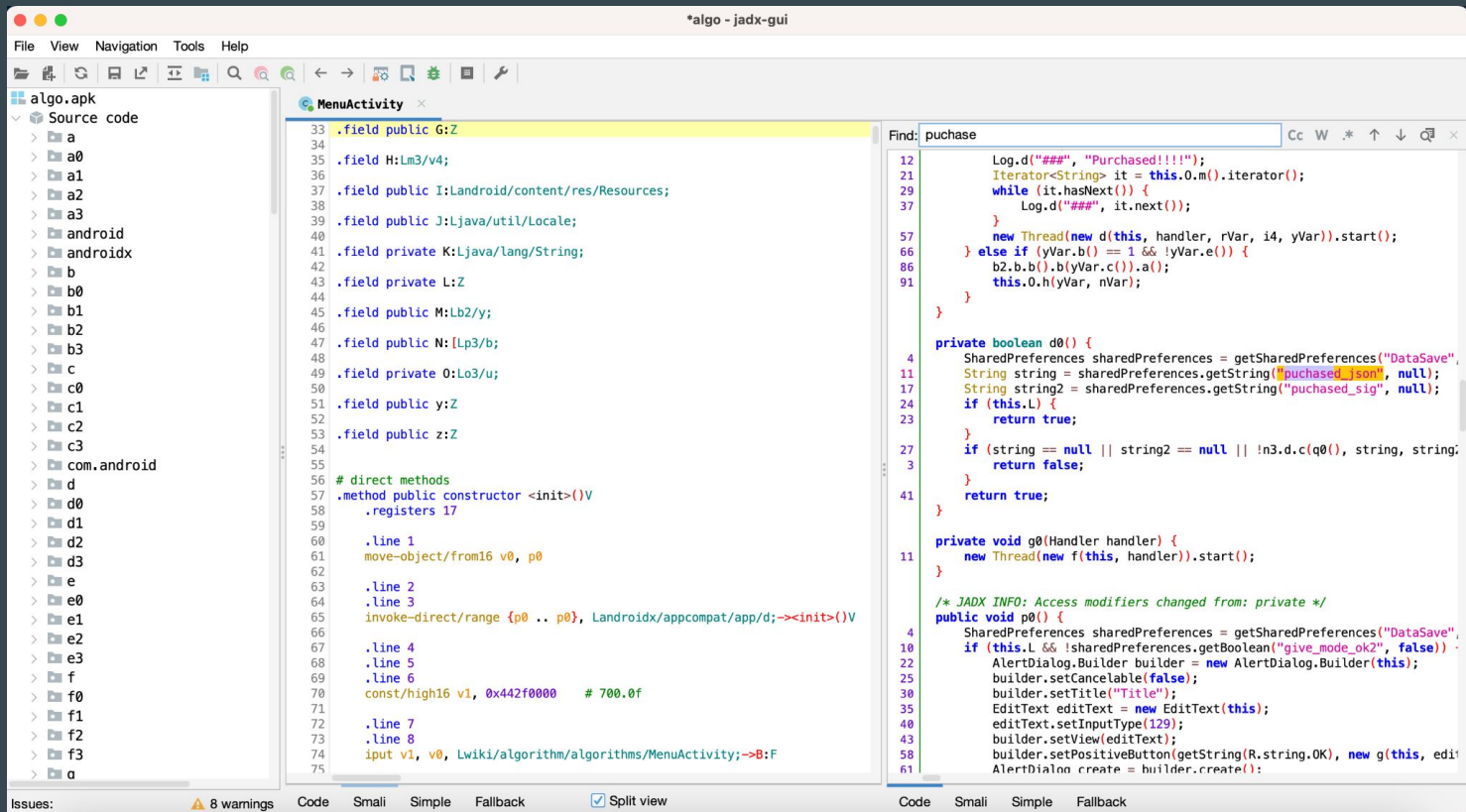
```
~/Desktop/software-sec-proj -- zsh                                ~/Library/Android/sdk/build-tools -- zsh

semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % adb shell pm list packages | grep "algorithms"
package:wiki.algorithm.algorithms
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % adb shell pm path wiki.algorithm.algorithms
package:/data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/base.apk
package:/data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/split_config.en.apk
package:/data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/split_config.xxhdpi.apk
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % adb pull /data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/base.apk ./
/data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/base.apk: 1 file pulled, 0 skipped. 34.5 MB/s (18168075 bytes in 0.281s)
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % adb pull /data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/split_config.en.apk ./
/data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/split_config.en.apk: 1 file pulled, 0 skipped. 12.9 MB/s (70041 bytes in 0.005s)
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % adb pull /data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/split_config.xxhdpi.apk
/data/app/~~kcZXVDCzuz3eZAoboWBN1Q==/wiki.algorithm.algorithms-Xv1GzV4DGUcydwsKcVFhlw==/split_config.xxhdpi.apk: 1 file pulled, 0 skipped. 34.5 MB/s (22408980 bytes in 0.619s)
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % mv ./base.apk ./algo.apk
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj %
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % apktool d algo.apk
I: Using Apktool 2.7.0 on algo.apk
I: Loading resource table...
I: Decoding AndroidManifest.xml with resources...
I: Loading resource table from file: /Users/semil/Library/apktool/framework/1.apk
I: Regular manifest package...
I: Decoding file-resources...
I: Decoding values */* XMLs...
I: Baksmaling classes.dex...
I: Copying assets and libs...
I: Copying unknown files...
I: Copying original files...
I: Copying META-INF/services directory
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % █
```



# Implementation

View with Jadx-gui - jadx-gui algo.apk



# Implementation

Make changes in the smali file and recompile the apk using Apktool

```
.line 1
const-string v0, "DataSave"

.line 2
.line 3
const/4 v1, 0x1

.line 4
invoke-virtual {p0, v0, v1}, Landroid/content/Context;->getSharedPreferences(Ljava/lang/String;I)Landroid/content/SharedPref

.line 5
.line 6
.line 7
move-result-object v0

.line 8
const-string v2, "purchased_json"

.line 9
.line 10
const/4 v3, 0x0

.line 11
invoke-interface {v0, v2, v3}, Landroid/content/SharedPreferences;->getString(Ljava/lang/String;Ljava/lang/String;)Ljava/lang/

.line 12
.line 13
.line 14
move-result-object v2

.line 15
const-string v4, "purchased_sig"

.line 16
.line 17
invoke-interface {v0, v4, v3}, Landroid/content/SharedPreferences;->getString(Ljava/lang/String;Ljava/lang/String;)Ljava/lang/

.line 18
```



# Implementation

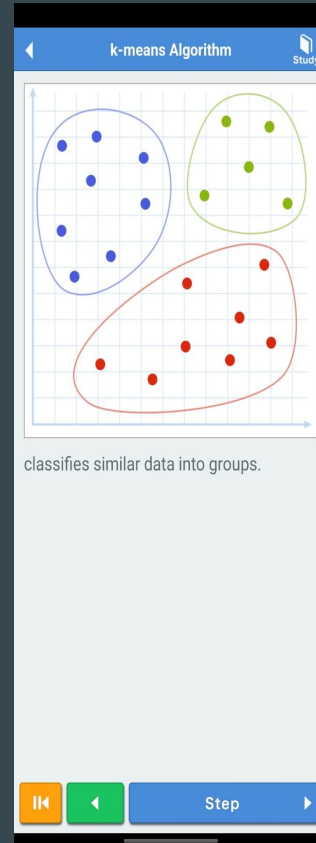
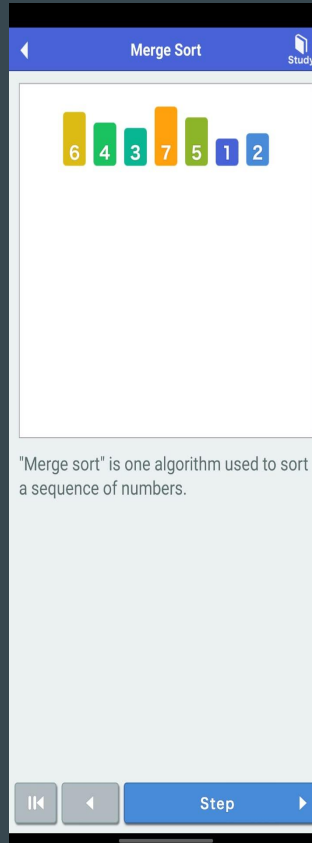
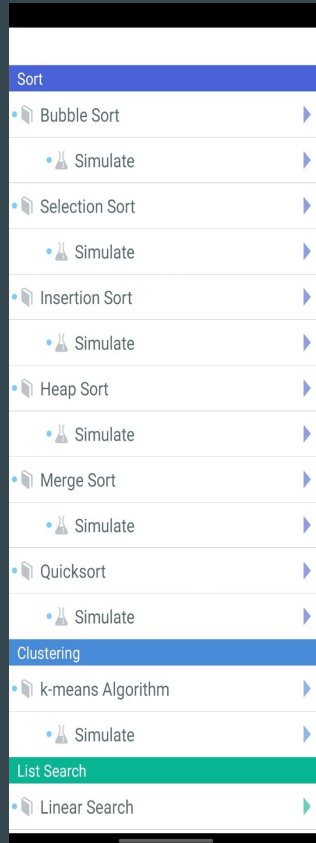
## APK Signing

```
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % apktool b algo
I: Using Apktool 2.7.0
I: Checking whether sources has changed...
I: Smaling smali folder into classes.dex...
I: Checking whether resources has changed...
I: Building resources...
I: Copying libs... (/kotlin)
I: Copying libs... (/META-INF/services)
I: Building apk file...
I: Copying unknown files/dir...
I: Built apk into: algo/dist/algo.apk
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro software-sec-proj % cd algo/dist
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist % ls
algo.apk
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist % apksigner sign --ks debug.keystore algo.apk
zsh: command not found: apksigner
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist % ~/Library/Android/sdk/build-tools/33.0.2/apksigner sign --ks debug.keystore algo.apk
[Keystore password for signer #1:
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist %
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist %
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist % adb install-multiple algo.apk split_config.en.apk split_config.xxhdpi.apk
Performing Incremental Install
Serving...
All files should be loaded. Notifying the device.
Success
Install command complete in 1236 ms
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist % █
```





# Results



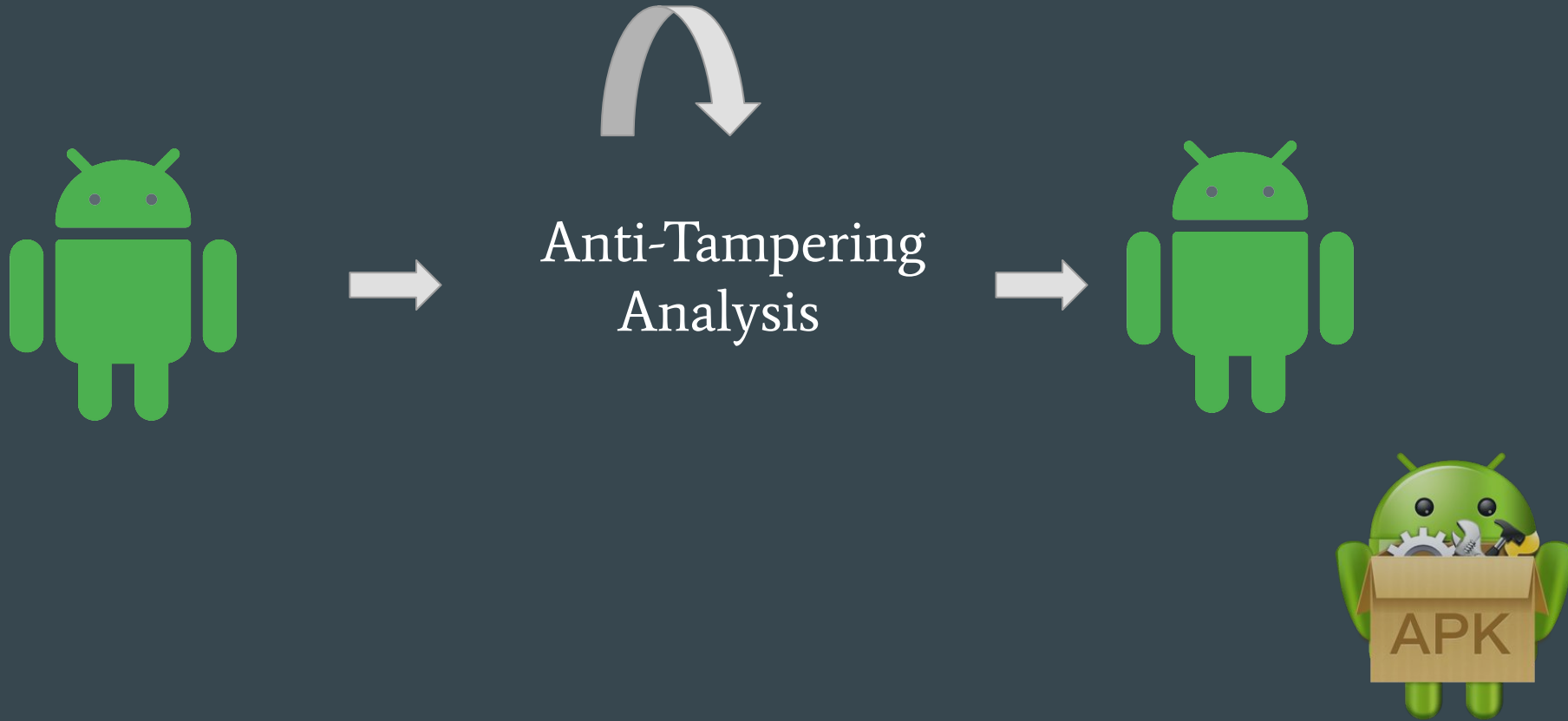


# Lets Prevent Hacking\*...

\*No conditions



## Part 2



# Some Techniques

- Code Obfuscation
- APK Signature Comparison
- Protection Fingerprints



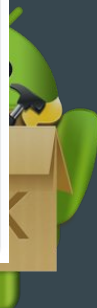
# Code Obfuscation

## Android Proguard

The purpose of obfuscation is to reduce your app size by shortening the names of your app's classes, methods, and fields. The following is an example of obfuscation using R8:

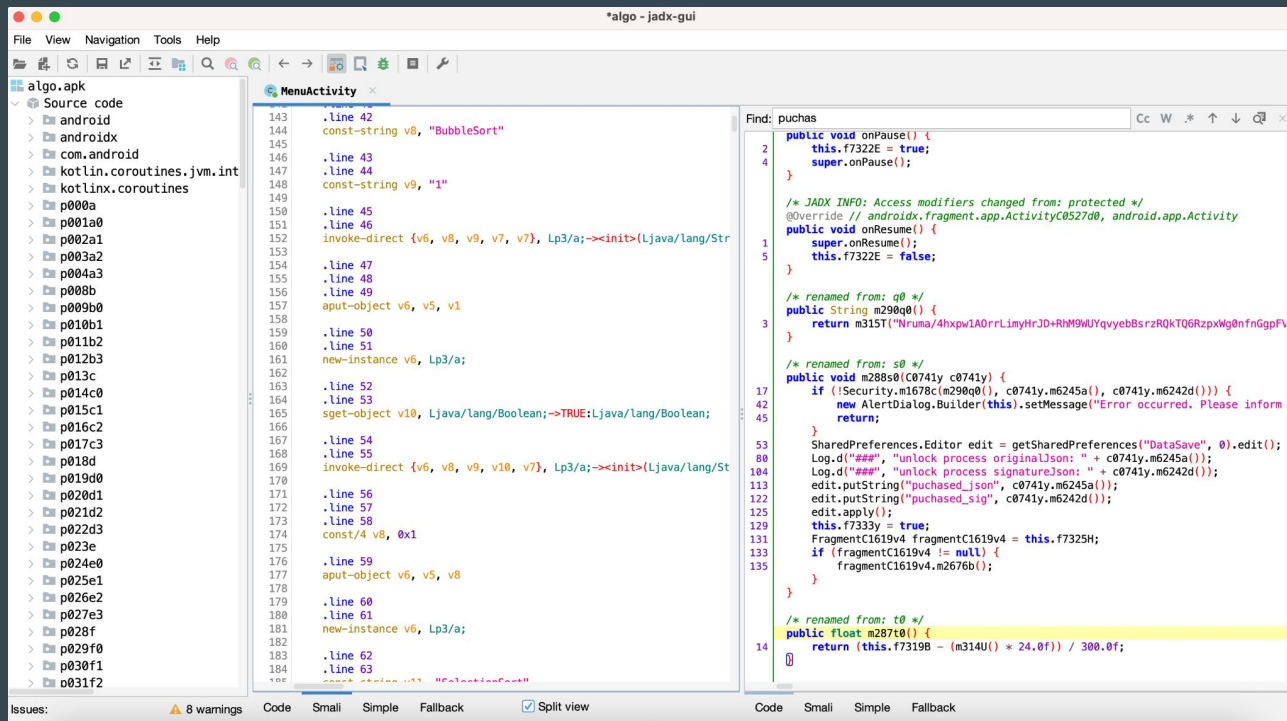


```
androidx.appcompat.app.ActionBarDrawerToggle$DelegateProvider -> a.a.a.b:
androidx.appcompat.app.AlertController -> androidx.appcompat.app.AlertController:
    android.content.Context mContext -> a
    int mListItemLayout -> 0
    int mViewSpacingRight -> l
    android.widget.Button mButtonNeutral -> w
    int mMultiChoiceItemLayout -> M
    boolean mShowTitle -> P
    int mViewSpacingLeft -> j
    int mButtonPanelSideLayout -> K
```



# Code Obfuscation

In our Algorithms apk



```
File View Navigation Tools Help
algo.apk
├── Source code
│   ├── android
│   ├── androidx
│   ├── com.android
│   ├── kotlin.coroutines.jvm.int
│   └── kotlin.coroutines
├── p000a
├── p001a0
├── p002a1
├── p003a2
├── p004a3
├── p008b
├── p009b0
├── p010b1
├── p011b2
├── p012b3
├── p013c
├── p014c0
├── p015c1
├── p016c2
├── p017c3
├── p018d
├── p019d0
├── p020d1
├── p021d2
├── p022d3
├── p023e
├── p024e0
├── p025e1
├── p026e2
├── p027e3
├── p028f
├── p029f0
├── p030f1
└── p031f2

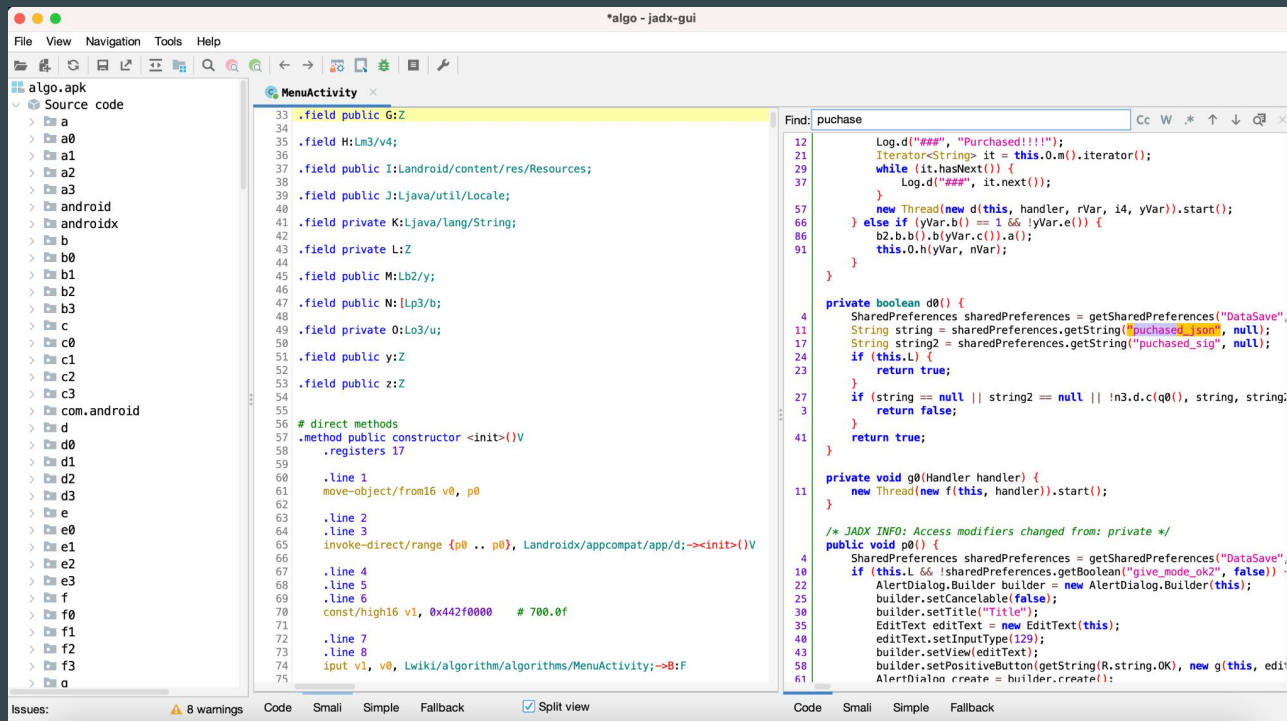
MenuActivity
143 .line 42
144 const-string v8, "BubbleSort"
145
146 .line 43
147 .line 44
148 const-string v9, "1"
149
150 .line 45
151 .line 46
152 invoke-direct {v6, v8, v9, v7, v7}, Lp3/a;=><init>(Ljava/lang/Str
153
154 .line 47
155 .line 48
156 .line 49
157 aput-object v6, v5, v1
158
159 .line 50
160 .line 51
161 new-instance v6, Lp3/a;
162
163 .line 52
164 .line 53
165 sget-object v10, Ljava/lang/Boolean;=>TRUE:Ljava/lang/Boolean;
166
167 .line 54
168 .line 55
169 invoke-direct {v6, v8, v9, v10, v7}, Lp3/a;=><init>(Ljava/lang/St
170
171 .line 56
172 .line 57
173 .line 58
174 const/4 v8, 0x1
175
176 .line 59
177 aput-object v6, v5, v8
178
179 .line 60
180 .line 61
181 new-instance v6, Lp3/a;
182
183 .line 62
184 .line 63
185 const-string v11, "Polynomial"

Find: puchas
Cc W .* ↑ ↓ 🔍 ×
2 public void onPause() {
3     this.f7322E = true;
4     super.onPause();
5 }
6
7 /* JADX INFO: Access modifiers changed from: protected */
8 @Override // androidx.fragment.app.ActivityC0527d0, android.app.Activity
9 public void onResume() {
10     super.onResume();
11     this.f7322E = false;
12 }
13
14 /* renamed from: g0 */
15 public String m290q0() {
16     return m315T("Nruma/4hxpwlA0rrLlmyHrJD+RhM9WUyqvyebBszzRQkT06RzpxWg0fnGgpFV
17 }
18
19 /* renamed from: s0 */
20 public void m288s0(C0741y c0741y) {
21     if (!Security.m1678c(m290q0(), c0741y.m6245a()), c0741y.m6242d()) {
22         new AlertDialog.Builder(this).setMessage("Error occurred. Please inform
23         return;
24     }
25     SharedPreferences.Editor edit = getSharedPreferences("DataSave", 0).edit();
26     Log.d("###", "unlock process originalJson: " + c0741y.m6245a());
27     Log.d("###", "unlock process signatureJson: " + c0741y.m6242d());
28     edit.putString("purchased_json", c0741y.m6245a());
29     edit.putString("purchased_sig", c0741y.m6242d());
30     edit.apply();
31     this.f7333y = true;
32     FragmentC1619v4 fragmentC1619v4 = this.f7325H;
33     if (fragmentC1619v4 != null) {
34         fragmentC1619v4.m2676b();
35     }
36 }
37
38 /* renamed from: t0 */
39 public float m287t0() {
40     return (this.f7319B - (m314U() * 24.0f)) / 300.0f;
41 }
42
43 0
```



# Code De-Obfuscation

## Jadx-gui Integrated de-obfuscation



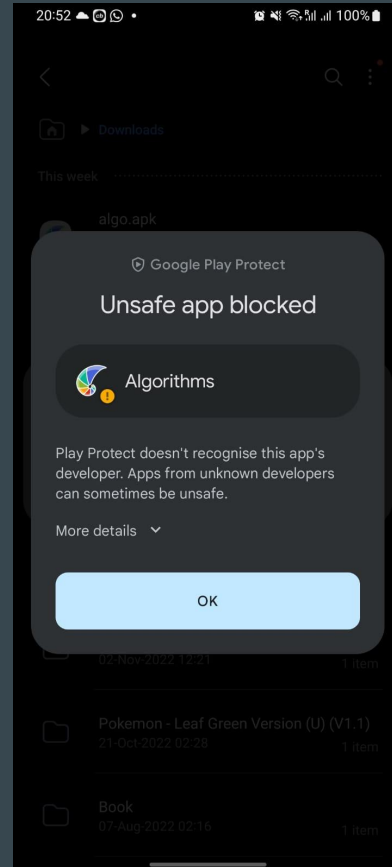
# APK Signature verification

~/Desktop/software-sec-proj/algo/dist — -zsh

```
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist % adb install-multiple algo.apk split_config.en.apk split_config.xxhdpi.apk  
adb: failed to finalize session  
Failure [INSTALL_FAILED_INVALID_APK: /data/app/vmdl276118772.tmp/split_config.en.apk signatures are inconsistent]  
semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro dist %
```



# APK Signature verification





# Protection fingerprints

```
~/Desktop/software-sec-proj/ATADetector/output -- zsh
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro Tool % java -jar out/artifacts/ATADetector_jar/ATADetector.jar -p ../apks/ -r ../output/

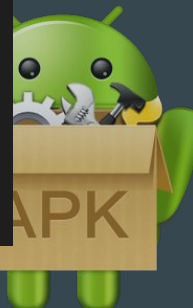
  ATADetector

[ERROR - FileUtil (getAllFilesWithGivenExtension)]: the directory ../apks could not be accessed (probable too low permissions) -> java.lang.NullPointerException
    at it.unittn.atadetector.util.FileUtil.getAllFilesWithGivenExtension(FileUtil.java:140)
    at it.unittn.atadetector.MainAPKLooper.main(MainAPKLooper.java:324)

starting analysis on file algo.apk...
[WARNING - ATADetector (analyzeApplication)]: dex2jar had some errors while working on algo.apk. Anyway we can try to proceed and go on with the analysis
[WARNING - ATADNativeLevel (analyzeSoLibraries)]: no libraries in in folder /Users/semil/Desktop/software-sec-proj/ATADetector/Tool/./output/algo/solibraries
Successfully completed another analysis.apps analyzed: 1/1
End of execution. There was:
- 1 apks to analyze
- 1 apks successfully analyzed
- 0 apks not analyzed because of errors

The analysis started at: Mon Apr 24 21:03:15 MDT 2023
and finished at time : Mon Apr 24 21:03:35 MDT 2023
(time elapsed in milliseconds = 20152)

You can find in the output folder the final json report.
Thank you!
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro Tool % cd ..
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro ATADetector % ls
README.md      Resources      Tool           apks           output
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro ATADetector % cd output
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro output % ls
algo.json      algo_short.json  errors.txt      finalReport.json  finalReport_short.json
[semil@Semils-MacBook-Pro output %
```



# Protection fingerprints

```
1 {"protectionCategory": [  
2   {  
3     "protection": [  
4       {  
5         "javaLevelPatterns": [...  
263       ],  
264       "_nameOfTheProtection": [  
265         "SignatureChecking",  
266         0,  
267         0  
268       ],  
269       "nativeLevelPatterns": [...  
442     ]  
443   },  
444   { ...  
720   },  
721   { ...  
889   },  
890   { ...  
1022   }  
1023   ],  
1024   "categoryName": "Anti-Tampering"  
1025 },  
1026 {  
1027   "protection": [...  
2599   ],  
2600   "categoryName": "Anti-Debugging"  
2601 },  
2602 ]}
```



Thank you!!

Any Questions...?

