



# Attacking webservers from the WAN

ETHICAL HACKING & LAB Assignment 4

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## Executive Summary

### Highlights

*In this lab, I will conduct a cyberattack on a web server over a WAN using my Kali Linux Attack Machine. First, I'll perform reconnaissance by scanning the network with Nmap to find open ports, focusing on the SMTP port. Next, I'll use Bruter to carry out a brute-force dictionary attack on SMTP, aiming to capture administrator credentials. Once I have the credentials, I'll use RDP to access the server remotely. Following this, I'll deface the website as a post-exploitation step and then clear the logs to cover my tracks.*

### Objectives

*My main objectives in this lab are to gain practical experience with network scanning and password cracking. I'll start by using Nmap to identify potential entry points and then move on to Bruter for a password attack on SMTP. After obtaining access credentials, I'll use RDP to remotely log into the server. The final objectives involve post-exploitation tasks, such as defacing the site and practicing stealth by removing any evidence of my actions from the logs. This lab helps me understand each stage of an attack, from reconnaissance to post-exploitation and cover-up.*

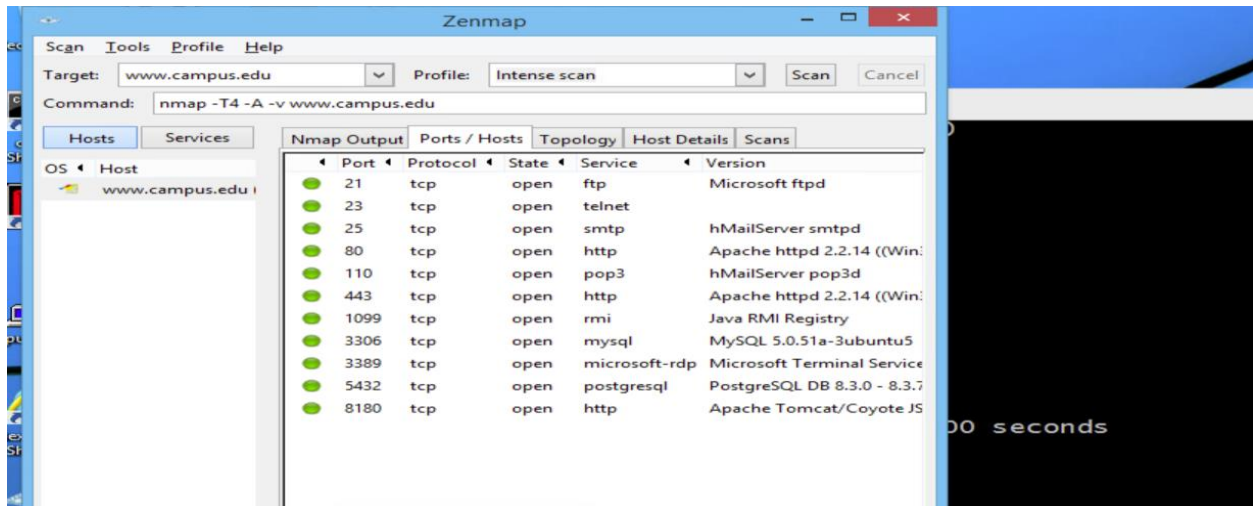
## Lab Description Details

To determine which ports are open on the firewall.

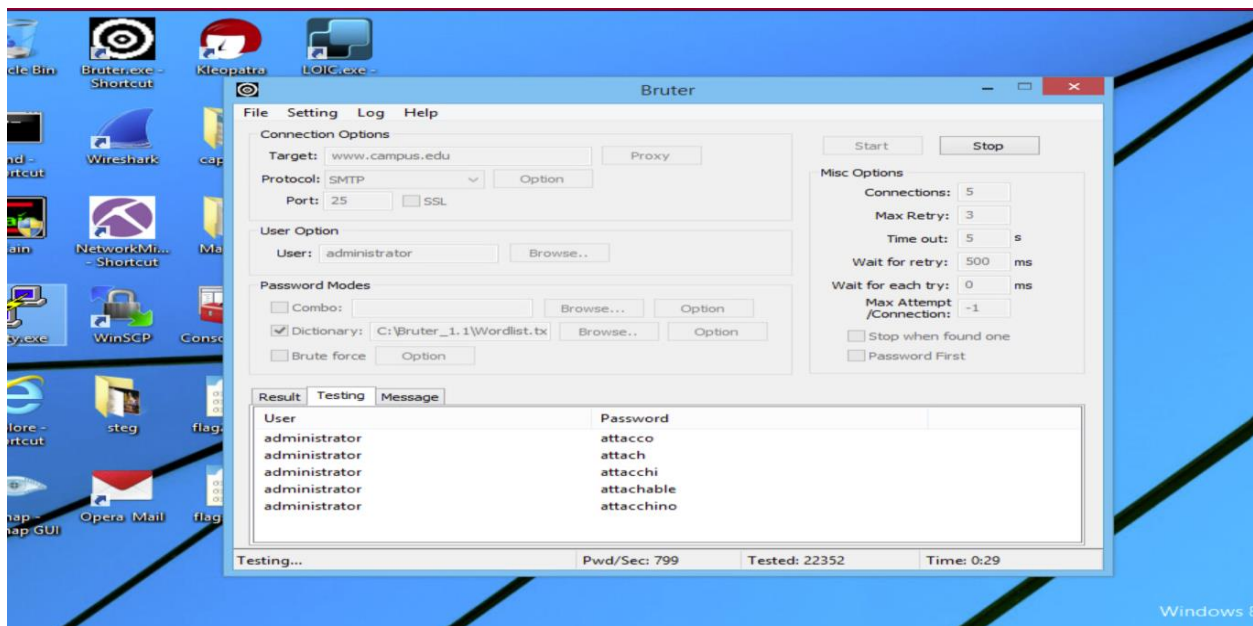
The screenshot displays a Kali Linux desktop environment. On the left, a challenge interface titled "Attacking Webservers from the WAN" is visible. It lists various services: http, pop3, https, rmiregistry, mysql, ms-term-serv, postgresql, and unknown. Below this list, it states "IP address (1 host up) scanned in 13.25 seconds". A "SAMPLE CHALLENGE" button is present. The main part of the screenshot is a terminal window titled "cmd - Shortcut". It shows the command "C:\>nmap www.campus.edu" and the resulting Nmap scan report for www.campus.edu (203.0.113.100). The report indicates the host is up with 0.00s latency and lists the following open ports: 21/tcp (ftp), 23/tcp (telnet), 25/tcp (smtp), 80/tcp (http), 110/tcp (pop3), 443/tcp (https), 3306/tcp (mysql), 3389/tcp (ms-term-serv), and 5432/tcp (postgresql). The scan was completed in 13.00 seconds. The desktop background is blue with various icons like Recycle Bin, Bruter.exe, Micopster, and LOLClient.

To open Zenmap we use this command “zenmap”. After it opens type “www.campus.edu” in the target box and click the scan button to launch an intense scan

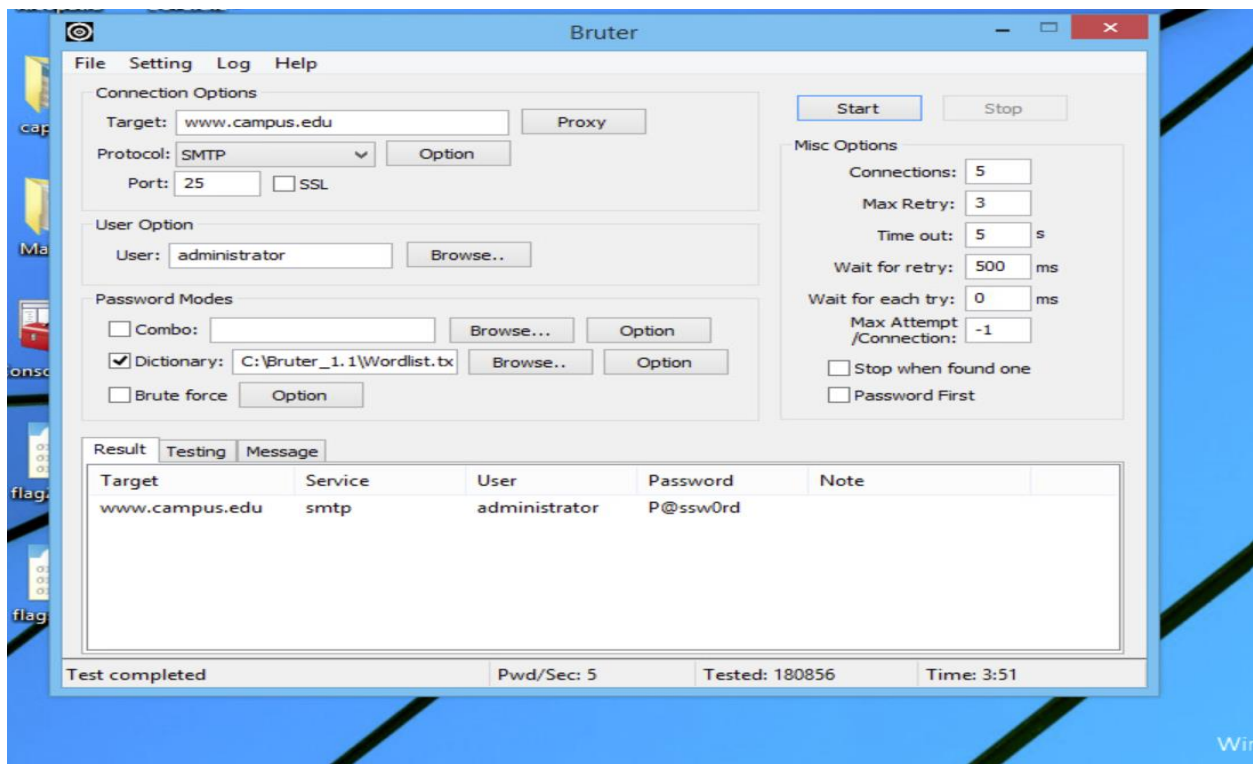
After the scan is complete. In ports/ Hosts tab to view the open ports and corresponding banner messages that are displayed and we can notice many Microsoft services.



After opening Bruter.exe we type the target “www.campus.edu” and select SMTP from the drop down. And in the option box set the Auten method as LOGIN and Domain as campus.edu then select ok. For the user we selected Administrator and in from the bowser selected the Wordlist.txt after everything is set . I selected start to launch the attack. After everything is done in result tab we can the passwords.

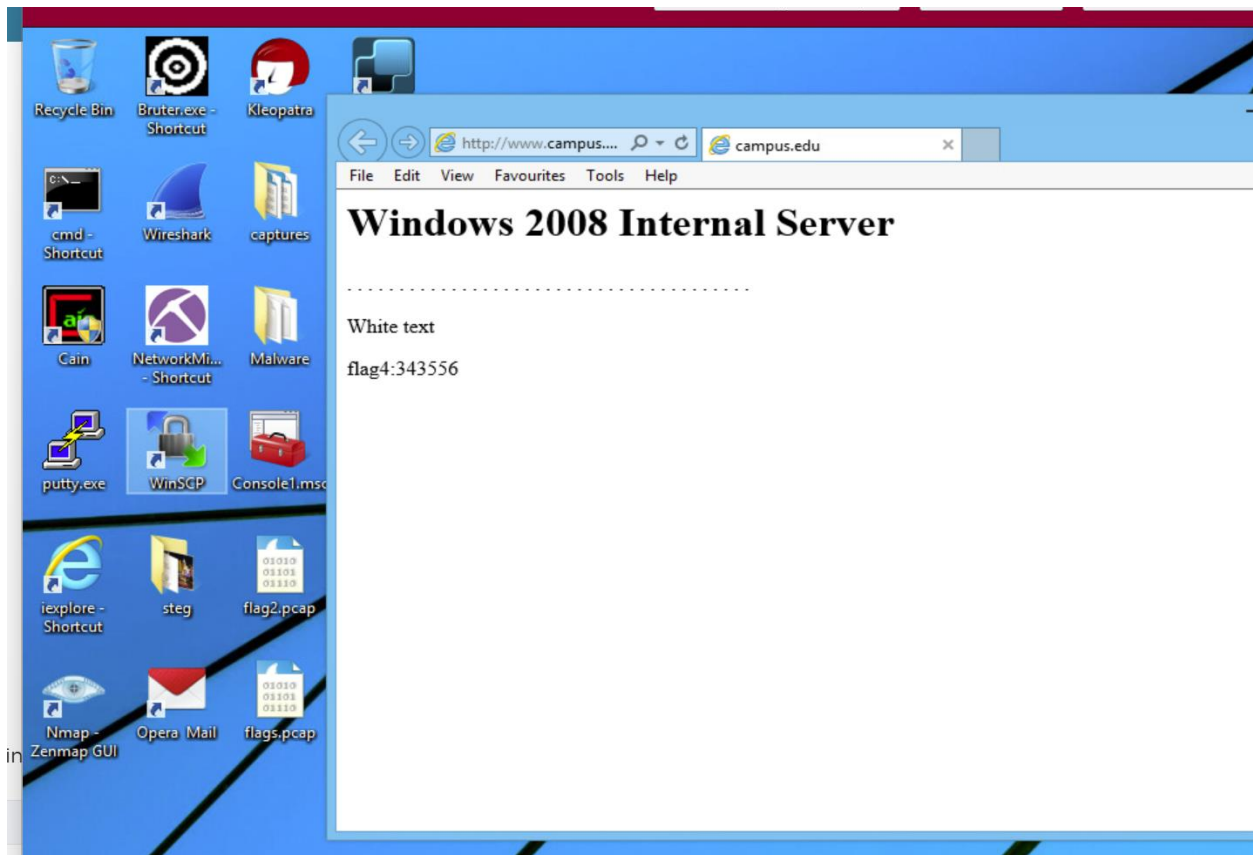


*This screenshot shows the Displayed passwords in result tab*

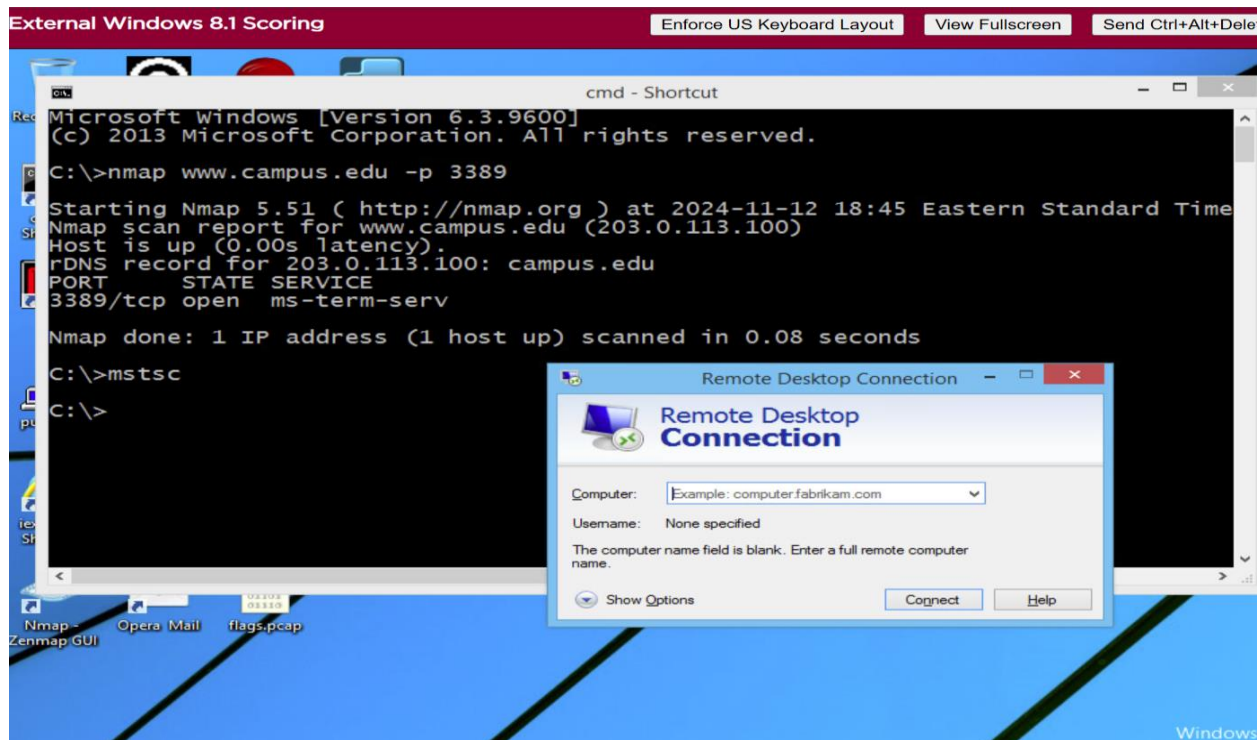


*This shows the password for the target “www.campus.edu”*

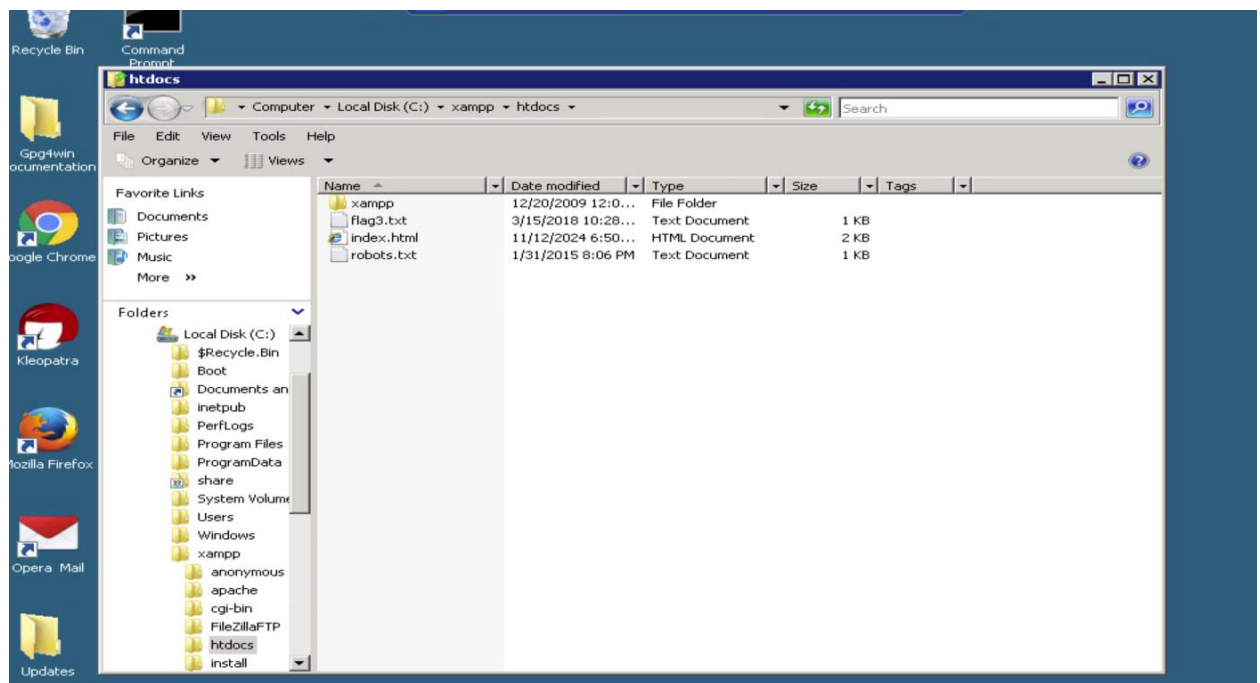
After Typing the “Campus.edu ” URL in the URL bar this server is displayed



To determine if RDP is open on the firewall we type the following command.



To launch the Microsoft Terminal Service Client I used the command "mstsc". After connecting to the remote desktop in the start menu and after opening the computer link, In Local Disk xampp folder in that htdocs folder. I opened the index.html and opened with Notepad



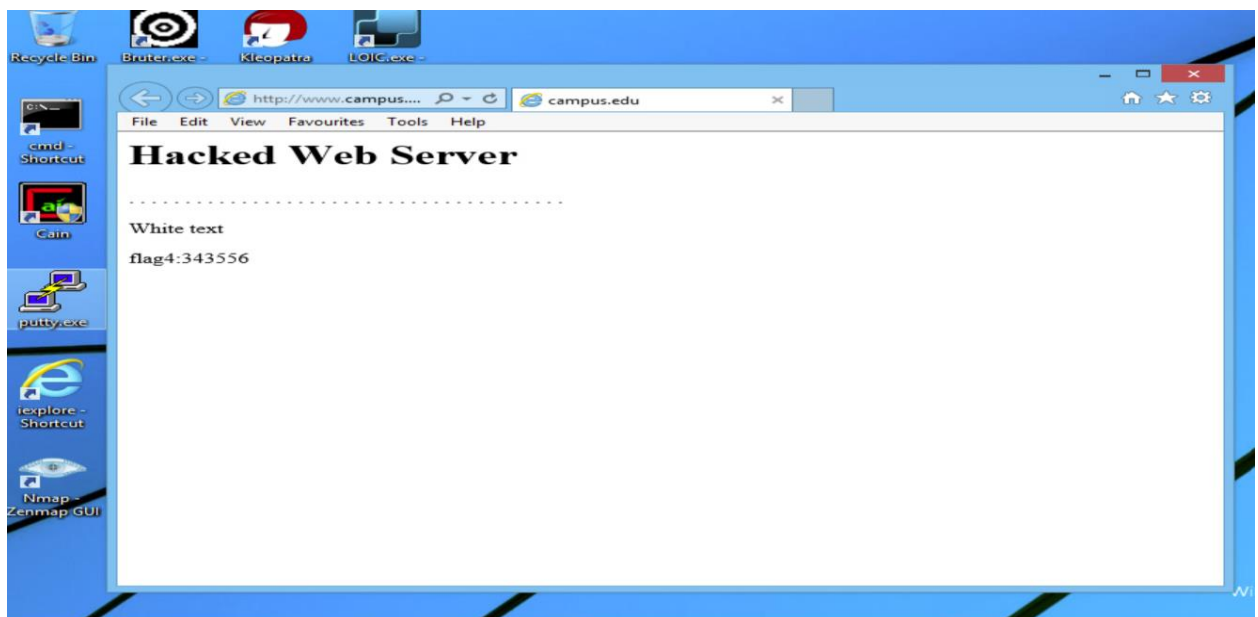


Highlighting the Windows 2008 internal Server in the index.html file and Typed the words “Hacked Web Server ” to replace windows 2008 internal server in the index.html file

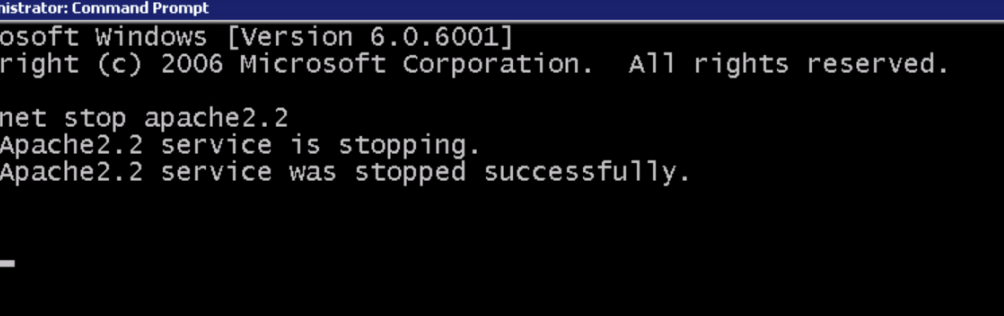
[illegible]

*This Shows the typed words in html file*

After changing the text in the html file Again entering the URL we can see the Message “Hacked Web Server”



*This screenshot displays the web page with the typed message*



The screenshot shows a Windows XP desktop environment. The taskbar at the top contains icons for Recycle Bin, Command Prompt, and a folder named 'Gpg4win'. The desktop background is a solid blue color. On the left side, the Start menu is open, displaying a list of applications including 'Gpg4win', 'Gpg4win - User', 'Google Chrome', 'Kleopatra', 'Mozilla Firefox', and 'Mozilla Firefox (32-bit)'. A black command prompt window titled 'Administrator: Command Prompt' is open in the center of the screen. The text inside the window reads: 'Microsoft Windows [Version 6.0.6001] Copyright (c) 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. C:\>net stop apache2.2 The Apache2.2 service is stopping. The Apache2.2 service was stopped successfully. C:\>\_'. The cursor is positioned at the end of the last line.

Recycle Bin Command Prompt

Gpg4win

Start menu items: Gpg4win, Gpg4win - User, Google Chrome, Kleopatra, Mozilla Firefox, Mozilla Firefox (32-bit)

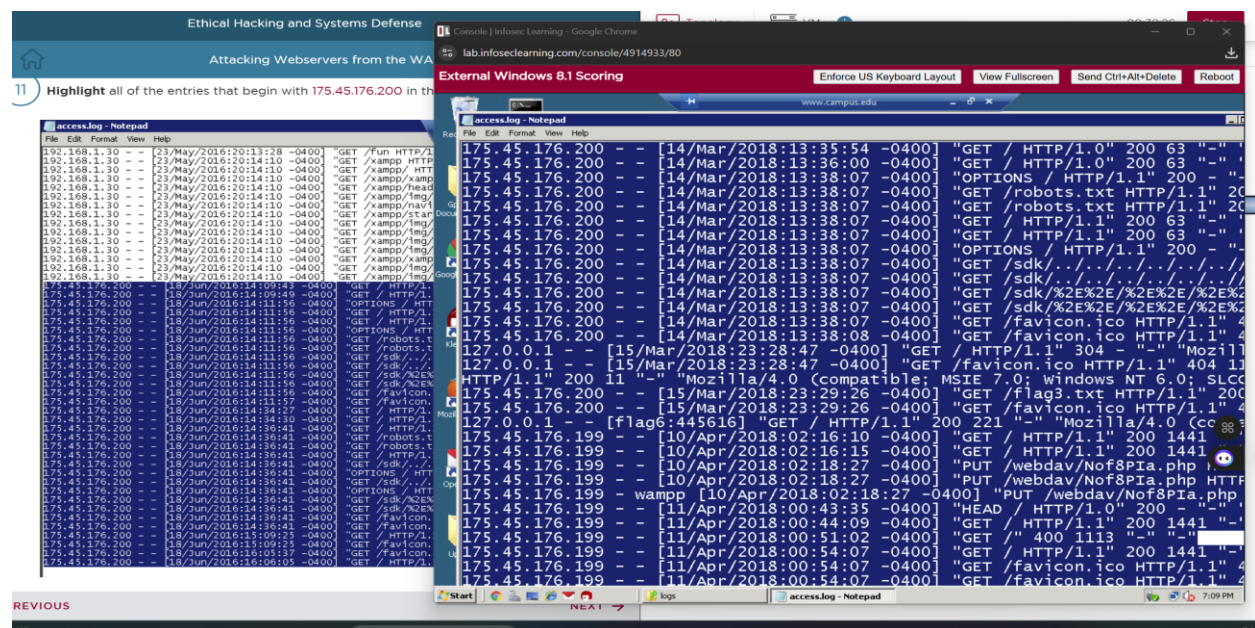
Administrator: Command Prompt

Microsoft Windows [Version 6.0.6001]  
Copyright (c) 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\>net stop apache2.2  
The Apache2.2 service is stopping.  
The Apache2.2 service was stopped successfully.

C:\>\_

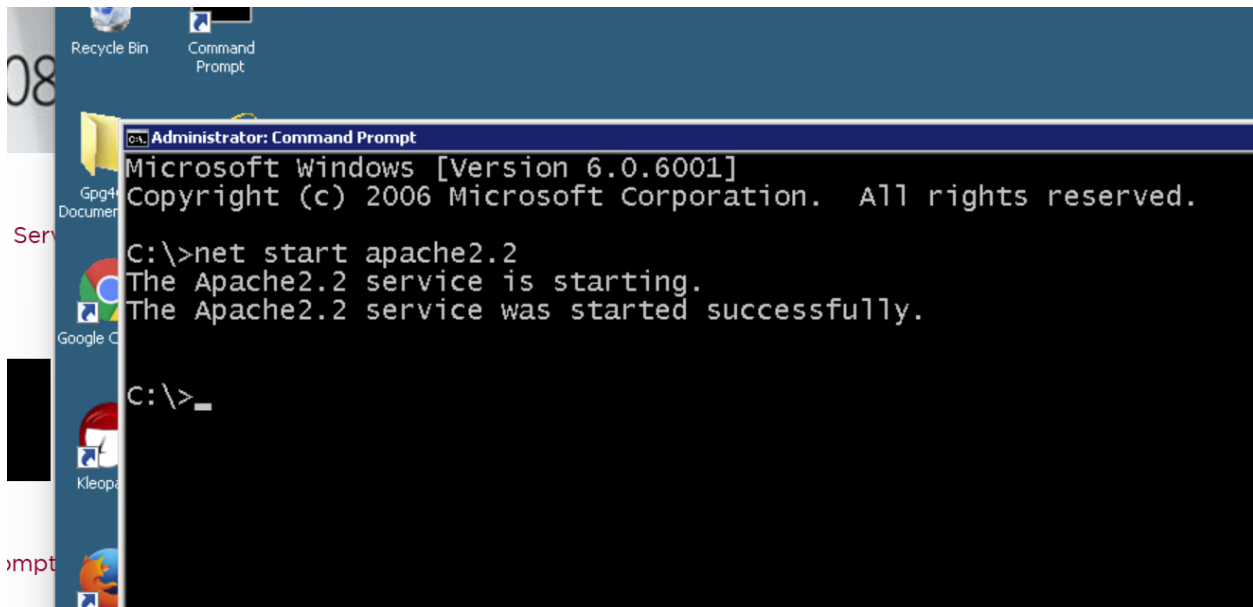
In the Start Menu click the computer link, in the local disk open xampp folder and in the apache folder in that folder I found access.log file. In that it shows the list of all entries begin with 175.45.176.200



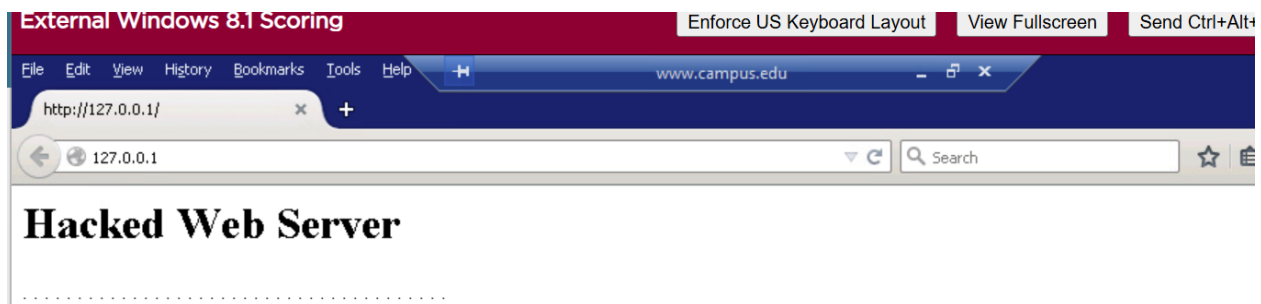
*This Screenshot shows the highlighted entries all begin with “175.45.176.200”*



To start the apache web server, used the following command



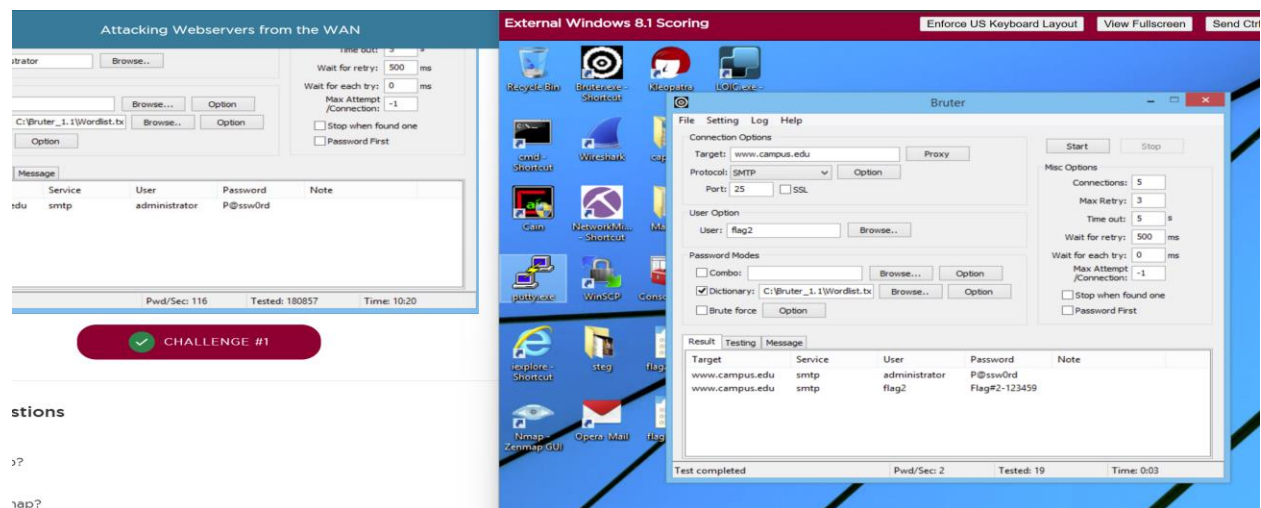
After opening the firefox and typing the URL “127.0.0.1” to connect to verify the sute is up and running



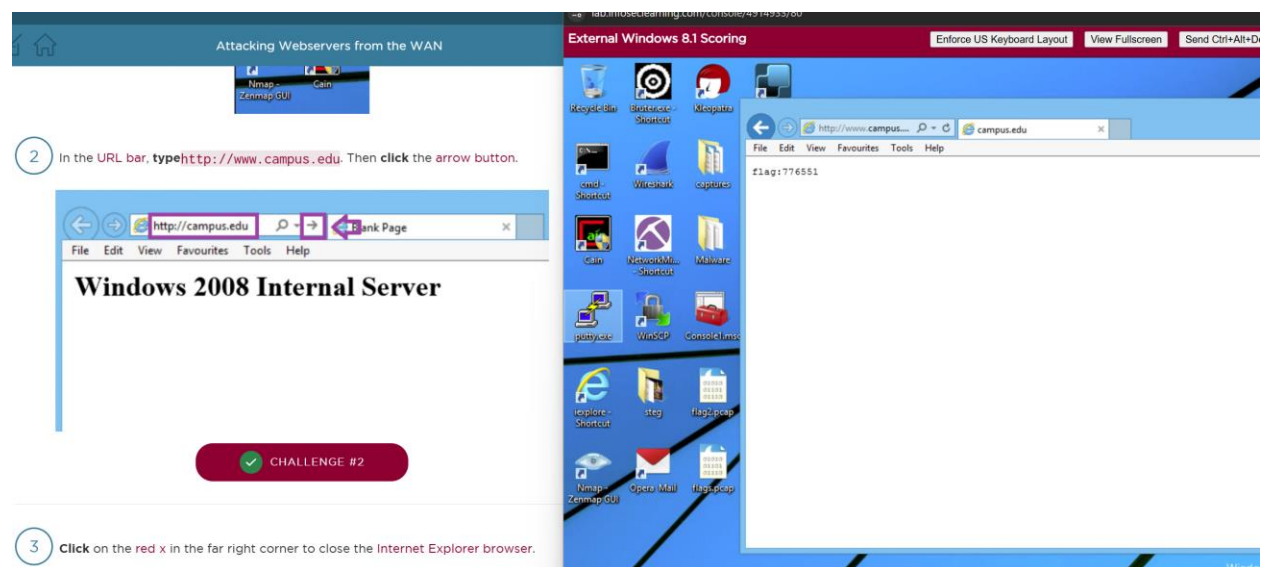
*This screenshot shows that the site is hacked*

## Supporting Evidence

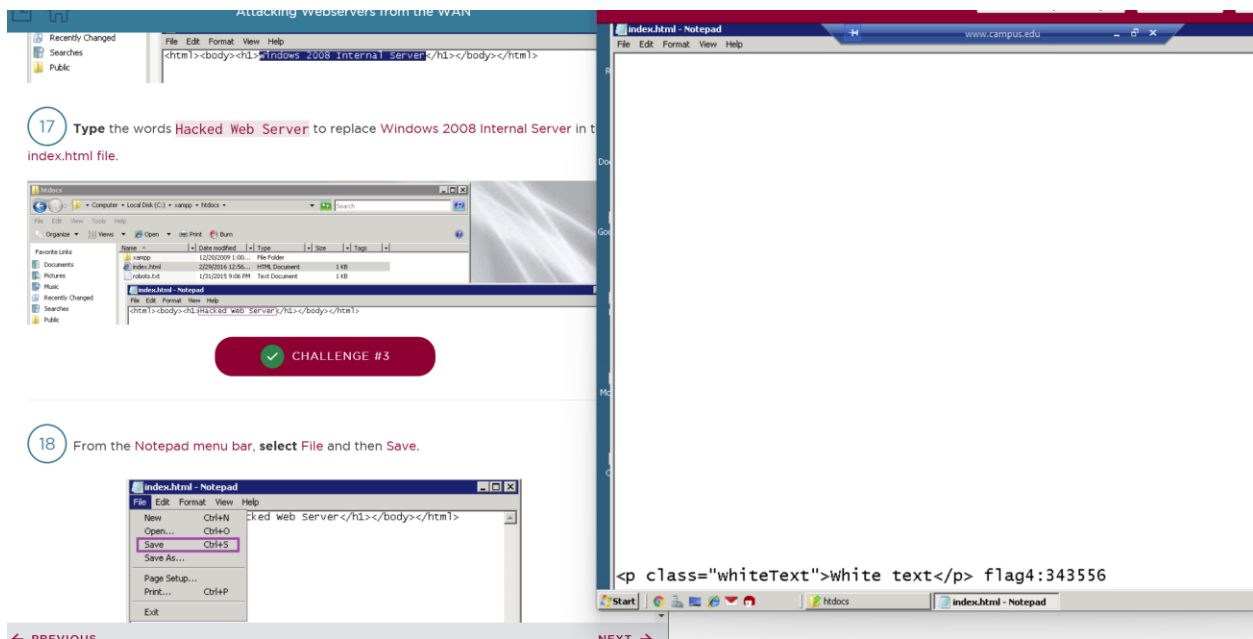
The challenge tasks I had during the lab.



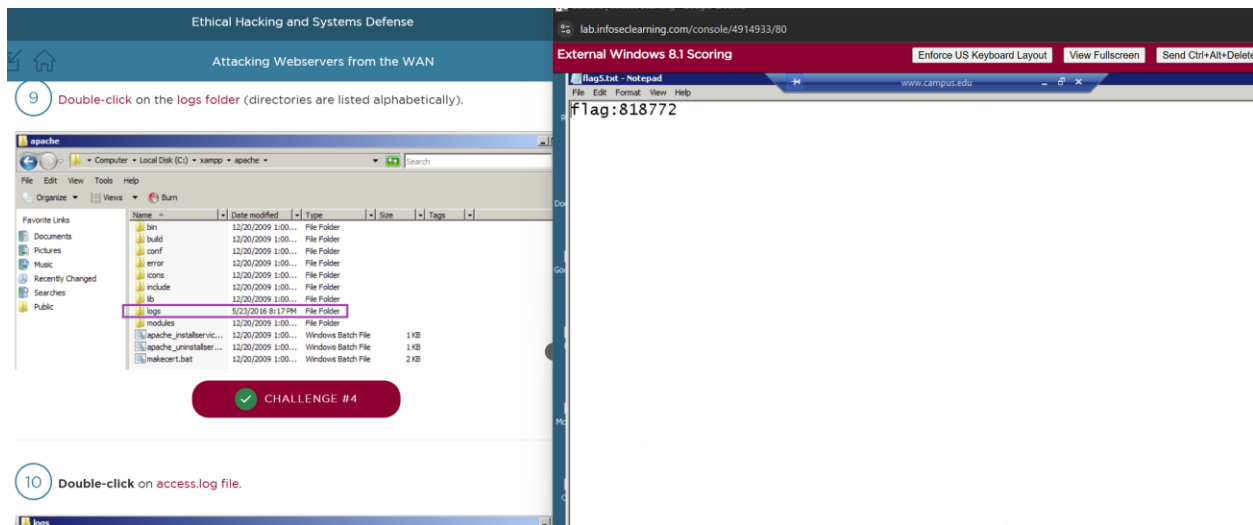
*This Screenshot shows the password displayed in result for the target*



*This screenshot shows the flag displayed in the "http://www.campus.edu" URL*



*This screenshot shows Flag found in the Html file*



*This screenshot shows that the flag found in the apache folder*



## Conclusion & Wrap-Up

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### Summary with:

#### Observations

In this lab, I attacked a web server from the WAN using Kali Linux. I started by scanning the network with nmap to find open ports. I found that the SMTP port was open, so I used Bruter to perform a dictionary attack and captured the administrator credentials. After gaining access, I used RDP to log into the victim machine, defaced the website, and then covered my tracks by removing log entries that showed my actions.

#### Identified risks

One major risk is the exposure of the SMTP service to the WAN. If critical services like SMTP are left open to the internet, attackers can easily target them using tools like Bruter to perform brute-force password attacks. Another risk is the use of weak passwords for administrative accounts. When passwords are easy to guess or not complex enough, they become a target for brute-force attacks. Additionally, allowing attackers to deface the website and remove logs means they can cause damage and hide their actions, making it harder to detect and respond to the attack.

#### Suggested recommendations

To reduce risks, I recommend restricting access to critical services like SMTP by using firewalls to block unauthorized traffic. Additionally, enforce the use of strong passwords and consider using multi-factor authentication (MFA) to protect admin accounts. Regularly monitor and analyze logs to detect suspicious activity and maintain a secure logging system that can't be easily tampered with. Lastly, ensure that all software and systems are regularly updated to patch known vulnerabilities.

#### Successes & failures

I successfully performed a dictionary attack, captured the credentials, accessed the system via RDP, defaced the website, and removed my traces. However, the lab environment was controlled, so it didn't include real-world security measures like intrusion detection systems (IDS), which would have made the attack more challenging.

#### Challenges

The main challenge was performing the dictionary attack using Bruter, as I had to choose the right wordlist to crack the password. After gaining access, it was tricky to completely cover my tracks in the logs, as doing this without detection would be more difficult in a real-world environment with advanced monitoring systems.

Table outlining the identified risks, their priority, and suggested remediation

Risk	Priority	Remediation	What & Why
Exposing SMTP service to the WAN	High	Use firewalls to restrict access to SMTP and other critical services, allowing access only from trusted internal networks.	Exposing SMTP makes it vulnerable to brute-force attacks, allowing unauthorized access to email systems.
Weak or easily guessable passwords	High	Enforce strong password policies, requiring complex and unique passwords for all admin accounts. Implement multi-factor authentication (MFA).	Weak passwords can be easily cracked, giving attackers access to critical systems and data.
Allowing attackers to deface the website	Medium	Regularly back up website content and implement web application firewalls (WAFs) to detect and block unauthorized change	Attackers can modify or deface a website, causing reputational and financial damage.
Ability to cover tracks in log files	Medium	Enable detailed logging and ensure that logs are stored securely and monitored to detect tampering or unauthorized activities.	Attackers can erase logs, hiding their actions and making detection difficult.