A Documentation on ICMP Smurf Attack (DDOS)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Smurf attack

According to Wikipedia, the Smurf Attack is "a way of generating significant computer network traffic on a victim network. This is a type of denial-of-service attack that floods a target system via spoofed broadcast ping messages". In this technique, the attacker forges ICMP echo request packets with the IP address of the victim as the source address and broadcasts the request on the network, making the computers in the network to send replies to the ICMP echo requests. Of course, in a multi-access broadcast network, the number of replies could be overwhelming as hundreds of computer may listen to the broadcast.

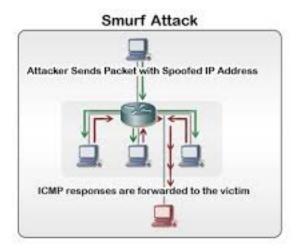


Figure 2: A smurf attack

Here we have a testing topology with numbers to understand the steps canonically when executing the ICMP Smurf Attack.

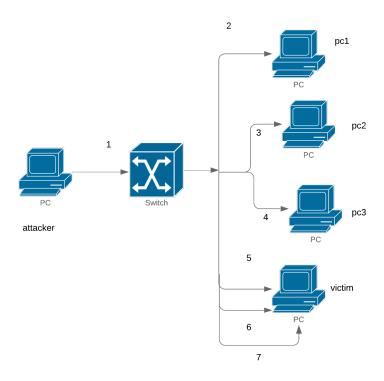


Figure 3: A smurf attack testing topology

1.2 ICMP and ICMP echo

The ICMP "is one of the core protocols of the Internet Protocol Suite. It is chiefly used by networked computers' operating systems to send error messages—indicating, for instance, that a requested service is not available or that a host or router could not be reached". Typically, the ICMP packets are generated or sent in case the IP datagrams errors or diagnostic and routing purposes, and the echo request is "an ICMP message whose data is expected to be received back in an echo reply ("ping") containing the exact data received in the request message."

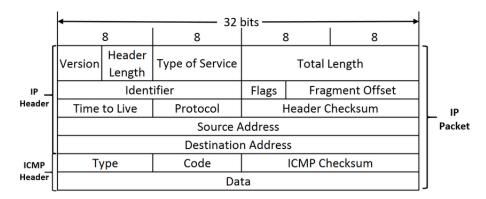


Figure 4: ICMP header

2 Timing and attack strategies

2.1 Timing diagram of ICMP

ICMP is commonly used by network tools such as ping or traceroute. **PC1** wants to test whether it can reach **PC2** over the network. **PC1** will start the ping utility that will send ICMP Echo Request packets to **PC2**. If **PC2** is reachable, it will respond with ICMP Echo Reply packets. If **PC1** receives no response from **PC2**, there might be a problem on the network.



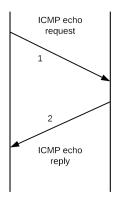


Figure 5: Internet Control Message Protocol

2.2 Attack timing diagram

For smurf attack, attacker send ICMP echo request with spoofed source IP of the victim to router of the IP broadcast network. The reflectors in that network send the ICMP echo reply to the source IP address of the victim; thus flooding the target system.

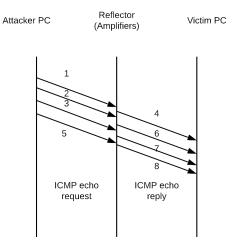


Figure 6: ICMP Smurf attack

2.3 Attack strategies

For initiating a "smurf attack", the attacker program has a list of broadcast addresses which it stores into an array, and sends a spoofed ICMP echo request to each of those addresses in series and starts again. The result is a devastating attack upon the spoofed IP with, depending on the amount of broadcast addresses used, many, many computers responding to the echo request.

Generally smurf is used by attackers so that attack part cannot be operated. Smurfing can make use of IP and ICMP. Basically network nodes and their administrators use ICMP for exchanging information regarding state of network. ICMP ping other nodes to check whether they are operating or not. A node which is operating basically sends an echo message when we send any ping message.

Smurf program forms a network packet seems to originate from another address that means spoofing an IP address. The packet basically has ICMP ping message addressing the IP broadcast address that means all IP addresses

are within a given network. When ping messages will be sent responses come back to victim address. Due to flooding of no of pings and echoes inside a network it may cause hurdles for real traffic to pass through.

3 Steps of ICMP Smurf Attack

- Target IP address is to be identified by the attacker PC (Linux Ubuntu 18.04) through nmap.
- Intermediary site (a broadcast address) is to be identified by attacker which helps in amplifying attack.
- Large amount of traffic/packets (ICMP request) will be sent by attacker to the broadcast address at particular intermediary sites.
- These intermediaries will provide broadcast to all hosts which are there in a subnet (255.255.255.0).
- Hosts will reply to network and will send the ICMP request to the target PC IP address. The target PC IP address will then reply with ICMP reply packets to all the ICMP request packets. Thus, the denial in service attack (ICMP Smurf Attack) is completed.

4 Frame details and modifications in header

For ICMP Smurf attack, attacker does not need to modify IP and ICMP header. Attacker only need to set the victim's IP address in the "source address" field of the IP header.

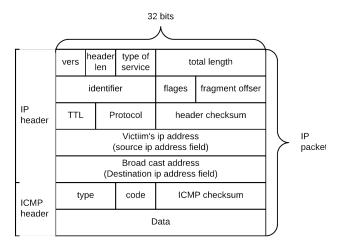


Figure 7: ICMP Smurf attack

5 Justification

Above design will work because the attacker has identified the IP address of the victim. Attacker then uses other PCs in the network to amplify the attack by sending a large amount of ICMP messages. ICMP echo reply is redirected to source address of the victim. Attacker sends a spoofed ICMP redirect message that appears to come from hosts default gateway. Victim reflectors will follow the path accordingly flooding the victim system causing link congestion End-point resource exhaustion.

6 System Requirements for ICMP Smurf Attack

For implementing the testing environment of the Smurf attack, we suppose the attacker is in the victim's network environment.

6.1 Hardware requirement

For attacker, any computer can be used for attacking the target machine. A router is needed where prevention for DDOS attack is turned off (the firewall, protection policy etc. are turned off). The machines in the broadcast network can be any device (mobile, computer etc.) connected with the router. The target machine can be a computer or mobile connected to the router.

6.2 Software requirement

Command needed for executing the attack:

- if config for getting the broadcast address of the network
- nmap broadcast address/24 to get the IP address of the target address
- sudo ./attak.py broadcast address target address execute the code with the input of broadcast address and target IP address

The attacker PC needs to have **ifconfig** command installed in their PC to find the broadcast address of the network environment. The attacker PC needs **nmap** or install **nmap** (if not have already) to identify the IP address of victim PC using the broadcast address. Then the attacker need to write code for executing Smurf attack using the raw socket and ICMP request packets. In the testing environment, the attacker used **python** coding language to code for the attack. After executing the code, the Smurf attack is launched. Later by using **ping**, the succession of the attack can be measured. Attacker can monitor the packets using **wireshark**. The attacker PC should install **wireshark** if not installed in the device already.

6.3 Programming Language

The attacker PC used **Python** programming language to write code for the attack. The attacker imported **socket**, **sys** and **scapy** libraries for the attack

code. IP header for the raw socket is made with the source (the target IP address), destination (the broadcast address), protocol(ICMP 1). The ICMP request packet is made with a specific data message to identify the ICMP request packets in the wireshark.

7 Implementing Testing environment

The testing environment consists of:

- 1 64 bit Linux Ubuntu 18.04 machine(HP Pavilion Notebook) attacker PC
- 1 64 bit Linux Ubuntu 16.04 machine(Oracle VirtualBox virtual NIC)
 device in the broadcast network
- \bullet 1 32 bit Linux Seed Ubuntu (Oracle Virtual
Box virtual NIC) - target PC
- 1 android(Samsung Electronics) device in the broadcast network
- the devices in the network are connected using a router for WiFi (tp link 4 ports for ethernet).

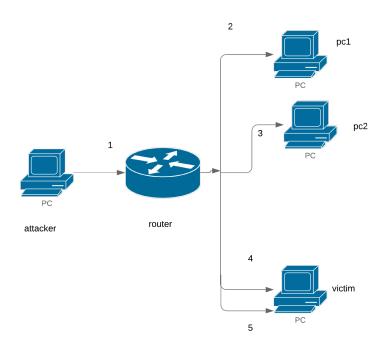


Figure 8: Testing environment topology

8 Images of Devices with their configuration

• Linux Ubuntu 18.04 Hp Pavilion Notebook (attacker): IP address: 192.168.0.175, netmask: 255.255.255.0, broadcast: 192.1680.0.255 and mac address: 10:f0:05:42:51:cb

The network map for the environment from the attacker PC:

• Linux SeedUbuntu (Oracle VirtualBox virtual NIC) : target device

IP address: 192.168.0.133, netmask: 155.255.255.0, broadcast: 192.168.0.255

Figure 9: Attacker machine

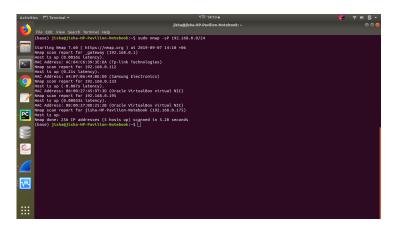


Figure 10: Nmap for Attacker machine

• Linux Ubuntu 16.04 (Oracle VirtualBox virtual NIC) : one of intermediate normal PC situated in the broadcast network of

the targeted PC IP address: 192.168.0.195, netmask: 155.255.255.0, broadcast: 192.168.0.255

• Android(Samsung Electronics) :

An android device situated in the broadcast network of the targeted PC IP address: 192.168.0.112, netmask: 155.255.255.0, broadcast: 192.168.0.255

Figure 11: Target machine

Figure 12: Intermediate normal machine

The network map for the environment from the target machine is same as the attacker machine as the attack is happening under the same network environment.

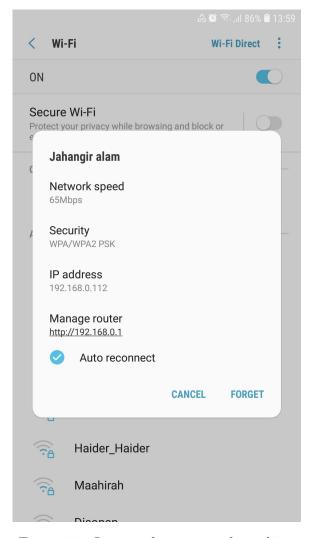


Figure 13: Intermediate normal machine

9 Screensort of code and executive terminal of IDE

For ICMP Smurf Attack, the code is written in python using scapy library. IPheader and ICMPheader have been created in the code. On CreateICM-PRequest() function 56 bytes of data has been written to check if wireshark is catching the packets that are sent from attacker or not. Some Screen shots for the code is given below:

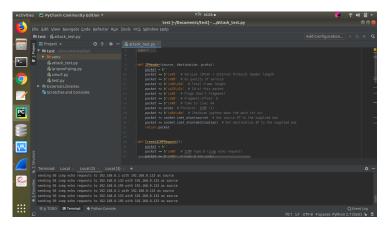


Figure 14: IPheader function

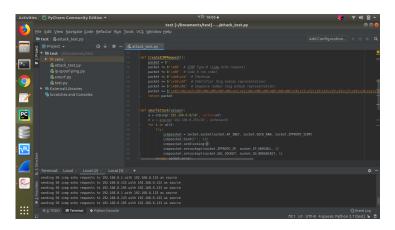


Figure 15: CreateICMPRequest function

After executing the code, we can see ICMP requests are sent from targent PC's IP address as source to the broadcast address as destination. Some Screen shots for the execution terminal is given below:

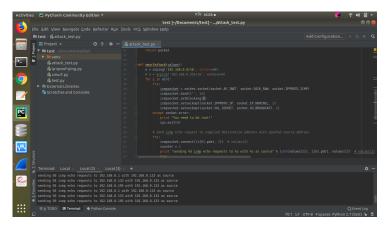


Figure 16: Smurf attack function

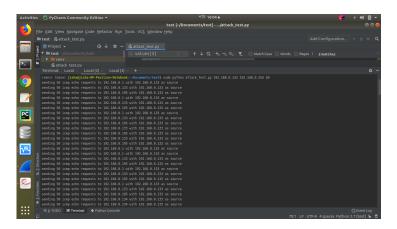


Figure 17: IDE terminal

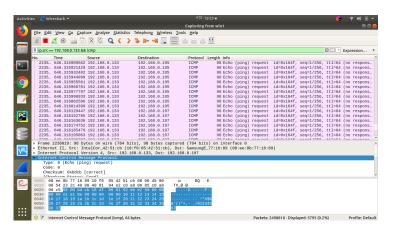
10 Result of the test

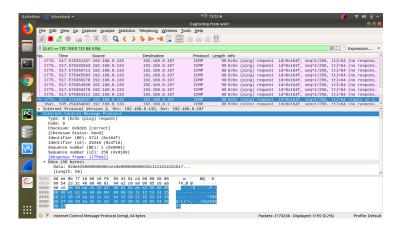
To determine the result and how the packets are traversing, wireshark is executed in attacker, target and intermediate devices.

10.1 Wireshark for attacker PC:

For the attacker PC in the wireshark window we can see that the target PC IP address is sending a lot of ICMP request packets to the boardcast IP address (192.168.0.255). To check if the ICMP requests are the ones we have sent we can check the data byte and its content in the wireshark. We can see

that the data content sent as ICMP request matches with the data content in the wireshark below. If we filter the ICMP packets according to the target IP address source or destination, we can see a data traffic (packets coming from a lot of IP addresses because of being broadcast) is being created in the network for the target PC.





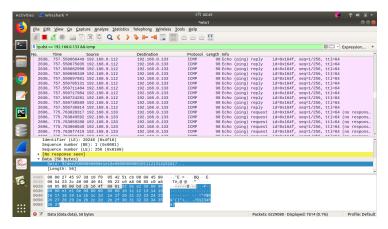
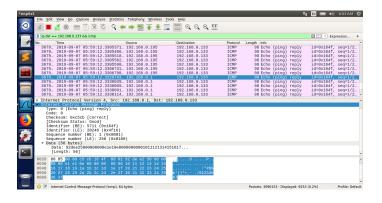


Figure 18: Attacker wireshark window

10.2 Wireshark for targeted PC:

For the targeted PC in the wireshark window we can see that a lot of ICMP reply is coming from many different IP addresses of the network creating a traffic for the target PC IP address. ICMP reply data contents 56 bytes of data that matches with the ICMP request we created in the python code.



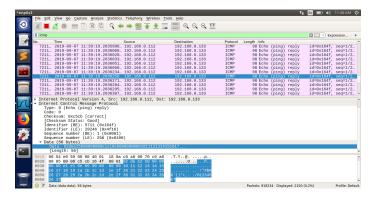


Figure 19: Target wireshark window

10.3 Wireshark for Intermediate PC:

For the intermediate normal PC in the wireshark window we can see that the IP address of the PC is getting ICMP request packets from the targeted IP address (192.168.0.133) and in return sending ICMP reply packets to the source IP address (192.168.0.133).

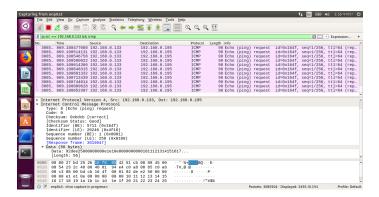


Figure 20: Intermediate PC wireshark window

When the code was running and sending packets in the network, a ping packet had been sent from a normal PC to the targeted PC to see the availability of the target PC. For testing, ping request was two times with the time difference being three minutes.

• for the first test of sending ping request, 24 request packets were sent and got 21 reply packets with the total loss of 12%. For the test, total time took 23433 ms.

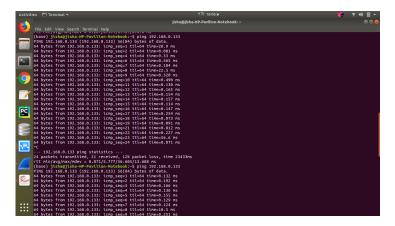


Figure 21: First ping test

• for the second test of sending ping request, 58 request packets were sent and got 55 reply packets with the total loss of 5%. For the test, total time took 58133 ms.

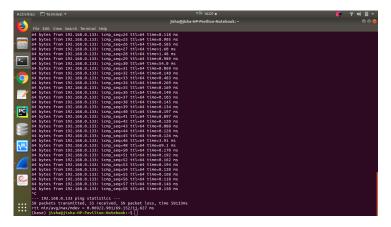


Figure 22: Second ping test

11 Prevention of ICMP Smurf Attack

According to Wikipedia, the prevention of Smurf attacks is two-folds:

- Configure individual hosts and routers not to respond to ping requests or broadcasts.
- Configure routers not to forward packets directed to broadcast addresses. Until 1999, standards required routers to forward such packets by default, but in that year, the standard was changed to require the default to be not to forward.

In addition to these two simple solutions, Craig A. Huegen's article(1) on prevention of Smurf attack is highly revered.

Also during the course of the experiment, it was found that broadcasted ICMP Echo request is discarded by default in all the Windows(7, 10), Linux(Ubuntu 16.04, Ubuntu 18.04, SeedUbuntu) and Cisco machines. The feature to reply to such broadcasts can be enabled in Linux machines but however Microsoft doesn't allow enabling this feature on their operating systems. This can be seen as a security benefit because this keeps the Windows machines from participating in a Smurf Attack by sending ICMP Echo responses; however it still doesn't keep them or any network that allows inbound ICMP packets safe from being attacked.

12 Conclusion

The test for the ICMP Smurf Attack can be considered successful in a sense that after sending a lot of ICMP request with the source id address of the target PC IP address, the target PC denied the ping request service (in the ping test) from a normal PC. We can also see from the target device's wireshark the huge amount of ICMP request and reply packets going to and from the target PC. Though the rate of service (ping request) denial is small, with proper size of network (as in the real world) the rate of service denial for this attack will be big. The advantages of modern devices that all most all the devices are configured to ignore broadcast to prevent from happening this kind of attack.

References

[1] THE LATEST IN DENIAL OF SERVICE ATTACKS: "SMURFING" DESCRIPTION AND INFORMATION TO MINIMIZE EFFECTS by Craig A. Huegen