



## Common Attack Methods and Techniques

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### **Denial of Service (DOS/DDOS)**

A denial of service attack is any attack used to achieve the disruption of any service to legitimate users. DDOS is the 'distributed' form of such an attack where many 'Zombies' that have been taken over by hackers launch simultaneous attacks to achieve a more effective denial of service attack.

### **Smurf attack**

Occurs when misconfigured network devices allow packets to be sent to all hosts, on a particular network via the broadcast address of the network.

### **Ping flood**

Occurs when the target system is overwhelmed with ping packets

### **SYN flood**

Sends a flood of TCP/SYN packets with forged sender address, causing half-open connections and saturates available connection capacity of the target machine.



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### **Teardrop attack**

Involves sending mangled IP fragments with overlapping, oversized payloads to the largest machine

### **Peer to Peer attack**

Causes clients of large peer-to-peer file sharing hubs to disconnect from their peer-to-peer network and to connect to the victim's website instead. As a result, several thousand computers may aggressively try to connect to a target website, causing performance degradation.

### **Permanent denial-of-service (PDoS) attack**

(Also known as phashing)- Damages a system hardware to the extent of replacement.

### **Application-level flood Buffer overflow**

Buffer overflow consumes available memory or CPU time,



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### **Brute force attack**

Floods the target with an overwhelming flux of packets, oversaturating its connection bandwidth or depleting the target's system resources

### **Bandwidth-saturating flood attack**

Relies on the attacker having higher bandwidth available than the victim

### **Banana attack**

Redirects outgoing messages from the client back to the client, preventing outside access, as well as flooding the client with the sent packets

### **Pulsing zombie**

A DoS attack in which a network is subjected to hostile pinging by different attacker computers over an extended time period. This results in a degraded quality of service and increased workload for the network's resources.



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### **Nuke**

ADoS attack against computer networks in which fragmented or invalid ICMP packets are sent to the target. Modified ping utility is used to repeatedly send corrupt data, thus slowing down the affected computer to a complete stop.

### **Distributed denial-of-service attack (DDoS)**

Occurs when multiple compromised systems flood the bandwidth or resources of the targeted system

### **Reflected attack**

Involves sending forged requests to a large number of computers that will reply to the requests: The source IP address is spoofed to that of the targeted, victim, causing the replies to flood.

### **Unintentional attack**

Website ends up denied, not due to deliberate attack by a single individual, or group of individuals, but simply due to a sudden enormous spike in popularity.



**Botnets**

Comprise a collection of compromised computers (called zombie computers) running software. Usually installed via worms, Trojan horses or back doors. Examples: Denial-of-service (DoS) attacks, adware, spyware and spam

**Virus**

Viruses - Involve the insertion of malicious program code into other executable code that can self-replicate and spread from computer to computer, via sharing of removable computer media, USB removable devices, transfer of logic over telecommunication lines or direct link with an infected machine/code. A virus can harmlessly display cute messages on computer terminals, dangerously erase or alter computer files, or simply fill computer memory with junk to a point where the computer can no longer function. An added danger is that a virus may lie dormant for some time until triggered by a certain event or occurrence, such as a date or being copied a pre-specified number of times, during which time the virus has silently been spreading

**Worms**

Destructive programs that may destroy data or use up tremendous computer and communication resources, but worms do not replicate like viruses. Such programs do not change other programs, but can run independently and travel from machine to machine across network connections by exploiting vulnerability and application/system weaknesses. Worms also may have portions of themselves running on many different machines. AG2.crl

**Spyware/Malware**

Similar to viruses. Examples are keystroke loggers and system analyzers that collect potentially sensitive information, such as credit card numbers, bank details, etc. from the host and then transmit the information to the originator when an online connection is detected.



### Unauthorized Access Through the Internet or World Wide Web

Unauthorized access through the Internet or web-based services. Many Internet software packages contain vulnerabilities that render systems subject to attack. Additionally, many of these systems are large and difficult to configure, resulting in a large percentage of unauthorized access incidents. Examples include:

- E-mail forgery (simple mail transfer protocol)
- Telnet passwords transmitted in the clear (via path between client and server).
- Altering the binding between IP addresses and domain names to impersonate any type of server. As long as the domain name server (DNS) is vulnerable and used to map universal resource locators (URLs) to sites, there can be no integrity on the Web.
- Releasing common gateway interface (CGI) scripts as shareware. CGI scripts often run with privileges that give them complete control of a server.
- Client-side execution of scripts (via JAVA in JAVA Applets), which pr

### Traffic Analysis

An inference attack technique that studies the communication patterns between entities in a system and deduces information. This typically is used when messages are encrypted and eavesdropping would not yield meaningful results. Traffic analysis can be performed in the context of military intelligence or counter-intelligence, and is a concern in computer security

### Spam

Also known as unsolicited commercial e-mail (UCE) or junk e-mail. Usually sent as mass-mailed messages and considered invasive by recipients.

- Spam causes inconveniences and has severe impacts on productivity and thus is considered a business risk.
- When spam is responded to, the e-mail address or the recipient is validated and gives away information.
- Spam is managed using Sender Permitted Form (SPF) protocol and with the help of tools such as Bayesian filtering and grey listing.

### War Dialing

The practice of driving around businesses or residential neighborhoods while scanning with a notebook computer, hacking tool software and sometimes with a global positioning system (GPS) to search for wireless network names. While driving around the vicinity of a wireless network, an attacker might be able to see the wireless network name, but the use of wireless security will determine whether the attacker can do anything beyond viewing the wireless network name. With wireless security enabled and properly configured, war drivers cannot see the network name and are unable to send data, interpret data sent on the wireless network, access the shared resources of the wireless or wired network (shared files, private web sites), or use the Internet connection. Without wireless security enabled and properly configured, war drivers can send data, interpret data sent on the wireless network, access the shared resources of the wireless or wired network (shared files, private web sites), install viruses, m

**War Driving**

Similar to car driving, but a vehicle is not used. The potential hacker walks around the vicinity with a hand-held device or a PDA. Currently, there are several freehacking tools that fit in these mini devices.

The process of using an attack tool to penetrate wireless systems from outside the facility where the wireless system sits.

A wireless Ethernet card set to work in promiscuous mode is needed to War drive, and you will also need a powerful antenna if you are going to remain at a distance.

**War Chalking**

The practice of marking a series of symbols (outward facing crescents) on sidewalks and walls to indicate nearby wireless access points. These markings are used to identify hotspots, where other computer users can connect to the Internet wirelessly and at no cost. War chalking was inspired by the practice of unemployed migrant workers, during the Great Depression in the US, using chalk marks to indicate which homes were friendly.

**Salami Attack**

Involves slicing small amounts of money from a computerized transaction or account. Similar to the rounding down technique. The difference between the rounding down technique and the salami technique is that, in rounding down, the program rounds off by the smallest money fraction. For example, in the rounding down technique, a US \$1,235,954.39 transaction may be rounded to US \$1,235,954.35. On the other hand, the salami technique truncates the last few digits from the transaction amount, so US \$1,235,954.39 becomes US \$1,235,954.30 or \$1,235,954.00, depending on the algorithm/formula built into the program. In fact, other variations of the same technique are applied to rates and percentages.

**Resource Enumeration and Browsing**

When the hacker lists the various resources (names, directories, privileges, shares, policies) on targeted hosts and networks. Browsing attack-A form of a resource enumeration attack and is performed by a manual search, frequently aided with commands and tools available in software, operating systems or add-on utilities.



**Remote Maintenance Tools.**

If not securely configured and controlled, can be used as an attack method by malicious hackers to remotely gain elevated access and cause damage to the target system.

**Race Condition**

Also known as Time of Check [TOC] Time of Use [TOU] attacks. Exploit a small window of time between the time that the security control is applied and the time that the service is used. The exposure to a race condition increases in proportion to the time difference between TOC and TOU. Interference occurs when a device or system attempts to perform two or more operations at the same time; but then the nature of the device or system requires the operations to happen in proper sequence. Race conditions occur due to interferences caused by the following conditions: Sequence or non-atomic-These conditions are caused by untrusted processes, such as those invoked by an attacker, that may get in between the steps of the secure program. Deadlock, livelock, or locking failure- These conditions are caused by trusted processes running the same program. Since these different processes may have the same privileges, they may interfere with each other, if not properly controlled. **Careful programming and**

**Piggybacking**

The act of following an authorized person through a secured door or electronically attaching to an authorized telecommunications link to intercept and possibly alter transmissions. Piggybacking is considered a physical access exposure.

**Phishing**

The criminally fraudulent process of attempting to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit card details by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.





**Spear Phishing**

A pinpoint attack against a subset of people (users of a web site or product, employees of a company, members of an organization) to undermine that company or organization. Phishing techniques include social engineering, link manipulation and web site forgery.

**Pharming**

An attack that aims to redirect the traffic of a web site to a bogus web site. Pharming can be conducted either by changing the host file on a victim's computer or by exploiting a vulnerability in DNS server software. DNS servers are computers responsible for resolving Internet names into the real addresses—they are the signposts of the Internet. Compromised DNS servers are sometimes referred to as “poisoned”. In recent years, both pharming and phishing have been used to steal identity information. Pharming has become a major concern for businesses hosting e-Commerce and to online banking web sites. Sophisticated measures known as anti-pharming are required to protect against this serious threat. Antivirus software and spyware removal software cannot protect against pharming.

**Social engineering**

The human side of breaking into a computer system. Organizations with strong technical security computer measures (such as authentication processes, firewalls and encryption) may still fail to protect their information systems. This situation may happen if an employee unknowingly gives away confidential information (e.g., passwords and IP addresses) by answering questions over the phone with someone they do not know or replying to an email message from an unknown person. Some examples of social engineering include impersonation through a telephone call, dumpster diving and shoulder surfing. The best means of defense for social engineering is an ongoing security awareness program, wherein all employees and third parties (who have access to the organization's facilities) are educated about the risks involved in falling prey to social engineering attacks. R14 9

**Network Analysis**

An intruder applies a systematic and methodical approach known as footprinting to create a complete profile of an organization's network security infrastructure. During this initial reconnaissance phase, the intruder uses a combination of tools and techniques to build a repository of information about a particular company's internal network. This probably would include information about system aliases, functions, internal addresses, and potential gateways and firewalls. Next, the intruder focuses on systems within the targeted address space that responded to these network queries. Once a system has been targeted, the intruder scans the system's ports to determine what services and operating systems are running on the targeted system, possibly revealing vulnerable services that could be exploited.



### Message Modification

Involves the capturing of a message and making unauthorized changes or deletions (of full streams or parts of the message) changing the sequence or delaying transmission of captured messages. This attack can have disastrous effects if, for example, the message is an instruction to a bank to make a Payment.

### Masquerading

An active attack in which the intruder presents an identity other than the original identity. The purpose is to gain access to sensitive data or computing/network resources to which access is not allowed under the original identity. Masquerading also attacks the authentication attribute by letting a genuine session authentication take place and subsequently enters the information flow, masquerading as one of the authenticated users of the session. **Since a masquerading attack is an attempt to gain access to a computer system by posing as an authorized user. A more effective approach is where the system informs the user about their last-time login information (date and time accessed). This will alert the user if their account has been compromised.**

### Impersonation

Impersonation both by people and machines falls under this category. Masquerading by machines (also known as IP spoofing)-A forged IP address is presented. This form of attack is often used as a means of breaking a firewall. Forgery is one of the ways impersonation is achieved. Forgery is attempting to guess or otherwise fabricate evidence that the impersonator knows or possesses the authenticating information (the secret).

### Packet replay

Packet replay is one of the most common security threats to network systems, similar to impersonation and eavesdropping. Packet replay refers to the recording and retransmission of message packets in the network and is not considered impersonation.



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### **Wiretapping and sniffing**

Wiretapping and sniffing are ways to gather information needed to impersonate, but are not impersonation attacks by themselves.

### **Alteration attack**

Occurs when unauthorized modifications affect the integrity of the data or code

### **Back Door**

Any opening left in a functional piece of software that allows 'unknown' entry into the system / or application without the owners knowledge. Many times, back doors are left in by the software creators.

### **Spoofing**

Spoofing is a technique used to gain unauthorized access to computers.

A hacker must first find an IP address of a trusted host.

Once this information is gotten, then the hacker can use this information to make the recipient think that the hacker is the trusted sender.



**Man in the Middle#1**

The attacker actively establishes a connection to two devices. The attacker connects to both devices and pretends to each of them to be the other device. Should the attacker's 'device' be required to authenticate itself to one of the devices, it passes the authentication request to the other device and then sends the response back to the first device. Having authenticated himself/herself in this way, the attacker can then interact with the device as he/she wishes. To successfully execute this attack, both devices have to be connectable.

**Man in the Middle#2**

The attacker interferes while the devices are establishing a connection. During this process, the devices have to synchronize the hop sequence that is to be used. The aggressor can prevent this synchronization so that both devices use the same sequence but a different offset within the sequence.

A Man in the Middle attack is when an attacker is able to intercept traffic by placing themselves in the middle of the conversation. Man in the Middle attacks involve a malicious attacker intercepting communications and fooling both parties into believing they are communicating with each other when they are really being watched.

The attacker can then do anything to the transmission they are now apart of to include eavesdropping or planting information. Wireless systems are very susceptible to this form of attack.

**Trojan horses (often called Trojans)**

Programs that are disguised as useful programs such as operating system patches, software packages or games. Once executed, however, Trojans perform actions that the user did not intend, such as opening certain ports for subsequent access by the intruder.

**Trap doors**

Commonly called back doors. Bits of code embedded in programs by programmers to quickly gain access during the testing or debugging phase. An unscrupulous programmer purposely leaves in this code (or simply forgets to remove it), a potential security hole is introduced. Hackers often plant a back door on previously compromised systems to gain subsequent access. Threat Vector Analysis (a type of defense-in-depth architecture), separation of duties and code audits help to defend against logic bombs and trap/back doors.



**Logic bomb**

A program or a section of a program that is triggered when a certain condition, time or event occurs. Logic bombs typically result in sabotage of computer systems and are commonly deployed by disgruntled insiders who have access to programs. For example, when terminated from an organization, a disgruntled software programmer could devise a logical bomb to delete critical files or databases. Logic bombs can also be used against attackers. Administrators sometimes intentionally install pseudo flaws, also called honey tokens, that look vulnerable to attack but really act as alarms or triggers of automatic actions when the intruder attempts to exploit the flaw.

**Interrupt Attack**

Occurs when a malicious action is performed by invoking the operating system to execute a particular system call. Example: A boot sector virus typically issues an interrupt to execute a write to the boot sector.

**Flooding**

A denial of service (DoS) attack that brings down a network or service by flooding it with large amounts of traffic. The host's memory buffer is filled by flooding it with connections that cannot be completed.

**E-mail Bombing and Spamming**

Characterized by abusers repeatedly sending an identical e-mail message to a particular address. E-mail spamming is a variant of bombing and refers to sending e-mail to hundreds or thousands of users (or to lists that expand to that many users). E-mail spamming can be made worse if recipients reply to the message, causing all of the original addressees to receive the reply. It may also occur innocently as a result of sending a message to mailing lists and not realizing that the list explodes to thousands of users or as a result of using a responder message, such as a vacation alert, that is not set up correctly. May be combined with e-mail spoofing, which alters the identity of the account sending the message making it more difficult to determine from whom the e-mail is coming.