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CVE-2023-27363: Proof of concept for remote code execution in Foxit Reader

15 - May - 2023 - S.T.A².R.S Team

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Following the initial announcement of a critical vulnerability (CVE-2023-27363) which allows remote code execution in **Foxit Reader**, a functional **proof-of-concept** has recently been released that shows the exploitation of the vulnerability through the creation of a specially crafted PDF document.

The following GIF published on Github shows the PoC execution:

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Foxit Reader is a free popular PDF document reader that is widely used, and is often chosen as an alternative to Adobe's PDF document reader.

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The vulnerability CVE-2023-27363, which was initially reported by the researcher Andrea Micalizzi, exploits a problem in the handling of certain JavaScript code when validating the cPath parameter in the exportXFADData method.

This situation allows arbitrary writing of files in the system in the context of the user's permissions, which can be exploited to perform a code execution attack by creating a file

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with an .hta extension in the ASEP (AutoStart Entry Point) “StartUp folder” located in the path C:\Users\[Username]\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Startup\.

Taking advantage of this technique, it’s possible to execute arbitrary code when the affected user logs in again or after a reboot of the system.

Although the vulnerability **CVE-2023-27363** was initially announced on 2 May 2023, on 12 May a proof of concept was made public in the Github repository showing the execution of arbitrary code through the opening of a PDF document with the affected versions of Foxit Reader.

CVE-2023-27363 main characteristics

The main characteristics of the **CVE-2023-27363 vulnerability** are detailed below:

- **CVE identifier:** CVE-2023-27363
- **Published date:** 02/05/2023
- **Affected software:** Foxit PDF Reader
- **CVSS Score:** CVSS:3.1/AV:N/AC:L/PR:N/UI:N/S:U/C:H/I:H/A:H (9.8 Critical)
- **Affected version:** 12.1.1.15289 and earlier.

Mitigation

The main solution is to urgently **update the Foxit PDF Reader software** to the new versions available which fix this vulnerability. These versions are available via the Foxit official website:

Foxit PDF Reader 12.1.2 update.

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Foxit released an advisory with official information and possible updates regarding this vulnerability.

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