The Curious Case of Aspnet_Compiler.exe

AUGUST 1, 2020 ~ CPLSEC

Hey all,

This post will explore code execution with aspnet_compiler.exe. I'm going to outline how to use the Microsoft signed executable to load & execute a local DLL builder and quickly discuss defensive opportunities. However, before going further, I would like to thank Lee Kagan and Antonlovesdnb for looking at BringYourOwnBuilder from a defensive standpoint.

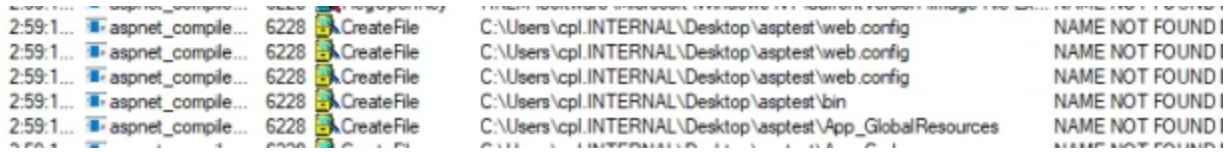
BringYourOwnBuilder

A couple of weeks ago I was poking around the Microsoft.NET directory and came across aspnet_compiler.exe. Naturally, *_compiler.exe is eyebrow raising, so I decided to take a look at the command-line options; quite a bit to drink in.

```
C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework64\v4.0.30319>aspnet_compiler.exe -?
Microsoft (R) ASP.NET Compilation Tool version 4.8.4084.0
Utility to precompile an ASP.NET application
Copyright (C) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Usage:
aspnet_compiler [-?] [-m metabasePath | -v virtualPath [-p physicalDir]]
                [[-u] [-f] [-d] [-fixednames] targetDir] [-c]
                [-x excludeVirtualPath [...]]
                [[-keyfile file | -keycontainer container]
                     [-aptca] [-delaySign]]
                [-errorstack]

-?            Prints this help text.
-m            The full IIS metabase path of the application. This switch cannot be combined with the -v or -p switches.
-v            The virtual path of the application to be compiled (e.g. "/MyApp"). If -p is specified, the physical path is used to locate the application.
              default site (under "/LM/W3SVC/1/Root"). This switch cannot be combined with the -m switch.
-p            The physical path of the application to be compiled. If -p is missing, the IIS metabase is used to locate the app. This switch must be combi
-u            If specified, the precompiled application is updatable.
-f            Overwrites the target directory if it already exists. Existing contents are lost.
-d            If specified, the debug information is emitted during compilation.
targetDir     The physical path to which the application is compiled. If not specified, the application is precompiled in-place.
-c            If specified, the precompiled application is fully rebuilt. Any previously compiled components will be re-compiled. This option is always en
-x            The virtual path of a directory that should be excluded from precompilation. This switch can be used multiple times.
-keyfile      The physical path to the strong name key file.
-keycontainer Specifies a strong name key container.
-aptca        If specified, the strong-name assembly will allow partially trusted callers.
-delaysign    If specified, the assembly is not fully signed when created.
-fixednames   If specified, the compiled assemblies will be given fixed names.
-nologo       Suppress compiler copyright message.
-errorstack   Shows extra debugging information that can help debug certain conditions.

Examples:

The following two commands are equivalent, and rely on the IIS metabase. The compiled application is deployed to c:\MyTarget:
    aspnet_compiler -m /LM/W3SVC/1/Root/MyApp c:\MyTarget
    aspnet_compiler -v /MyApp c:\MyTarget

The following command compiles the application /MyApp in-place. The effect is that no more compilations will be needed when HTTP requests are sent to it:
    aspnet_compiler -v /MyApp

The following command does *not* rely on the IIS metabase, as it explicitly specifies the physical source directory of the application:
    aspnet_compiler -v /MyApp -p c:\myapp c:\MyTarget
```

C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework64\v4.0.30319\aspnet_compiler.exe -v none -p C:

Inspecting the command above with procmon gives the following results.



2:59:1...	aspnet_compile...	6228	CreateFile	C:\Users\cpl.INTERNAL\Desktop\asptest\web.config	NAME NOT FOUND I
2:59:1...	aspnet_compile...	6228	CreateFile	C:\Users\cpl.INTERNAL\Desktop\asptest\web.config	NAME NOT FOUND I
2:59:1...	aspnet_compile...	6228	CreateFile	C:\Users\cpl.INTERNAL\Desktop\asptest\web.config	NAME NOT FOUND I
2:59:1...	aspnet_compile...	6228	CreateFile	C:\Users\cpl.INTERNAL\Desktop\asptest\bin	NAME NOT FOUND I
2:59:1...	aspnet_compile...	6228	CreateFile	C:\Users\cpl.INTERNAL\Desktop\asptest\App_GlobalResources	NAME NOT FOUND I

While searching to get a better understanding of your typical web.config file, I eventually stumbled across this stackoverflow post which included one especially interesting element – buildProvider. To feel out this element further I used the following web.config file while again inspecting the result with procmon.

Seems like aspnet_compiler.exe is trying to use BringYourOwnBuilder.(dll|exe) to build the wtf file during compilation. The documentation page at Microsoft provided insight into the BuildProvider class and it's methods. The code execution opportunity came by overriding the GenerateCode method, proof of concept code as follows.

Running aspnet_compiler.exe with the following folder structure gives us a very true message box.

C:\Windows\Microsoft.NET\Framework64\v4.0.30319\aspnet_compiler.exe -v none -p C:
c:\users\cpl.internal\desktop\asptest\web.config

c:\users\cpl.internal\desktop\asptest\App_Code\habssuck.wtf :)
c:\users\cpl.internal\desktop\asptest\bin\BringYourOwnBuilder.dll

On the Defensive

Fortunately, detecting this activity is quite simple. Since aspnet_compiler.exe is rarely executed, sysmon rules can be configured to generate events on process creation and network traffic generation.

```
<Sysmon schemaversion="4.22">
    <EventFiltering>
        <RuleGroup name="" groupRelation="or">
            <ProcessCreate onmatch="include">
                <Image condition="image">aspnet_compiler.exe</Image>
            </ProcessCreate>
        </RuleGroup>
        <RuleGroup name="" groupRelation="or">
            <NetworkConnect onmatch="include">
                <Image condition="image">aspnet_compiler.exe</Image>
            </NetworkConnect>
        </RuleGroup>
    </EventFiltering>
</Sysmon>
```

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