

Implementing Dynamic Taint Propagation to Enforce Domain Driven Security

Specification and Time Schedule

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1990 was the World Wide Web (Web) founded by Tim Berners-Lee and the creation have cause a huge impact on todays society. [20] The Web is a good source for information and it connects the world in one unanimous platform. Many bushiness have decided to take advantage of this to gain accessability for their users to the system. But this accessability gain for the wanted user group dose not come without its drawbacks. The accessability is a weakness in the same manner as it is a strength. The Web Application is not only accessible for the wanted user group but for all user groups. Which entails that users who wishes to abuse and/or cause harm to the application have the accessability to do so.

There are a number of possible attacks that a Web Application is vulnerable to and the attack that might be the most frequently conducted today will probably not be the same as the most performed in the future. The organization Open Web Applications Security Project, mostly known for its shortening OWASP, is a online community which aim to provide knowledge about how to secure Web Applications. [9] OWASP have produced reports about the top 10 security risks with a web application and the latest was published 2017. This report contains information about the ten most common application security risks for that year. Among those security risks is number one Injection Attacks and number seven Cross-Site Scripting. [10, 9, 3]

This thesis will look at the two named security risk and perform evaluations and benchmarks of a possible solution to prevent these kinds of attacks.

Chapter 2

Background

As said in the previous chapter is Injection Attacks the number one security vulnerability for Web Applications. Injection Attack is a collection name for any attack where the attacker's input changes the intent of the execution. Some possible versions of Injection Attacks is injection of queries that manipulates SQL, NoSQL, OS and LDAP. [10] The most common goals and result of a Injection Attacks are file destruction, lack of accountability, denial of access and data loss. [16]

Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) in other hand was number seven at OWASP top 10 security vulnerabilities published in 2017. [10] But the origin of the attack goes back to the beginning of the Web and one of the first XSS attacks was conducted just after the release of JavaScript. The attack was conducted through loading a malicious web application into a frame on the site that the attacker want to gain control of. The attacker could then through malicious scripts from the frame access any content that is visible or typed into the web application. The first prevention for XSS was then introduces through the standard of Same-Origin Policy. Same-Origin Policy restricts JavaScript to only access content from its own origin. [5, 14]

To prevent these form of security vulnerabilities in web applications have a variety of tools and methodologies been created. One of these is Dynamic Taint Propagation which goal is to prevent possible Injection and Cross-Site Scripting attacks in run time. This is done by marking input variables from sources, which is a marking point where malicious data might enter the system, as tainted through a taint flag attached to the variable. This taint flag follows the variable throughout the application and propagates onto the other variables it comes in

contact with. It is possible to detain (remove the taint flag) a tainted variable but this is only done after the variable have been sanitized through validation. The taint values are checked in areas called sinks which is a marking for entrypoint to sensitive code such as SQL executions. [12, 17] The decision of what to do when a tainted variable tries to pass through a sink might vary depending on the application. But in general for a Dynamic Taint Propagation tool is the common reaction to stop the execution of the tainted code. But other actions such as logging or raising an alarm is not uncommon.

But there is not only tools that have been created to help prevent Injection Attacks and XSS. One methodology that have been coined to help secure applications is the programming paradigm Domain Driven Security. Domain Driven Security aim to secure applications by focusing on the core domain models and making certain that validation of the value objects are correct. [19, 8]

The question that this thesis will evaluate is if we can combine Dynamic Taint Propagation and Domain Driven Security and develop a tool that enforces the security gains of Domain Driven Security.

2.1 Related Work

Stendahl [15] wrote a thesis in 2016 where he evaluated if a Domain Driven Security is able to prevent Injection Attacks and Cross-Site Scripting. He came to the conclusion that there is a security gains towards Injection Attacks and Cross-Site Scripting and the gained security comes from proper validation.

Halder, Chandra, and Franz [6] have written a report about Dynamic Taint Propagation in Java where they try to solves the problem of not properly validating user input. They managed to construct tool that is independent from the Web Applications source code and can see a gain in security. Halder, Chandra, and Franz [6] ran their benchmarks on OWASP's project WebGoat [2] but acknowledged in their report that benchmarks of real Web Applications need to be tested.

There do exist two Dynamic Taint Propagation tools where Phosphor [13] is one and Security Taint Propagation [4] is another. Both are open source projects and developed for Java applications.

2.2 Goal & Objective

The goal of this thesis is to implement and benchmark a Dynamic Taint Propagation tool which aims to enforce the security gains of Domain Driven Security. The Dynamic Taint Propagation tools meaning will be to prevent Injection Attacks and Cross-Site Scripting in run time were possible malicious code shall be prevented from executing and logged.

The principal, Omegapoint, is interested in everything that might validate, invalidate, evolve or bring a further value to the programming paradigm Domain Driven Security. The reason for this is because the concept of Domain Driven Security was born and is in development by Omegapoint consultants. Omegapoint also like to se a prototype of a Dynamic Taint Propagation tool which is able to block attacks in run time.

Chapter 3

Research Question & Method

How can an implementation of a Dynamic Taint Propagation tool enforce the security gains of Domain Driven Security.

The assignment would be to evaluate the implementation of a Dynamic Taint Propagation tool and discuss if it helps to enforce the security gains of Domain Driven Security. The process of this thesis would be to conduct, in order:

Literature Study The literature study is where information relevant to the thesis need to be gathered and presented.

Tainting & Detainting This step is the part where tainting and detainting rules are decided. These need to be decided since the next step is the implementation of the Dynamic Taint Propagation tool.

Implementation The implementation step is where the Dynamic Taint Propagation tool is implemented. Omegapoint have developed a proof of concept product which I will continue my work upon. This tool is developed in and for Java with help of the Javassist [7] which makes the manipulation of bytecode easier. The proof of concept is developed to check taint on HTTP query strings trough a Spring server.

Benchmarking This step is where the Dynamic Taint Propagation tool will be benchmarked. The Dynamic Taint Propagation tool should

be tested on a larger set of applications to make the result significant. The values that is in focus during the benchmark is the values in the table below.

- Injection Prevention Rate
- False Positive Rate
- Added Time Complexity

Analysis The analysis step is where the benchmarking results is reflected upon and written into the report.

Report Writing & Presentation The last steps is to finalize the report and present the thesis.

The relevance in the thesis lies in the problem with software security. Since we are going towards an age where digitalization only grows larger is the question about how we can secure our software extremely relevant. The hypothesis is that we can help in the process of enforcing more secure software. But the question is with how much and if there are negative side effects such as too much overhead to the runtime.

Chapter 4

Evaluation & News Value

There should be a discussion and evaluation of the implemented Dynamic Taint Propagation tool. This evaluation should contain well thought comments and observations about the benchmarking result. A comparison/analysis of the possibility for the Dynamic Taint Propagation tool to enforce the security gain of Domain Driven Security shall also be conducted.

The work should be of interest for anyone wanting to see a gain in security. The core idea is to enforce more secure software through Dynamic Taint Propagation. However, since the relation between Dynamic Taint Propagation and Domain Driven Security will be discussed will the practitioners of Domain Driven Security find it extra interesting.

The benchmark will check the values; injection prevention rate, false positive rate and added time overhead. The tools to use as benchmark is all or some of; OWASP Zed [11], w3af [18] and Loader [1]. A discussion whether this tool also helps to enforce the programming paradigm Domain Driven Security is also to be conducted.

Chapter 5

Pre-study

The literature study will focus on gathering the relevant information needed for the report. These areas are listed in the table below:

- Web Applications
- Dynamic Taint Propagation
- Domain Driven Security
- Injection Attacks
- XSS
- Javassist

Research into JVM modifications must also be included since it is needed for the implementation of the Dynamic Taint Propagation tool. The information will be obtained by researching for relevant books, reports and other possible material. Two of the founders of the concept of Domain Driven Security work at Omegapoint and are accessible for questions. Conduction interviews with the founders might be of interest.

Chapter 6

Conditions & Schedule

6.1 Resources

To save some time will the development of the Dynamic Taint Propagation tool continue on the work that Simon Tardell have started. Which is a tool developed in and for Java with help of the Java library Javassist [7]. Applications to evaluate the implementation is also of need. The thesis is at the moment aimed towards web applications which means that a number, 10 should be sufficient, of web applications need to be gathered. Omegapoint have some internal systems which could be used. Other usable web applications can be found on open source platforms.

6.2 Limitations

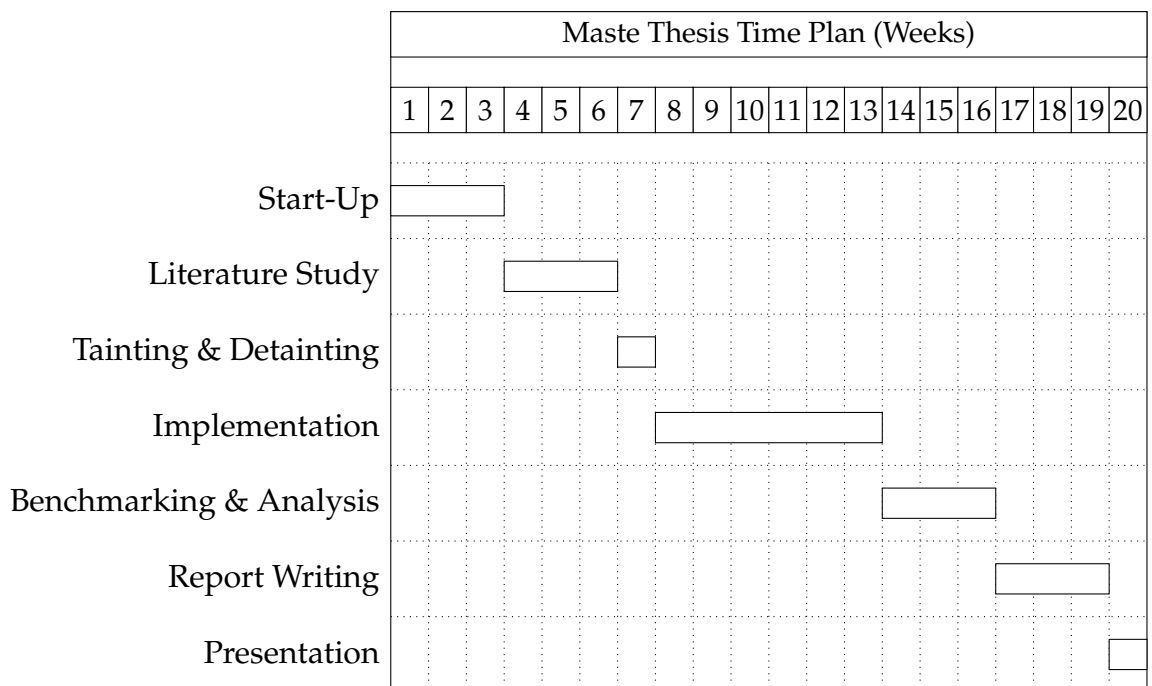
- The Dynamic Taint Propagation tool dose not have to be a production ready. The goal is to develop a prototype.
- Web Applications is the targeted applications.
- The scope of the thesis will not contain Static Taint Propagation.
- The tool is developed in Java with Javassist.

6.3 Company Supervisor

- **Jonatan Landsberg:** Will assist with supervision on the academic part of the thesis.
- **Simon Tardell:** Supervisor in the technical parts of the thesis. He is also the author of the first draft of the Dynamic Taint Propagation tool which this thesis will continue its work upon.

6.4 Time Plan

Below is my time plan for the Masters Thesis. The goal is to continuously, throughout all phases, add to the report. But I have also reserved a couple of weeks in the end for writing the report. I believe that this time can be used to add to or rewrite sections if needed.



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