

iOS VPN Security

Jack Wilson

Obligatory \$whoami

- 4th year student @ Abertay
 - BSc (Hons) Ethical Hacking
- Intern Security Consultant
- First-time speaker at a conference
- Didn't plan to speak until about 1 hour ago

Why VPN Security?

Why VPN Security?



x0rz

@x0rz

Following

Another shitty free VPN app leaking sensitive information over unencrypted HTTP request (MAC address, phone number, IMEI, IMSI, ...)



```
local > 188.166.196.111:httpl [POST] http://188.166.196.111/abc/activate/
[REQUEST HEADERS]
User-Agent : All-Connected
X-Auth-Token : d85127f0289dfc08d0b8f9a
Content-Type : application/json; charset=utf-8
Host : 188.166.196.111
Connection : close
Accept-Encoding : identity
Content-Length : 503
[REQUEST BODY]
{
  "app_uuid": "e54ef4373e859a6b",
  "google_account": "*****",
  "os_name": "Android",
  "os_ver": "6.0.1",
  "os_lang": "nl_NL",
  "dev_model": "SM-G920F",
  "dev_manufacturer": "samsung",
  "dev_mac_addr": "*****",
  "phone_number": "*****",
  "app_version": "20820",
  "network_name": "*****",
  "app_package_name": "free.vpn.unblock.proxy.vpnpro",
  "app_ver_code": "2017071411",
  "app_dist_channel": "DEFAULT",
  "app_ver_name": "2.0.7",
  "imei": "*****",
  "imsi": "*****",
  "nonce": "*****"
}
```



Free VPN proxy by Snap VPN

ALL Connected Co.,Ltd. Outils

★★★★★

PEGI 3

Contient des annonces

⚠ Vous ne disposez d'aucun appareil.

Ajouter à la liste de souhaits

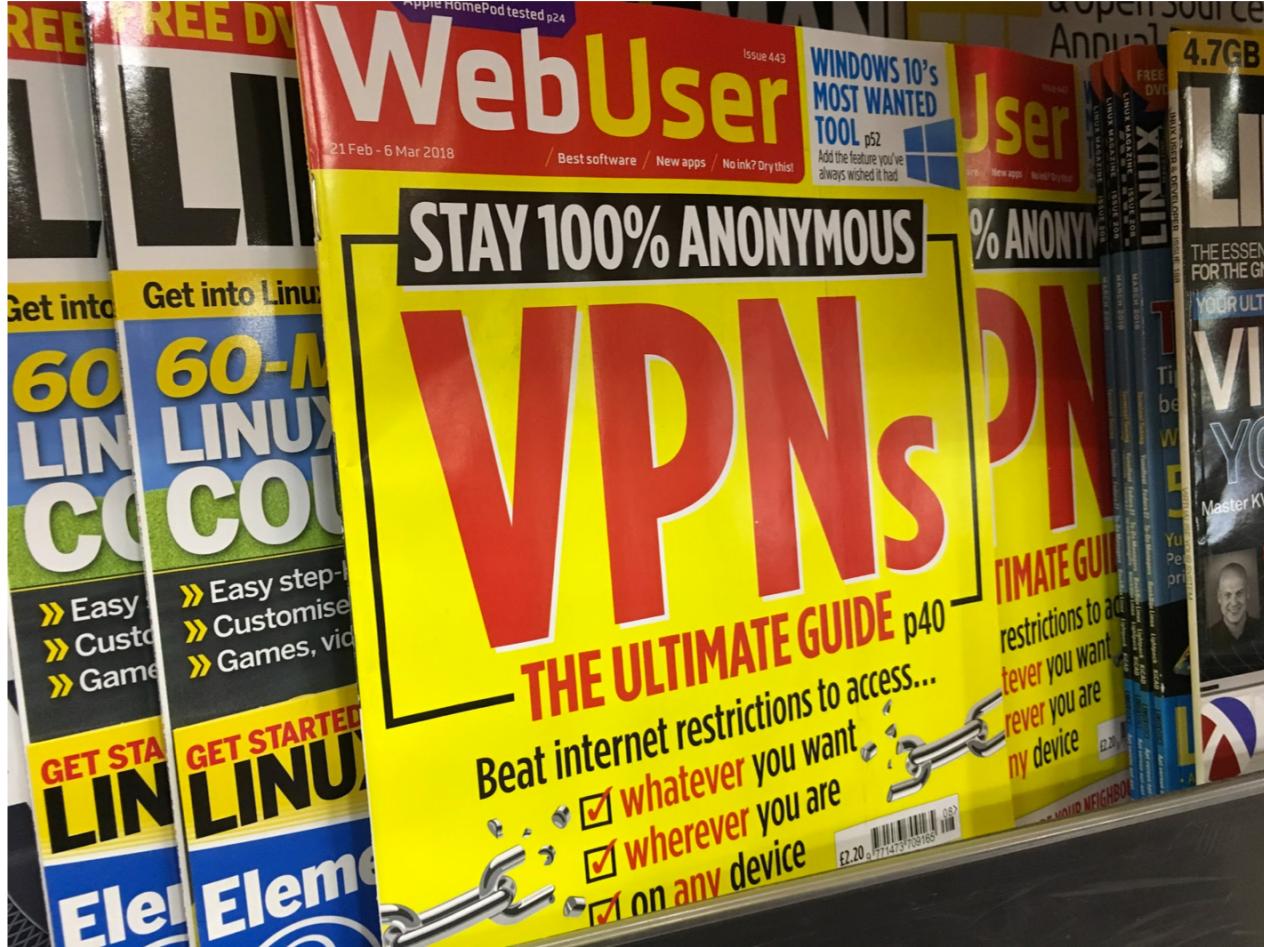


7:43 PM - 25 Jul 2017

544 Retweets 552 Likes



Why VPN Security?



- h/t @neil_neilzone

Notes from the article

- This is a wider issue, I'm only picking on this article as it's recent
- The general advice is ok
- The "100% anonymity" claim is garbage
- The image (right) is terrible advice

Unblock sites that are blocked at work

Many workplaces, universities and schools have an 'acceptable use' policy for the web, which blocks sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to prevent employees and students from wasting time, hogging bandwidth and leaking information. If you find this approach heavy-handed and unfair, you can use a VPN to secretly bypass the network restrictions. By concealing your IP address and location, a VPN will allow you to access your favourite sites without getting into trouble - and, by encrypting your traffic, it stops anyone seeing what you've been doing if you do get rumbled. If you're unable to download VPN software to your office computer, try a VPN browser extension instead.

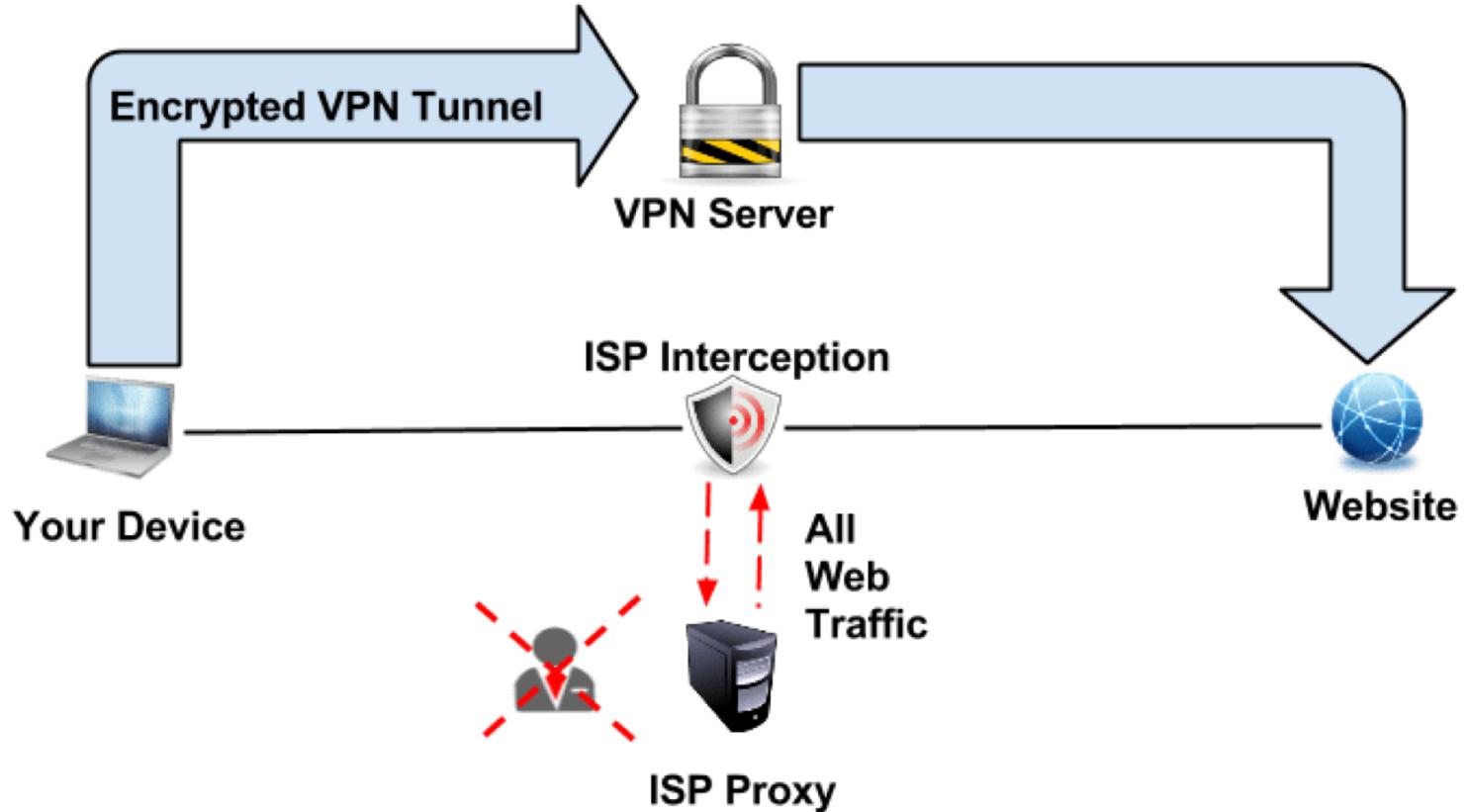
But why iOS?

Android was
already done

An Analysis of the Privacy and Security Risks of Android VPN Permission-enabled Apps

Muhammad Ikram^{1,2}, Narseo Vallina-Rodriguez³, Suranga Seneviratne¹,
Mohamed Ali Kaafar¹, Vern Paxson^{3,4}
¹Data61, CSIRO ²UNSW ³ICSI ⁴UC Berkeley

Basics First: What is a VPN?



- It's against the acceptable usage policy to use a VPN on eduroam
- This makes practical work/research an absolute nightmare

Threat Models

- Why you **SHOULD** use a VPN
 - Security on public Wi-Fi
 - Avoid ISP tracking
 - We'll go into this later
 - You want to appear somewhere you're not/avoid geo-restrictions
 - You want to avoid websites/advertisers tracking you (kind of)
- Why you **SHOULDN'T** use a VPN
 - To avoid governments
 - To be anonymous
 - Privacy != Anonymity
 - "If your threat model (sec.) includes the NSA, do not use the internet"
–The Grugq

Trust

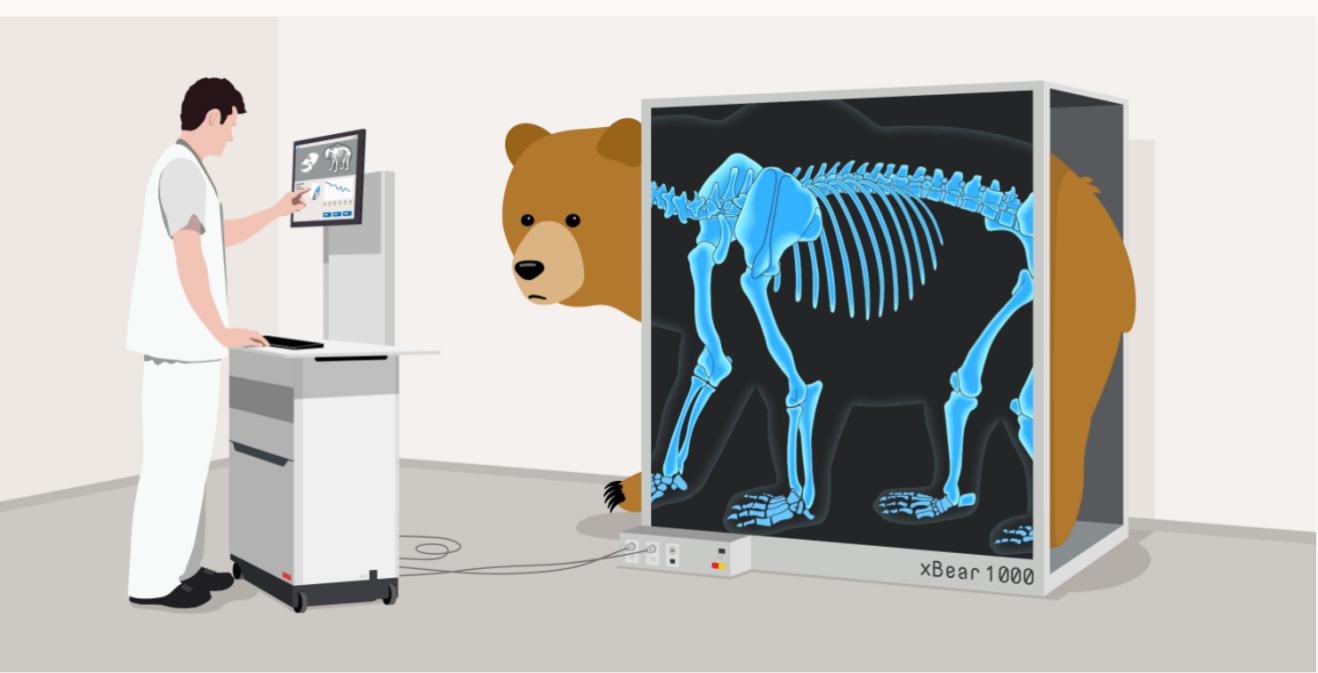
- Picking a VPN provider involves a lot of trust
 - Will they (at least try) to keep your data safe/secure?
 - Will they stick to the claims in their privacy statement?
 - Are they truly the “No logging” VPN service that they advertise?
 - Will they sell your data?
 - Will they fiddle with your traffic?



Trust

A VPN simply moves trust from
your ISP to the VPN provider

Tunnelbear Audit



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TunnelBear Completes Industry-First Consumer VPN Public Security Audit

Consumers and experts alike have good reason to question the security claims of the VPN industry. Over the last few years, many less reputable VPN companies have abused users' trust by [selling their bandwidth, their browsing data, offering poor security or even embedding malware](#).

"No logs" VPN provider catches a stalker

@iJackWilson | www.jack.lu



Hola uses
users devices
as endpoints

Hola Better Internet Sells Your Bandwidth, Turning Its VPN into a Botnet



Alan Henry

5/28/15 3:15pm • Filed to: PRIVACY ▾

88

8

The botnet claim is debatable, but the exit node part is an issue

Via <https://lifehacker.com/hola-better-internet-sells-your-bandwidth-turning-its-1707496872>

Facebook buys VPN for analytics

Facebook's Onavo Gives Social-Media Firm Inside Peek at Rivals' Users

Information from data-security app shows company what people do on their phones beyond suite of firm's apps

When an Onavo Protect user opens a mobile app or website, Onavo redirects the traffic to Facebook's servers and the action is logged in a database, according to Onavo's website and the people familiar with the system. Facebook's product teams can analyze the aggregated data to get detailed information on things such as which apps people generally are using, how frequently, for how long, and whether more women than men use an app in a specific country. If data inside an app isn't encrypted, the information can be as specific as the number of photos the average user likes or posts in a week.

Via <https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-onavo-gives-social-media-firm-inside-peek-at-rivals-users-1502622003>

Other stuff to look for

- Self-hosted infrastructure VS third –party
 - Mitigations to SSL/TLS downgrade attacks
 - Uptime guarantee
 - Policies around staff access/customer confidentiality
 - Log longevity/destruction
 - Server security (hardening/encryption/patching etc.)
 - Customer password storage (plain text vs bcrypt etc.)
-
- Via Kenn White (@kennwhite)
 - <https://twitter.com/kennwhite/status/570062025641951232>



The Dissertation

Take a heap of
iOS VPN
clients and test
for:

- Sending traffic over HTTP
- DNS Leak
- Transmission of PII
- Using insecure/outdated tunnelling protocols
- Using Non-Unique Pre-Shared Keys
- Asking for unnecessary permissions
- Malvertising
- Other weird stuff stupid developers do

*Disclaimer: I don't think all developers are stupid

What's the point?

- To get an overview of the state of iOS VPN security within the free/cheap market
 - Realistically, most non-technical consumers will look at this price range
- To write guidance for developers
- Possibly some responsible disclosure



Testing Criteria Explained

HTTP

- Web traffic (Unencrypted)
- Analyse PCAPS
 - Automation
 - `grep -i -a -f wordlist.txt ${SEARCHTERM} | grep -ivf exclusions.txt || echo "No keyword matches" >&2`
- You'd think encrypting passwords is simple...

```
GET /lygamesService.asmx/TollUserReg?apikey=lygames_0953&uuid=CADF4902-5C7F-428E-BF9A-98BEFA172682&name=&mail=junk@jack.lu&pass=7c6a180b36896a0a8c02787eeafb0e4c&source=SDNEW560 HTTP/1.1
```

You'd be
wrong

```
{
  "user_name" : "3CD2E3CE-8C17-4C32-97C4-DD53A3D4A14B",
  "user_passwd" : "3CD2E3CE-8C17-4C32-97C4-DD53A3D4A14B"
}HTTP/1.1 200 OK
```

```
Server: nginx/1.4.6 (Ubuntu)
Date: Tue, 23 Jan 2018 14:36:58 GMT
Content-Type: text/html; charset=utf-8
Content-Encoding: gzip
Transfer-Encoding: chunked
```

```
{"psk":"Z6utCz93PG","remote_id":"abcdef.com","local_id":"test@abcdef.com","eap_user":"user1","eap_passwd":"rj0T6ID62j"}
```

@iJackWilson | www.jack.lu

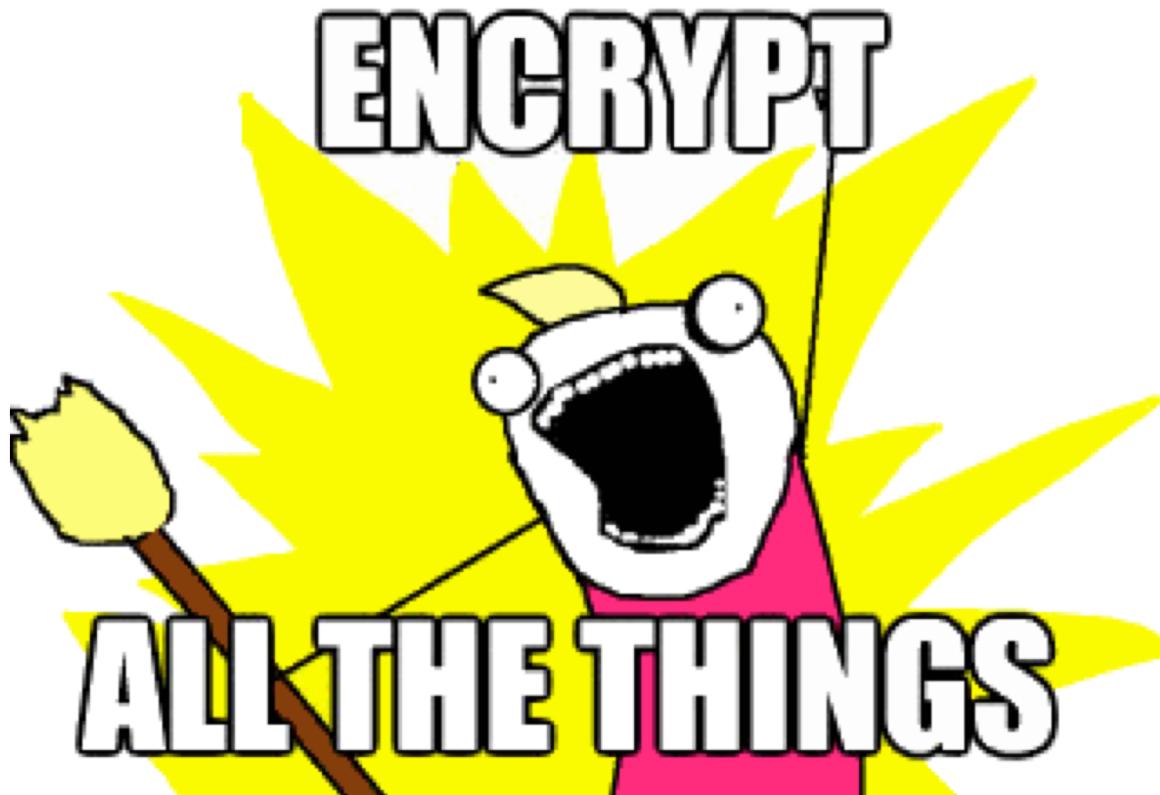
&pass=7c6a180b36896a0a8c02787eeafb0e4c



```

  ▼ <name>
    user
  </name>
  ▼ <value>
    ▼ <string>
      junk@jack.lu
    </string>
  </value>
</member>
<member>
  ▼ <name>
    password
  </name>
  ▼ <value>
    ▼ <string>
      password
    </string>
  </value>
</member>
```

How can this
be fixed?



How can this
be fixed on a
larger scale?

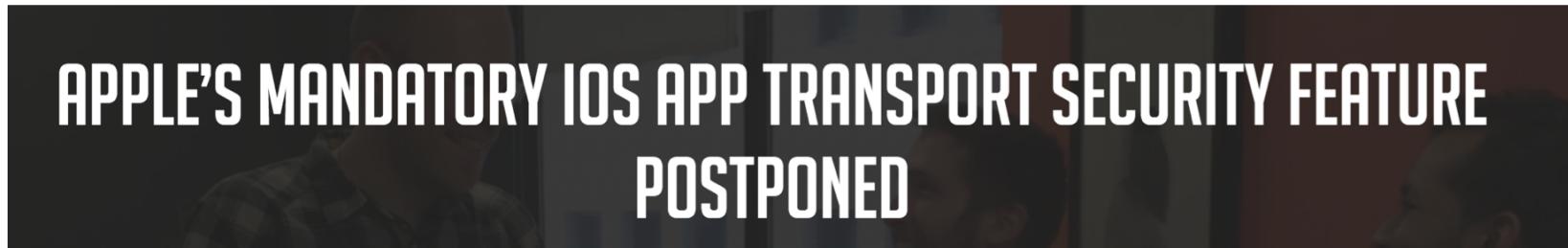
SECURITY



WWDC 2016: Apple to require HTTPS encryption on all iOS apps by 2017

At a session at the 2016 WWDC, Apple revealed that it would be requiring all iOS apps to use HTTPS connections through an existing feature called App Transport Security by the end of the year.

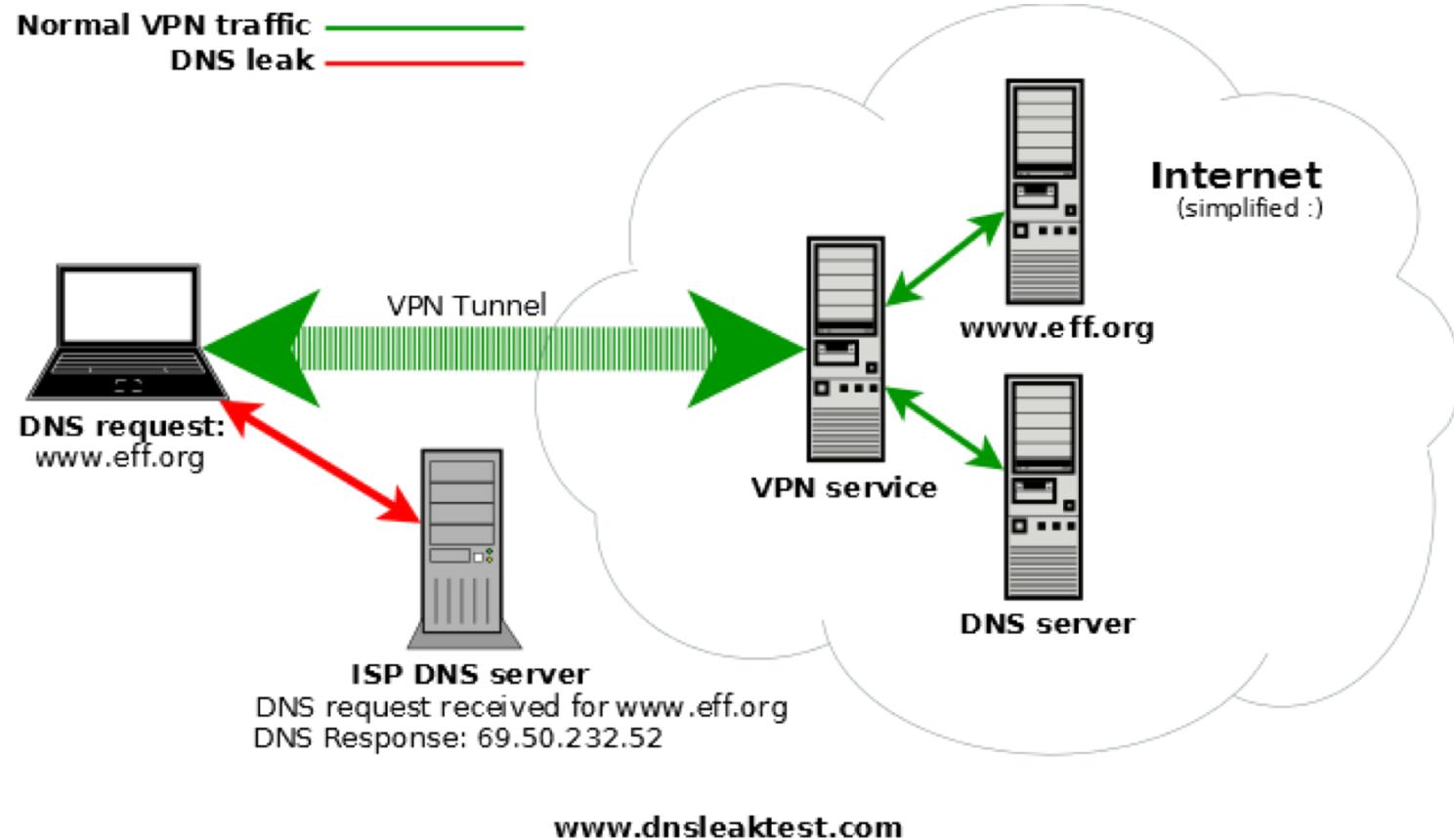
By Conner Forrest | June 15, 2016, 2:14 PM PST



APPLE'S MANDATORY IOS APP TRANSPORT SECURITY FEATURE POSTPONED

↖(ツ)↗

DNS Leak

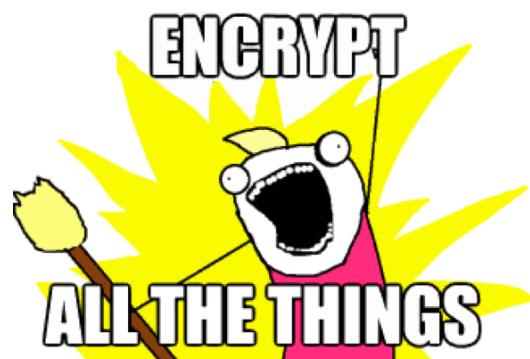


Why this is bad

- It gives whoever is receiving the DNS requests the ability to monitor which sites you visit
 - Your ISP, Google, etc.
- Not ideal if you want to avoid tracking

How can this be fixed?

- In a perfect world?
 - VPN providers running their own DNS
- A bare minimum
 - Using a trusted, secure DNS provider
 - Trust means a different thing to different people
 - Not an ISP or Google
- Honourable mention: DNS over TLS
 - Encrypts DNS traffic (when not using a VPN)
 - Avoids anyone sniffing traffic from viewing your DNS requests



Transmission of PII

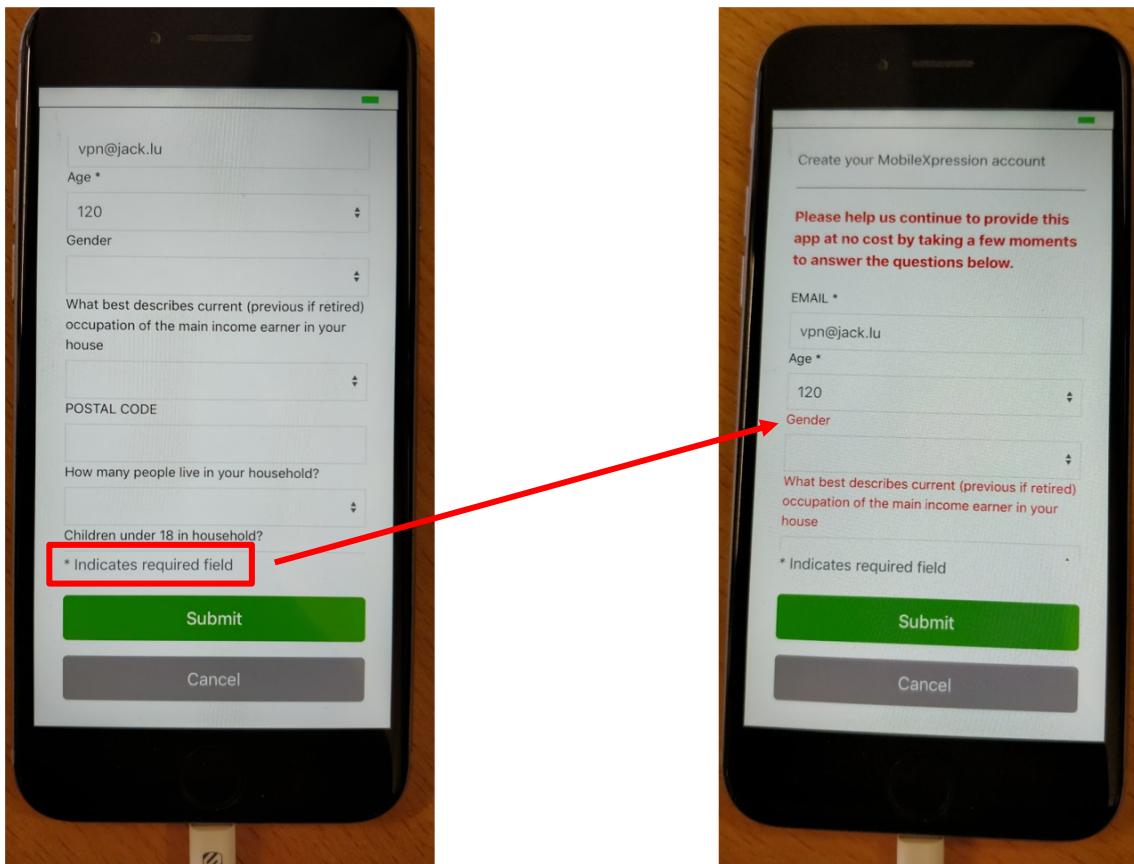
- Determining what information apps are sending that could uniquely identify a person/device
 - Install Burp certificate on phone?
 - TLS/SSL downgrade attacks?
- If all the goodies so far are in plain text what is hiding under encryption?
 - I've not looked too much at this yet

What is PII?

- Personally-Identifiable Information
 - Anything that can be used to identify someone/something
- Device Identifier
 - IMEI
 - IP Address
 - Device Serial Number
- User Identifier
 - Name
 - Banking Details
 - Date of Birth
 - Contact Information (Phone Number/Email etc.)
- Location Data
 - Home/Work Address
 - GPS Location
- Credentials
 - Username
 - Email address (again)
 - Password

How can this be fixed?

- Developers: Don't be greedy, only take what you need
 - There's no need for a VPN app to require my age, gender, postcode and how many people live in my house
 - I wish I was kidding



Greedy Developers (cont.)

```
▼ Member Key: env
  ▼ Object
    ▼ Member Key: ip
      String value: fe80::10ee:4653:2dd:43a0
      Key: ip
    ▼ Member Key: screenScale
      Number value: 2
      Key: screenScale
    ▼ Member Key: lang
      String value: en-GB
      Key: lang
    ▼ Member Key: natOrient
      String value: portrait
      Key: natOrient
    ▼ Member Key: country
      String value: GB
      Key: country
    ▼ Member Key: storage
      Number value: 9635508224
      Key: storage
    ▼ Member Key: charging
      True value
      Key: charging
    ▼ Member Key: ua
      String value: Mozilla/5.0 (iPhone; CPU iPA
      Key: ua
    ▼ Member Key: sdkVer
      String value: 6.6.0-c59cbb79
      Key: sdkVer
    ▼ Member Key: osv
      String value: 11.2.2
      Key: osv
    ▼ Member Key: h
      Number value: 667
      Key: h
    ▼ Member Key: os
      String value: ios
      Key: os
    ▼ Member Key: w
      Number value: 375
      Key: w
    ▼ Member Key: deviceFeatures
      ▼ Object
        ▼ Member Key: mic
          String value: unknown
          Key: mic
        ▼ Member Key: cameraRear
          String value: false
          Key: cameraRear
        ▼ Member Key: bt
          String value: unknown
          Key: bt
        ▼ Member Key: gps
          String value: unknown
          Key: gps
        ▼ Member Key: cameraFront
          String value: false
          Key: cameraFront
        Key: deviceFeatures
      ▼ Member Key: carrier
        String value: 02
        Key: carrier
      ▼ Member Key: headphones
        False value
        Key: headphones
      ▼ Member Key: model
        String value: iPhone7,2
        Key: model
      ▼ Member Key: lmt
        True value
        Key: lmt
```

Non-Unique Pre-Shared Keys

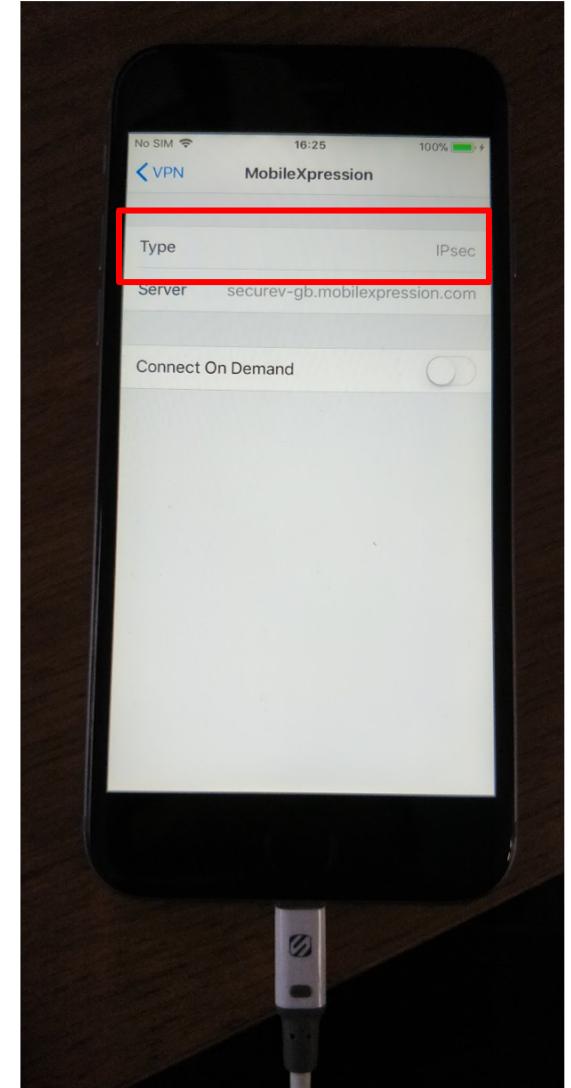
- A pre-shared key is required to authenticate to some VPN services
- Similar to how you connect to your home WiFi
- If an adversary knows the PSK they could theoretically impersonate the VPN server and decrypt/eavesdrop connection

Tunnelling Protocols

- Apple support the following protocols:
 - IKEv2 (with IPSec)
 - Good, secure, fast
 - L2TP over IPSec
 - May be compromised by the NSA
 - Let's not go down the Snowden rabbithole...
 - SSL VPN
 - Light, clientless (works in a browser)
 - PPTP (Deprecated in iOS 10)
 - Insecure, weak encryption

Tunnelling Protocols

- How to analyse protocols?
 - Some VPN's documentation refers to protocols used/offered
 - VPN config within iOS (sometimes) gives this information
 - Not consistent or guaranteed to be accurate



Bro? Bro!



Bro

- Bro Network Security Monitor
 - A very powerful tool
 - Comes with analysers for protocols
 - Also open source
 - A royal PITA to get working

Permissions

- Are apps asking for permissions they don't necessarily need?
 - E.g. contacts, camera roll, GPS etc.
 - No evidence of this (so far) in preliminary testing

Malvertising

- Are the third-party ad libraries some developers use known to display malicious adverts?
 - Cryptocurrency miners
 - “Your iPhone has (6) viruses, click here to fix”
- A bit tricky to test in the restricted iOS ecosystem
 - Can’t just rip apart an APK
 - Possibly determine ad networks from Wireshark data?

Malvertising on iOS pushes eyebrow-raising VPN app

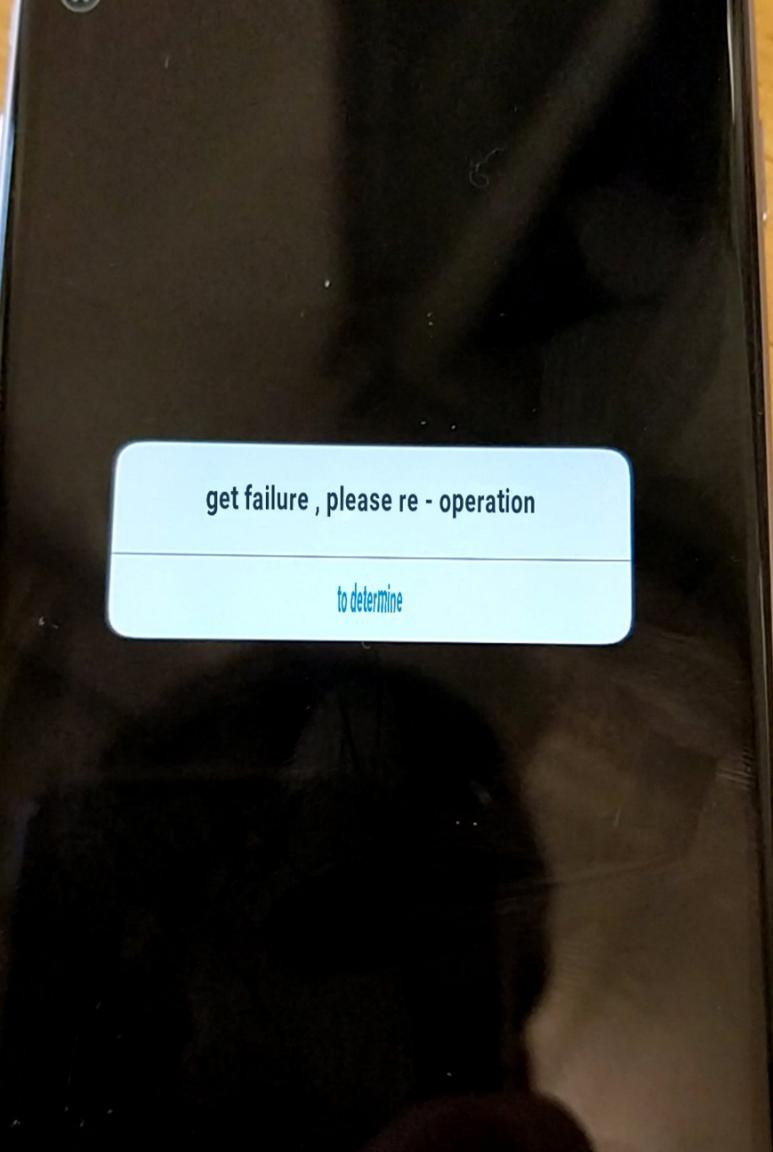
Posted: April 6, 2017 by [Jérôme Segura](#)

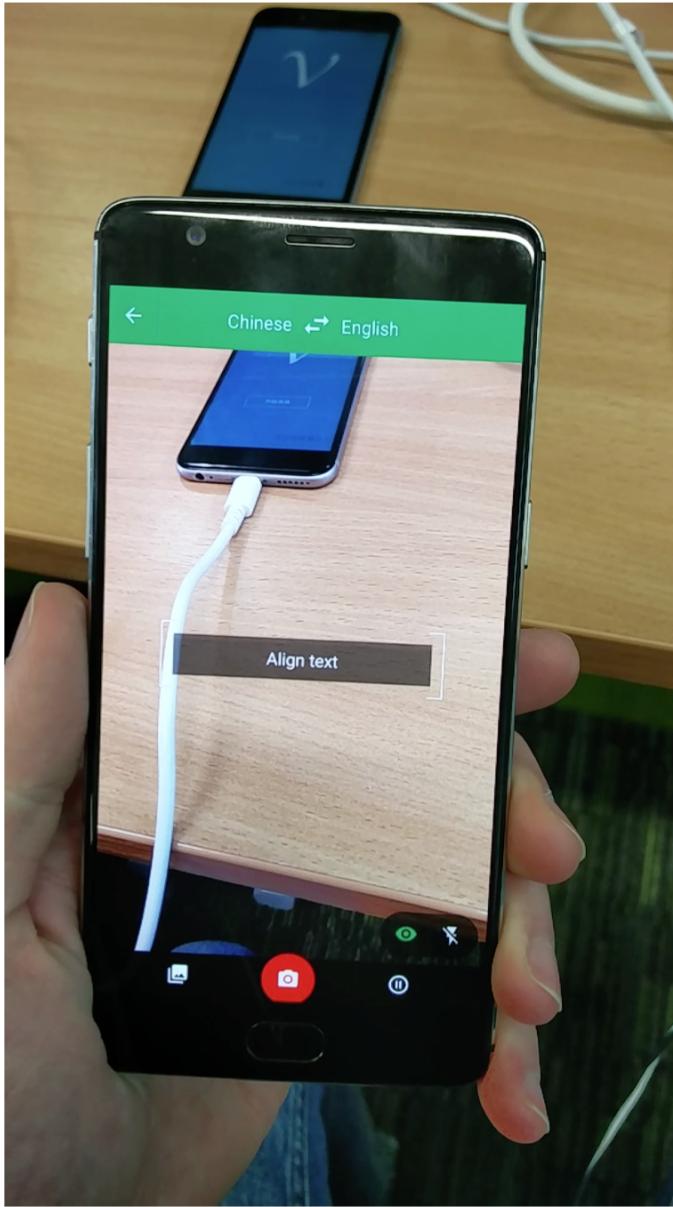
There is a preconceived idea that malvertising mostly affects the Windows platform. Certainly, when it comes to malicious adverts, Internet Explorer is a prime target for malware infections. However, malvertising can produce different outcomes adapted to the device the user is running.

Case in point, we discovered this scareware campaign that pushes a ‘free’ VPN app called *My Mobile Secure* to iOS users via rogue ads on popular Torrent sites. The page plays an ear-piercing beeping sound and claims your device is infected with viruses.

“We have detected that your Mobile Safari is (45.4%) DAMAGED by BROWSER TROJAN VIRUSES picked up while surfing recent corrupted sites.”

Other weird findings





Not Secure cloudapi/report/serverReachable

TypeError at /cloudapi/report/serverReachable

unbound method unSupportGetMethod() must be called with Error instance as first argument (got nothing instead)

Request Method: GET
Request URL: http://[REDACTED]/cloudapi/report/serverReachable
Django Version: 1.6.1
Exception Type: TypeError
Exception Value: unbound method unSupportGetMethod() must be called with Error instance as first argument (got nothing instead)
Exception Location: /home/django/xtsvpn/cloudapi/views/userreport.py in add, line 15
Python Executable: /usr/bin/python
Python Version: 2.7.6
Python Path: ['/home/django/xtsvpn', '/home/django', '/usr/bin', '/usr/lib/python2.7', '/usr/lib/python2.7/plat-x86_64-linux-gnu', '/usr/lib/python2.7/lib-tk', '/usr/lib/python2.7/lib-old', '/usr/lib/python2.7/lib-dynload', '/usr/local/lib/python2.7/dist-packages', '/usr/lib/python2.7/dist-packages']
Server time: Tue, 30 Jan 2018 08:15:44 +0800

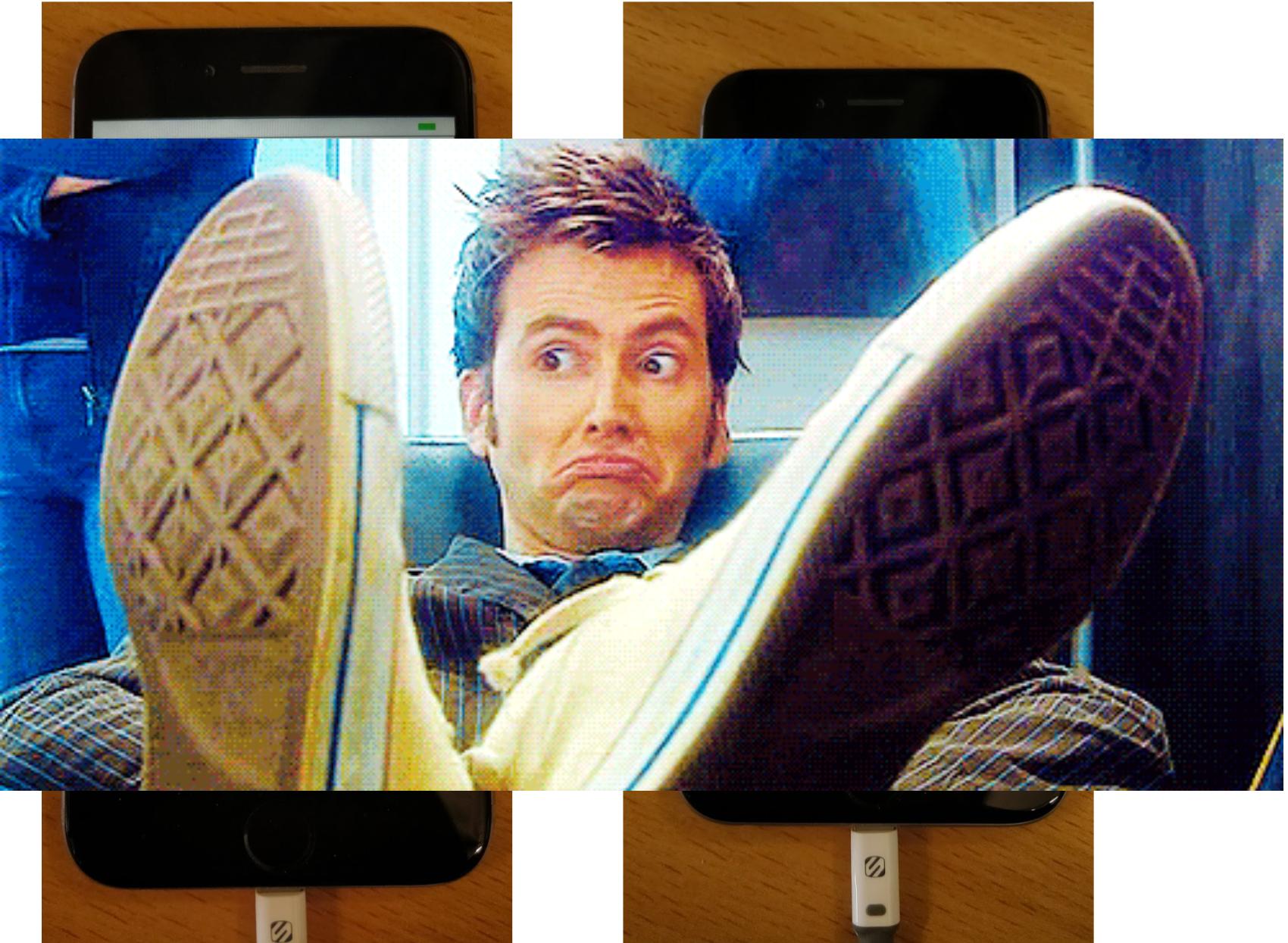
Traceback Switch to copy-and-paste view

```
/usr/lib/python2.7/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/base.py in get_response
112.             response = wrapped_callback(request, *callback_args, **callback_kwargs)
...
▶ Local vars
/home/django/xtsvpn/cloudapi/views/userreport.py in add
15.         return Error.unSupportGetMethod()
...
▶ Local vars
```

Request information

GET No GET data
POST No POST data

Django 1.6.1 was released December 2013.
CVE's for XSS, CSRF, DoS...



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```
GET /downloads/config/whalevpn_config.zip HTTP/1.1
```

Hot(ish) off the press!

A flaw in Hotspot Shield can expose VPN users, locations

The virtual private network says it provides a way to browse the web "anonymously and privately," but a security researcher has released code that could identify users' names and locations.



By Zack Whittaker for Zero Day | February 6, 2018 -- 20:00 GMT (20:00 GMT) | Topic: Security

- Hotspot Shield
- 9M+ installs across every platform worldwide
- Runs a web server on localhost that hosts JSON endpoints
- Including source IP, WiFi SSID and country
- SSID + wigle.net = profit?
- Researcher also developed a PoC for RCE
- h/t Mikey for sending the article

Algo?

- Roll your own VPN
 - Works with DO, AWS, Azure, Google Compute Engine
 - Only supports IKEv2
 - Works well natively on Apple
 - A bit janky on Android/Windows
 - Built-in ad-blocking
 - Cheapest DO droplet is \$5/month
 - Server can be used for other purposes
 - This depends

Results

Let's see some statistics

29 apps tested (so far)

- Note: Some apps work, some are broken
- 75% leak DNS
- 77% send any traffic over HTTP
 - majority of these apps send confidential/PII data over HTTP
 - Usernames, passwords etc.
- 2 apps were fully in Chinese
- A few apps were shut down by the Chinese government
- 1 app charged me £28 for a free trial
 - Symantec
- 1 VPN server was hosted on the same server as an Italian Hotel's website

Game Plan

- Look more into Algo
- Test a well-renowned app for a good baseline standard
 - VyprVPN/NordVPN/PIA etc.
- Test more apps for a larger dataset
- Test more for TLS interception/tunnelling protocol/PSK stuff
- Write dissertation
- Write guidance for devs
- Responsible disclosure?
- 60 days and counting...

Questions/ Comments/ Feedback?

- Now
- Chat to me if you see me
- Twitter (@iJackWilson)
- Dissertation journal/proposal available at bit.ly/JacksDJ
- Other work at www.jack.lu/blog