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ASIS 2014 quals # Crypto – Random Image

Posté le **10 mai 2014** - 1 374 vues

URL: <http://asis-ctf.ir/challenges/>

Type: XOR + grayscale threshold

Solution: ASIS_af4e8dcbbcdcef44fd3ecdbc6e9695d4

Description

Find the flag
file

Archive contains 2 files:

```
$ tar xvfJ crypto_150_8f3fd5d2bacd408904b8406c19183c23
x color_crypto.py
x enc.png
```

color_crypto.py is the Python source code of the algorithm used to encrypt the PNG file:

```
#!/usr/bin/env python

import Image
import random

def get_color(x, y, r):
    n = (pow(x, 3) + pow(y, 3)) ^ r
    return (n ^ ((n >> 8) << 8))

flag_img = Image.open("flag.png")
im = flag_img.load()
r = random.randint(1, pow(2, 256))
print flag_img.size

enc_img = Image.new(flag_img.mode, flag_img.size)
enpix = enc_img.load()
```

```

for x in range(flag_img.size[0]):
    for y in range(flag_img.size[1]):
        t = random.randint(1, pow(2, 256)) % 250
        enpix[x,y] = t

for x in range(flag_img.size[0]):
    for y in range(flag_img.size[1]):
        if im[x,y] < 250 :
            s = get_color(x, y, r)
            enpix[x,y] = s

enc_img.save('enc' + '.png')

```

enc.png is a 8-bit grayscale PNG image:



ALGORITHM ANALYSIS

The coding scheme rely on grayscale threshold. Basicly, in original image:

- if pixel gray level ≥ 250 then it is considered as *bright* pixel
- if pixel gray level < 250 then it is considered as *dark* pixel

In encoded image:

- *bright* pixel is substituted with a random value:
 $\text{random.randint}(1, \text{pow}(2, 256)) \% 250$
- *dark* pixel is computed in `get_color(x, y, r)` function, from its coordinates and a constant big random value $r = \text{random.randint}(1, \text{pow}(2, 256))$:

$$n = (\text{pow}(x, 3) + \text{pow}(y, 3)) \wedge r$$

then it returns the 8 less significant bits (i.e. the less significant byte)

$$n \wedge ((n \gg 8) \ll 8)$$

which somehow is equivalent to $n \& 0xff$

WEAKNESS

The weakness here is that for each pixel the coordinates x and y are known, and r is a constant value. Knowing XOR associative property ($a \wedge b = c \iff a \wedge c = b \iff b \wedge c = a$):

1. for each pixel of the encoded image, we XOR its value with $(x^3 + y^3)$
2. thus, the less significant byte of r is the most frequently occurring value
3. finally:
 - if a pixel of the encoded image XOR $(x^3 + y^3) =$ the less significant byte of r , then pixel of the original image was *dark* (let's say black)
 - else pixel of the original image was *bright* (let's say white)

There could be some false positive (i.e. pixels that we considered *dark* when they were *bright*) due to randomness, but statistically they will be few.

PYTHON DECODER

```
import Image

enc_img = Image.open('enc.png')
enc_pix = enc_img.load()

# 1. XOR all pixel values with corresponding (x**3 + y**3)
pow_pix = [(enc_pix[x,y] ^ (x**3 + y**3)) & 0xff
            for x in range(enc_img.size[0])
            for y in range(enc_img.size[1])]

# 2. r_LSbyte = most frequently occurring byte
r_LSbyte = max([b for b in range(0x100)], key = pow_pix.count)

flag_img = Image.new(enc_img.mode, enc_img.size)
flag_pix = flag_img.load()

for x in range(enc_img.size[0]):
    for y in range(enc_img.size[1]):
        if ((enc_pix[x, y] ^ (x**3 + y**3)) & 0xff == r_LSbyte):
            flag_pix[x, y] = 0          # original pixel was dark
        else:
            flag_pix[x, y] = 255        # original pixel was bright

flag_img.save('flag.png')
```

Running on enc.png, we obtain the following decoded PNG flag file (with less significant byte of $r = 0x3d$):

ASIS_af4e8dcbbcdcef44fd3ecdbc6e9695d4

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