#### Practical Malware Analysis

Ch 1: Malware Analysis Primer

Updated 1-15-16

#### The Goals of Malware Analysis

## Incident Response

- Case history
  - A medical clinic with 10 offices found malware on one of their workstations
  - Hired a consultant to clean & re-image that machine
- All done—case closed?

#### Incident Response

- After malware is found, you need to know
  - Did an attacker implant a rootkit or trojan on your systems?
  - Is the attacker really gone?
  - What did the attacker steal or add?
  - How did the attack get in
    - Root-cause analysis

## Breach clean-up cost LinkedIn nearly \$1 million, another \$2-3 million in upgrades

**Summary:** LinkedIn executives reveal on quarterly earnings call just what the June theft of 6.5 million passwords cost the company in forensic work and on-going security updates.



LinkedIn spent nearly \$1 million investigating and unraveling the theft of 6.5 million passwords in June and plans to spend up to \$3 million more updating security on its social networking site.

Link Ch 1a

#### Malware Analysis

- Dissecting malware to understand
  - How it works
  - How to identify it
  - How to defeat or eliminate it
- A critical part of incident response

#### The Goals of Malware Analysis

- Information required to respond to a network intrusion
  - Exactly what happened
  - Ensure you've located all infected machines and files
  - How to measure and contain the damage
  - Find signatures for intrusion detection systems

#### Signatures

- Host-based signatures
  - Identify files or registry keys on a victim computer that indicate an infection
  - Focus on what the malware did to the system, not the malware itself
    - Different from antivirus signature
- Network signatures
  - Detect malware by analyzing network traffic
  - More effective when made using malware analysis

#### False Positives



#### Malware Analysis Techniques

#### Static v. Dynamic Analysis

#### Static Analysis

- Examines malware without running it
- Tools: VirusTotal, strings, a disassembler like IDA
   Pro

#### Dynamic Analysis

- Run the malware and monitor its effect
- Use a virtual machine and take snapshots
- Tools: RegShot, Process Monitor, Process Hacker, CaptureBAT
- RAM Analysis: Mandant Redline and Volatility

#### **Basic Analysis**

- Basic static analysis
  - View malware without looking at instructions
  - Tools: VirusTotal, strings
  - Quick and easy but fails for advanced malware and can miss important behavior
- Basic dynamic analysis
  - Easy but requires a safe test environment
  - Not effective on all malware

#### Advanced Analysis

- Advanced static analysis
  - Reverse-engineering with a disassembler
  - Complex, requires understanding of assembly code
- Advanced Dynamic Analysis
  - Run code in a debugger
  - Examines internal state of a running malicious executable

- Backdoor
  - Allows attacker to control the system
- Botnet
  - All infected computers receive instructions from the same Command-and-Control (C&C) server
- Downloader
  - Malicious code that exists only to download other malicious code
  - Used when attacker first gains access

- Information-stealing malware
  - Sniffers, keyloggers, password hash grabbers
- Launcher
  - Malicious program used to launch other malicious programs
  - Often uses nontraditional techniques to ensure stealth or greater access to a system
- Rootkit
  - Malware that conceals the existence of other code
  - Usually paired with a backdoor

- Scareware
  - Frightens user into buying something
  - Link Ch 1b



- Spam-sending malware
  - Attacker rents machine to spammers
- Worms or viruses
  - Malicious code that can copy itself and infect additional computers

#### Mass v. Targeted Malware

- Mass malware
  - Intended to infect as many machines as possible
  - Most common type
- Targeted malware
  - Tailored to a specific target
  - Very difficult to detect, prevent, and remove
  - Requires advanced analysis
  - Ex: Stuxnet

# General Rules for Malware Analysis

#### General Rules for Malware Analysis

- Don't Get Caught in Details
  - You don't need to understand 100% of the code
  - Focus on key features
- Try Several Tools
  - If one tool fails, try another
  - Don't get stuck on a hard issue, move along
- Malware authors are constantly raising the bar

#### Ch 2: Basic Static Analysis

#### Techniques

- Antivirus scanning
- Hashes
- A file's strings, functions, and headers

## **Antivirus Scanning**

## Only a First Step

- Malware can easily change its signature and fool the antivirus
- VirusTotal is convenient, but using it may alert attackers that they've been caught
  - Link Ch 2a



## Hashing

A fingerprint for malware

#### Hashes

- MD5 or SHA-1
- Condenses a file of any size down to a fixed-length fingerprint
- Uniquely identifies a file well in practice
  - There are MD5 collisions but they are not common
  - Collision: two different files with the same hash

#### HashCalc

H HashCalc		X
Data Format: File ▼	Data: C:\Users\student\Desktop\p3.pcap	
□ нмас	Key Format: Key:  Text string ▼	
✓ MD5	52583b5e2c99d19c046915181fd7b29b	
☐ MD4		
▼ SHA1	991d4e880832dd6aaebadb8040798a6b9f163194	
☐ SHA256		

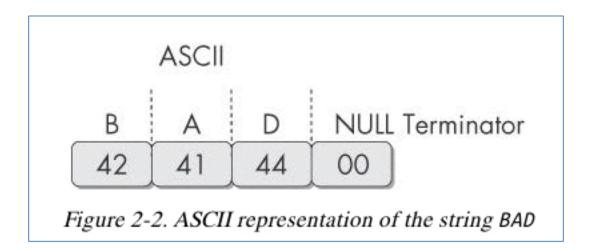
#### Hash Uses

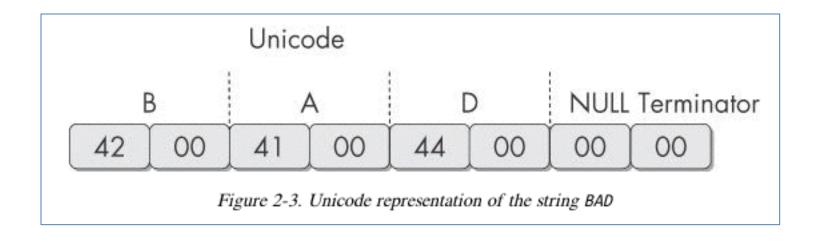
- Label a malware file
- Share the hash with other analysts to identify malware
- Search the hash online to see if someone else has already identified the file

## Finding Strings

## Strings

- Any sequence of printable characters is a string
- Strings are terminated by a null (0x00)
- ASCII characters are 8 bits long
  - Now called ANSI
- Unicode characters are 16 bits long
  - Microsoft calls them "wide characters"





#### The strings Command

- Native in Linux, also available for Windows
- Finds all strings in a file 3 or more characters long

## The strings Command

Bold items can be ignored

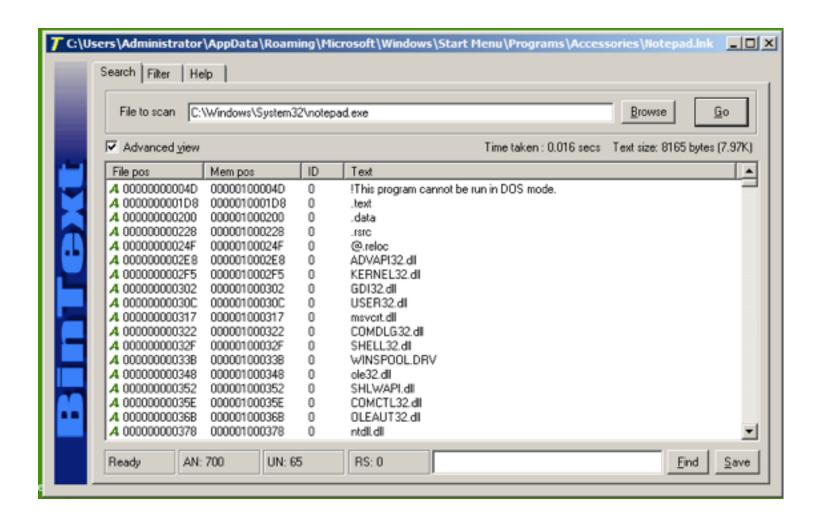
GetLayout and SetLayout are Windows

functions

GDI32.DLL is a Dynamic Link Library

```
C:>strings bp6.ex_
VP3
VW3
t$@
D$4
99.124.22.1 4
e-@
GetLayout 1
GDI32.DLL 3
SetLayout 2
M}C
Mail system DLL is invalid.!Send Mail failed to send message. 5
```

#### BinText

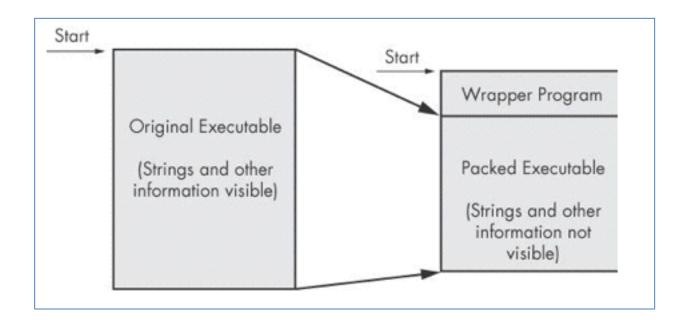


Link Ch 2i

# Packed and Obfuscated Malware

## Packing Files

- The code is compressed, like Zip file
- This makes the strings and instructions unreadable
- All you'll see is the wrapper small code that unpacks the file when it is run



# Detecting Packers with PEiD

File: C:\m	alware\orig_af2.ex_					
Entrypoint:	0000EEA0	EP Section:	UPX1	>		
File Offset:	000050A0	First Bytes:	60,BE,15,A0	>		
Linker Info:	6.0	Subsystem:	Win32 console	>		
UPX 0.89.6 - 1.02 / 1.05 - 2.90 -> Markus & Laszlo         Multi Scan       Task Viewer       Options       About       Exit         ✓ Stay on top       >> ->						

Figure 2-5. The PEiD program

#### Demo: UPX

```
root@kali: ~/126
 File Edit View Search Terminal Help
 root@kali:~/126# cat chatty.c
#include <stdio.h>
main()
char name[10];
printf("This program contains readable strings\n");
printf("Enter your name: ");
scanf("%s", name);
printf("Hello %s\n", name);
root@kali:~/126# gcc -static chatty.c -o chatty
root@kali:~/126# upx -o chatty-packed chatty
                       Ultimate Packer for eXecutables
                          Copyright (C) 1996 - 2011
               Markus Oberhumer, Laszlo Molnar & John Reiser Dec 12th 2011
UPX 3.08
        File size
                          Ratio
                                     Format
                                                Name
    592800 -> 272588
                         45.98% linux/elf386
                                                chatty-packed
Packed 1 file.
 root@kali:~/126# ls -l
total 852
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 592800 Aug 16 20:34 chatty
 -rw-r--r-- 1 root root
                         174 Aug 16 20:27 chatty.c
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 272588 Aug 16 20:34 chatty-packed
 root@kali:~/126#
```

# Packing Obfuscates Strings

```
root@kali:~/126# strings chatty | wc
   1962   4498   33817
root@kali:~/126# strings chatty-packed | wc
   3950   4290   23623
root@kali:~/126#
```

#### NOTE

Many PEiD plug-ins will run the malware executable without warning! (See Chapter 3 to learn how to set up a safe environment for running malware.) Also, like all programs, especially those used for malware analysis, PEiD can be subject to vulnerabilities. For example, PEiD version 0.92 contained a buffer overflow that allowed an attacker to execute arbitrary code. This would have allowed a clever malware writer to write a program to exploit the malware analyst's machine. Be sure to use the latest version of PEiD.

# Portable Executable File Format

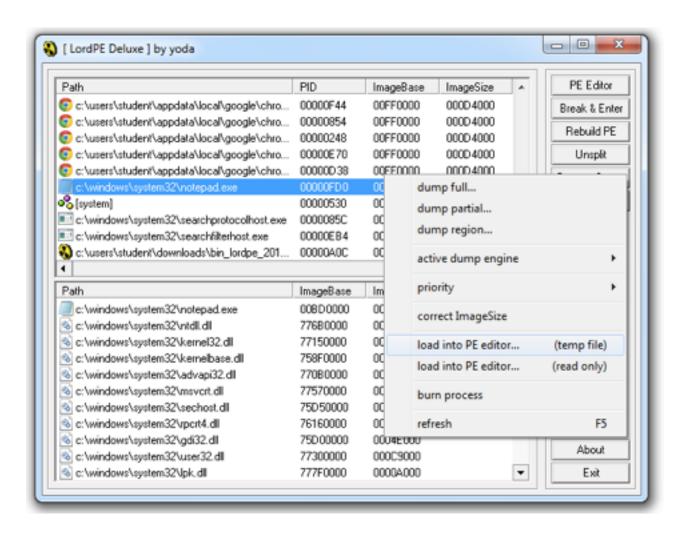
#### PE Files

- Used by Windows executable files, object code, and DLLs
- A data structure that contains the information necessary for Windows to load the file
- Almost every file executed on Windows is in PE format

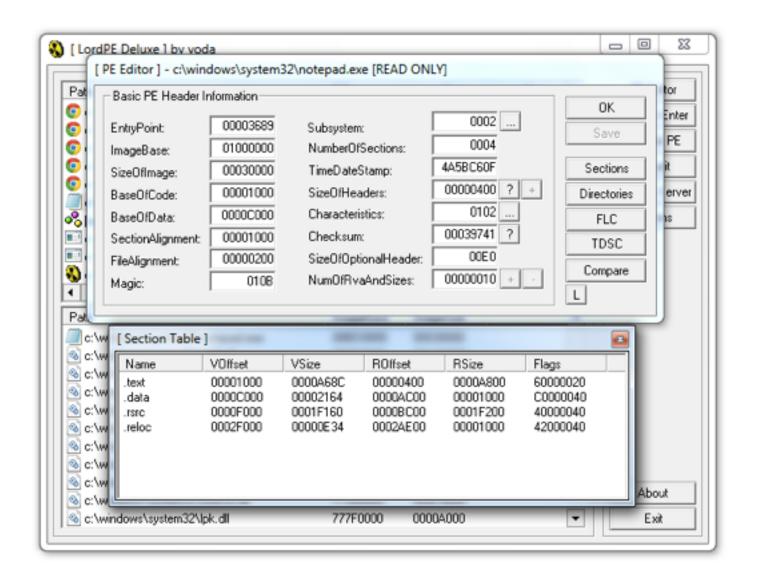
#### PE Header

- Information about the code
- Type of application
- Required library functions
- Space requirements

#### LordPE Demo

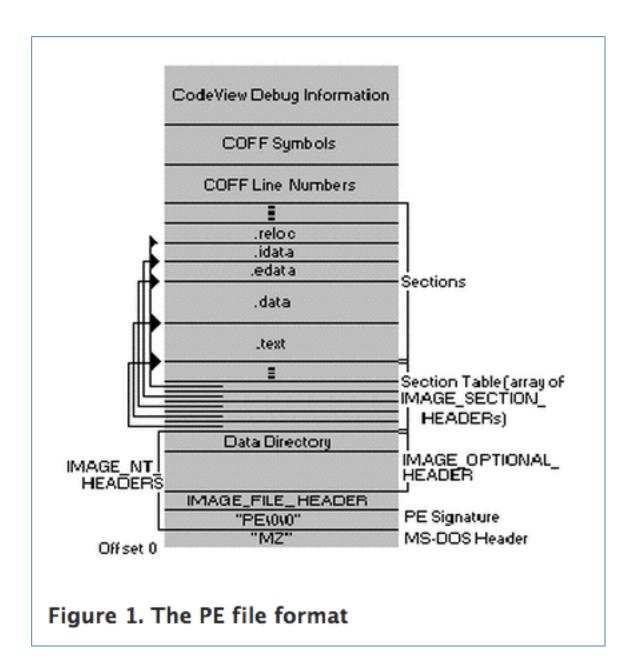


#### Main Sections



# There are a lot more sections

- But the main ones are enough for now
- Link Ch 2c



## Linked Libraries and Functions

# **Imports**

- Functions used by a program that are stored in a different program, such as library
- Connected to the main EXE by Linking
- Can be linked three ways
  - Statically
  - At Runtime
  - Dynamically

# Static Linking

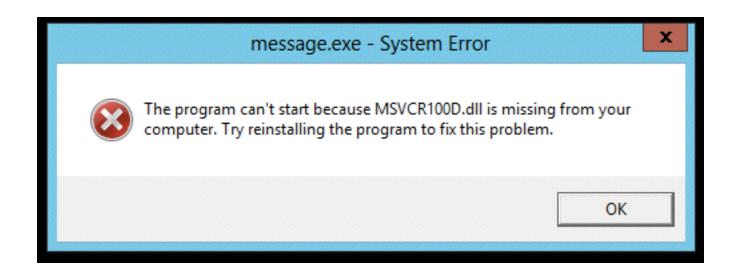
- Rarely used for Windows executables
- Common in Unix and Linux
- All code from the library is copied into the executable
- Makes executable large in size

# Runtime Linking

- Unpopular in friendly programs
- Common in malware, especially packed or obfuscated malware
- Connect to libraries only when needed, not when the program starts
- Most commonly done with the LoadLibrary and GetProcAddress functions

# Dynamic Linking

- Most common method
- Host OS searches for necessary libraries when the program is loaded



#### Clues in Libraries

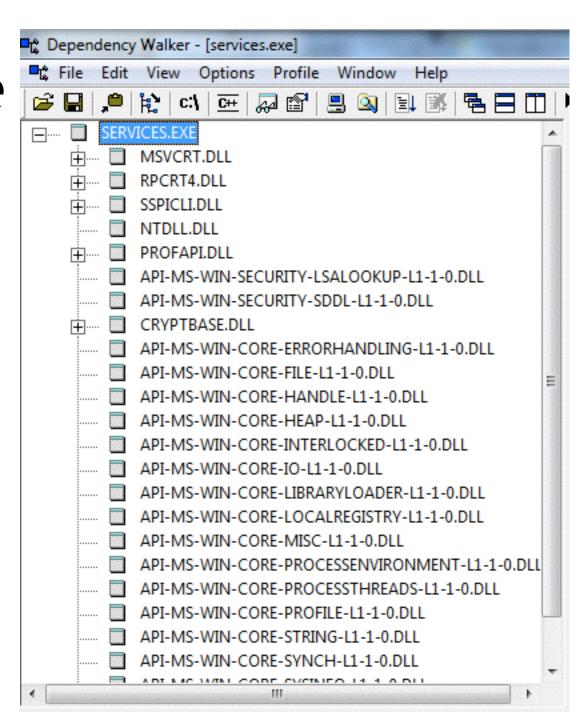
- The PE header lists every library and function that will be loaded
- Their names can reveal what the program does
- URLDownloadToFile indicates that the program downloads something

# Dependency Walker

## Shows Dynamically Linked Functions

- Normal programs have a lot of DLLs
- Malware often has very few DLLs

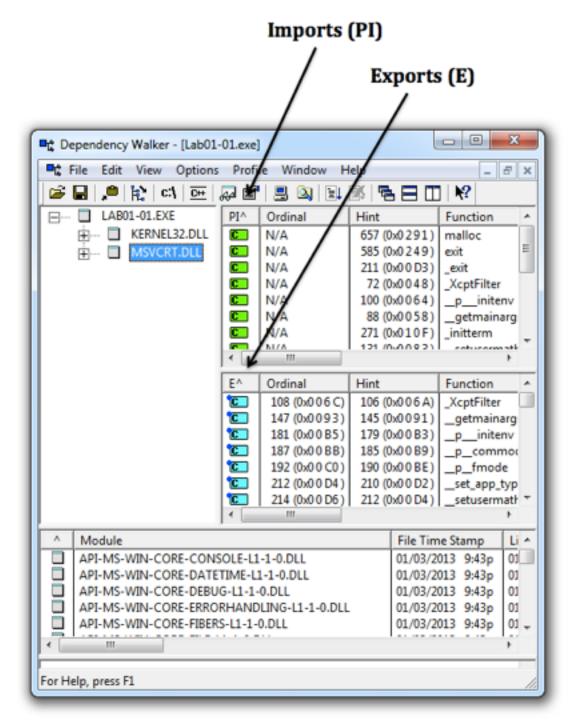
#### Services.exe



# Services.ex\_ (malware)



Imports
&
Exports
in
Dependency
Walker



#### Table 2-1. Common DLLs

DLL	Description	
Kernel32.dll	This is a very common DLL that contains core functionality, such as access and manipulation of memory, files, and hardware.	
Advapi32.dll	I This DLL provides access to advanced core Windows components such as the Service Manager and Registry.	
User32.dll	This DLL contains all the user-interface components, such as buttons, scrol bars, and components for controlling and responding to user actions.	
Gdi32.dll	This DLL contains functions for displaying and manipulating graphics.	

Ntdll.dll

This DLL is the interface to the Windows kernel. Executables generally do not import this file directly, although it is always imported indirectly by *Kernel32.dll*. If an executable imports this file, it means that the author intended to use functionality not normally available to Windows programs. Some tasks, such as hiding functionality or manipulating processes, will use this interface.

WSock32.dll These are networking DLLs. A program that accesses and either of these most likely connects to a network or Ws2\_32.dll performs network-related tasks.

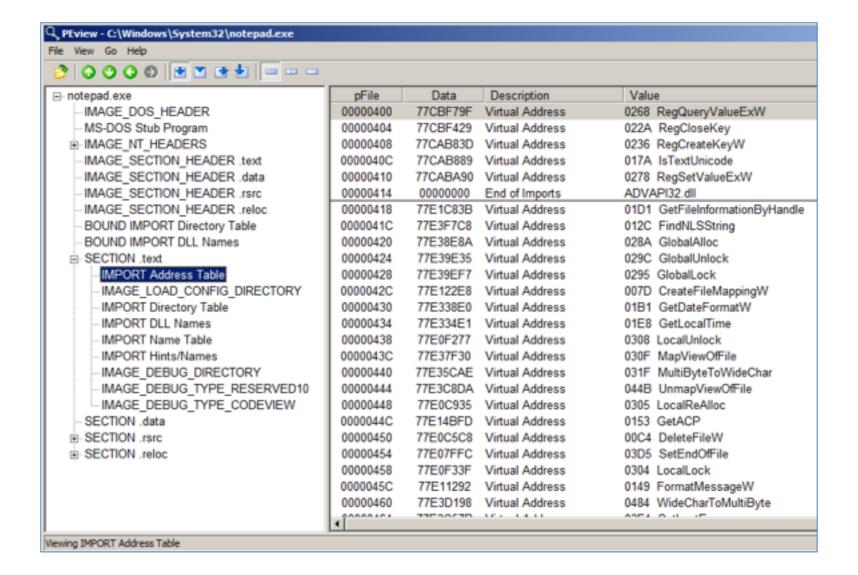
Wininet.dll

This DLL contains higher-level networking functions that implement protocols such as FTP, HTTP, and NTP.

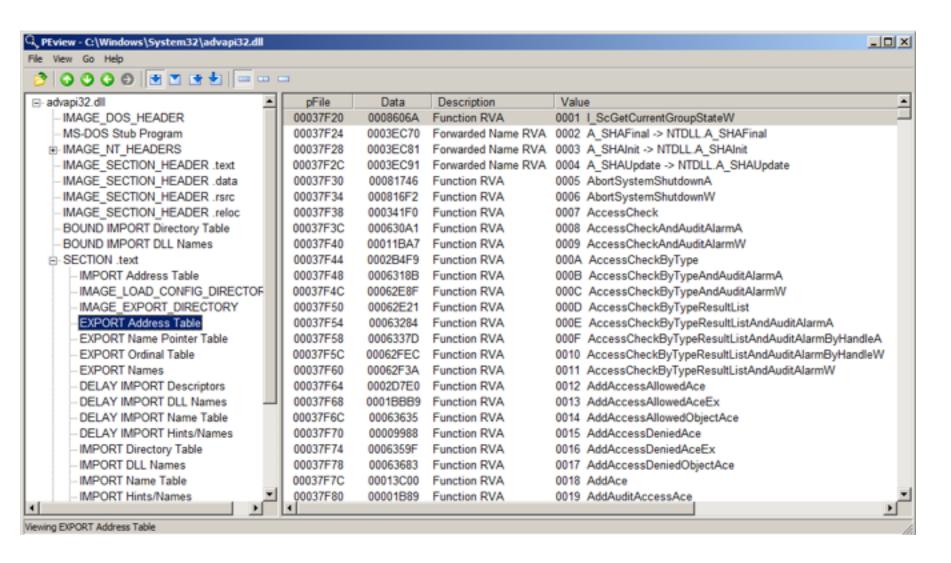
# **Exports**

- DLLs export functions
- EXEs import functions
- Both exports and imports are listed in the PE header

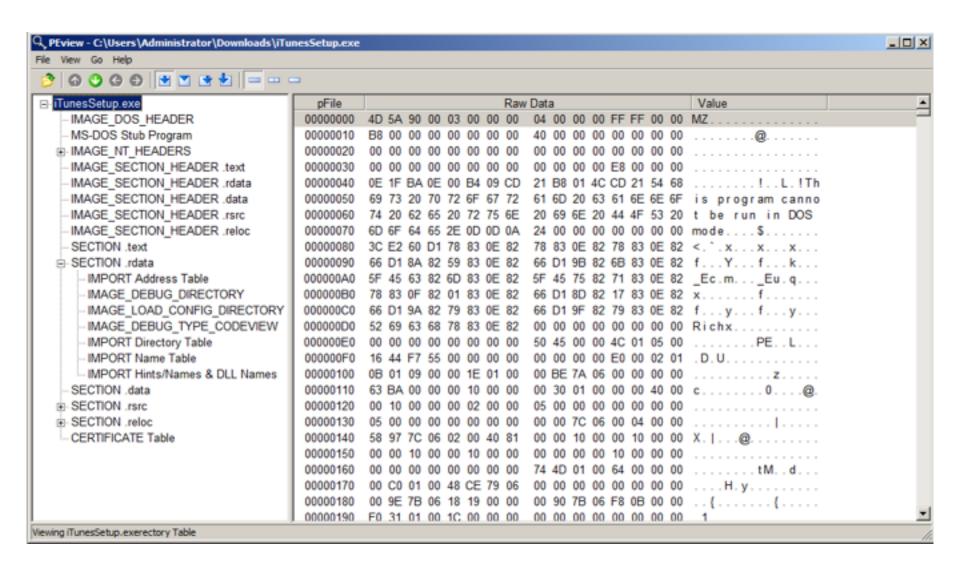
# Notepad.exe



# Advapi32.dll



# iTunesSetup.exe



# Example: Keylogger

- Imports User32.dll and uses the function SetWindowsHookEx which is a popular way keyloggers receive keyboard inputs
- It exports LowLevelKeyboardProc and LowLevelMouseProc to send the data elsewhere
- It uses RegisterHotKey to define a special keystroke like Ctrl+Shift+P to harvest the collected data

# Ex: A Packed Program

- Very few functions
- All you see is the unpacker

Table 2-3. DLLs and Functions Imported from PackedProgram.exe

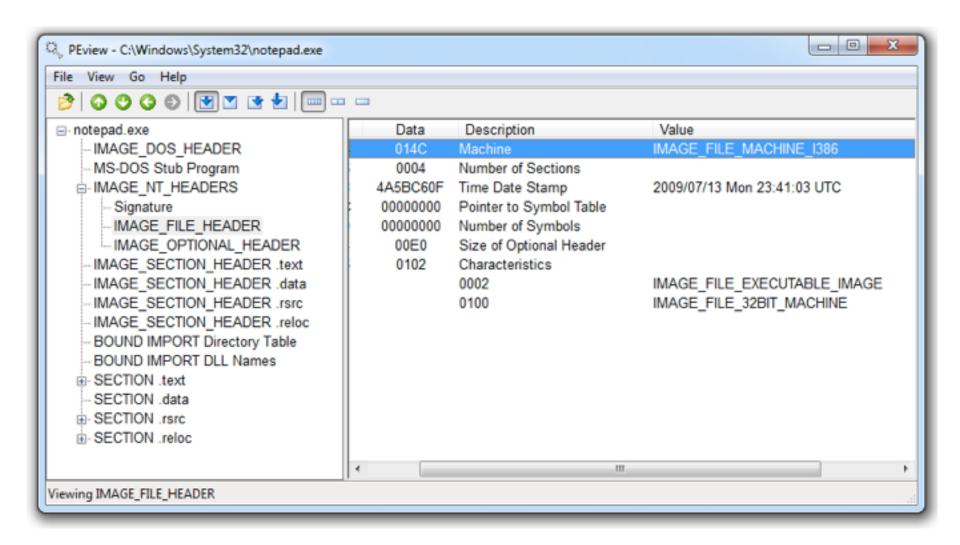
Kernel32.dll	User32.dll	
GetModuleHandleA	MessageBoxA	
LoadLibraryA		
GetProcAddress		
ExitProcess		
VirtualAlloc		
VirtualFree		

# The PE File Headers and Sections

# Important PE Sections

- .text -- instructions for the CPU to execute
- .rdata -- imports & exports
- .data global data
- .rsrc strings, icons, images, menus

# PEView (Link Ch 2e)



# Time Date Stamp

- Shows when this executable was compiled
- Older programs are more likely to be known to antivirus software
- But sometimes the date is wrong
  - All Delphi programs show June 19, 1992
  - Date can also be faked

# IMAGE\_SECTION\_HEADER

- Virtual Size RAM
- Size of Raw Data DISK
- For .text section, normally equal, or nearly equal
- Packed executables show Virtual Size much larger than Size of Raw Data for .text section

#### **Not Packed**

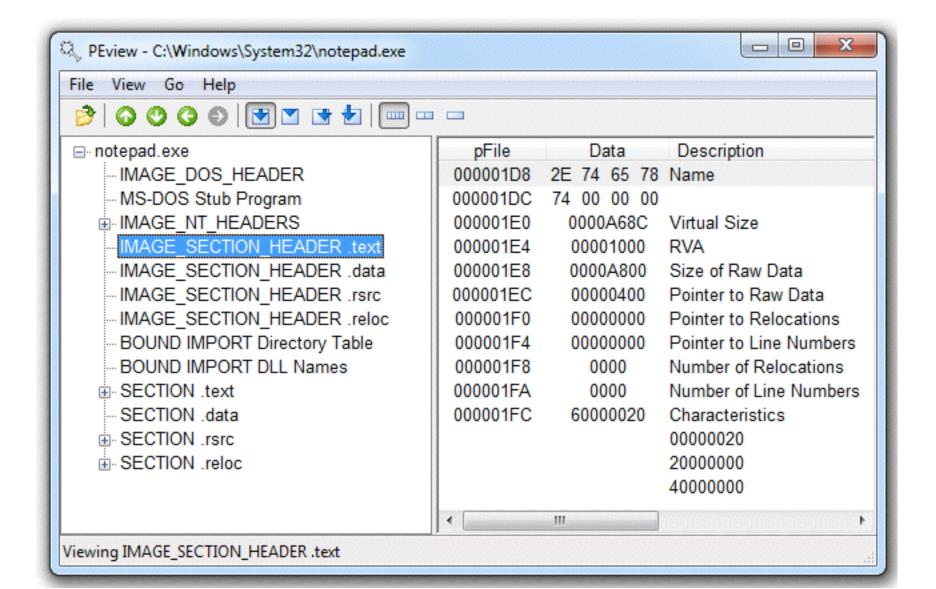


Table 2-6. Section Information for PackedProgram.exe

Name	Virtual size	Size of raw data
.text	A000	0000
.data	3000	0000
.rdata	4000	0000
.rsrc	19000	3400
Dijfpds	20000	0000
.sdfuok	34000	3313F
Kijijl	1000	0200

#### Resource Hacker

- Lets you browse the .rsrc section
- Strings, icons, and menus
- Link Ch 2f

#### Resource Hacker

