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Department of Homeland Security

Decider 1.0.0 User Guide



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Introduction

Welcome to Decider

This guide is intended to walk analysts through the process of identifying MITRE ATT&CK® techniques and sub-techniques using Decider. We begin with a guided workflow and then proceed to identify alternative approaches to technique identification. We provide additional descriptions of Decider's features toward the end of the guide.

This project makes use of MITRE ATT&CK®

ATT&CK Terms of Use

CISA Best Practices for MITRE ATT&CK Mapping

The mapping steps below follow those identified in CISA's <u>ATT&CK Mapping Guide</u>. Analysts may choose their own starting point based on their familiarity with ATT&CK and the technical details / context available in the report.

1. Identify Tactics – Comb through the report to identify the adversary's tactics and the flow of the attack. To identify the tactics (the adversary's goals), focus on what the adversary was trying to accomplish and why.

Review the tactic definitions to determine how the identified behaviors might translate into a specific tactic. Each tactic includes a finite number of actions an adversary can take to implement their goal. Understanding the flow of the attack can help identify the techniques or sub-techniques that an adversary may have employed.

2. Identify Techniques – After identifying the tactics, review the technical details associated with how the adversary tried to achieve their goals. **Note**: if you have insufficient detail to identify an applicable technique, you will be limited to mapping to the tactic level, which alone is not actionable information for detection purposes.

Compare the behavior in the report with the description of the ATT&CK techniques listed under the identified tactic. If one of them matches, then it may be an appropriate technique. Be aware that multiple techniques may apply concurrently to the same behavior.

3. Identify Sub-techniques — Review sub-technique descriptions to see if they match the information in the report. A match here may be an appropriate sub-technique. Read subtechnique descriptions carefully to understand the differences between them. In cases where the parent of a sub-technique aligns to multiple tactics, make sure to choose the appropriate tactic. Note: map solely to the parent technique only if there is not enough context to identify a sub-technique.

Consider techniques and sub-techniques as elements of an adversary's playbook, rather than as isolated activities. Adversaries often use information they obtain from each activity in an

operation to determine what additional techniques they will use next in the attack cycle. Because of this, techniques and sub-techniques are often linked in the attack chain.

Description of Decider

Decider is a web application that provides a series of questions to help analysts map threat reports to MITRE ATT&CK techniques. The decision tree starts at the Tactic level and flows through Techniques to Sub-Techniques. Analysts may also skip the decision tree by using the available search functionality. Decider provides features, such as suggesting related Techniques, warning about potential mis-mappings, and capturing the analyst's work in a shopping cart. The shopping cart feature allows the analyst to save their mapping progress. Carts can also be exported into JSON (for scripting usage / later importing), exported into ATT&CK Navigator layers (to visualize the attack heatmap in relation to defenses / existing adversary heatmaps), or a Microsoft Word Document report (where the mapped techniques and notes are in a table).

Troubleshooting

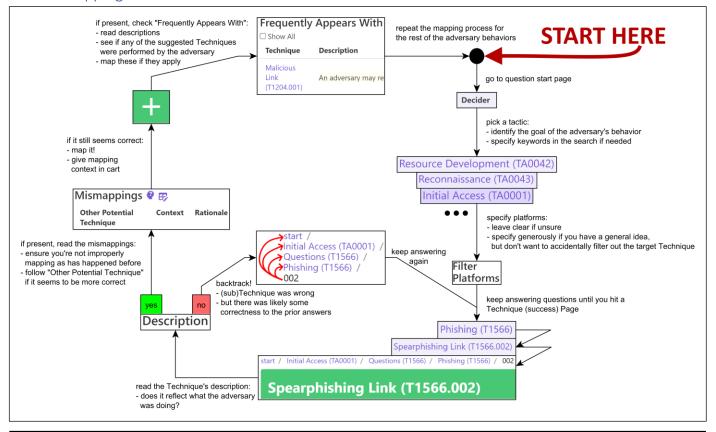
Please report any operational issues (.e.g., server not connecting, authentication failure, broken links, ambiguous or insufficient question content, information gaps in the guide, etc.), to dmounts@mitre.org. Suggestions for improvements to Decider are welcome as well.

Options for Analyst Workflows

Guided Workflow

- 1. Go to the main question page (click **Decider** in the top-left).
- 2. Identify the goal of the adversary's actions (Tactic) click this card.
- 3. Identify what platform(s) the adversary's actions occurred on and set these filters accordingly.
- 4. Follow the prompts and select the best answer for each question.
- 5. You will ultimately reach a Technique page.
- 6. If the Technique appears to be correct, add it to the cart and you can include the related context in the text area of the cart.
- 7. If the Technique appears to be incorrect, backtrack through the steps.

Guided Mapping – Visual Workflow

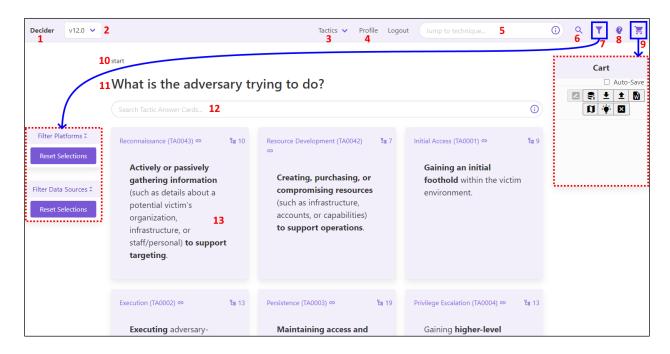


Note:

An analyst's ultimate workflow will be unique to them depending on their familiarity with ATT&CK and their level of experience in mapping adversary behaviors. Do whatever is most effective or intuitive for yourself. Take these suggestions as a means of familiarizing yourself with Decider navigation and discovery.

Navigating Decider

The Overview – General Features & Question Answering



- 1. Home: Takes you to the main question page.
- **2. Version Selector:** This dropdown allows you to change what version of ATT&CK content you are viewing across the website.
- **3. Tactics Dropdown:** This dropdown contains the Tactic links. These links allow for quickly accessing the questions for each ATT&CK Tactic.
- 4. Profile: Gives access to self-password change, editing tools, and user management.
- **5. Mini Technique Search:** Allows searching Techniques by name / ID. Clicking (i) will open information about this search. Aside from 6, this has a shortcut to the Full Search as well.
- 6. Open Full Search: This links to the Full Technique Search page.
- 7. Hide / Show Filters: Clicking this will toggle the visibility of the filters column on the left. Note: hiding the filters does nothing to clear or disable them it's purely visual. The platform filters allow restricting displayed cards by what system(s) the adversary's behavior was against (e.g., Linux, Windows, ...). The data sources filters allows restricting displayed cards by what types of data the sensors / logs are capable of collecting (e.g., Logon Session, Network Traffic, ...). If no filters are selected, then all cards will be shown; otherwise, only cards that fulfil at least one specified filter will be shown (Platforms and Data Sources are handled in different filtering stages. So, if an entry is filtered out platform-wise, Data Sources cannot bring it back if a filter option there applies).
- **8. Help Documentation & Change Log:** This opens a pop-up that allows you to open a local copy of this document or you can view a small log of the developmental changes over time (not comprehensive).

- 9. Hide/Show Cart: This button toggles the display of the cart of mapped Techniques. Here you can save the cart state to a file, restore an old cart file, export a Word table of Techniques, export an ATT&CK Navigator layer, gain insight on suggested Techniques to map based on currently mapped Techniques, or you can save a cart to the database to be reloaded later.
- 10. Breadcrumb Bar: Shows your location / progress in the process of answering questions. You can click the links here to navigate back to prior questions.
- 11. Current Question: This is the question you are currently trying to answer by selecting an answer
- 12. Answer Card Search: Searching keywords here will sort the answer cards by relevance and highlight where the terms appear on the card. Clicking (i) will open information about this search. This search is basic on the **start→Tactics** page (pictured), but more advanced on the Tactic→Techniques and Technique→SubTechniques pages. Checkout "Answer Card Search – Basic vs Advanced" for more information.
- 13. Answer Cards: You click on one of these in order to answer the question at the top of the page thus bringing you closer towards the Technique being described.

Answer Card Search – Basic vs Advanced

The capabilities of the answer card search depend on what page type you are on.

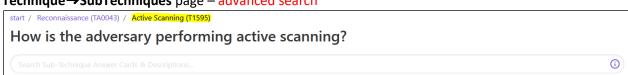
start→Tactics page – basic search



Tactic→Techniques page – advanced search



Technique→SubTechniques page – advanced search



Both advanced searches being mentioned here are exactly the same.

Note: the ① icon has a different help screen for each of these two search types (basic vs advanced). The help screen opened corresponds to the search currently being used for the page type you are on.

Basic Answer Card Search (start → Tactics)

This search only searches the content displayed on the answer cards themselves. This is because there are a small number of Tactics (14) and they are all displayed at once. This is essentially an alternative to [Ctrl]-[F].

While of limited utility – this search does support fuzziness and prefix-matching.

Advanced Answer Card Search (**Tactic →Techniques**, **Technique →SubTechniques**)

This search leverages more content than what is displayed on the answer cards. This helps maintain searchability while allowing for a succinct answer card style.

For a given answer card (which represents a (Sub)Technique) – these fields are searched:

- A: The answer card's content
- B: The Technique's description
- C: The answer card content of its SubTechniques (if the card has SubTechs)
- D: The description content of its SubTechniques (if the card has SubTechs)

The priority of each field (used in scoring / ordering results) is as follows: A > B > C > D.

When matches occur on fields that are not on the card content itself (ex: B, C, D)

- these matches will appear under the card content:



The advanced search supports boolean operators:

- Terms are or'ed together by default
- () are used for operation **order**
- | will **or**'s two expressions/terms together
- & will and two expressions/terms together
- ~ will negate the expression/term directly to the right of it (no spaces)
- * will make the expression/term directly to the left of it (no spaces) prefix match
- "" are used to search for phrases containing any of the prior-mentioned operators
 - special characters get ignored, but, the order of each portion of A-z0-9 terms is enforced when matching the phrase

Word-stemming is automatically performed

- meaning that different endings to a search term are also matched / highlighted:



There is also a status area under the search bar

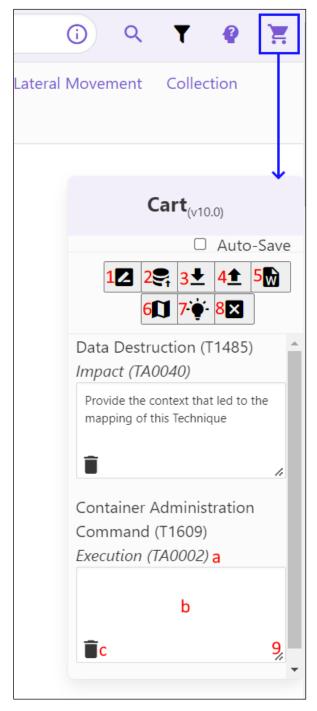
- **Search Used** describes how the server interpreted a given search
- the status area can also warn about malformed searches or say if the search yielded no results



The limitation of this search is that it cannot:

- fuzzy match (close-enough misspellings match anyway)
- use synonyms ('execute' may imply 'run'/'process')

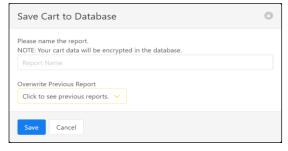
Cart
Techniques are stored here to save progress during the mapping session.



- 1. Rename the Cart: Allows you to rename the cart.
- 2. Save to Database: This opens a pop-up that allows you to save the cart to the Decider database for later usage. The cart can be saved as a new report, or you can overwrite an existing report as to update it with the new work. "cart" and "report" are essentially the same here, reports are just carts that are saved to the database.
- **3. Save a Copy of The Cart**: Allows you to save a copy of the cart locally as a JSON file.
- **4**. **Import data into the cart**: Takes a previously downloaded JSON file and populates the cart.

These two serve as a means of saving mapping progress locally between sessions, while the database button serves as a centralized means to do so.

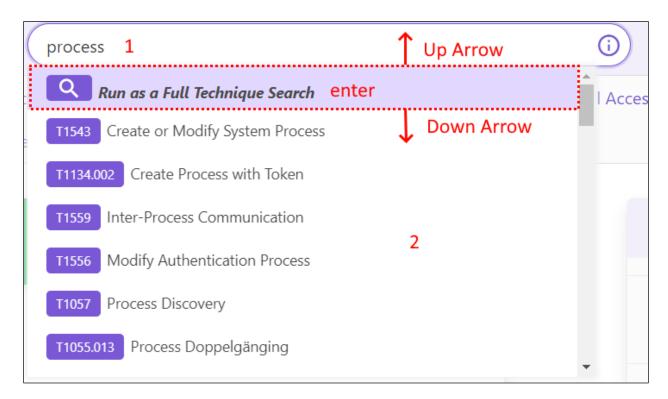
- **5. Export to Word Doc:** Downloads a Word document containing a table of the mapped Techniques.
- **6. Export to Navigator:** Exports the cart to an ATT&CK Navigator JSON that can be used at https://mitre-attack.github.io/attack-navigator/
- **7. Suggested Techniques** *(cart wide)*: Gives suggestions of Techniques to map based on cart contents.
- 8. Close cart: Deletes all entries in the cart.



- 9. Cart Entry: This is how a mapped Technique is displayed in the cart.
 - **a. Mapped Technique & Its Tactic:** This is also a link to the Technique detail page.
 - **b. Mapping Comment:** Here you can include text explaining why this Technique was mapped.
 - **c. Delete Entry:** Deletes this single cart entry.

Mini Technique Search

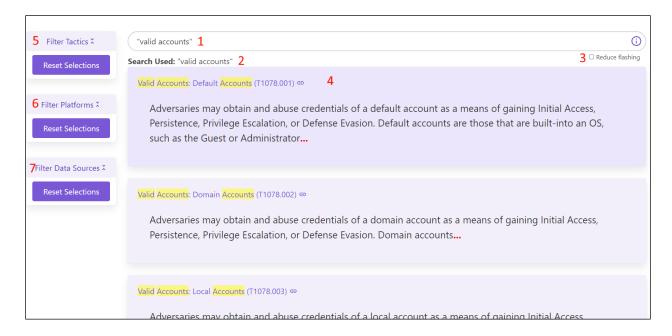
Allows for quickly jumping to Technique pages by Technique name or ID.



- **1. Search Area:** Enter a Technique Name or ID here and results will appear automatically. Clicking (i) will open information about this search.
- 2. Results: Click an entry to go to its page. You can also use the [up-arrow], [down-arrow], and [enter] keys as an alternative means of navigation.

Full Technique Search

The following describes a full-text search process for Techniques, along with filtering options.



1. Search Area: Enter a search query – results will update automatically.

Clicking (i) will open information about this search.

This search supports prefix-matching, boolean logic, requiring specific phrases, and it automatically stems words (process = processes = processing = processed).

Note: This search does not allow searching for symbols – all non A-Za-z0-9 / space characters get replaced with spaces, and that result is used as the search query. Any terms that get split by this will be turned into phrases – so all parts of the term must appear in the search result card.

For Example: hklm\system → "hklm system"

Quotes serve another purpose outside of phrases, they allow one to enter a term that contains any of the special characters (but not quotes): &, |, \sim , (,), *.

- **2. Search Used:** This provides transparency as to how Decider's search is interpreting your query. It prevents confusion if a special character is used, or if there is an issue with the search itself.
- **3. Reduce Flashing:** When checked this will set the background of the results area to the same pastel purple as the result cards. This removes the flashing that can occur with the white <-> purple transitioning as matching results come and go.
- **4. Results**: Click a Technique to go to its page matched terms are highlighted and a few snippets with the matched terms are shown.
- **5. Tactic Filtering:** None selected: Techniques having any Tactic as their parent are shown. Selections made: only Techniques having any of the selected Tactics as their parent(s) are shown.

- **6. Platform Filtering:** None selected: Techniques that run on any platform are shown. Selections made: only Techniques that run on any of the selected platforms are shown.
- 7. Data Source Filtering: None selected: Techniques that can be detected using any type of data source / collected data are shown. Selections made: only Techniques that are identifiable using the selected data sources are shown.

Full Technique Search

& AND'ing

Both terms must be present

denial & service

Adjacent terms & together by default

| OR'ing

Either term must be present

bios | uefi

~ NOT'ing

This term must not be present

pass the "hash

(ORDER'ing)

Greater operator control

pass (hash | ticket)

Prefixes*

Match terms with this beginning



"Phrases"

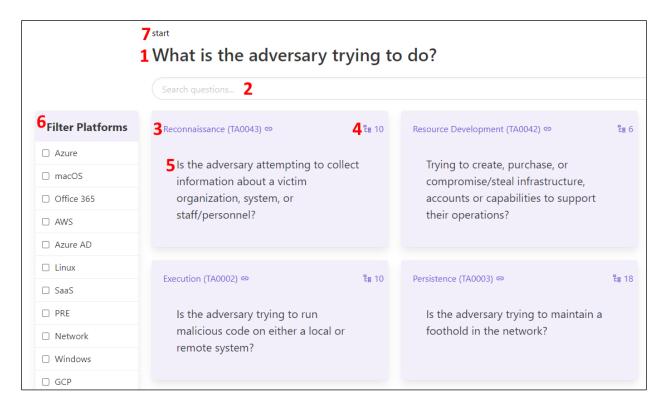
This phrase must be present

"pass the"

Searches from the (Main) Question Page

Start the question-answer process by picking a Tactic.

Other question pages are essentially the same – except you pick between (sub)Techniques instead.



- **1. Question:** Prompt that you need to answer by selecting a card.
- **2. Answer Card Search:** Entering keywords here will order the cards by relevance. Search terms are also highlighted on the cards. See "Answer Card Search Basic vs Advanced" for more info.
- 3. Answer Card ATT&CK Link: You can click here to open the ATT&CK page for the answer card.
- 4. Child Count: Shows the number of cards that will appear after clicking this one.

For a Tactic, this shows the number of Techniques under that Tactic.

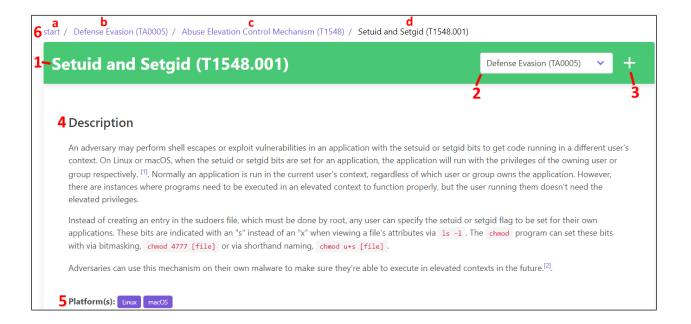
For a Technique, this shows the number of Sub-Techniques under that Technique.

When this is 0, clicking the card will take you to the Technique (Success) Page.

- **5. Answer Card Answer Link:** You select a card and progress by clicking its answer. (*Clicking anywhere on the card that isn't the ATT&CK link also works*).
- 6. Platform Filtering: No selections: all cards will be shown. Selections made: only cards that lead to Techniques that run on any of the specified platforms will be shown. (not shown in this image, but Data Source filtering is below the Platform filtering. it is explained in detail above in *The Overview General Features & Question Answering*).
- **7. Crumb Bar:** While present on all question pages and all Technique pages the crumb bar is inherently uninteresting on the main question page. See *Reaching the Technique (Success) Page* for a demonstration of all components in a crumb bar.

Reaching the Technique (Success) Page

After enough questions have been answered – you will end up on a page for the (Sub)Technique to be mapped. Since this page is larger, it will be broken into multiple screenshots (in the same order as they appear in the tool), and each will be described.



- **1. Technique Name (ID):** This is a link to MITRE ATT&CK that has the Technique name and ID.
- **2. Tactic Selection:** Some Techniques (how the adversary did something) fit under multiple different Tactics (the goal of the adversary in their actions). This allows for selecting the Tactic to be used when adding this Technique to the cart in 3. The example Technique (T1566.002) only has a single Tactic so this selection box will not be present in the actual app. It was added for documentation purposes. **NOTE:** If brought to this page from the search functions, you must select a tactic to use major functions of the page.
- **3. Add to Cart:** This button adds a new cart entry that contains the Technique, it's Tactic, and a text box that can be used to provide the context behind the mapping. **NOTE:** If brought to this page from the search functions, you must select a tactic to add a technique to the cart.
- **4. Description:** This describes the Technique. Reading this is useful in determining if a mapping should ultimately be made.
- **5. Platform(s):** These are the OSes / systems in which this Technique could be used against. This is useful to check if it hadn't been filtered for before as the Technique may not fit the platform(s) you have observed as a target of the behavior.
- **6. Crumb Bar:** This is a set of links denoting the answer card path you took to the current page.
 - a. Start: Takes you to the main question page.
 - **b. Tactic:** Links to the Tactic you're under.
 - c. Technique: Links to the Technique you're under.

d. Sub-Technique: Links to the current Sub-Technique page displayed.

NOTE: If you're viewing a success page for a Technique that isn't a sub-technique, then this crumb will not exist – and the prior crumb will be the current page displayed.

The right-most crumb is the current page, and all crumbs to the left are considered the content parents of it. The current crumb is always unclickable – as you're already on that page.



- **7. Technique/Sub-Technique Selector:** Allows you to quickly jump between a Technique and its Sub-Techniques.
- 8. **Technique AKAs**: NOTE AKAs have been removed from Decider.



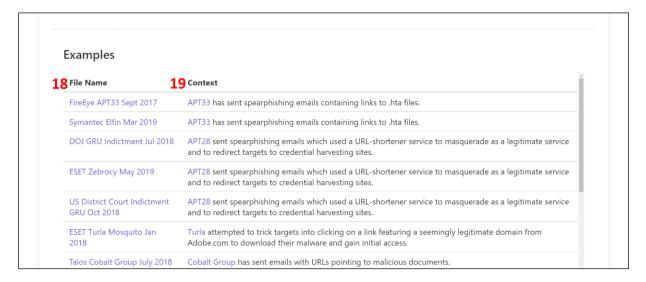
- 9. Tooltip: A mouse-over tooltip that provides an in-app documentation about mismappings.
- **10. Edit Mis-mappings:** This button opens the *Technique Mis-mappings Edit Page* for the Technique you're currently on. Such page allows for creating new mis-mappings, editing current ones, or removing them

NOTE: If brought to this page from the search functions, you must select a tactic before navigating to the mismapping edit page.

- **11. Potential Technique:** These are either N/A or in-app links to the correct Techniques. Each row describes an instance when the current Technique (the Technique page you're on) was an incorrect mapping and provides an alternative that was correct in that given scenario. When this is N/A it means that the original mapping was incorrect, and that there is no correct mapping for the behavior.
- **12. Context:** Provides background from the original source report that led to the Technique being mapped in that instance.
- **13. Rationale:** This is a description as to why the original Technique (the current Technique page you're on) was not a correct mapping at the time, and why the other Technique mentioned was correct.



- 14. Tooltip: A mouse-over tooltip that provides an in-app documentation reference/background.
- **15. Show All Checkbox:** Currently, only a sub-set of all entries are shown this is to prevent bias in the suggestions given. When this is checked all entries will be listed.
- **16. Technique:** These are in-app links to the suggested Techniques. If the Technique you're currently on is correct then these are suggestions of Techniques that typically appear with that Technique.
- **17. Description:** These are the descriptions of the suggested Techniques. This allows quickly reading through what each Technique entails. As pictured, these start off as a single line and can be expanded by clicking them.



- **18. File/Report Name:** The document / report in which this Technique occurred.
- 19. Context: The actions taken by the adversary that led to the mapping of this Technique in the report.

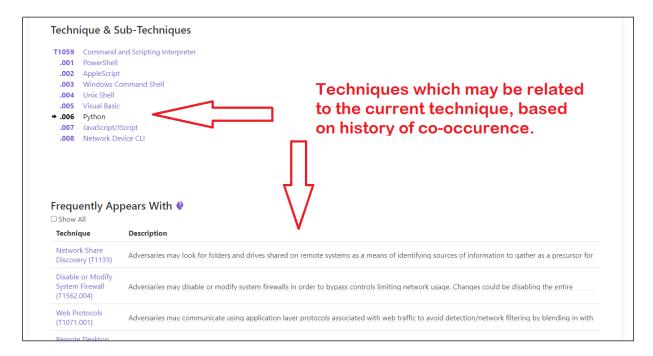
Frequently Appears With (cart-wide)

This page functions similarly to the **Frequently Appears With** section as outlined in *Technique (Success) Page*. This page contains all suggested Techniques to map for all mapped Techniques already in the cart. The benefit is that there is a single place to access suggested Techniques to map – this is in contrast to manually going through the suggested Techniques for each entry in the cart.

Frequently Appears With (<i>cartwide</i>)				
Technique	Description			
Windows Service (T1543.003)	Adversaries may create or modify Windows services to repeatedly execute malicious payloads as part of persistence. When Windows boots up, it starts programs or applications called services that perform background system functions. [1] Windows service configuration information, including the file path to the service's executable or recovery programs/commands, is stored in the Windows Registry. Service configurations can be modified using utilities such as sc.exe and Reg. Adversaries may install a new service or modify an existing service by using system utilities to interact with services, by directly modifying the			
	Registry, or by using custom tools to interact with the Windows API. Adversaries may configure services to execute at startup in order to persist on a system. An adversary may also incorporate Masquerading by using a service name from a related operating system or benign software, or by modifying existing services to make detection analysis more challenging. Modifying existing services may interrupt their functionality or may enable services that are disabled or otherwise not commonly used.			
	Services may be created with administrator privileges but are executed under SYSTEM privileges, so an adversary may also use a service to escalate privileges from administrator to SYSTEM. Adversaries may also directly start services through Service Execution.			
Archive via Custom Method (T1560.003)	An adversary may compress or encrypt data that is collected prior to exfiltration using a custom method. Adversaries may choose to use			
Deobfuscate/Decode Files or Information (T1140)	Adversaries may use Obfuscated Files or Information to hide artifacts of an intrusion from analysis. They may require separate mechanisms			
Application Window Discovery (T1010)	Adversaries may attempt to get a listing of open application windows. Window listings could convey information about how the system is			
Match Legitimate Name or Location (T1036.005)	Adversaries may match or approximate the name or location of legitimate files when naming/placing their files. This is done for the sake of			

"Frequently Appears With" (also known as Technique Co-occurrence)

When analyzing the threat reports mapped in ATT&CK itself, we have found certain technique pairs occur more commonly in threat reports than others. This **co-occurrence** can be scored, and we then use this information to identify potentially "related" techniques to display for the analyst.



In the Decider application, the initial view is a randomized list of the techniques that more commonly co-occur with the current technique. These are randomized (versus, for example, listing them by number or alphabetically) to avoid potential bias. To display the full list, simply select the check box.

Note: co-occurrences do not guarantee that those techniques were used by the adversary. It simply indicates potential - something for an analyst to consider looking at, if it relates to the threat report they are reviewing.

Mismappings

Mismappings can occur when an adversary behavior is incorrectly mapped to a technique or subtechnique. This often happens when the adversary activity occurs in a different phase of the attack lifecycle (or tactic) than reflected in the mapping or when the mapping incorrectly identifies the specific adversary behavior. Since many of the technique and sub-techniques have subtle differences, mismappings are bound to occur. This feature allows analysts to understand previously mismapped techniques as well as the proposed correction or alternative techniques. CISA analyst can use the mismappings as a guide and mechanism to build their own knowledge base of mismappings should they chose to do so while also aiding in simplifying and decreasing common oversights of mismapping techniques.

Technique ID	Often Mistaken for:	Explanation of Difference
		Multi-Stage channels are used under different conditions, can have
		multiple payloads that serve different functions, and can be used for
<u>Multi-Stage</u>	Fallback Channels	obfuscation of C2. Fallback channels are more simply alternate
Channels (T1104)	(T1008)	communication channels to be used if there is an issue with the primary
		channel.
<u>Obtain</u>		This technique is meant to be applied to tools that were obtained pre-
Capabilities: Tool	Ingress Tool Transfer	compromise even if it may be used post compromise. This tool was
(T1588.002)	(1105)	downloaded by the adversary post compromise.
		T1016 can be executed via remote access tools however it is focused on a
	System Network	single compromised machine (i.e., ipconfig) where T1018 is meant to be
Remote System	Configuration Discovery	for enumeration of multiple systems on a network (i.e., net view) likely for
Discovery (T1018)	(T1016)	lateral movement.
Subvert Trust		T1554.004 is specifically for a root certificate installation on a
Controls: Install	Develop Capabilities:	compromised machine whereas T187.003 is appropriate when digital
Root Certificate	<u>Digital Certificates</u>	certificates are installed on adversary-owned infrastructure that can be
(T1553.004)	(T1587.003)	used during targeting.

Profile



The profile page, accessible at '/profile' when logged-in, allows the use of Decider functions related to account information maintenance, access to previously saved carts, as well as editing and administrative tools (*depending on the current user's role*). The screenshot above displays the profile tab of an authenticated user with 'Admin' and 'Editor' privileges enabled. A user with only 'Member' permissions will not see items 1, 2, 3, and 4 and cannot access these routes.

- **1. User Management:** Add, edit, or remove users from Decider. See Administrator Tools User Management for more information.
- **2. Edit Mismappings:** Edit the mismappings that appear on each respective technique/sub-technique success page. See Editor Tools Edit Mismappings for more information.
- **3. Edit Card Content:** Edit the question content of Decider, including tactic, technique, and sub technique questions / answers. See Editor Tools Edit Card Content for more information.
- **4. Audit Card Content:** Generates a table of missing question / answer card content. This table also mentions any cards that have style issues (i.e., bolding, punctuation, etc). See Editor Tools Audit Card Content for more information.
- **5. Change Password:** Allows any logged-in user to change their password. Clicking this brings the user to a page where they enter their new password.
- **6. Load Cart:** Loads a previously saved cart from the 'Save Cart to Database' function. All previously saved carts will populate here. Clicking on a link here will unload/delete the current cart and replace it with the cart chosen.
- 7. Delete Cart: Deletes the cart. Each cart will have its respective delete button.

NOTE: Admin / editing features are outlined in the admin guide as a typical user will not need them.