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**Project Review:** 1

**Title:** OWASP Attacks and Vulnerability Assessment - XSS Attacks

**Literature Review:**

**1) A Comprehensive Inspection Of Cross Site Scripting Attack by Mohit Dayal, Nanhay Singh & Ram Shringar Raw:**

**Technique Implemented: XSS.**

Cross Site Scripting attack (XSS) is the computer security threat which allows the attacker to get access over the sensitive information, when the JavaScript, VBScript, ActiveX, Flash or HTML which is embedded in the malicious XSS link gets executed. In this paper, the authors had discussed about various impacts of XSS, types of XSS, checked whether the site is vulnerable towards the XSS or not, discussed about various tools for examining the XSS vulnerability and summarized the preventive measures against XSS.

**Attack Types:**

Stored XSS (type 1): Stored XSS is also known as persistent XSS or type 1 XSS. In this attack, attacker embedded a malicious script which gets permanently stored on the server. One of the most common examples of this type is a XSS attack in a comment field of a blog or forum post.

Reflected XSS (type 2): Reflected XSS is also known as non persistent or type 2 XSS. In this attack attacker first builds the malicious link. After creating the malicious link it sends the URL to the user via email and persuades them to click on it. User then sends the request to the server to give access to the required page. Genuine server handles the request made by the user and sends the response page containing the malicious code. Malicious XSS link gets executed inside the user's browser when the user login and sends the sensitive information to the attacker.

**Pseudocode Implemented:**

i. Stored XSS (type 1): `<script>document.body.background="http://www.gettyimages.in/gi-resources/images/Homepage/CategoryCreative/UK/UK_Creative_462809583.jpg";</script>`  
Adds a background image to the website.

ii. Reflected XSS (type 2): <script>alert("Reflected XSS Attack");</script>

Gives an alert when form is submitted.

### Conclusion:

There is a whole world of XSS taking place that goes beyond proof-of-concept pop-up boxes. Malicious actors are leveraging XSS vulnerabilities for nefarious purposes including click/ad fraud, session stealing, and compromising users' browsers. A single line of code can ruin and alter an entire website especially if the script is inserted into the database and loaded by each user.

### Performance Analysis:

Existing Model	Suggested Model
Attack via Email, Stealing user's cookies, Sending an unauthorized request and XSS attack in comment field are some ways to attack a website using Cross Side Scripting.  A server side XSS Attack can ruin or steal important information from all users of the website.	N- Stalker, Acunetix, Paros, Hackbar and XSS ME are some tools to be used for detection of XSS vulnerabilities.  Also, escape all HTML, CSS and JavaScript attributes before performing any new operation.

## 2) Detection of SQL Injection and XSS Attacks in Three Tier Web Applications by Prof. Piyush A. Sonewar & Prof. Sonali D. Thosar:

### Technique Implemented: XSS & SQL Injection.

Web applications are used on a large scale worldwide, which handles sensitive personal data of users. With web application that maintains data ranging from as simple as telephone number to as important as bank account information, security is a prime point of concern. With hackers aimed to breakthrough this security using various attacks, we are focusing on SQL injection attacks and XSS attacks. SQL injection attack is very common attack that manipulates the data passing through web application to the database servers through web servers in such a way that it alters or reveals database contents. While Cross Site Scripting (XSS) attacks focuses more on view of the web application and tries to trick users that leads to security breach. We are considering three tier web applications with static and dynamic behavior, for security. Static and dynamic mapping model is created to detect anomalies in the class of SQL Injection and XSS attacks.

**Attack Types:**

Reflected XSS (type 2): A reflected XSS (or also called a non-persistent XSS attack) is a specific type of XSS whose malicious script bounces off of another website to the victim's browser. It is passed in the query, typically, in the URL.

DOM XSS (type 0): DOM Based XSS (or as it is called in some texts, "type-0 XSS") is an XSS attack wherein the attack payload is executed as a result of modifying the DOM "environment" in the victim's browser used by the original client side script, so that the client side code runs in an "unexpected" manner. That is, the page itself (the HTTP response that is) does not change, but the client side code contained in the page executes differently due to the malicious modifications that have occurred in the DOM environment.

**Pseudocode Implemented:**

i. Reflected XSS (type 2): `<iframe src="hackerPage.aspx" width="200px" height="200px"></iframe>`

Embeds the hackers page onto the host page.

ii. DOM XSS (type 0): If the site has a script like: `<script>document.write("<OPTION value=1>")`

`+document.location.href.substring(document.location.href.indexOf("default=")+8)+"</OPTION>");</script>`, a DOM Based XSS attack against this page can be accomplished by sending the following URL to a victim:

`http://www.some.site/page.html?default=<script>alert(document.cookie)</script>`

**Conclusion:**

XSS attacks require very little skill, time and effort to perform when compared to SQL Injection and hence XSS attacks are a preference for most new hackers and testers.

**Performance Analysis:**

Existing Model	Suggested Model
There is a heavy server load on the system because of lightweight virtualization and a robust mechanism is needed for detection and prevention of SQL injection and XSS attacks. So the researchers have implemented a system that reduces the server load and implement faster mapping patterns to remove attacks such as SQL injection and XSS in multitier web applications.	Based on the testing done and results obtained, our approach is efficient considering web server overhead. Using httpperf it is found that, upto 90 requests per seconds our system performed similar compared to vanilla system. But above that the system started showing degradation after 110 requests per second. The overhead in the system defined in was 10.3% to 26.2%. But in the researchers approach they have found out that their system's over head is between 4.5% to 12.2%. Also the time required for execution in some system that maintains bulk data is more than their present approach. It is mostly because of the bulk data loading time the system consumes each and every time the request is made by the user. Their approach uses dedicated web server approach with basic format of SQL query comparison i.e. skeleton comparison that reduces time requirement for execution. Considering the other overheads on the system in a network, our approach reduces time requirement for the whole system to be completed by nearly 52% on an average.

### **3) A Google Chromium Browser Extension for Detecting XSS attack in HTML5 based Websites by Arun Prasath Sivanesan, Akshay Mathur & Ahmad Y Javaid:**

#### **Technique Implemented: XSS.**

The advent of HTML 5 revives the life of cross-site scripting attack (XSS) in the web. Cross Document Messaging, Local Storage, Attribute Abuse, Input Validation, Inline Multimedia and SVG emerge as likely targets for serious threats. Introduction of various new tags and attributes can be potentially manipulated to exploit the data on a dynamic website. The XSS attack manages to retain a spot in all the OWASP Top 10 security risks released over the past decade and placed in the seventh spot in OWASP Top 10 of 2017. It is known that XSS attempts to execute scripts with untrusted data without proper validation between websites. XSS executes scripts in the victim's

browser which can hijack user sessions, deface websites, or redirect the user to the malicious site. This paper focuses on the development of a browser extension for the popular Google Chromium browser that keeps track of various attack vectors. These vectors primarily include tags and attributes of HTML 5 that may be used maliciously. The developed plugin alerts users whenever a possibility of XSS attack is discovered when a user accesses a particular website.

### **Attack Types:**

Direct Attack Patterns: In Direct attack patterns, attack vectors are obviously determined.

Multiple Format Attack patterns: Multiple format attack patterns include direct attack patterns as well as attributes that can be more comprehensively exploited. For example, src attribute indicates a source URL, commonly used in many tags.

### **Pseudocode Implemented:**

i. Direct Attack Patterns:

`<body onscroll="alert(1);"><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><input autofocus>`

ii. Multiple Format Attack patterns: "); ");</img>

### **Conclusion:**

XSS is not a foolproof attack and can be prevented by maintaining a repository of common XSS cheat sheets, HTML tags, JS and JSON alerts and changes. Something running in the background and checking for abnormalities in these, can easily detect and XSS attack.

#### Performance Analysis:

Existing Model	Suggested Model
Although XSS has existed for a long time, it has been ranked consistently in OWASP Top 10 security issues cheat sheet. It mainly occurs when the application includes untrusted data on its webpage. For instance, this vulnerability takes place when GET variables are printed without checking or filtering the content. The comments section in a web page is the most vulnerable part which can be used to construct an attack. There's no mechanism to check for such hidden attacks automatically all the time.	The key to this paper is collecting attack vectors and storing them in the repository. These attack vectors are collected from XSS cheat sheet and HTML 5 cheat sheet. This paper also presents an analysis of different attack patterns and find them using the browser extension. This extension is built using HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and JSON. It works in the background and alerts the user right at the browser if it finds one or more attack patterns. The extension starts working automatically whenever a new tab is opened in the browser A particular web page can also be scanned individually by clicking scan manually option in the extension page.

#### 4) A Comparative Analysis of Cross Site Scripting (XSS) Detecting and Defensive Techniques by Shaimaa Khalifa Mahmoud, Marco Alfonse, Mohamed Ismail Roushdy & Abdel-Badeeh M. Salem:

##### Technique Implemented: XSS.

Now the web applications are highly useful and powerful for usage in most fields such as finance, e-commerce, healthcare and more, so it must be well secured. The web applications may contain vulnerabilities, which are exploited by attackers to steal the user's credential. The Cross Site Scripting (XSS) attack is a critical vulnerability that affects on the web applications security. XSS attack is an injection of malicious script code into the web application by the attacker in the client-side within user's browser or in the server-side within the database, this malicious script is written in JavaScript code and injected within untrusted input data on the web application. This study discussed the XSS attack, its taxonomy, and its incidence. In addition, the paper presented the XSS mechanisms used to detect and prevent the XSS attacks.

##### Attack Types:

Reflected XSS: The purpose of this attack is to steal the session cookie of the user. This type of XSS attack requires a more interaction between the victim and the attacker.

Stored XSS: This kind of attack occurs frequently in the social networks and other similar applications

**Algorithm Implemented:**

i. Reflected XSS: The steps are as follows:

1. The attacker sends a link containing malicious script code to the user via email or any similar web page.
2. When the user clicks on this link, the malicious code is sent to the server without being detected by the web application.
3. The server sends the HTTP response to the user with the malicious script code.
4. The attacker's domain receives the user's cookies after executing the script contained in the response.
5. The attacker can store these cookies for future use.

ii. Stored XSS: The steps are as follows:

1. The attackers insert a malicious script code on a web application that has a vulnerability.
2. When the user sends HTTP request, the web page content which includes the malicious code is accessed.
3. The malicious script is sent to the user by the HTTP response.
4. The script is executed in the web browser and sends the session cookies to the attackers.
5. These stolen cookies are stored on the attacker's domain.

**Conclusion:**

The XSS attacks are still exploiting the web application vulnerabilities to steal the user credential. The techniques that are used to detect and prevent the XSS attack still need more work to enhance the accuracy of XSS detection and prevention. Recently, OWASP developed a Web Application Firewall (WAF) model that can detect and prevent the Reflected XSS attack but the Stored XSS attack and the DOM-based XSS attack are still require more work.

### Performance Analysis:

Existing Model	Suggested Model
The existing techniques solve some of the XSS attack problems to protect the user credentials on the web application but the web application still has vulnerability and contains a large amount of the sensitive data which are lost. Most attacks can't be prevented if it is on the client side instead of the server side.	The Stored-XSS attacks still need more research in order to enhance the detection and prevention of them. Also, the web pages are still vulnerable to the DOM-based XSS attacks which require from the researcher to develop new techniques for preventing this kind of threat. The future work is to develop a defensive mechanism that uses data mining and machine learning techniques, to detect and prevent the Stored XSS attack and DOM-based XSS attack in order to reduce the false negative and false positive.

### 5) XSS Vulnerability Assessment and Prevention in Web Application by Ankit Shrivastava, Santosh Choudhary & Ashish Kumar:

#### Technique Implemented: XSS.

—Cross site scripting (XSS) is a type of scripting attack on web pages and account as one of the unsafe vulnerability existed in web applications. Once the vulnerability is oppressed, an intruder advances intended access of the authenticate user's web-browser and may perform sessionhijacking, cookie-stealing, malicious redirection and malwarespreading. As prevention against such attacks, it is essential to implement security measures that certainly block the third party intrusion. Recently the most dangerous attacks are reflected and DOM based cross-site scripting attacks because in both cases attacker attack using server side scripting and do forgery over the network, it is hard to detect and therefore it must be prevented. Vulnerabilities of websites are exploited over the network through web request using GET and POST method.

#### Attack Types:

Stored XSS: We inject malicious script in our application to steal the cookie and this could be performed by passing a script.

#### Pseudocode and Algorithm Implemented:

##### i. Stored XSS:

This script will navigate the application browser to google.co.in. The URL includes the victim's browser cookie as a query parameter. Once the attacker gets the URL response with cookie he/she can use it to hack the victim's session.



Steps to steal cookie:

- 1) Choose a form to inject a script into.
- 2) Request a page from the website.
- 3) The website contains the malicious string from the DB in the response and sends it to the victim.
- 4) The victim's browser executes the malicious script inside the response, sending the victim's cookies to the attacker's server.

ii. DOM XSS: The following page <http://test.mail.org.in> contains the below code:

```
<script>document.write("Current URL:"+document.baseURI);</script>
```

<http://test.mail.org.in/test.html#>, It is simple enough JavaScript code that will get executed, If we look at the source of the page, we won't see because it is all happening in the DOM and done by the executed JavaScript code.

DOM based XSS using an example of [test.mail.org.in](http://test.mail.org.in):

- 1) Refresh web page and capture request in burp suite.
- 2) Capture request in burp suite.
- 3) Edit and add `84960';alert(1)//467ffe1de` this as a parameter and forward the request.
- 4) Hence XSS had been performed.

### **Conclusion:**

Cross-site scripting is one of the most hazardous website vulnerabilities. It is used to harm web applications and users. It harms users by sending or inserting malicious code into application database, mostly it is used to perform attacks like session hijacking. We also know that patching XSS is possible but we can never be completely sure that no one can break our filter. Attackers always find their ways to break application security. If we really want to make a hard-to-crack XSS filter, we have to analyze more on all XSS patterns and then we can use our prevention technique efficiently. After efficient analysis and using better prevention technique, we can stop or fix the dangerous xxx web application vulnerabilities. We should not depend on a single technique or approach, we should use a multilayer security and also we should have focused on initial level security. Use of SSL must be recommended to insure secure interaction between client and server.

### Performance Analysis:

Existing Model	Suggested Model
In existing approach normally developers user java script validation or user input filter to prevent client side malicious inputs, for the output they use escape method and sanitation method. Some more secure web applications use application level firewall to filter user request. But still, we are not able to stop XSS attacks.	It is not sufficient in the prevention of more dangerous XSS payloads. The use of one or two existing approaches can stop the direct malicious inputs from the web browser, but not strong enough to handle middleware attacks. The researchers are using java script validation for user input, java script signature mechanism to identify valid java script, assigning a unique token for client-server request during communication, using escape method to prevent script characters, sanitization method to clean-up HTML text. They also suggest the use of strong application level firewall, use of HTTPOnly cookie flag, use of proper security testing and also the use of scanner tool to detect XSS payloads in all parameters, headers and path, use of strong SPRING tool to develop java application and use of updated web browser.

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