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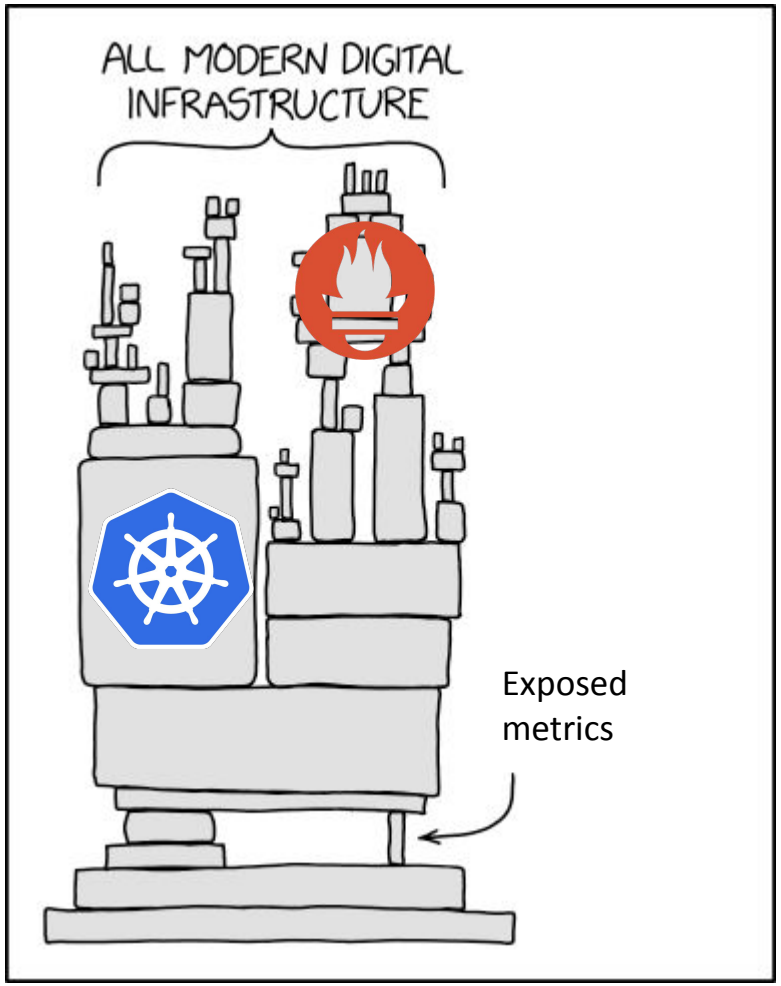
How Attackers Use Exposed Prometheus Server to Exploit Kubernetes Clusters

Miguel Hernández & David de Torres, Sysdig

Kubernetes fingerprinting with Prometheus



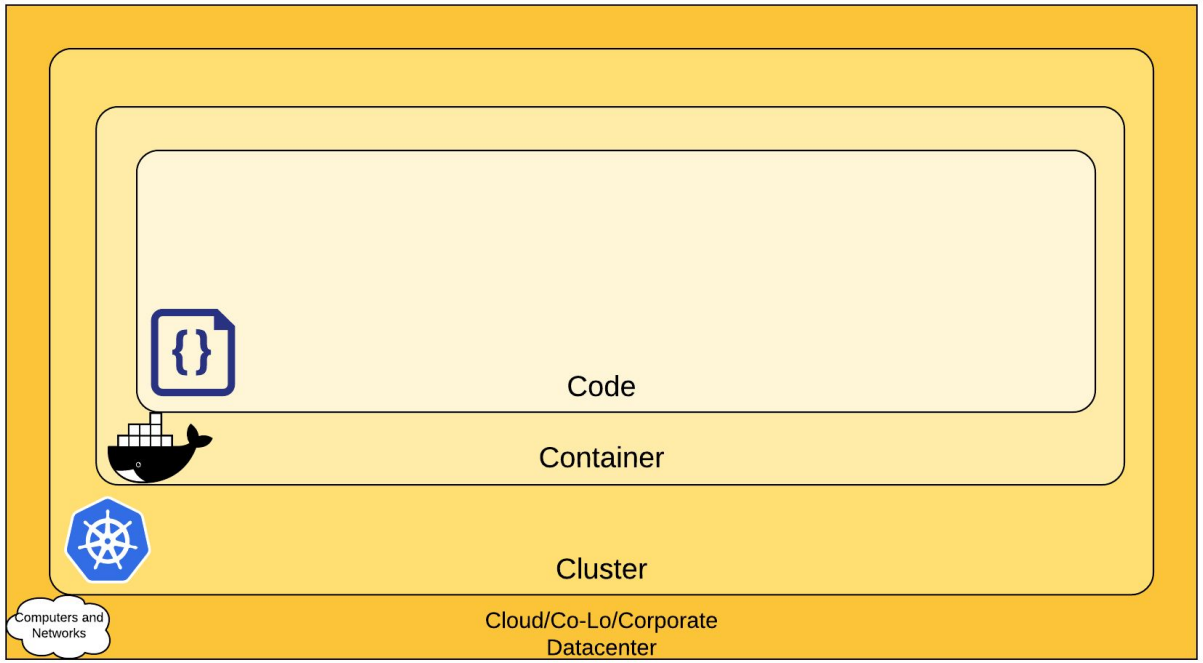
https://xkcd.com/2347/

Miguel Hernandez
Security Researcher
Sysdig
@MiguelHzBz

David de Torres
Manager of Engineering
Sysdig
@maellyssa

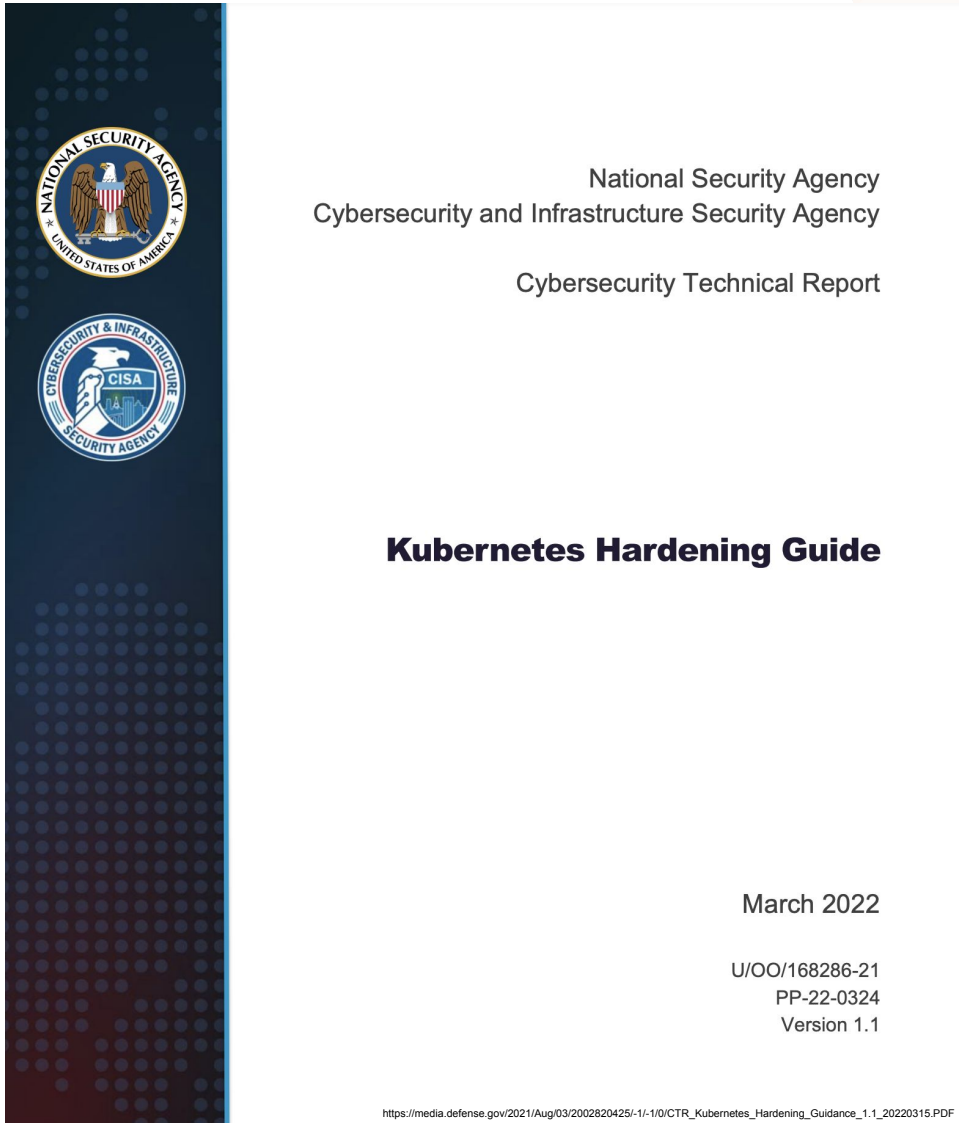
Assume you are a target, but not for free

- Follow the Kubernetes security best practices.
- Use Prometheus to monitor everything.
- But don't let the door open.



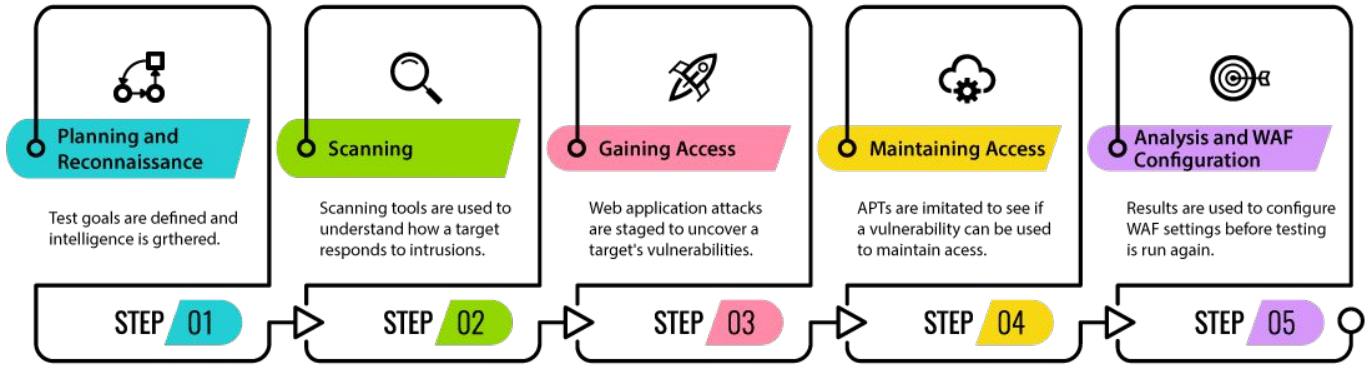
DISCLAIMER

We are not going to break and break into Kubernetes Cluster or Prometheus.



Why Kubernetes fingerprinting?

The **first step** in any pentesting, ethical hacking or cybercriminal groups, is to **gather as much information as you can about the target** you want to breach.



https://www.eccouncil.org/ethical-hacking/

Why? Simple, to know **what technique** to use or the **appropriate tools** to achieve intrusion and evasion of defense systems.

Information on versions inside the cluster can map to CVE and vulnerabilities that can be exploited.

Information on applications, tools and architectures can be used for competitors.

Kubernetes in the wild

https://kubernetes.io/docs/tasks/access-application-cluster/web-ui-dashboard/

Accessing the Dashboard UI

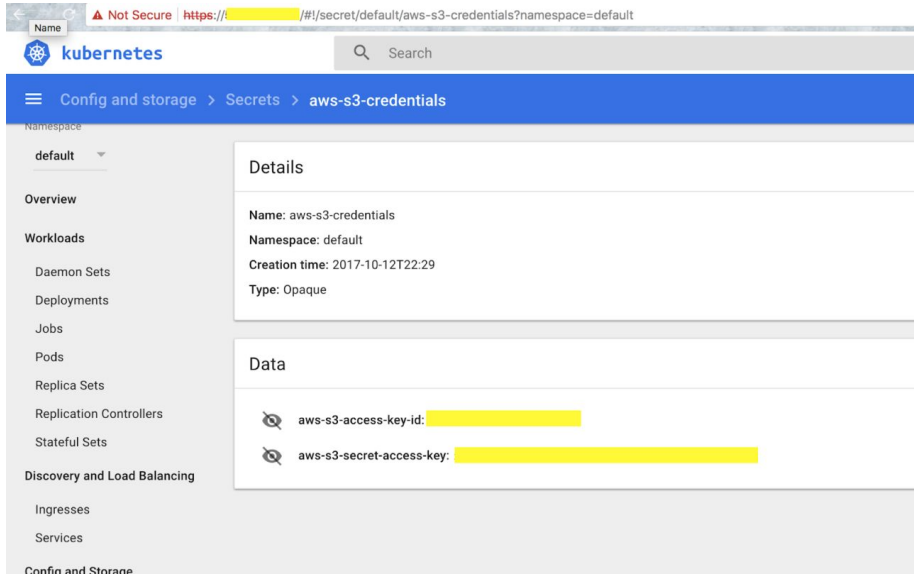
To protect your cluster data, Dashboard deploys with a minimal RBAC configuration by default. Currently, Dashboard only supports logging in with a Bearer Token. To create a token for this demo, you can follow our guide on creating a sample user.

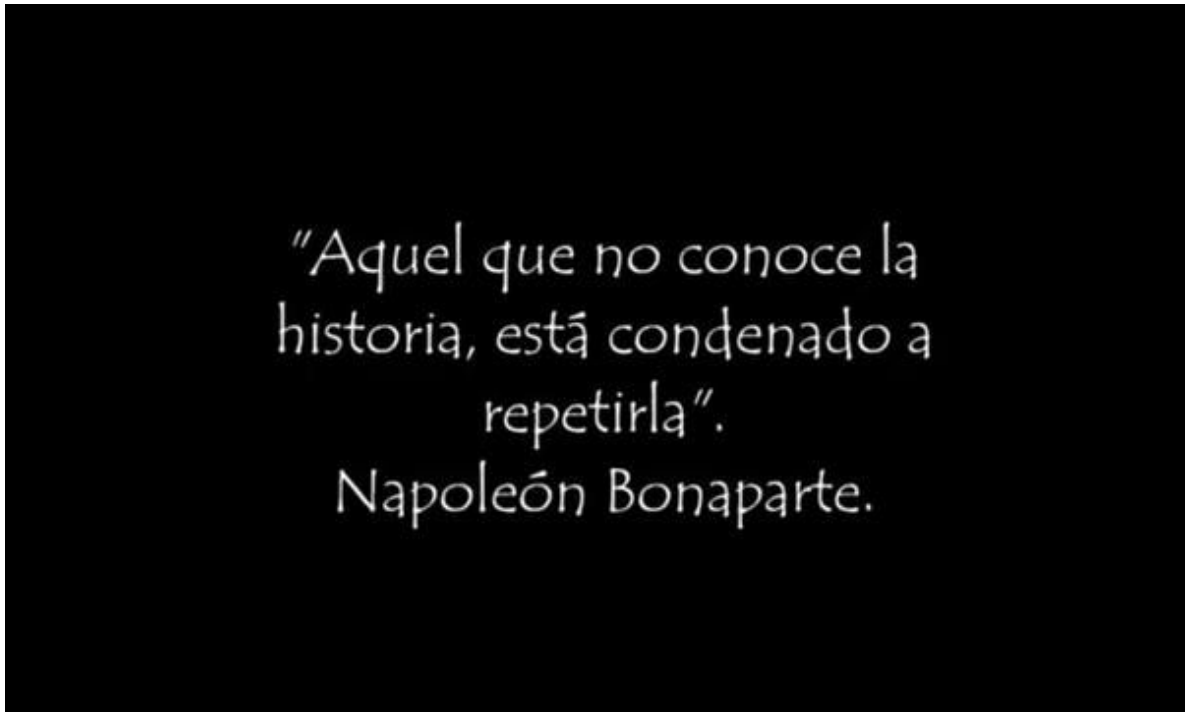
Warning: The sample user created in the tutorial will have administrative privileges and is for educational purposes only.

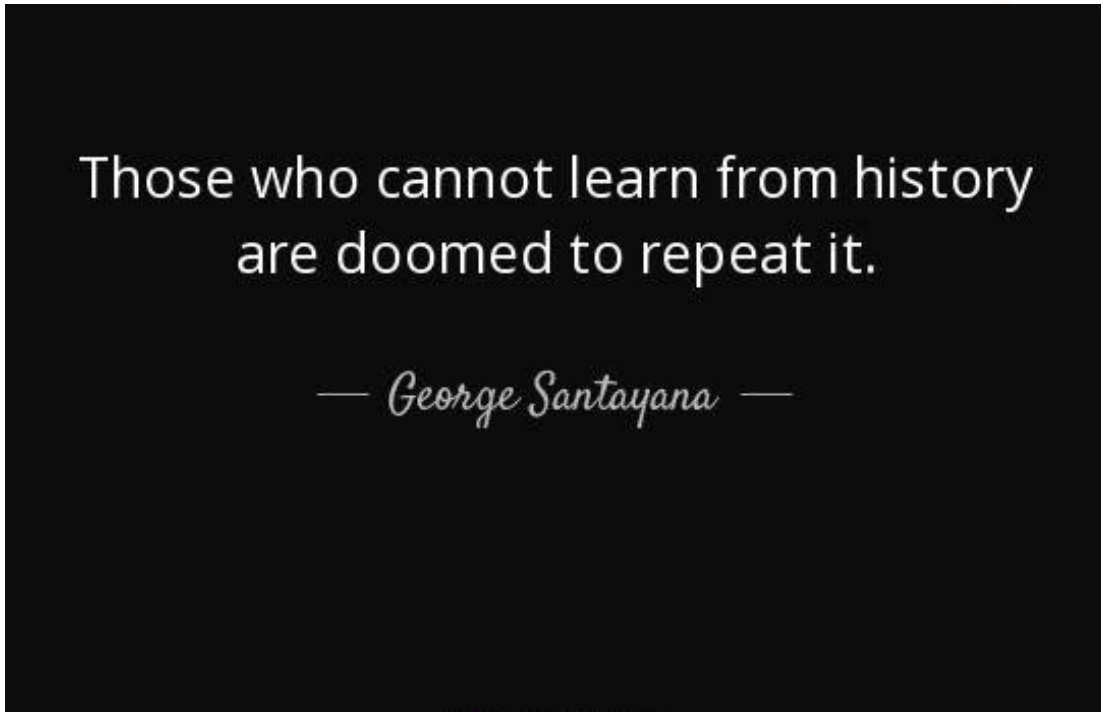
Tesla cloud resources are hacked to run cryptocurrency-mining malware

Crooks find poorly secured access credentials, use them to install stealth miner.

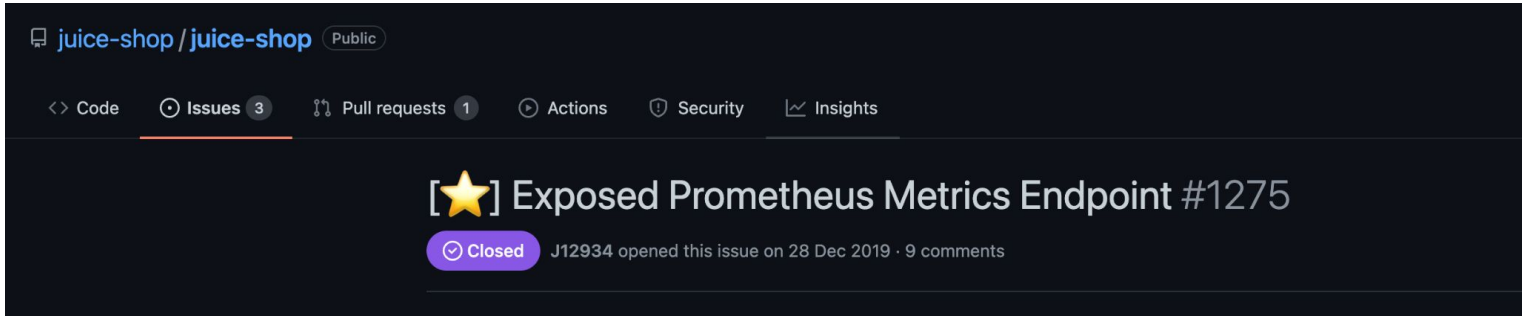
DAN GOODIN - 2/20/2018, 8:21 PM



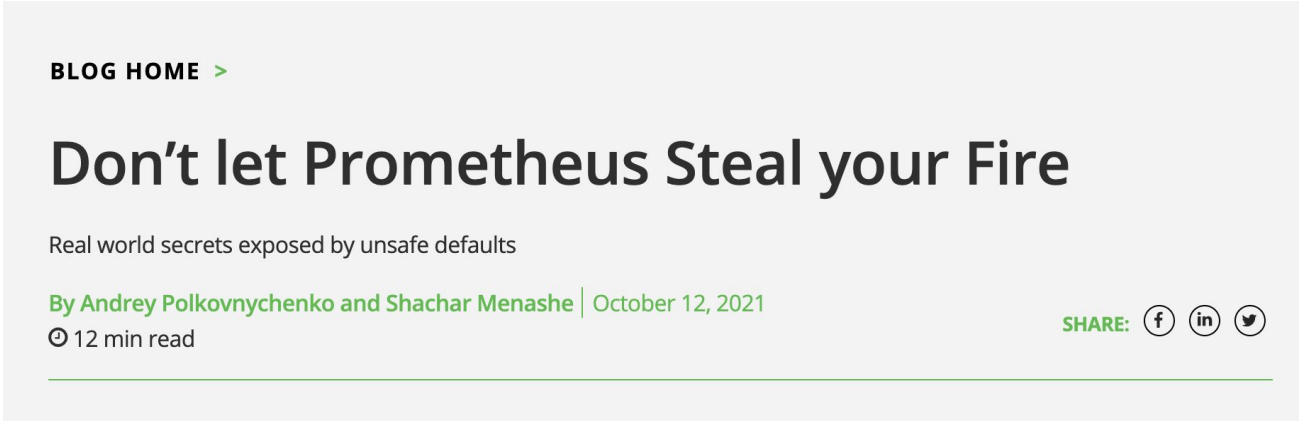

"Aquel que no conoce la
historia, está condenado a
repetirla".
Napoleón Bonaparte.


Those who cannot learn from history
are doomed to repeat it.
— George Santayana —

But Prometheus is only metrics…



https://github.com/juice-shop/juice-shop/issues/1275



https://jfrog.com/blog/dont-let-prometheus-steal-your-fire/

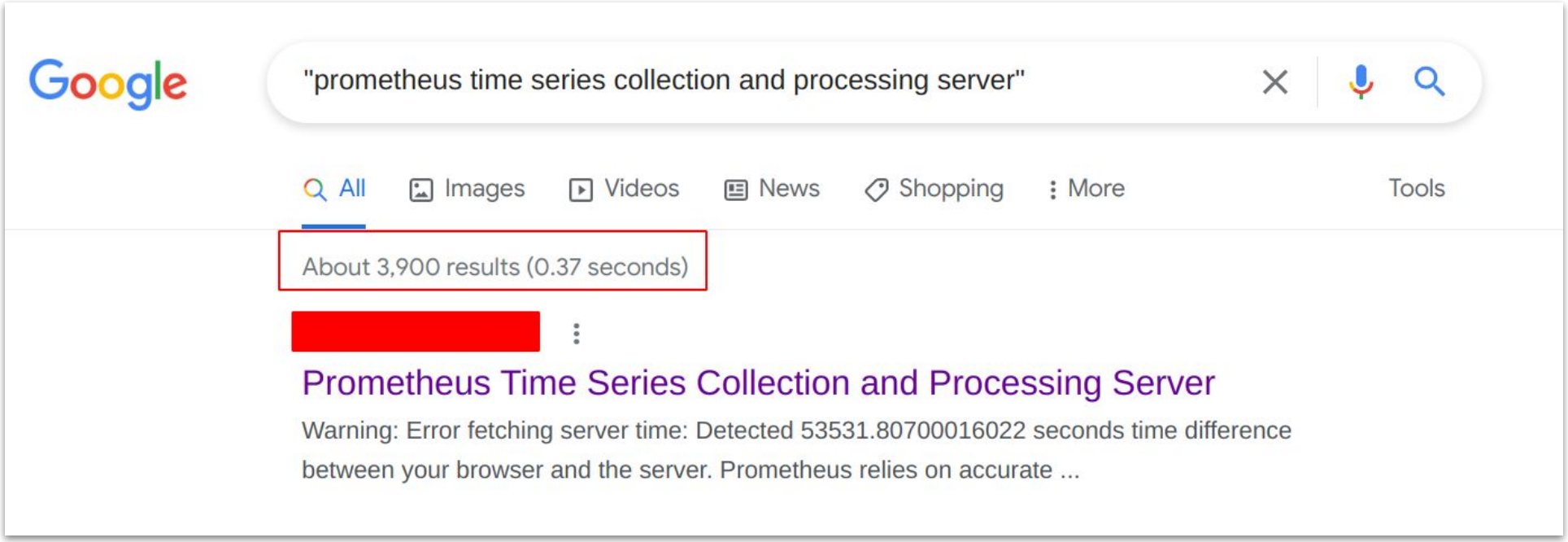
https://www.cncf.io/online-programs/a-look-at-how-hackers-exploit-prometheus-grafana-fluentd-jaeger-more/

Prometheus in the wild

Prometheus collects and stores its metrics as time series data, i.e. metrics information is stored with the timestamp at which it was recorded, alongside optional key-value pairs called labels.

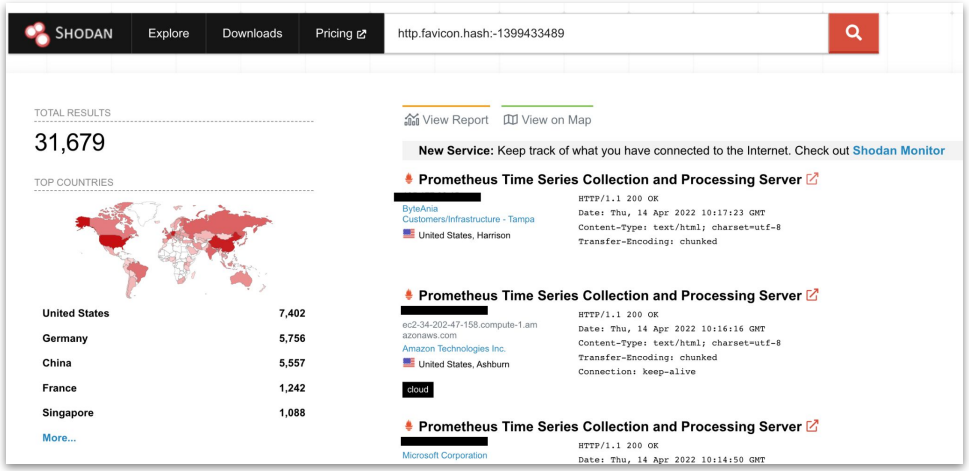
Prometheus allows (and recommends) using basic authentication, but **not enabled by default**: https://prometheus.io/docs/operating/security/

Exposing open Prometheus endpoints to the Internet is a bad idea… and **as every bad idea, it's highly adopted**:



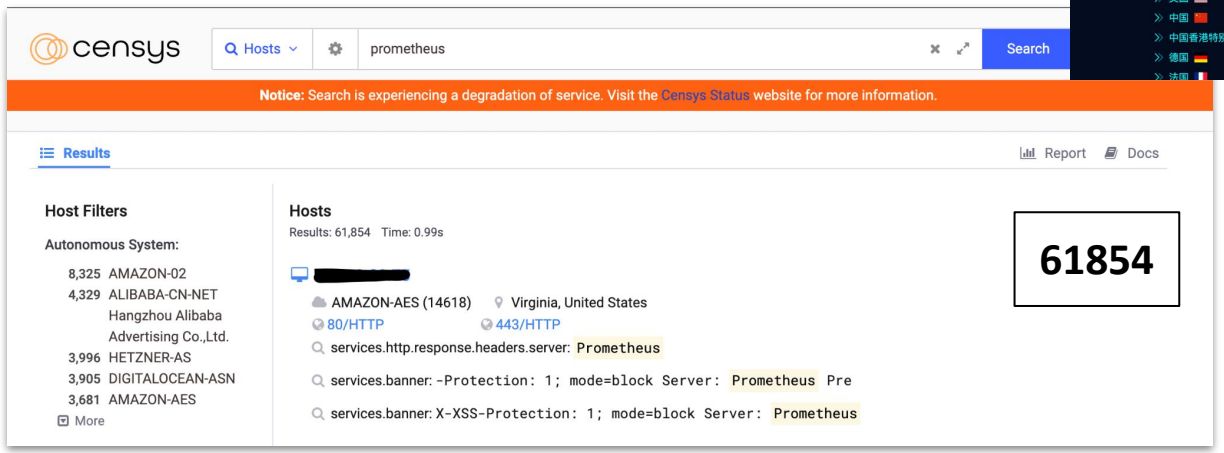
More Prometheus in the wild

Shodan -> favicons (https://github.com/sansatart/scrapts/blob/master/shodan-favicon-hashes.csv)



Fofa (https://fofa.info/)

Censys (https://search.censys.io/)



What will we us to fingerprint Kubernetes?

Two of the most widely used exporters offer most of the information that we need:

Node Exporter

- Physical infrastructure
- Network interfaces

Kube State Metrics

- Host OS & kernel
- Kubernetes components
- Hostnames and network topology
- Logical hierarchy
- Secrets location
- Applications (and versions) deployed

Scenario - NotARealCompanyForSure ©

Website
API
…
https://example.com

Scenario - NotARealCompanyForSure ©

Website
API
…
https://example.com

Fingerprinting Physical Infrastructure

Node Exporter:
`node_dmi_info`

bios_vendor:
- SeaBIOS
- Amazon EC2

bios_version:
- seabios-1.9.1-qemu-project.org
- 8f19b21
- 1.0

bios_release:
- 1.0

bios_date:
- 10/16/2017
- 04/01/2014

chassis_asset_tag:
- Amazon EC2

chassis_vendor:
- Amazon EC2
- Alibaba Cloud

system_vendor:
- Tencent Cloud
- Amazon EC2
- Alibaba Cloud

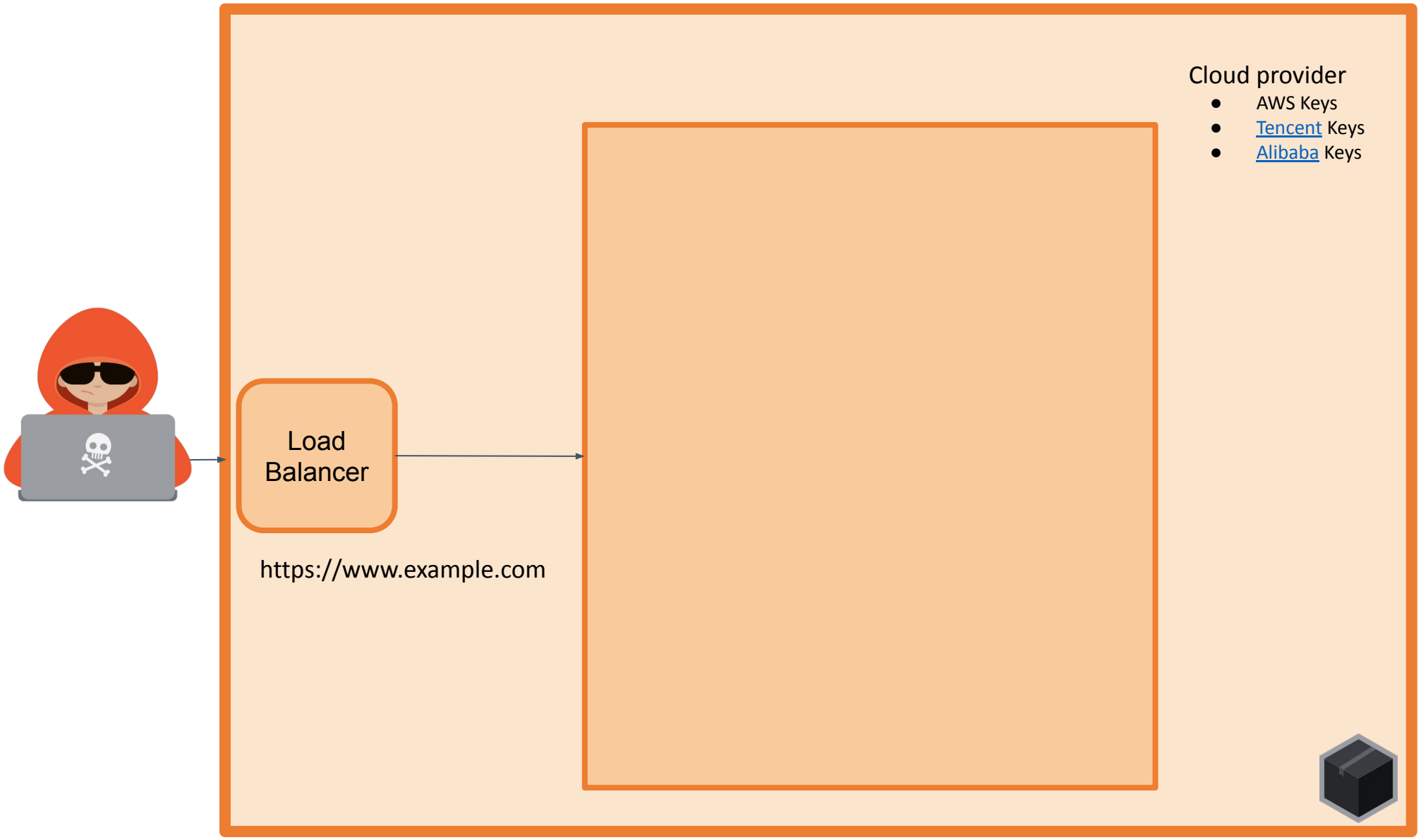
product_name:
- m5.xlarge
- Alibaba Cloud ECS

product_version:
- pc-i440fx-2.1

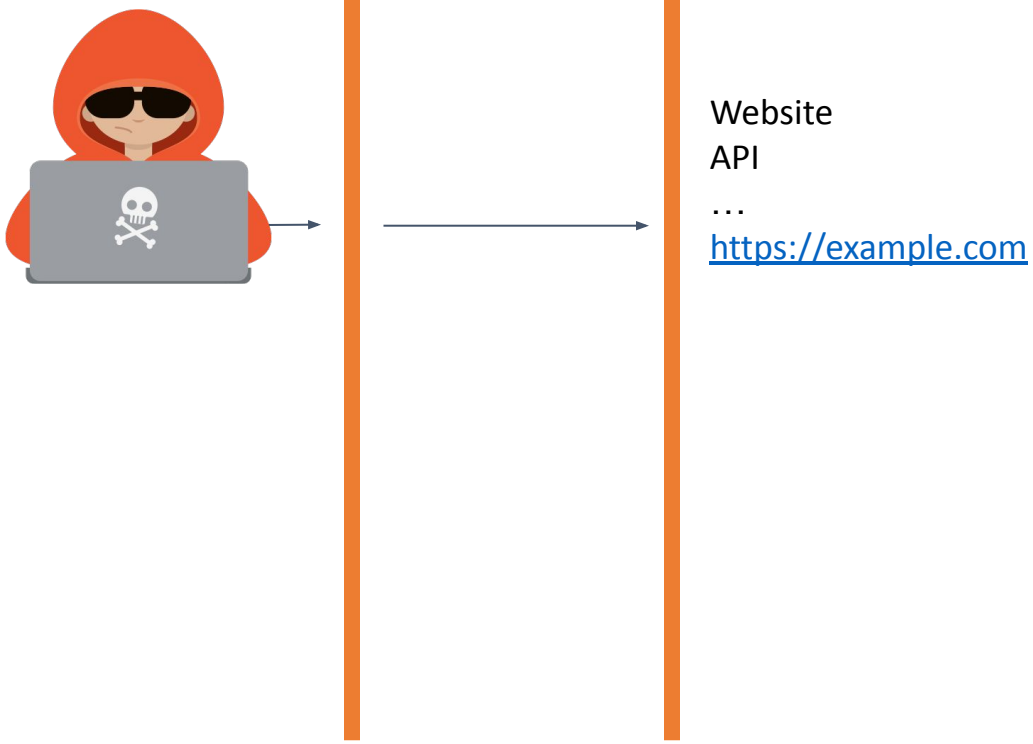
board_vendor:
- Amazon EC2

board_asset_tag:
- i-00280f617XXXXX

board_vendor:
- Smdbmds
- Amazon EC2


Cloud provider
AWS Keys
Tencent Keys
Alibaba Keys
Load Balancer
https://www.example.com

Scenario - NotARealCompanyForSure ©



Fingerprinting network interfaces

Node Exporter:

```
node_network_info{device=~'eth.+'}
```

```
{
    address="06:d5:XX:XX:XX:XX",
    broadcast="ff:ff:ff:ff:ff:ff",
    device="eth0",
    instance="172.31.XX.XX:9100",
    instance_az="us-west-2a",
    instance_id="i-XXXXX",
    instance_name="XXX-XXX",
    instance_type="c5.xlarge",
    instance_vpc="vpc-XXXXXXX",
    job="ec2_instances",
    operstate="up"
}
```

Fingerprinting network topology

KSM:

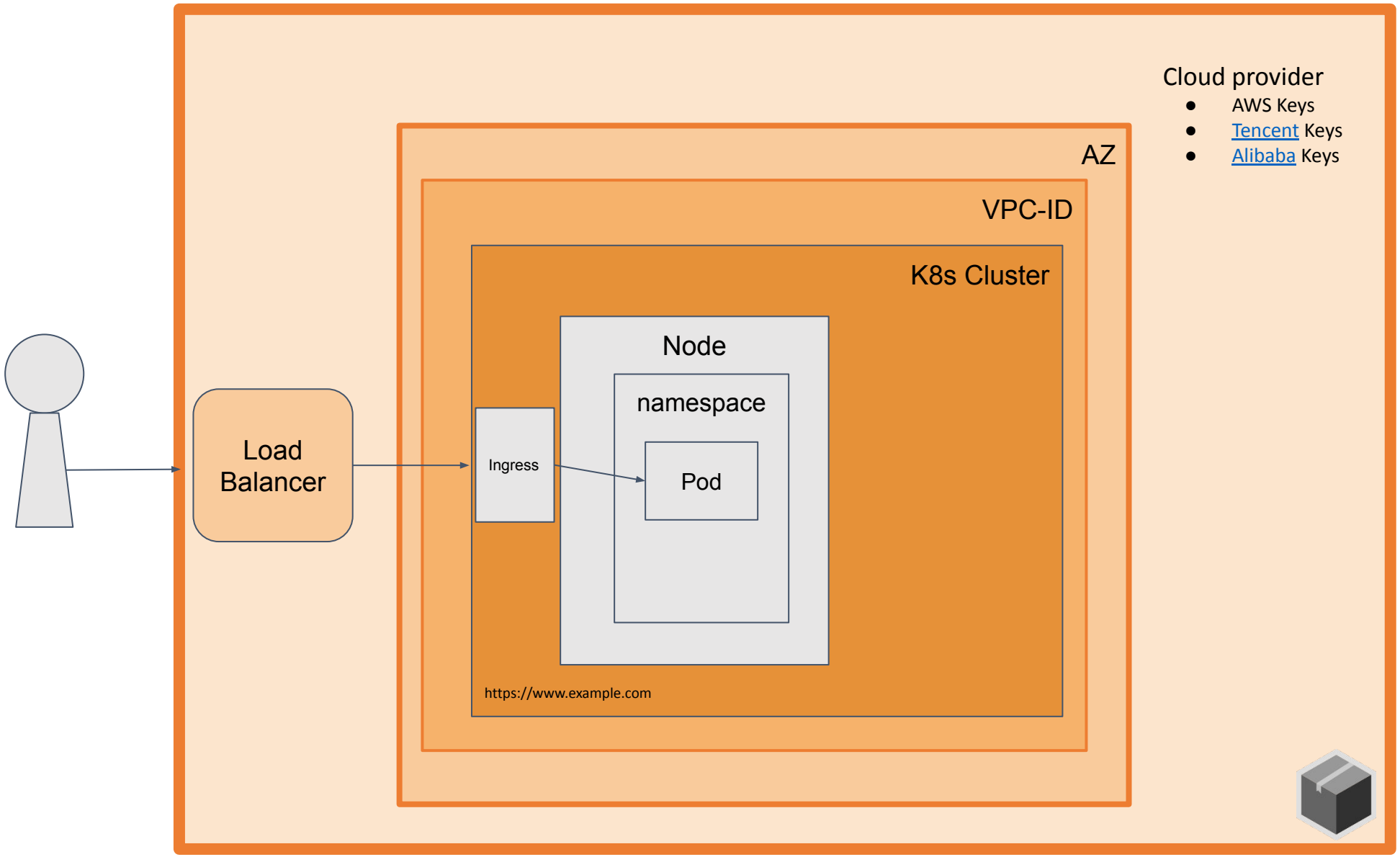
```
kube_node_info

kube_service_info * on (service) group_left group by
    (service,type)(kube_service_spec_type{type="LoadBalancer"})

kube_ingress_info
```

Node hostname

Services in the cluster (specially load-balancers)

- namespace
- cluster IP
- node
- (application behind the service can be guessed by name of service/namespace)

Ingresses in the cluster


Cloud provider
AWS Keys
Tencent Keys
Alibaba Keys
AZ
VPC-ID
K8s Cluster
Node
namespace
Pod
Ingress
Load Balancer
https://www.example.com

Scenario - NotARealCompanyForSure ©

Cloud provider

Credentials:

- AWS Keys
- Tencent Keys
- Alibaba Keys

Networking

- Load Balancer
- Region & AZ
- VPC
- Instance IP & ID

K8s Cluster

Topology

- Cluster IP
- Namespaces
- Nodes
- Ingress

Website

API

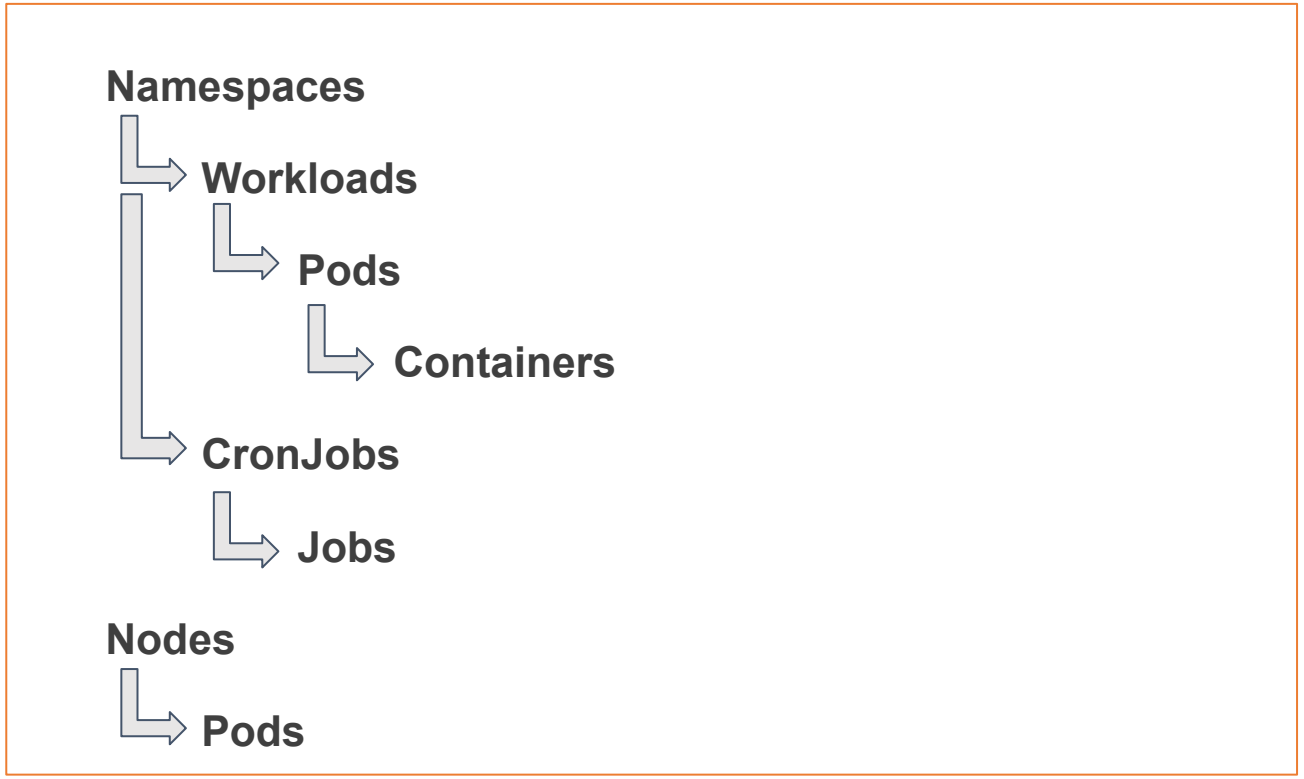
…

https://example.com

Fingerprinting Kubernetes hierarchy

KSM:

```
kube_namespace_status_phase

kube_deployment_spec_replicas
kube_daemonset_status_desired_number_scheduled
kube_statefulset_replicas
kube_replicaset_spec_replicas

kube_pod_info

kube_pod_container_info

kube_cronjob_info

kube_job_info
```



Fingerprinting Kubernetes Control Plane

Kubernetes:

`kubernetes_build_info`

Component
- API-server
- controller-manager
- kube-proxy…

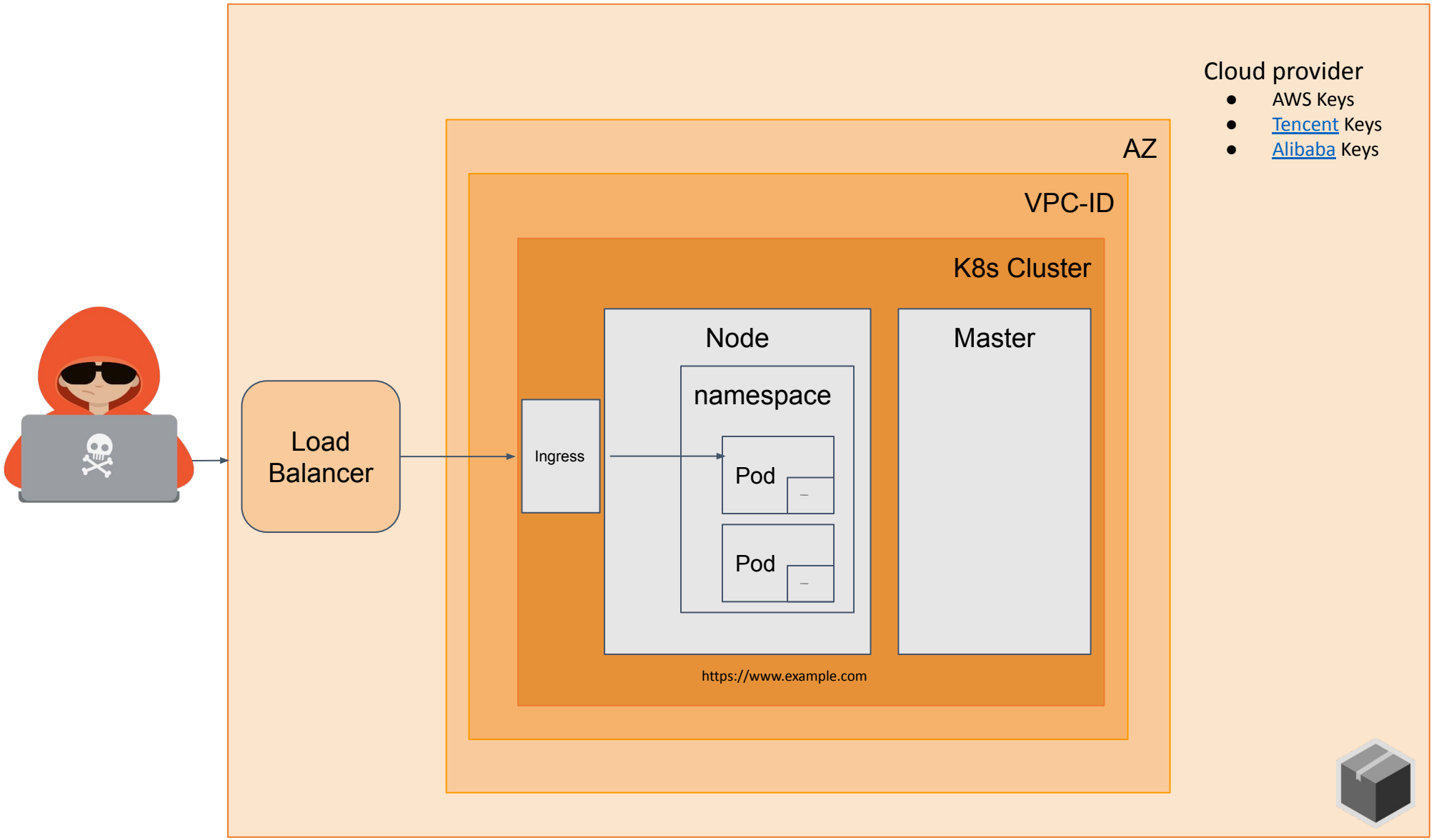
Major, minor version

git version

git commit

build_date

go_version


Cloud provider
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AZ
VPC-ID
K8s Cluster
Node
Master
namespace
Ingress
Pod
Pod
Load Balancer
https://www.example.com

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K8s Cluster

Components:

- Kube-proxy
- Kube-admin
- Kubelet

Topology

- Cluster IP
- Namespaces
- Nodes
- Ingress

Known Vulnerabilities:

- CVE-2020-8554
- CVE-2020-8558
- CVE-2020-8559
- CVE-2021-25735
- CVE-2021-25737
- CVE-2021-25741

Website
API
…
https://example.com

Fingerprinting OS & Kernel

KSM Exporter:

`kube_node_info`

os_image:

- Ubuntu 18.04.4 LTS
- Ubuntu 20.04.3 LTS
- CentOS Linux 7 (Core)
- Tencent Linux 2.4

kernel_version:

- 5.11.0-1027-aws
- 4.15.0-142-generic
- 4.14.105-19-0020.1
- 3.10.0-1160.59.1.el7.x86_64

Scenario - NotARealCompanyForSure ©

Cloud provider

Credentials:

- AWS Keys
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- Alibaba Keys

Networking

- Load Balancer
- Region & AZ
- VPC
- Instance IP & ID

K8s Cluster

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Topology

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- CVE-2021-25741

Node

- Kernel
- OS
- Go version
- Git version

Known Vulnerabilities:

- CVE-2022-0847 - dirty pipe (Kernel Linux)
- CVE-2022-0185
- USN-3833-1: Linux kernel (AWS) vulnerabilities
  - CVE-2018-18955
- CVE-2021-3156

Website
API
…
https://example.com

Applications versions

KSM:

`kube_pod_container_info`

Custom:

`prometheus_build_info`

pod (app name)

image name + tag + sha256

- docker.io/library/cassandra:3.11.6
- sha256:5aa8400b4b3b794b5eba85f79b75a9ed9326e41428ae3a9d6b91cd731f2cf768

Prometheus version

Scenario - NotARealCompanyForSure ©

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Pod / Container

Registry:
- docker.io

Image:
- Image-id

Service
- Service-example
  - Website
  - API
  - …
  - https://example.com

Known Vulnerabilities:
- CVE-2021-44521 - Cassandra
- https://mariadb.com/kb/en/security/ - RCE
- CVE-2020-28035
- Wordpress
- CVE-2018-16850 - PostgreSQL
- CVE-2019-11043 - PHP
- CVE-2021-44228 - Log4j
- CVE-2022-22963 - Spring Cloud
- CVE-2020-13942 - Apache unomi

Locating Kubernetes secrets

KSM:

```
kube_secret_info
kube_secret_type

kube_secret_annotations
```

Namespace

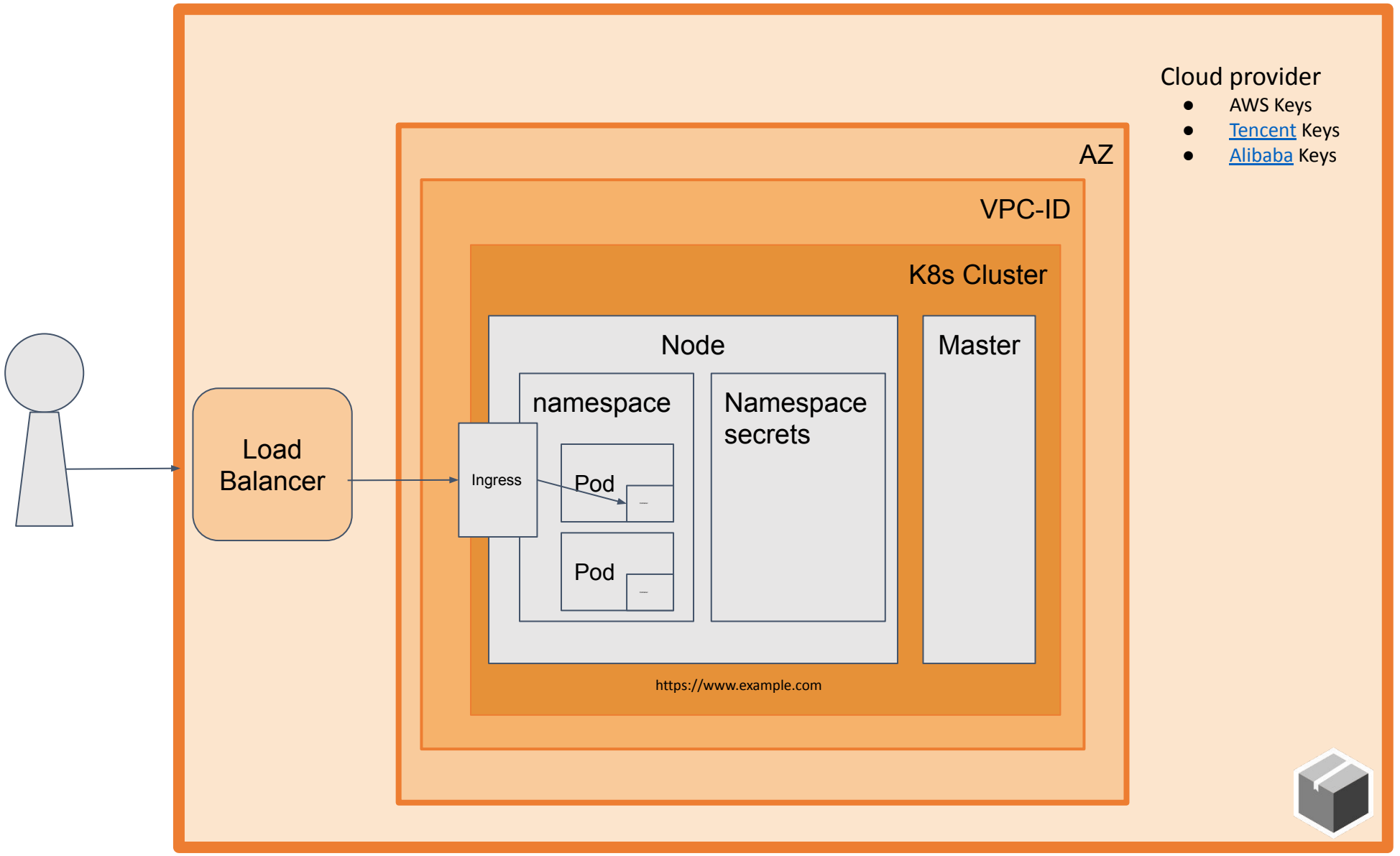
Secret name

Type
- Opaque
- service-account-token…

Kubectl last applied info (leak)

Application (application that uses the secret can be usually guessed by the name of secret/namespace)

```
kube_secret_annotations{kubectl_kubernetes_io_last_applied_configuration != ""}
```


Cloud provider
AWS Keys
Tencent Keys
Alibaba Keys
AZ
VPC-ID
K8s Cluster
Node
Master
namespace
Namespace secrets
Load Balancer
Ingress
Pod
Pod
https://www.example.com

Scenario - NotARealCompanyForSure ©

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- CVE-2020-13942 - Apache unomi

Kubernetes Secrets

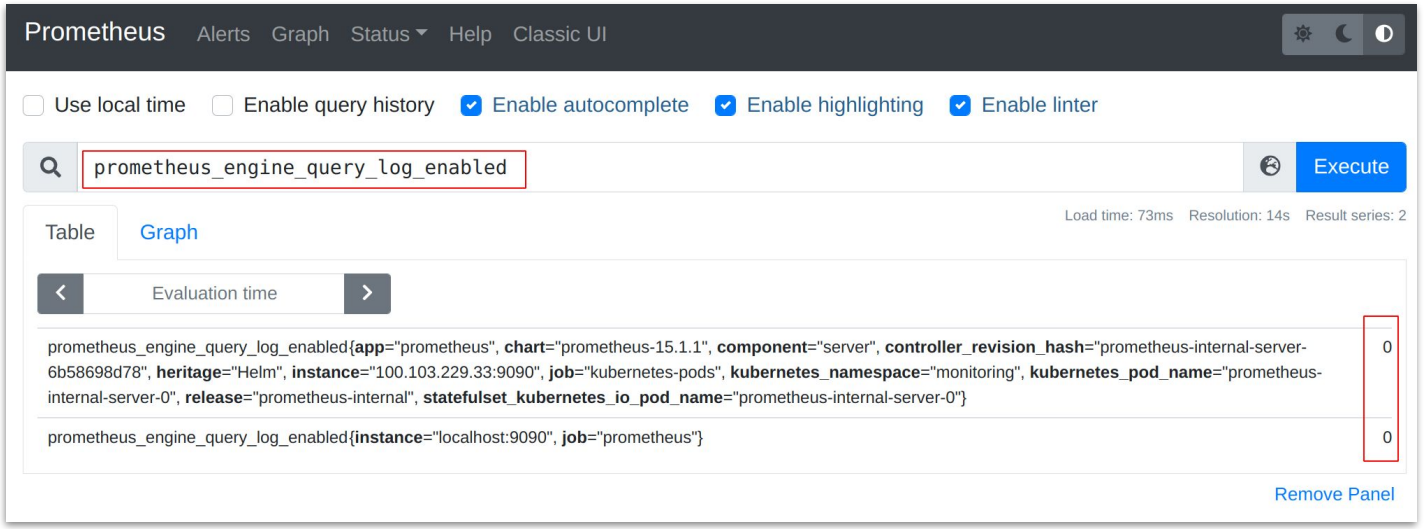
- Service auth tokens

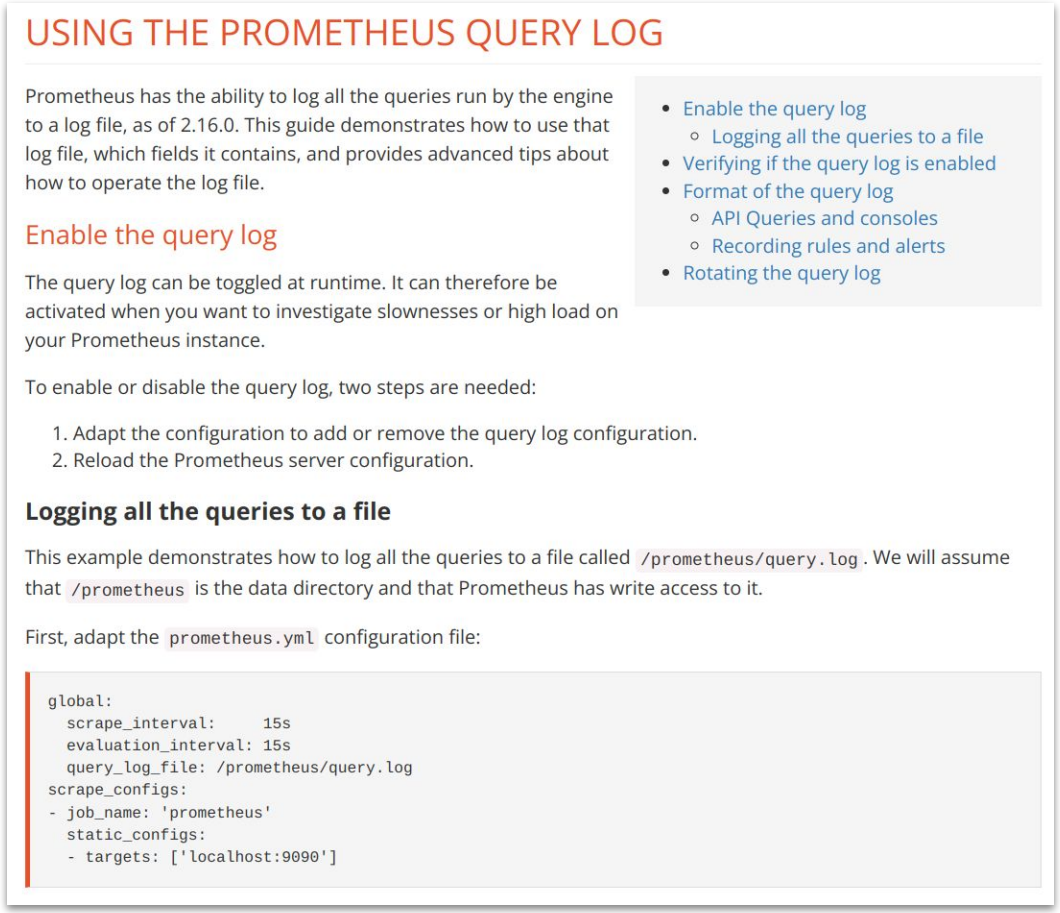
Logging queries in Prometheus

Prometheus allows query logging… but it's **not enabled by default**.

You can check if loggin is enabled by querying this metric:

```
prometheus_engine_query_log_enabled
```





USING THE PROMETHEUS QUERY LOG

Prometheus has the ability to log all the queries run by the engine to a log file, as of 2.16.0. This guide demonstrates how to use that log file, which fields it contains, and provides advanced tips about how to operate the log file.

- Enable the query log
  - Logging all the queries to a file
- Verifying if the query log is enabled
- Format of the query log
  - API Queries and consoles
  - Recording rules and alerts
- Rotating the query log

Enable the query log

The query log can be toggled at runtime. It can therefore be activated when you want to investigate slownesses or high load on your Prometheus instance.

To enable or disable the query log, two steps are needed:

1. Adapt the configuration to add or remove the query log configuration.
2. Reload the Prometheus server configuration.

Logging all the queries to a file

This example demonstrates how to log all the queries to a file called `/prometheus/query.log`. We will assume that `/prometheus` is the data directory and that Prometheus has write access to it.

First, adapt the `prometheus.yml` configuration file:

```
global:
  scrape_interval:     15s
  evaluation_interval: 15s
  query_log_file: /prometheus/query.log
scrape_configs:
- job_name: 'prometheus'
  static_configs:
  - targets: ['localhost:9090']
```

https://prometheus.io/docs/guides/query-log/

Real History

Now, the attacker prepares the journey and the intrusion target.

In this fictitious examples, the attacker might want to access the data leak, use your machines for cryptomining or encrypt the victim's data (ransomware). With this knowledge of Prometheus exposed, the attacker uses the specific technique for each case.

https://miro.medium.com/max/750/1*TSX7fu85EwGEdnhA-Sv4cA.jpeg

https://cd.blokt.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/crypto-mining-e1518714481556.jpg

Leak data scenario - Attacker Path

Cloud provider

Credentials:
- AWS Keys
- Tencent Keys
- Alibaba Keys

Networking
- Load Balancer
- Region & AZ
- VPC
- Instance IP & ID

K8s Cluster

Components:
- Kube-proxy
- Kube-admin
- Kubelet

Topology
- Cluster IP
- Namespaces
- Nodes

Known Vulnerabilities:
- CVE-2020-8554
- CVE-2020-8558
- CVE-2020-8559
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Node

- Kernel
- OS
- Go version
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- CVE-2020-13942 - Apache unomi

Kubernetes Secrets

- Service auth tokens

Cryptomining scenario - Attacker Path

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- USN-3833-1: Linux kernel (AWS) vulnerabilities
  - CVE-2018-18955
- CVE-2021-3156

https://dirtypipe.cm4all.com/
https://github.com/arget13/DDexec

Pod / Container

Registry:
- docker.io

Image:
- Image-id

Service
- Service-example
  - Website
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  - …
  - https://example.com

Known Vulnerabilities:
- CVE-2021-44521 - Cassandra
- https://mariadb.com/kb/en/security/ - RCE
- CVE-2020-28035
- Wordpress
- CVE-2018-16850 - PostgreSQL
- CVE-2019-11043 - PHP
- CVE-2021-44228 - Log4j
- CVE-2022-22963 - Spring Cloud
- CVE-2020-13942 - Apache unomi

https://github.com/kozmer/log4j-shell-poc

Kubernetes Secrets

- Service auth tokens

Prometheus secrets

Secrets

Non-secret information or fields may be available via the HTTP API and/or logs.

In Prometheus, metadata retrieved from service discovery is not considered secret. Throughout the Prometheus system, metrics are not considered secret.

Fields containing secrets in configuration files (marked explicitly as such in the documentation) will not be exposed in logs or via the HTTP API. Secrets should not be placed in other configuration fields, as it is common for components to expose their configuration over their HTTP endpoint. It is the responsibility of the user to protect files on disk from unwanted reads and writes.

Secrets from other sources used by dependencies (e.g. the `AWS_SECRET_KEY` environment vari EC2 service discovery) may end up exposed due to code outside of our control or due to functi happens to expose wherever it is stored.

Ransomware scenario - Attacker Path

Cloud provider

Credentials:
- AWS Keys
- Tencent Keys
- Alibaba Keys

Networking
- Load Balancer
- Region & AZ
- VPC
- Instance IP & ID

K8s Cluster

Components:
- Kube-proxy
- Kube-admin
- Kubelet

Topology
- Cluster IP
- Namespaces
- Nodes

Known Vulnerabilities:
- CVE-2020-8554
- CVE-2020-8559
- CVE-2021-25735
- CVE-2021-25737
- CVE-2021-25741

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Node

- Kernel
- OS
- Go version
- Git version
- Docker

Known Vulnerabilities:
- CVE-2022-0847 - dirty pipe (Kernel Linux)
- CVE-2022-0185
- USN-3833-1: Linux kernel (AWS) vulnerabilities
  - CVE-2018-18955
- CVE-2021-3156

Pod / Container

Registry:
- docker.io

Image:
- Image-id

Service
- Service-example
  - Website
  - API
  - …
  - https://example.com

Known Vulnerabilities:
- CVE-2021-44521 - Cassandra
- https://mariadb.com/kb/en/security/ - RCE
- CVE-2020-28035
- Wordpress
- CVE-2018-16850 - PostgreSQL
- CVE-2019-11043 - PHP
- CVE-2021-44228 - Log4j
- CVE-2022-22963 - Spring Cloud
- CVE-2020-13942 - Apache Unomi
- …

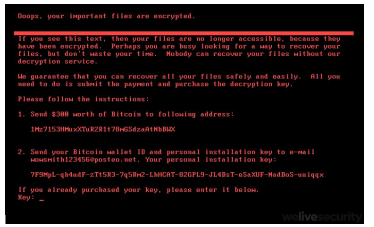
1

https://github.com/hktalent/spring-spel-0day-poc

3

Kubernetes Secrets

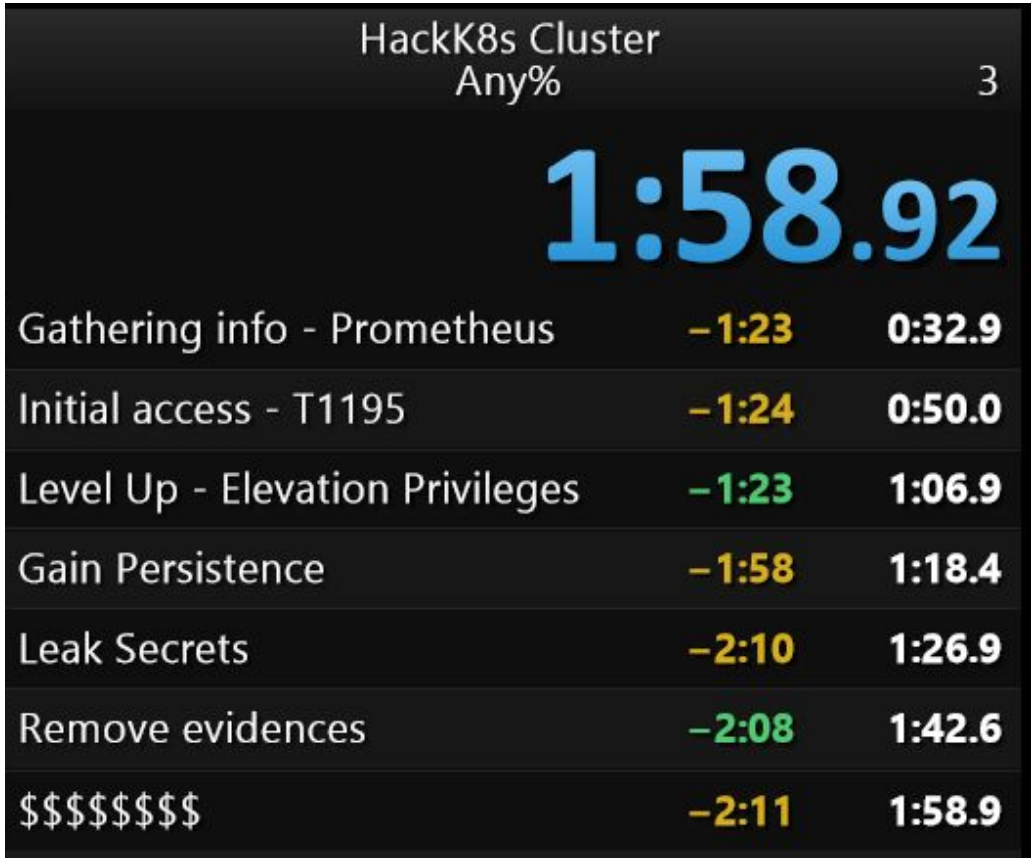
- Service auth tokens



Summary

We could think that metrics are not important in a security perspective, but we show that’s not true.

It’s also important to mention that the proper services Kubernetes or Prometheus advise of the problems to expose their data to the world



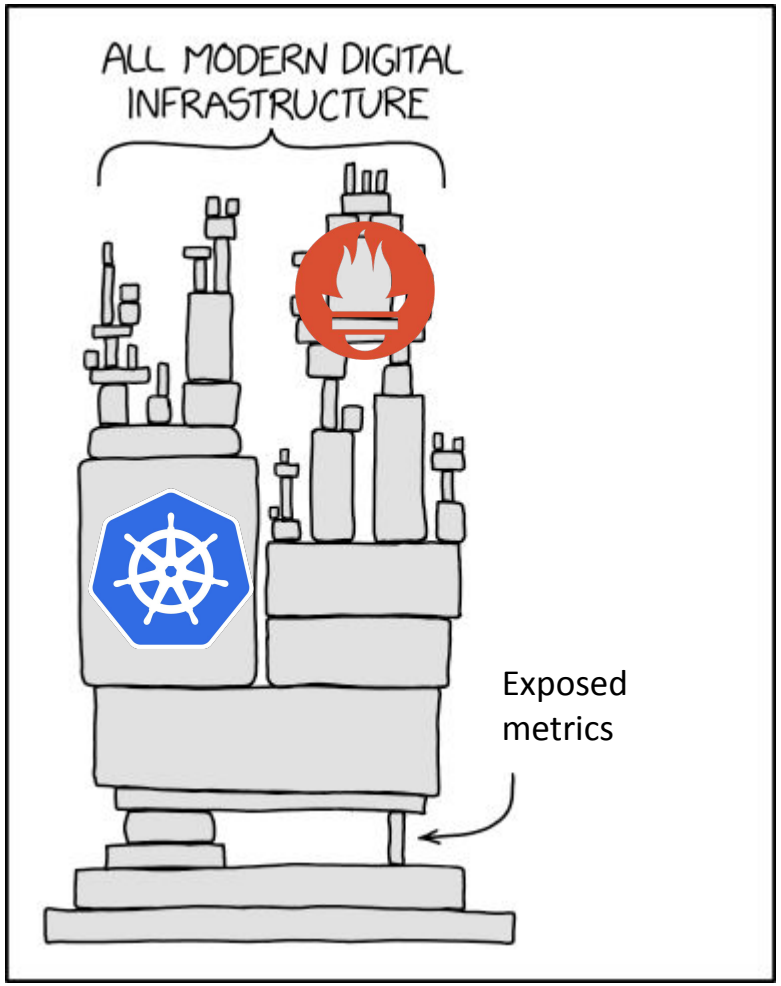
Recommendations

Today, if we follow security best practices in every part of our chain, we are safe from most security incidents.

We will have to continue to fight with new vulnerabilities that impact our services and also, not least, a plan against insiders. But let's at least make things difficult.

- Secure your Cloud provider with Principle of least privilege.
  - **https://www.cisa.gov/uscert/ncas/current-activity/2020/01/24/nsa-releases-guidance-mitigating-cloud-vulnerabilities**
- Secure your Cluster Kubernetes
  - **https://media.defense.gov/2021/Aug/03/2002820425/-1/-1/0/CTR_Kubernetes_Hardening_Guidance_1.1_20220315.PDF**
- Secure the Host / OS
  - **https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/legacy/sp/nistspecialpublication800-123.pdf**
- Secure the containers
  - **https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/specialpublications/nist.sp.800-190.pdf**
- Secure your code
  - **https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/Legacy/SP/nistspecialpublication800-95.pdf**
- Secure your Prometheus Metrics!
  - **https://prometheus.io/docs/operating/security/#prometheus**

Kubernetes fingerprinting with Prometheus



https://xkcd.com/2347/

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KubeCon CloudNativeCon Europe 2022

How Attackers Use Exposed Prometheus Server to Exploit Kubernetes Clusters

Miguel Hernández & David de Torres, Sysdig