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Credential Dumping: SAM

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In this article, we will learn about SAM. We will learn about the passwords and how they are stored in the SAM. We will also focus on the NTLM Authentication. At last, we will be using a bunch of different tools to extract those credentials from SAM.

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Introduction to SAM

SAM is short for the Security Account Manager which manages all the user accounts and their passwords. It acts as a database. All the passwords are hashed and then stored SAM. It is the responsibility of LSA (Local Security Authority) to verify user login by matching the passwords with the database maintained in SAM. SAM starts running in the background as soon as the Windows boots up. SAM is found in **C:\Windows\System32\config** and passwords that are hashed and saved in SAM can found in the registry, just open the Registry Editor and navigate yourself to **HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SAM**.

How are Passwords stored in Windows?

To know how passwords are saved in windows, we will first need to understand what are LM, NTLM v1 & v2, Kerberos.

LM authentication

LAN Manager (LM) authentication was developed by IBM for Microsoft's Windows Operating Systems. The security it provides is considered hackable today. It converts your password into a hash by breaking it into two chunks of seven characters each. And then further encrypting each chunk. It is not case sensitive either, which is a huge drawback. This method coverts the whole password string into uppercase, so when the attacker is applying any attack like brute force or dictionary; they can altogether avoid the possibility of lowercase. The key it is using to encrypt is 56-bit DES which now can be easily cracked.

NTLM authentication

NTLM authentication was developed to secure the systems as LM proved to be insecure at the time. NTLM's base is a challenge-response mechanism. It uses three components – nonce (challenge), response and authentication.

When any password is stored in Windows, NTLM starts working by encrypting the password and storing the hash of the said password while it disposes of the actual password. And it further sends the username to the server, then the server creates a 16-byte random numeric string, namely nonce and sends it to the client. Now, the client will encrypt the nonce using the hash string of the password and send the result back to the server. This process is called a response. These three components (nonce, username, and response) will be sent to Domain Controller. The Domain Controller will recover the password using hash from the Security Account Manager (SAM) database. Furthermore, the domain controller will check the nonce

and response in case they match, Authentication turns out to be successful.

Working of NTLM v1 and NTML v2 is the same, although there are few differences such as NTML v1 is MD4 and v2 is MD5 and in v1 C/R Length is 56 bits + 56-bit +16 bit while v2 uses 128 bits. When it comes to C/R Algorithm v1 uses DES (ECB mode) and v2 is HMAC_MD5. and lastly, in v1 C/R Value Length 64 bit + 64 bit + 64 bit and v2 uses 128 bits.

Now as we have understood these hashing systems, let's focus on how to dump them. The methods we will focus on are best suited for both internal and external pen-testing. Let's begin!

NOTE: Microsoft changed the algorithm on Windows 10 v1607 which replaced the RC4 cipher with AES. This change made all the extraction tools that directly access SAM to dump hashes obsolete. Some of the tools have been updated and handle the new encryption method properly. But others were not able to keep up. This doesn't mean that they cannot be used anymore. This just means that if we face the latest Windows 10, we rather use update tools. Hence we divided this article into 2 parts. Windows 7 and Windows 10.

Windows 7

PwDump7

This tool is developed by Tarasco and you can download it from **here**. This tool extracts the SAM file from the system and dumps its credentials. To execute this tool just run the following command in command prompt after downloading:

```
PwDump7.exe
```

And as a result, it will dump all the hashes stored in SAM file as shown in the image above.

Now, we will save the registry values of the SAM file and system file in a file in the system by using the following commands:

```
reg save hklm\sam c:\sam
reg save hklm\system c:\system
```

We saved the values with the above command to retrieve the data from the SAM file.

SamDump2

Once you have retrieved the data from SAM, you can use SamDump2 tool to dump its hashes with the following command:

```
samdump2 system sam
```

Metasploit Framework: Invoke-Powerdump.ps1

Download Invoke-Powerdump Script

The method of Metasploit involves PowerShell. After getting the meterpreter session, access windows PowerShell by using the command **load PowerShell**. And then use the following set of commands to run the Invoke-PowerDump.ps1 script.

```
powershell_import /root/powershell/Invoke-PowerDu
powershell_execute Invoke-PowerDump
```

Once the above commands execute the script, you will have the dumped passwords just as in the image above.

Metasploit Framework: Get-PassHashes.ps1

Download Get-PassHashes Script

Again, via meterpreter, access the windows PowerShell using the command load PowerShell. And just like in the previous method, use the following commands to execute the scripts to retrieve the passwords.

```
powershell_import /root/powershell/Get-PassHashes
powershell_execute Get-PassHashes
```

And VOILA! All the passwords have been retrieved.

PowerShell

Download Invoke-Powerdump Script

This method is an excellent one for local testing, AKA internal testing. To use this method, simply type the following in the Powershell:

```
Import-Module <'path of the powerdump script'>-
Invoke-PowerDump
```

And, it will dump all the credentials for you.

NOTE: These were the tools that will only work on Windows 7. Now let's take a look at the tools that work on Windows 10. The tools that work on Windows 10 can also work on Windows 7 but not vice-versa. The tools mentioned above work only on Windows 7. Even if they run on Windows 10 and give the hash, that hash will not be accurate and will not work and/or crack.

Windows 10

Mimikatz

There is a good enough method to dump the hashes of SAM file using mimikatz. The method is pretty easy and best suited for internal penetration testing. In one of our previous article, we have covered mimikatz, read that article click **here.** So in this method, we will use **token::elevate** command. This command is responsible for allowing mimikatz to access the SAM file in order to dump hashes. Now, to use this method use the following set of commands:

```
privilege::debug
token::elevate
lsadump::sam
```

Impacket

Impacket tool can also extract all the hashes for you from the SAM file with the following command:

```
./secretsdump.py -sam /root/Desktop/sam -system /
```

Metasploit Framework: HashDump

When you have a meterpreter session of a target, just run **hashdump** command and it will dump all the hashes from SAM file of the target system. The same is shown in the image below:

Another way to dump hashes through hashdump module is through a post exploit that Metasploit offers. To use the said exploit, use the following set of commands:

```
use post/windows/gather/hashdump
set session 1
exploit
```

Metasploit Framework: credential_collector

Another way to dump credentials by using Metasploit is via another in-built post exploit. To use this exploit, simply background your session and run the following command:

```
use post/windows/gather/credential/credential_col
set session 1
exploit
```

Metasploit Framework: load kiwi

The next method that Metasploit offers are by firing up the mimikatz module. To load mimikatz, use the **load kiwi** command and then use

the following command to dump the whole SAM file using mimikatz.

```
lsa_dump_sam
```

Hence, you have your passwords as you can see in the image above.

Koadic

Once you have the session by Koadic C2, use the hashdump_sam module to get passwords as shown below:

```
use hashdump_sam
execute
```

All the hashes from the SAM file will be dumped as shown in the above image.

Powershell Empire: mimikatz/sam

Once you have the session through the empire, interact with the session and use the mimikatz/sam module to dump the credentials with help of following commands:

```
usemodule credentials/mimikatz/sam
execute
```

This exploit will run mimikatz and will get you all the passwords you desire by dumping SAM file.

LaZAgne

LaZage is an amazing tool for dumping all kinds of passwords. We have dedicatedly covered LaZagne in our previous article. To visit the said article, click **here.** Now, to dump SAM hashes with LaZagne, just use the following command:

```
lazagne.exe all
```

Yay!!! All the credentials have been dumped.

CrackMapExec

CrackMapExec is a really sleek tool that can be installed with a simple apt install and it runs very swiftly. Using CrackMapExec we can dump the hashes in the SAM very quicly and easily. It requires a bunch of things.

Requirements:

Username: Administrator

Password: Ignite@987

IP Address: 192.168.1.105

Syntax: crackmapexec smb [IP Address] -u '[Username]' -p '[Password]' –sam

```
crackmapexec smb 192.168.1.105 -u 'Administrator'
```

Read More: Lateral Moment on Active Directory: CrackMapExec

Decrypting Hash: John The Ripper

John The Ripper is an amazing hash cracking tool. We have dedicated two articles on this tool. To learn more about John The Ripper, click here – **part 1**, **part 2**. Once you have dumped all the hashes from SAM file by using any of method given above, then you just need John The Ripper tool to crack the hashes by using the following command:

```
john –format=NT hash –show
```

And as you can see, it will reveal the password by cracking the given hash.

The article focuses on dumping credentials from the windows SAM file. Various methods have been shown using multiple platforms to successfully dump the credentials. To secure yourself you first must learn how a vulnerability can be exploited and to what extent. Therefore, such knowing such methods and what they can do is important.

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April 8, 2020 at 6:21 pm

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October 12, 2020 at 9:41 pm

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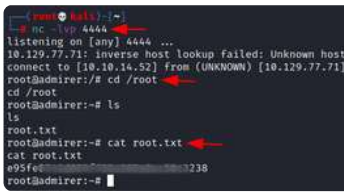

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