Title:Nmap Scanning Techniques

Objective: To understand and document various host discovery techniques using Nmap, focusing on scanning types, protocol-specific techniques, and TCP header flag usage. This document is structured for practical learning and screenshot-based step-by-step validation.

- 1. **TCP Connect Scan (Vanilla Scan)** Performs a full TCP handshake to check if a port is open.
- 2. **SYN Scan** Sends SYN packets to detect open ports without completing the TCP handshake (stealthy).
- 3. FIN Scan Sends a FIN packet to detect closed ports based on RST responses.
- 4. **Xmas Scan** Sends a TCP packet with FIN, PSH, and URG flags to identify open ports on Unix systems.
- 5. **FTP Bounce Scan** Uses an insecure FTP server to scan ports on another host, bypassing firewalls.
- 6. **Sweep Scan** Scans the same port across multiple IP addresses to find active hosts.
- 7. **Ping Scan** Sends ICMP Echo Requests to identify live hosts on a network.

TCP Header Flags (Short Scenario-Based)

- 1. **URG (Urgent)** Marks urgent data; like "yo, read this message **NOW** before anything else".
- 2. **PSH (Push)** Tells the receiver to **process data immediately** (e.g., sending chat messages).
- 3. **FIN** Gracefully **ends** a TCP connection (used in FIN scans to sneakily probe a port).
- SYN Starts a TCP connection (used in SYN scan to check if port replies with SYN-ACK).

- 5. **RST** Forcefully **resets** the connection if something is wrong (used in scan detection).
- 6. **ACK** Acknowledges receipt of data or a SYN (used in ACK scan to probe firewall behavior).

3. Host Discovery Scans

3.1 Ping Scan (-sn): Ping scan is used to discover which hosts are up in a network without performing a port scan.

Usage:To quickly identify live hosts in a given subnet or IP range without scanning their ports.

Command Format: nmap -sn <target>

Example 1: Subnet Scan: nmap -sn 192.168.1.0/24

Example 2: Specific Host Range: nmap -sn 192.168.1.10-20



Fig: Ping Scan

3.2 Ping Scan with --exclude

This scan pings all hosts in a subnet **except** the IPs you manually exclude. It helps when you know certain systems shouldn't be touched—maybe sensitive devices, monitored hosts, or production servers.

Example Scenario: Let's say your test range is 192.168.1.0/24, but .5 and .10 are production boxes with alerts set up. You can exclude them using --exclude to avoid triggering alarms or issues



Fig: Ping Scan (--Exclude)

3.3 Ping Scan using List of IPs with -iL

Command: nmap -sn -iL iplist.txt

Used For: Scans hosts listed in a file (one IP per line) for live status. Helpful when dealing with custom host inventories.



Fig: Ping Scan with list

3.4 Ping Scan using No Ping (-Pn)

This disables host discovery and treats all hosts as online, useful when ping is blocked by firewalls or ICMP is disabled.

Command: nmap -Pn <target>

Fig: No Ping Scan

3.5 Ping Scan using Specific Probe Types (-PS, -PA, -PU, -PY, -PR)

To perform host discovery using different protocol-specific probes. Useful for evading firewalls and detecting hosts in different network configurations.

Example:

nmap -PS80,443 192.168.1.0/24

nmap -PA80,443 192.168.1.0/24

nmap -PU53 192.168.1.0/24

nmap -PY 631 192.168.1.0/24

nmap -PR 192.168.1.0/24

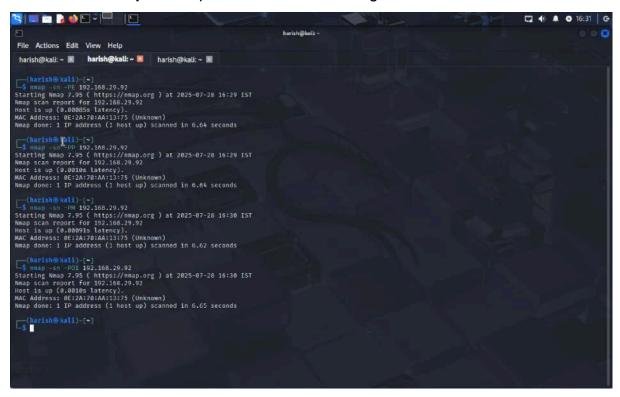


Fig: Portlist Scans

3.6 ICMP-Based Ping Scan using PE, PP, PM, PO

Performs host discovery using various ICMP types: Echo Request (-PE), Timestamp Request (-PP), Netmask Request (-PM), and all other types (-P0) for comprehensive ICMP-based discovery.

Command Example: nmap -PE -PP -PM -PO <target>



3.7 Ping Scan using -n / -R

Command: nmap -sn -n 192.168.1.0/24

Purpose:

- -n disables reverse DNS resolution for faster scanning.
- -R forces reverse DNS resolution to identify hostnames (slower, but useful when you need names).

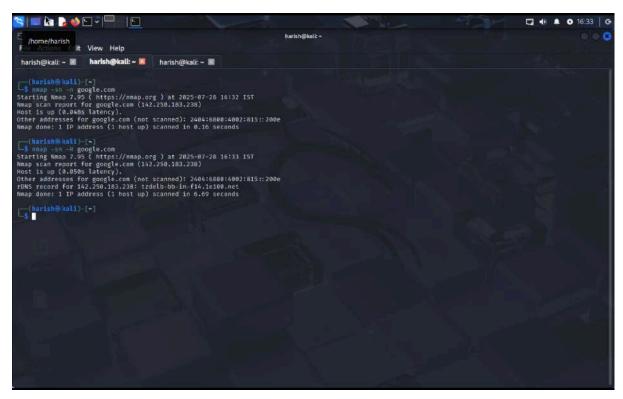


Fig: Ping Scan -n/-R

3.8 Ping Scan using --traceroute

- Symbol: --traceroute
- **Command**: nmap -sn --traceroute 192.168.1.0/24
- **Purpose**: Traces the network path to the target host(s) along with host discovery.
- Use Case: Understand network routing, hops, and delays during scan.

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Fig: --traceroute Scan

- open A service is actively accepting connections on that port.
- closed No service is listening; the port is reachable but not in use.
- filtered Nmap can't tell if the port is open or closed because a firewall or filter blocks the probes.
- unfiltered The port is reachable, but Nmap can't determine whether it's open or closed (rare case).

- open|filtered Nmap can't determine if the port is open or filtered; happens in UDP or stealth scans.
- closed|filtered Nmap can't tell whether the port is closed or filtered; very rare.

4. Scanning Techniques

4.1 TCP Connect Scan

TCP Connect Scan is a basic port scan method that completes the full 3-way TCP handshake to determine if a port is open. It is easily detectable but works on all systems since it uses the OS's connect() system call.

Command: nmap -sT <IP>or<domain>

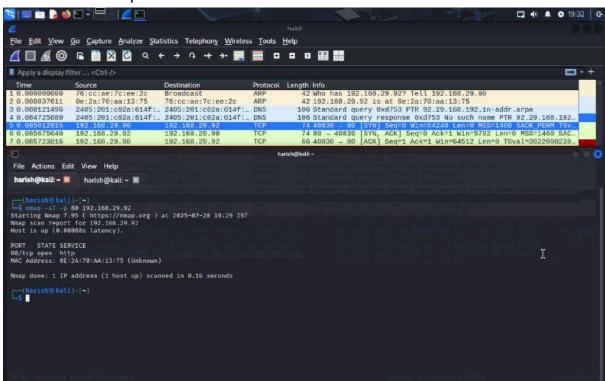


Fig: TCP connect Scan

Note: Use Tcp connect scan when we have root or admin privileges and easily Detectable by the firewall

WorkFlow:

- 1. Client Send SYN packet → server
- 2. Server Send SYN ACK packet —-> client
- 3. Client Send ACK packet —----> server

A reliable connection gets establish to communicate safe to send data without any error or accurate data transfer

4.2 SYN Scan (Half-Open Scan):

Sends SYN \rightarrow receives SYN-ACK from open ports \rightarrow immediately sends RST to avoid completing handshake.

works: Sends SYN \rightarrow receives SYN-ACK from open ports \rightarrow immediately sends RST to avoid completing handshake

Command: nmap -sS IP

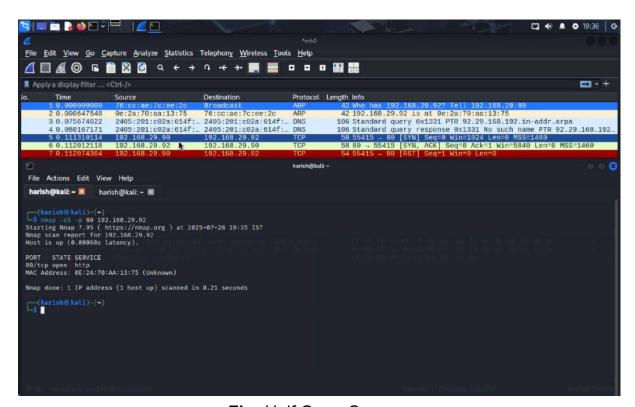


Fig: Half Open-Scan

Fast and stealthy since it avoids full TCP connection.

4.3 UDP Scan:

UDP Scan: Used to identify open UDP ports by sending empty UDP packets and analyzing responses or lack thereof.

Works:

- Sends empty UDP packet to target ports.
- If ICMP port unreachable received → port is closed.
- If no response → port is open or filtered.
- Slower and harder to interpret due to no handshake and rate-limiting ICMP.

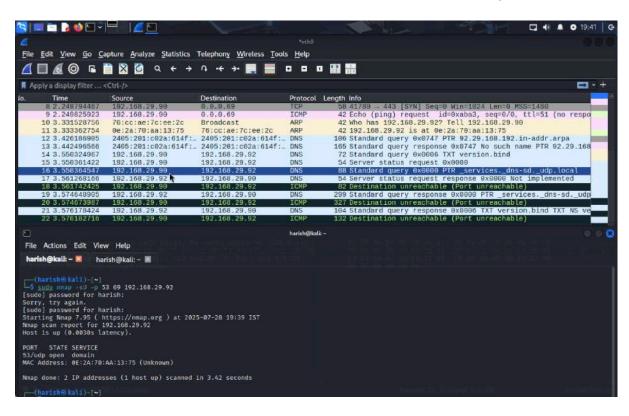


Fig: UDP Scan

4.4 TCP ACK Scan

TCP ACK Scan is used to map firewall rulesets by determining whether ports are filtered or unfiltered. It sends ACK packets and observes the response.

Command:nmap -sA <target>

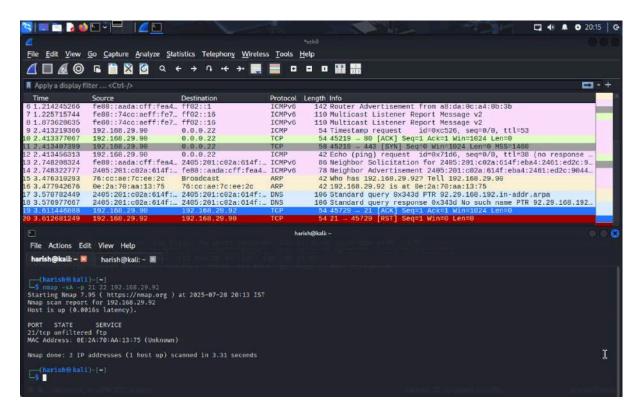


Fig: TCP ACK SCAN

Work:

Sends ACK packets to check if ports are **filtered or unfiltered**. No handshake happens.

- RST = unfiltered.
- No reply/ICMP = filtered

4.5 XMAS Scan (-sX)

Sends TCP packet with FIN, PSH, URG flags lit — looks like a "lit-up" packet . Only works reliably on Unix/Linux systems.

Workflow:

- No response = Open|Filtered
- RST = Closed
- ICMP Unreachable = Filtered

Command: nmap -sX <target>

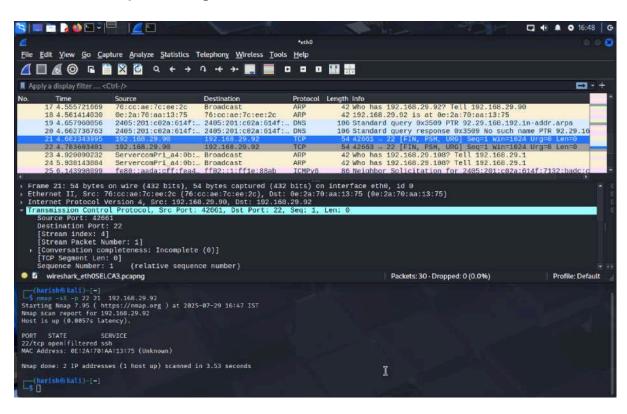


Fig: Xmass scan

4.6 TCP Null Scan : Sends TCP packets with no flags set to bypass firewalls and detect open ports.

works: Closed ports reply with RST; open ports give no response.

Command: nmap -sN <target>

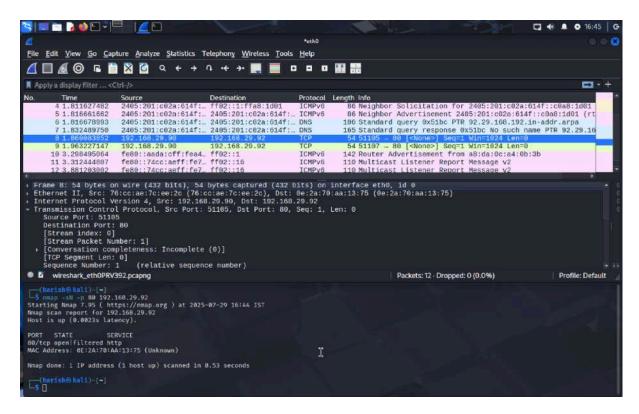


Fig: Null Scan

Detects services and versions running on open ports.

Command: nmap -sV <IP>

works: Sends probes to open ports and analyzes responses to determine the exact service and version.

Fig: Finding the version of the services

Detects the operating system of a host.

Command: nmap -O 192.168.1.1

works: Analyzes TCP/IP stack responses to different packets and matches them with known OS fingerprints. Used to identify target systems for exploit

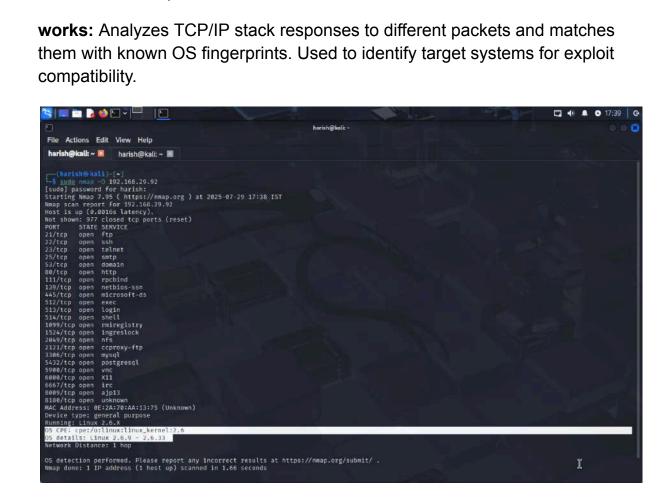


Fig: Operating System detection

5. Firewall Evasion Techniques

5.1 Decoy Scan -D and -D RND:

The -D option in Nmap is used to perform **decoy scanning**, a technique to **obfuscate the source of the scan**. It works by adding **decoy IP addresses** along with your real IP so that the target system sees multiple sources, making it harder to determine the actual attacker.

- Usage: nmap -D 192.168.1.2,192.168.1.3,ME 192.168.1.1
- RND: nmap -D RND:10 192.168.1.1 This sends probes from 10 randomly spoofed IPs along with your own. It looks like IP spoofing but isn't true spoofing; it just adds confusion for IDS/firewalls.

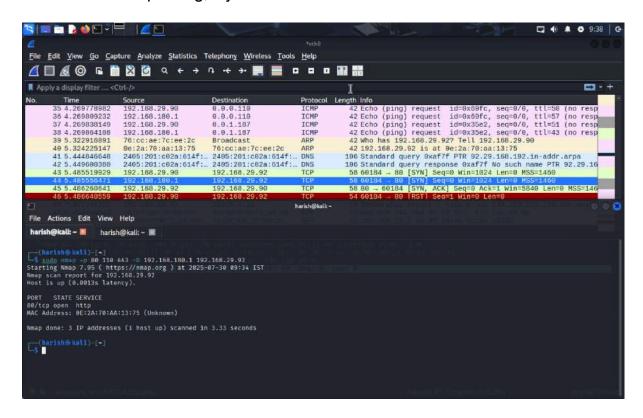


Fig:Decoy Scan (-D)

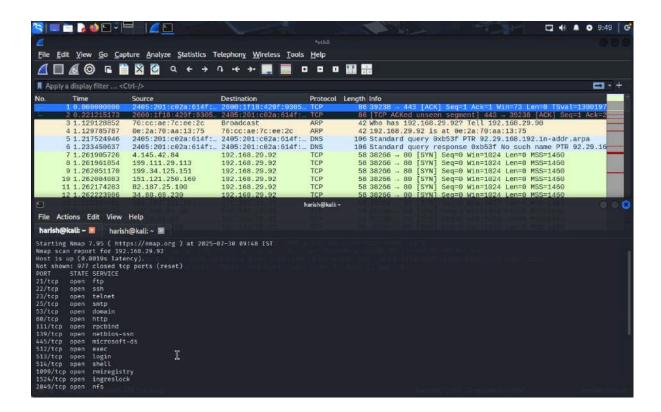


Fig:Decoy Scan Random ip's

5.2 SA Firewall Detection Scan

A TCP ACK scan (-sA) used to determine firewall rulesets and whether a port is filtered.

Workflow: Sends TCP ACK packets to target ports:

- If there is **no response** or an ICMP unreachable error, the port is **filtered**.
- If a RST (reset) is received, the port is unfiltered (not necessarily open).

Useful to map out firewall rule behavior without checking open/closed port status.

Command: nmap -sA <IP>

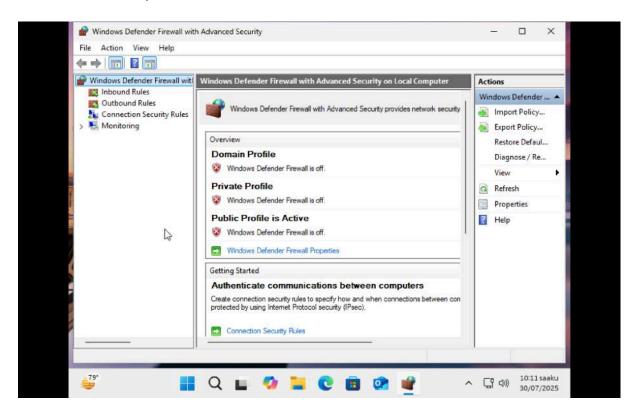


Fig 1: Target with no firewall

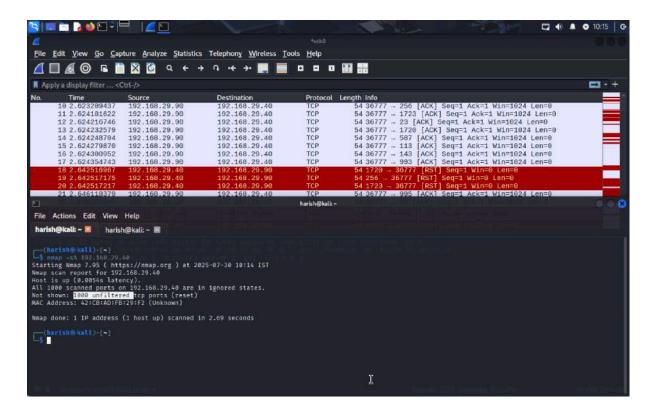


Fig 2: Ack undetected (no firewall)

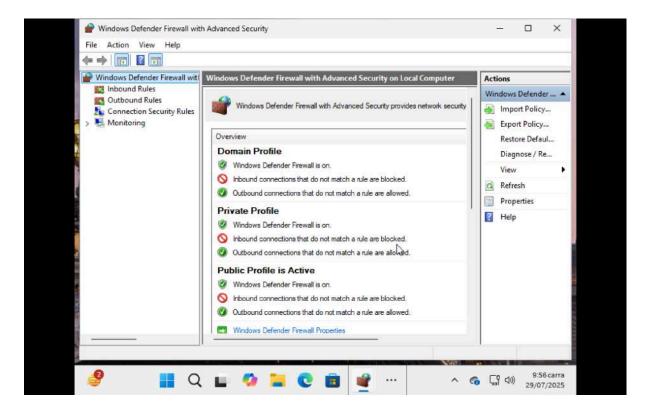


Fig 3: Target with firewall

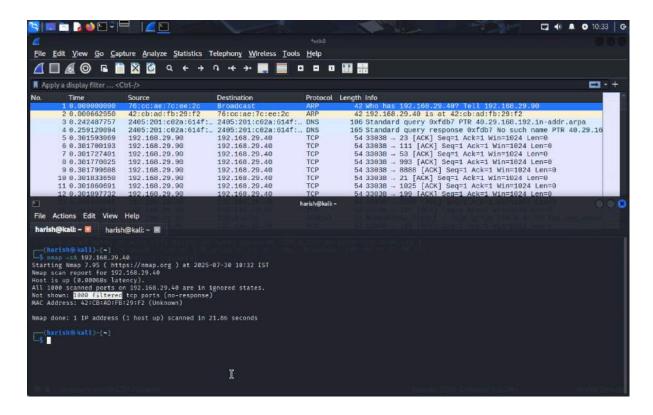


Fig 4: Ack Detected (firewall)

5.3 Using -g Option (Spoof Source Port)

- The -g option in Nmap allows you to set a specific source port for your scan packets.
- Some firewalls and IDS allow packets from certain ports (like port 53 for DNS). Spoofing the source port may help bypass such filters.
- Example: nmap -sS -g 53 192.168.1.10
- **Scenario**: Use when you suspect the firewall allows traffic only from certain service ports like DNS (53), HTTP (80), etc.

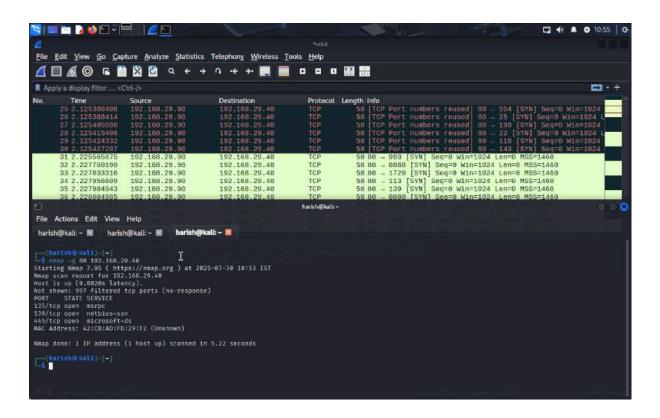


Fig:using same client port

5.4 Timing Scan (-T0 to -T5)

Timing templates in Nmap control how aggressive or stealthy your scan is. Useful for evading detection or speeding up scans.

- T0 Paranoid (very slow, IDS evasion)
- -T1 Sneaky
- T2 − Polite
- -T3 Normal (default)
- -T4 Aggressive (fast, can trigger detection)
- -T5 Insane (maximum speed, high detection risk)
- Example: nmap -sS -T2 192.168.1.1

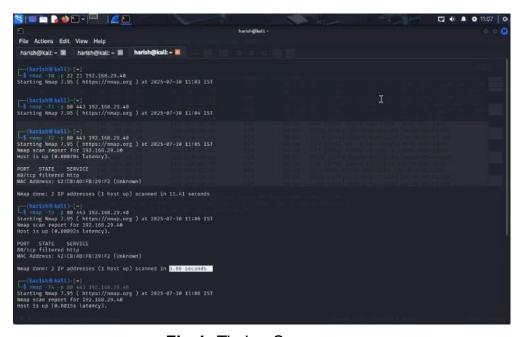
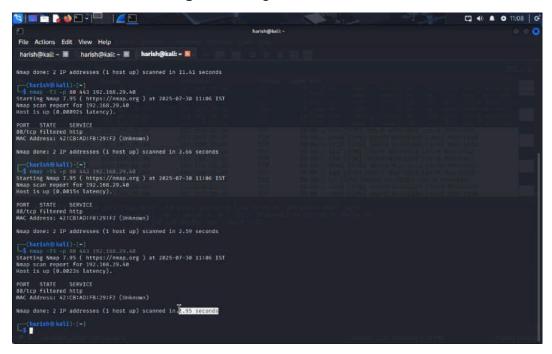


Fig 1: Timing Scans

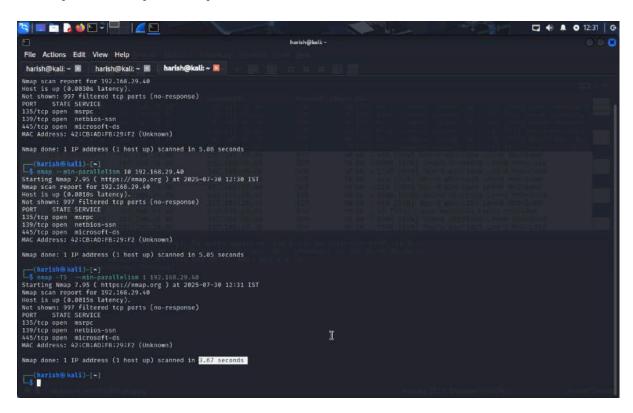


5.5 Min-Parallelism Scan

The --min-parallelism option sets the minimum number of probes that Nmap will try to send in parallel.

Use case: Useful to increase scan speed and performance tuning when scanning large networks or when dealing with rate-limited environments.

Example: nmap --min-parallelism 50 <IP>



6. Scripting and Banner Grabbing Scans

6.1 Scripting ftp Scan

Uses Nmap Scripting Engine (NSE) to run custom scripts for vulnerability detection, brute force, and more.

Command: nmap -p 21 --script=ftpanon.nse <IP>

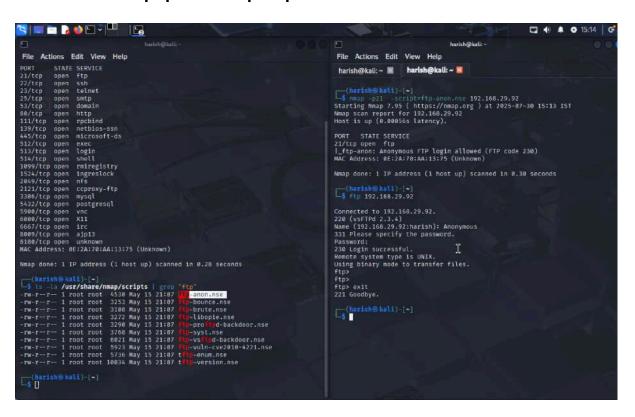


Fig: ftp-anon scan to anonymous login

6.2 SSH Scripting Scan (NSE-based)

SSH scripting scans use Nmap's NSE (Nmap Scripting Engine) to run scripts that probe for specific details or vulnerabilities related to SSH services.

Fig: SSH2-algorithm Scan

6.3 Banner Grabbing

Banner grabbing is a technique used to capture the initial response or header info that a service gives when you connect to its port — this often reveals:

- The service type
- Software version
- OS details
- Sometimes even misconfigurations or warnings



Fig: Banner Grabing Scan

6.4 HTTP Enumeration Script Scan

Goal: Discover hidden web directories, applications, technologies, and potential attack surfaces exposed via HTTP.

Script Used: http-enum

Command: nmap -sV -p 80,443 --script=http-enum <target-ip>

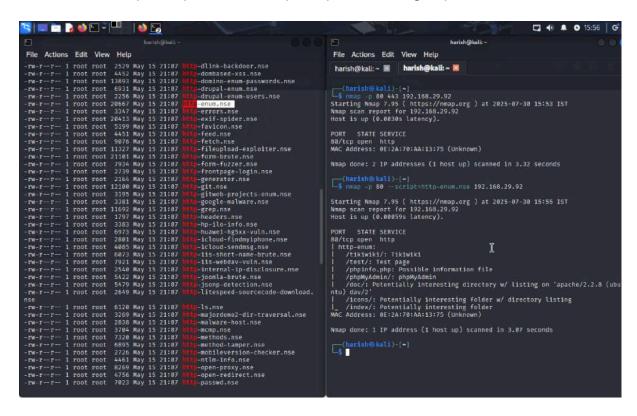
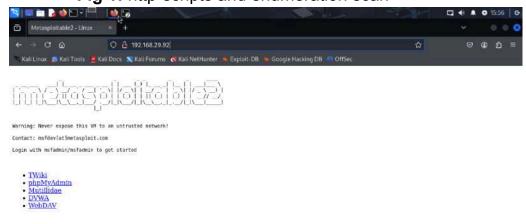


Fig 1: http-scripts and enumeration scan



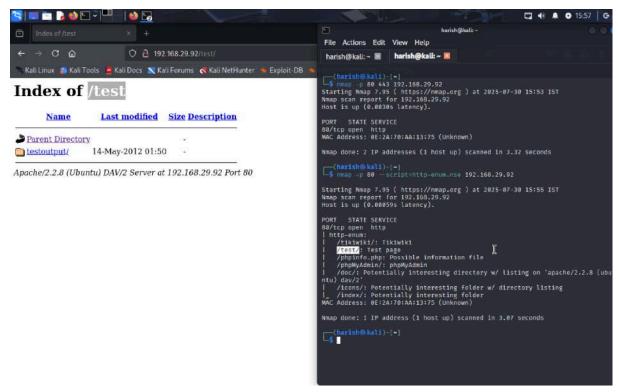


Fig 2: find hidden directories

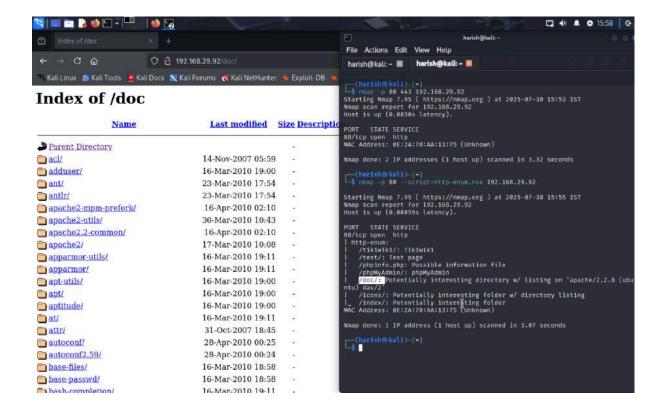


Fig 3: more sub directories

6.4 SQL Script Scan

- Command: nmap -p 3306 --script=mysql* <target>
- Use: Detects MySQL service details, user accounts, and potential misconfigs

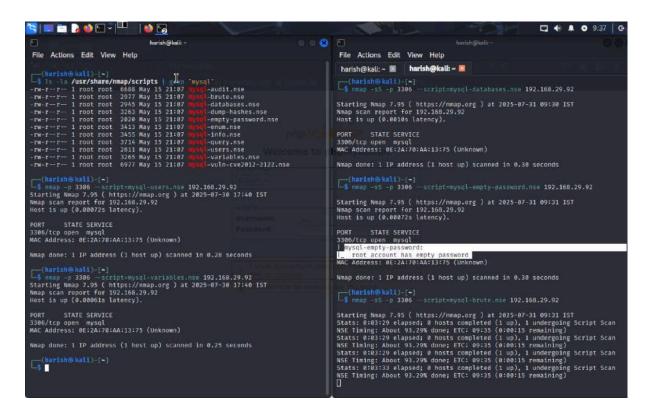


Fig: Sql Scripts and Scans

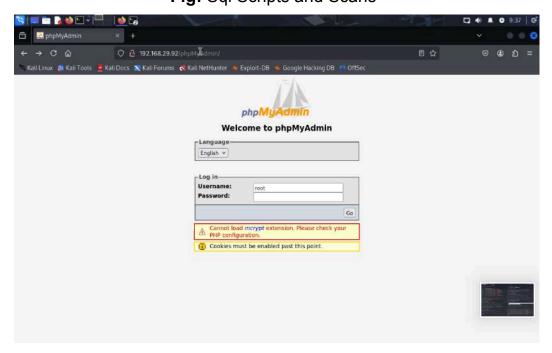


Fig: Database

5 FTP Service and Exploitation Scan

Scans for FTP services and outdated versions

Command: nmap -p 21 -sV 192.168.29.92

Goal: Identify insecure FTP configurations and exploitation vectors.



Fig: ftp version detection

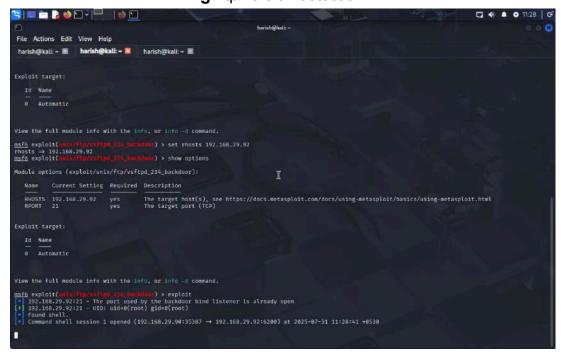


Fig: exploiting the outdated version

6.6 vulners.nse Script Scan

vulners.nse is an Nmap script that integrates with the Vulners vulnerability database to identify known vulnerabilities (CVE IDs) associated with services running on target machines.

It helps in identifying publicly known vulnerabilities in services based on version detection and fingerprinting. This is useful for vulnerability assessment and reporting.

Command:

nmap -sV --script vulners <target>

Example:

nmap -sV --script vulners 192.168.1.10

Workflow:

- Performs service version detection (-sV).
- Queries the Vulners database through the script.
- Lists possible vulnerabilities (CVE IDs, severity, and exploit links).

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Fig: Advance Vulnerability Scan

Conclusion

All Nmap scans were executed in a controlled lab environment using Metasploitable2 as the target. The objective was to practically understand various Nmap scanning techniques, including host discovery, service detection, OS fingerprinting, and firewall evasion strategies. Each scan was performed with a specific purpose — whether to identify open ports, bypass filters, or analyze service behavior. These scans help demonstrate how to choose the right technique based on the situation, such as evading firewalls, performing stealth scans, or collecting banner/service information for exploitation.