Projects

- Some kind of research project in security
- Best in a group of two
  - If you can’t find a partner I’ll be willing to consider single person projects; but I prefer if this is the exception
- Form groups in the next week (Apr 8th)
  - Send me mail by next Thurs identifying who is in your group
- Initial project proposals due Apr 15th
  - One page
  - What you plan to do, Why is it interesting, How you’ll do it, What you’re not sure about (or what resources you need)
- Ultimately 6 pages and short talk (10-15mins)
- Hope: some sufficiently interesting to be real paper
Generally speaking

- Most projects will fall into the category of:
  - Analysis: evaluate the security of a system of interest
  - Attack: identify some new attack/vulnerability, develop/test it and discuss the possible ramifications, mitigations, etc
  - Measurement: measure some aspect of adversarial behavior (real or potential), characterize it, explore its limits, etc
  - Design: design and/or build a new system that addresses a problem in a new way
Things to thing about…

- Pick good problems
  - Why is this problem interesting or will become interesting?
  - Look at what others are doing:
    » Non-academic conferences: BlackHat, Defcon, HITB, ShmooCon, various blogs

- Pick problems that are achievable
  - What resources would you need to investigate the problem?

- Think about how to evaluate your work
Random ideas

- On web site under project ideas
Resources

- Servers
- Lots of SPAM (1M/day?), lots of related data (DNS data, rendered web pages, etc)
- Lots of malware samples, lots of twitter
- DDoS data, traffic traces, netflow data, university power monitors
- Lots of 802.11 gear (192 radios throughout the building), directional antennas, oscilloscopes and logic probes
- Big chunks of Internet address space
- Fingerprinting supplies,
- Good DSLR, pro-am HDTV camera, telescope
- Lots of low-level stuff in the embedded lab
- Legal clearance for various kinds of purchasing activity

- Ask if you’re serious and you need something
Questions about project?
What’s a software vulnerability?

- A bug in a software program that allows an unprivileged user capabilities that should be denied to them

- Worst kind?
  - Control hijacking
    - Divert control flow (in instruction stream)
    - Divert to “payload” that executes code of adversary’s choosing
Today’s papers

- Meta-data
  - Who are authors? Background/agenda?
  - Venue? Who is reader?

- Kind of paper?
  - What is purpose?
  - What is value being offered?
Stack overflows

- Robert T. Morris worm, 1988 (note: not control data)

- Cannon
  - AlephOne “Hacking the Stack for Fun and Profit”, Phrack 49, 1996
  - Dildog, “The Tao of Windows Buffer Overruns”, Cult of The Dead Cow cDC-351, 1998
  - Overwrite control data on stack to execute arbitrary instructions from input
Recap: Stack activations for C

- Parameters
- Return Address
- Frame Pointer
- Locals
- Callee-save regs

Stack Grown Down

Frame N-1

Frame N
Example

```c
f() {
    g(parameter);
}

g(char *string) {
    char buf[16];
    strcpy(buf,string);
}
```
What this looks like
(Windows x86 cdecl call)

Prolog

push ebp    // save old frame pointer
mov ebp,esp // Set current frame pointer
sub esp,10h // reserve 16 bytes for buf
push ebx    //callee saves
push esi
push edi

... do stuff

Epilog

pop edi // restore callee saves
pop esi
pop ebx
mov esp,ebp // unroll stack
pop ebp //restore old frame pointer
ret 3 // pop eip and jmp to it

Caveat: no opt, no /GZ, no /GS
Quintessential stack overflow

- Basic problem is that the library routines look like this:

  ```c
  void strcopy(char *src, char *dst) {
    int i = 0;
    while (src[i] != "\0") {
      dst[i] = src[i];
      i = i + 1;
    }
  }
  ```

- If the memory allocated to dst is smaller than the memory needed to store the contents of src, a buffer overflow occurs.

- Particularly problematic with C’s idiom of using local temporary buffers – allows “stack smashing” attack.
Stack smashing in action

```c
f() {
    g(badstring);
}
```

```
g(char *string) {
    char buf[16];
    strcpy(buf,string);
}
```

Evil shellcode address

Shellcode

16 bytes

April 5, 2010
Aside: why is it called shellcode?

```
xor    eax, eax
push   eax
push   0x68732f6e
push   0x69622f2f
mov    ebx, esp
push   eax
push   eax
push   ebx
mov    al, 59
push   eax
int  80h
```

```
char shellcode[] = 
   "\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x6e\x2f\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x2f\x62"
   "\x69\x89\xe3\x50\x50\x53\x50\xb0\x3b\xcd\x80";
```

```
//bin/sh
```

Shellcode courtesy Foster, Osipov, Bhalla and Heinen
Vulnerabilities, threats and hindsight

- Just a bug or exploitable vulnerability?
- Lots of hot air expended on this topic
  - “Yes, you found a bug, but it’s not exploitable”
  - “This class of bugs is very hard to exploit”
  - “While the DoS threat is significant, this vulnerability can’t be used for code injection”
- Historically these distinctions have changed with experience
  - Case in point: the off-by-one stack overflow
  - Historically, not considered a major control hijacking threat
  - Today, considered easy
Off-by-one example

```c
main() {
    f();
}

f() {
    g(input);
}

g(char *input) {
    char buf[16];
    int i;
    for (i=0; i<=16; i++)
        buf[i] = input[i];
}
```

When `f` returns control hijacked

Can overflow buffer by 1 byte!
```c
void *ConcatBytes(void *buf1, unsigned int len1,
                   char *buf2, unsigned int len2)
{
    void *buf = malloc(len1 + len2);
    if (buf == NULL) return;

    memcpy(buf, buf1, len1);
    memcpy(buf + len1, buf2, len2);
}
```

What if:
len1 == 0xFFFFFFFFE
len2 == 0x000000102

0x100 bytes allocated... not enough. Ooops.
Aside: vulnerability research is “trendy”

- Example
  - Integer overflow reports from National Vulnerability Database
  - Zalewski identifies Integer overflow in OpenSSH in March of 2001
    - One more found 4 months later (tcpdump)

- Common pattern
  - Once new “class” of vulnerability is identified, then it gets found everywhere

XP SP2 impact
Attacks and Defenses

- What are the essential elements of control flow hijacking?

- What could you do to defend against or mitigate it?

- What could you do to go around those things?
Kinds of defenses

- Eliminate violation of runtime model
  - Better languages, code analysis, runtime monitors (CFI)
- Don’t allow bad input
  - Input validation
- Detect overflow/overwrite of data structures
  - Stack validation
  - Run-time bounds checking, pointer validation, etc
- Don’t allow untrusted code to execute
  - Hardware protection, code signing
- Minimize invariants for making repeatable exploits
  - ASLR, code randomization, encrypted pointers
- Minimize impact of untrusted code running (sandboxing)
Other kinds of low-level software attacks

» Return-to-libc
  ■ Chained function calling
  ■ Return-oriented programming

» Don’t know buf’s address
  ■ Trampolining (don’t know buff’s address)
  ■ NOP sleds

» Other kinds of overwrites
  ■ Function pointer clobbering
  ■ Data pointer overwrite (4 byte with/that)
  ■ Vtables, exception handlers
  ■ Format string
  ■ Heap overflow, heap spray
  ■ Type conversions

» Multi-stage attacks
This is just the surface...

- If you’re into this stuff,
  - Read Kotler’s “Advanced Buffer Overflow Methods” for more shellcode hacks
    » E.g. using program literals as serendipitous instructions; jumping into middle of instructions, etc
  - Read Dowd et al’s “Art of Software Security Assessment” for more nasty C/C++ issues (they also update a blog with new ones)
More stuff you could be reading...

- The important vulnerability research literature is generally not from academia

- To keep up to date
  - Dave Aitel (Daily Dave mailing list)
  - H.D. Moore (browserfun.blogspot.com & metasploit)
  - Halvar Flake (ADD/XOR/ROL)
  - Matasano blog (general)
  - Blackhat Briefings talks and some of the other cons
For next time...

- Look at two kinds of defense papers
  - Nozzle – system for detecting heap spraying attacks
  - XFI – low-level control flow isolation
Misc other random vulnerabilities
Generic heap overflow

- Key idea: heap data structures hold both data and metadata (where allocated chunks are)
- The metadata holds pointers
  - Linked lists typically (allocated chunks vs free list)
- Heap impl writes **through** those pointers

- If you overwrite heap data into pointers you can control both the address and value

April 5, 2010
**Typical problem (simplified)**

- Each allocated memory chunk has a header
  - prev (ptr)
  - next (ptr)
  - Data

- Used to track allocated/free memory
- Removing a block (a) from a list
  
  ```c
  a.prev->next = a.next;
  a.next->prev = a.prev;
  ```

- What if you overwrite data block?
- Write arbitrary data to arbitrary location
Bitfields

- C/C++ allow bit-level data types
  ```
  struct {
    unsigned int a:8 (8 bits)
  } b;
  ```
  - Typically used to map onto bit-level file/stream formats
  - Vagueness in the standard leads to problems

- Truncation
  - Not clear how to handle bitfield as an rvalue (c = b.a)
    » Gcc model: use length of type (i.e., int = 32 bits)
    » MSVC model: use length of bitfield (i.e. 8 bits)

- Sign conversion
  - What is type of b.a?
  - Not defined by standard, but many implementations implement it as a signed number!

- Bottom line: trivial to get this wrong
delete and delete[]

- Arrays of objects allocated/deallocated with new[] and delete[] in C++; not new and delete
- Incorrect code:
  ```cpp
  int main(void) {
      basebob *ba = (basebob *) new bob[4];
      dostuff(ba);
      delete ba;
  }
  ```
- Minor issue: only destructor for ba[0] is called
- Bigger problem: different heap representation

![Diagram showing malloc chunk header and count]

April 5, 2010

Courtesy Mark Dowd,
More unintuitive interactions

BOOL DoStuff() {
    char pPwd[64];
    size_t cchPwd = sizeof(pPwd) / sizeof(pPwd[0]);
    BOOL fOK = false;
    if (GetPassword(pPwd, &cchPwd))
        fOK = DoSecretStuff(pPwd, cchPwd);
    memset(pPwd, 0, sizeof(pPwd));
    return fOK;
}

When DoStuff() returns can you still find the password on the stack? Yes, compiler optimizes call to memset away…
More unintuitive interactions

BOOL DoStuff() {
    char pPwd[64];
    size_t cchPwd = sizeof(pPwd) / sizeof(pPwd[0]);
    BOOL fOK = false;
    if (GetPassword(pPwd, &cchPwd))
        fOK = DoSecretStuff(pPwd, cchPwd);
    memset(pPwd, 0, sizeof(pPwd));
    *(volatile char*)pPwd = *(volatile char *)pPwd;
    return fOK;
}

Prevent optimization. Volatile tells compiler ptr can be changed/accessed outside program scope

Courtesy Mike Howard