

Black-box analysis of malware



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Black-box analysis of malware – Outline

- Lecture
 - Malware
 - Black-box principle
 - Tools
 - Automatic sandbox analysis
- Hands-on lab
 - Analysis of provided malware samples

Malware

Malware definition

“Malware, short for malicious software, is an umbrella term used to refer to a variety of forms of hostile or intrusive software, including computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, ransomware, spyware, adware, scareware, and other intentionally harmful programs. It can take the form of executable code, scripts, active content, and other software. Malware is defined by its **malicious intent, acting against the requirements of the computer user** — and so does not include software that causes unintentional harm due to some deficiency.”

Malware types

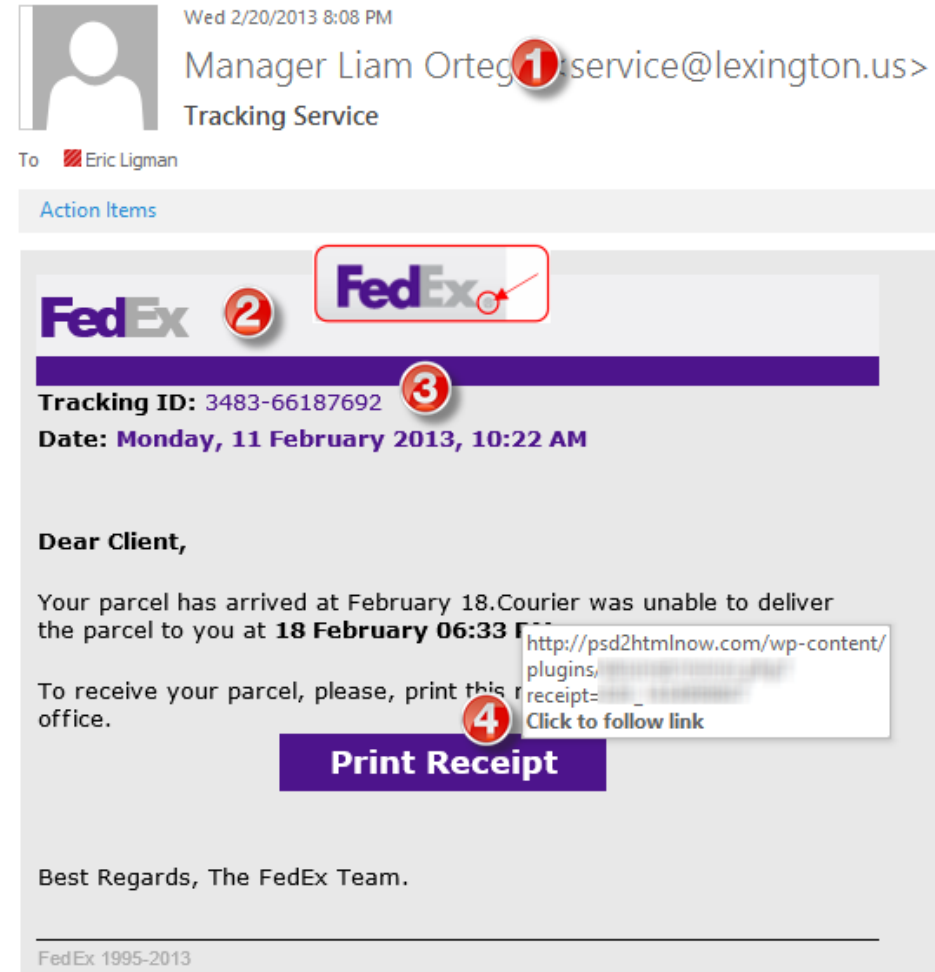
- Trojan
- Fake AV
- Backdoor
- Remote Access Tool (RAT)
- Dropper
- Downloader
- Information stealer
- Keylogger
- Ransomware
- Coinminer
- Sniffer
- Virus
- Worm
- Spyware
- Adware
- Botnet

Malware infection vectors

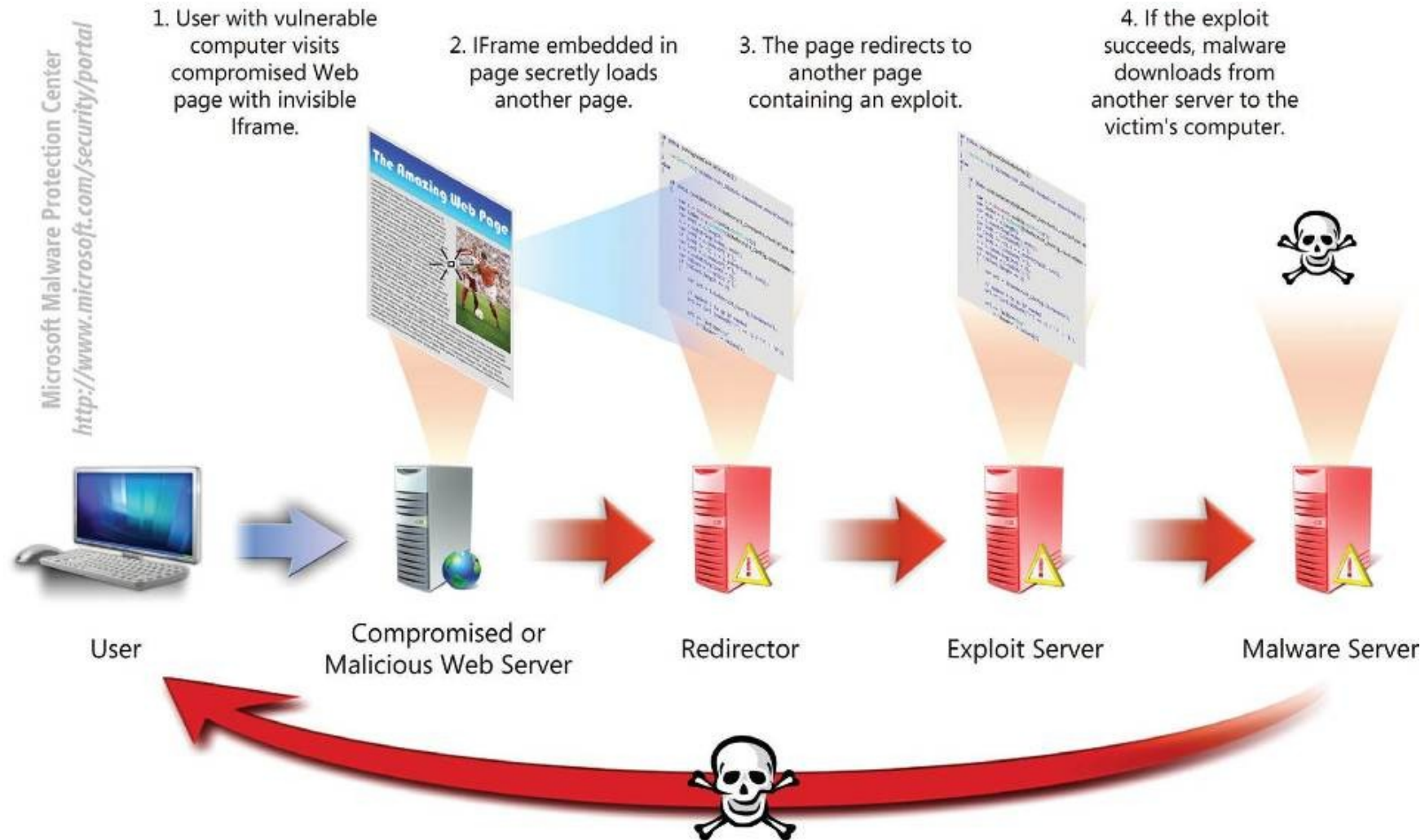
- Email
 - Link
 - Attachment
 - Link + document download
- Malicious website
 - Drive-by download
- USB
- Cracked software
- Worms

Infection vector – Phishing

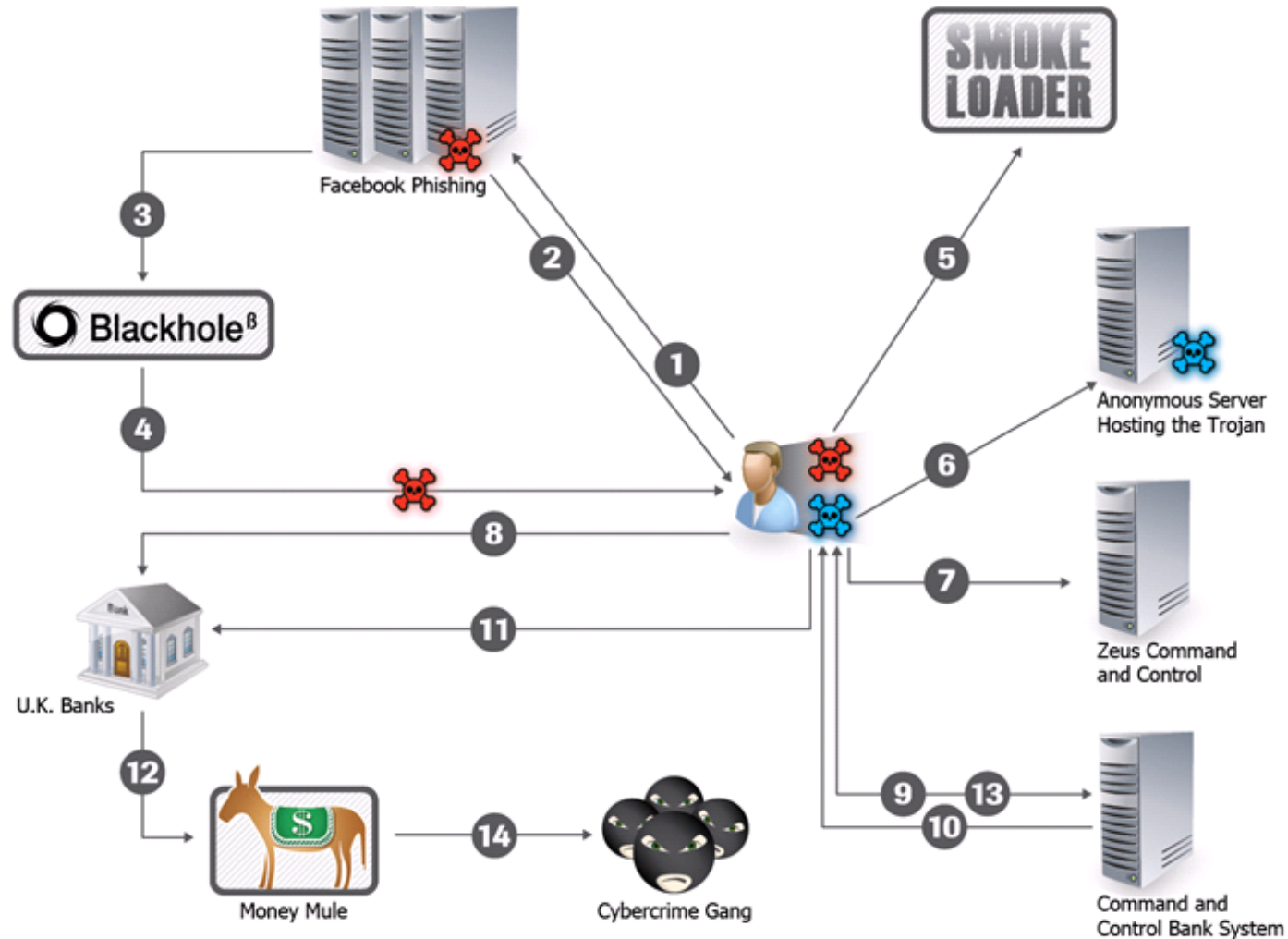
- Subject
 - “Account blocked”
 - “Package to be delivered”
 - “Expiring subscription”
 - “Invoice” / “Receipt” / “Parchment”
- Signs
 - Unexpected sender address (1)
 - Graphic errors (2)
 - Erroneous info (3)
 - Links to unexpected URL (4)
 - Links to same URL
 - Generic salutation
 - Use of threats, sense of urgency



Infection vector – Drive-by download



Example – Zeus infection



Malware Kill Chain + Defense in Depth

Phase	Detect	Deny	Disrupt	Degrade	Deceive	Destroy
Reconnaissance	Web analytics	Firewall ACL				
Weaponization	NIDS	NIPS				
Delivery	Vigilant user	Proxy filter	In-line AV	Queuing		
Exploitation	HIDS	Patch	DEP			
Installation	HIDS	“chroot” jail	AV			
C2	NIDS	Firewall ACL	NIPS	Tarpit	DNS redirect	
Actions on Objectives	Audit log			Quality of Service	Honeypot	

Black box malware analysis

Motivation – Ask the right questions

- What is the **scope of compromise**? What are 2nd stage callbacks?
- Communication between local file server and an unknown IP address in China has been observed. **What** process is responsible for the communication?
- Malware is creating temporary files. **Where** are these files located?
- Malware executable is created again after system reboot. **How** is it possible and what is causing it?
- A new type of malware has been spreading through internal network. How to quickly **assess the malware** capabilities? What is its purpose? Is it based on any well-known tool?

Black box malware analysis

- Dynamic analysis – file is executed
- Analysis without internal knowledge
 - Observable inputs
 - Observable outputs
- Quick, simple
- Common monitoring tools
- Collected indicators about
 - Filenames, process names, process parent/child relationships, temporal relationships, domain names, IP addresses, registry keys, persistence methods, cleanup operations etc.
- Can be highly automated

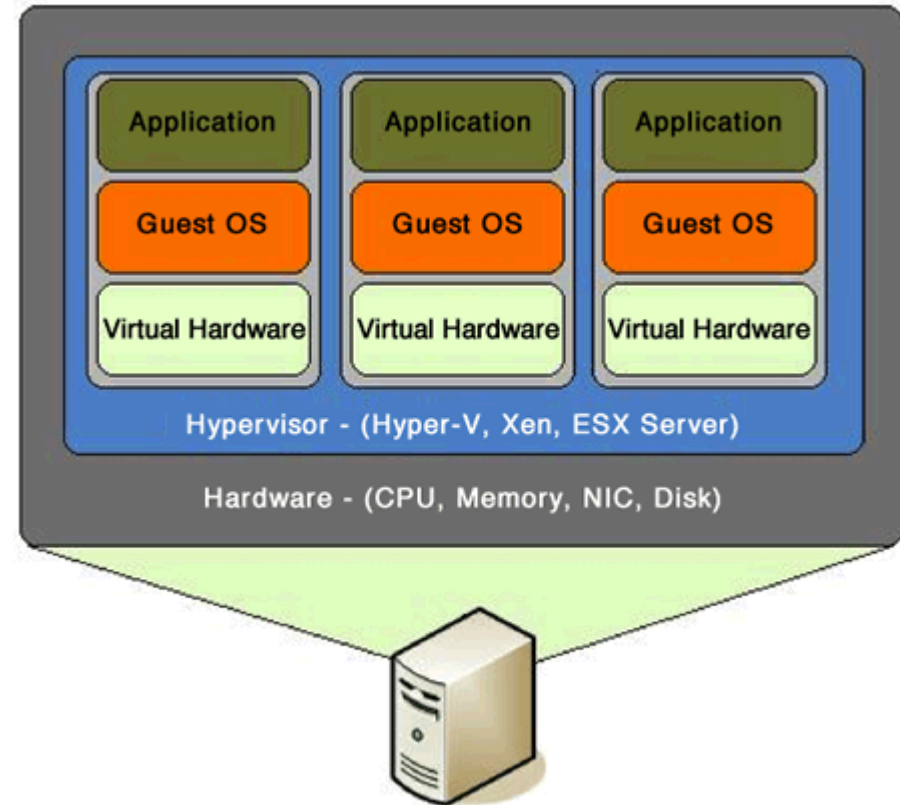


Black box malware analysis – Principle

1. Prepare analysis environment
2. Create snapshot
3. Run monitoring tools
4. Run malware
5. Collect and observe interactions between malware and VM
6. Restore snapshot
7. Repeat 3-6 as needed

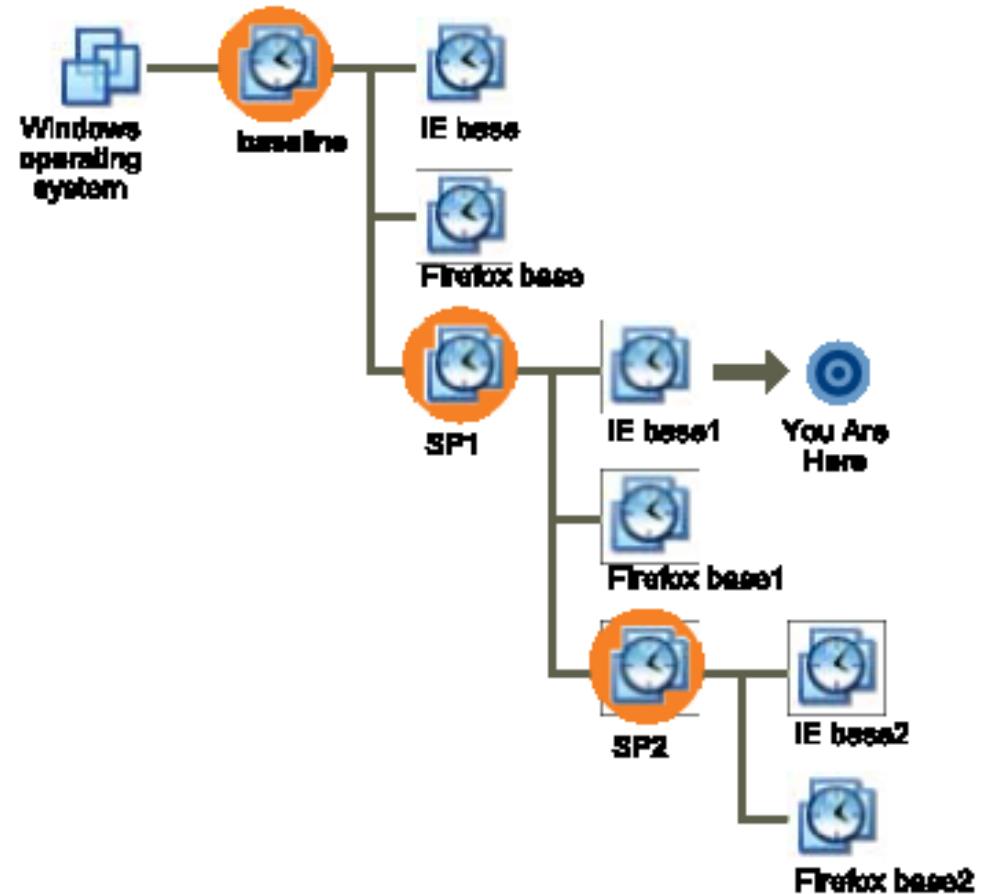
Analysis environment

- Virtual Machine
 - Limited/no connectivity
 - Virtualized services (DNS, HTTP,...)
 - Several VMs for various host types
- Software
 - Monitoring tools
 - Often exploited applications
- Risks
 - VM isolation breach
 - Malware inactivity in VM



Virtual machine snapshot

- Snapshots
 - Saved state of VM
 - Disk state, memory state
- Quick restoration of previous state



Tools

Network analysis

- Capturing **sent/received packets**
- Protocol dissection
- Promiscuous mode
- Tools
 - Tcpdump, Wireshark, NetworkMiner
- Indicators
 - Domain names, IP addresses, protocols, ports, HTTP parameters
- Q&A
 - Who is this program communicating with? What reputation does the partner have? What data is exchanged? Is it encrypted or obfuscated?

Network analysis – What to look for

- New established connections – HTTP 80/8080
 - Direct calls for domains without DNS lookup
 - Random domain names (e.g., rpxiodffd.biz)
 - Suspicious domain names (e.g., google.org)
 - Similarly looking domain names (e.g., osinstall.biz, swinstall.biz, swinstall.com)
- Outgoing portscans
- Ping/DNS request for well known services
 - Connection availability test
- Be aware of background OS/processes activities!

Example – Wireshark

The screenshot displays the Wireshark interface for a capture file named 'test.cap'. The main packet list pane shows the following data:

No.	Time	Source	Destination	Protocol	Length	Info
1	0.000000	192.168.0.2	Broadcast	ARP	42	Gratuitous ARP for 192.168.0.2 (F
2	0.299139	192.168.0.1	192.168.0.2	NBNS	92	Name query NBSTAT *<00><00><00><0
3	0.299214	192.168.0.2	192.168.0.1	ICMP	70	Destination unreachable (Port un
4	1.025659	192.168.0.2	224.0.0.22	IGMP	54	v3 Membership Report / Join group
5	1.044366	192.168.0.2	192.168.0.1	DNS	110	standard query SRV _ldap._tcp.nbg
6	1.048652	192.168.0.2	239.255.255.250	SSDP	175	M-SEARCH * HTTP/1.1
7	1.050784	192.168.0.2	192.168.0.1	DNS	86	standard query SOA nb10061d.wv004
8	1.055053	192.168.0.1	192.168.0.2	SSDP	337	HTTP/1.1 200 OK
9	1.082038	192.168.0.2	192.168.0.255	NBNS	110	Registration NB NB10061D<00>
10	1.111945	192.168.0.2	192.168.0.1	DNS	87	standard query A proxyconf.wv004.
11	1.226156	192.168.0.2	192.168.0.1	TCP	62	ncu-2 > http [SYN] Seq=0 win=6424
12	1.227282	192.168.0.1	192.168.0.2	TCP	60	http > ncu-2 [SYN, ACK] Seq=0 Ack

The selected packet (No. 11) is detailed in the packet details pane:

- Frame 11: 62 bytes on wire (496 bits), 62 bytes captured (496 bits)
- Ethernet II, Src: 192.168.0.2 (00:0b:5d:20:cd:02), Dst: Netgear_2d:75:9a (00:09:5b:2d:75:9a)
- Internet Protocol, src: 192.168.0.2 (192.168.0.2), dst: 192.168.0.1 (192.168.0.1)
- Transmission Control Protocol, Src Port: ncu-2 (3196), Dst Port: http (80), Seq: 0, Len: 0
 - Source port: ncu-2 (3196)
 - Destination port: http (80)
 - [Stream index: 5]
 - Sequence number: 0 (relative sequence number)
 - Header length: 28 bytes
 - Flags: 0x02 (SYN)
 - window size value: 64240

The packet bytes pane shows the raw data in hexadecimal and ASCII:

```
0000 00 09 5b 2d 75 9a 00 0b 5d 20 cd 02 08 00 45 00  ..[-u... ] ....E.
0010 00 30 18 48 40 00 80 06 61 2c c0 a8 00 02 c0 a8  .0.H@... a,.....
0020 00 01 0c 7c 00 50 3c 36 95 f8 00 00 00 00 70 02  ...|.P<6 .....p.
0030 fa f0 27 e0 00 00 02 04 05 b4 01 01 04 02  .. ..... .....
```

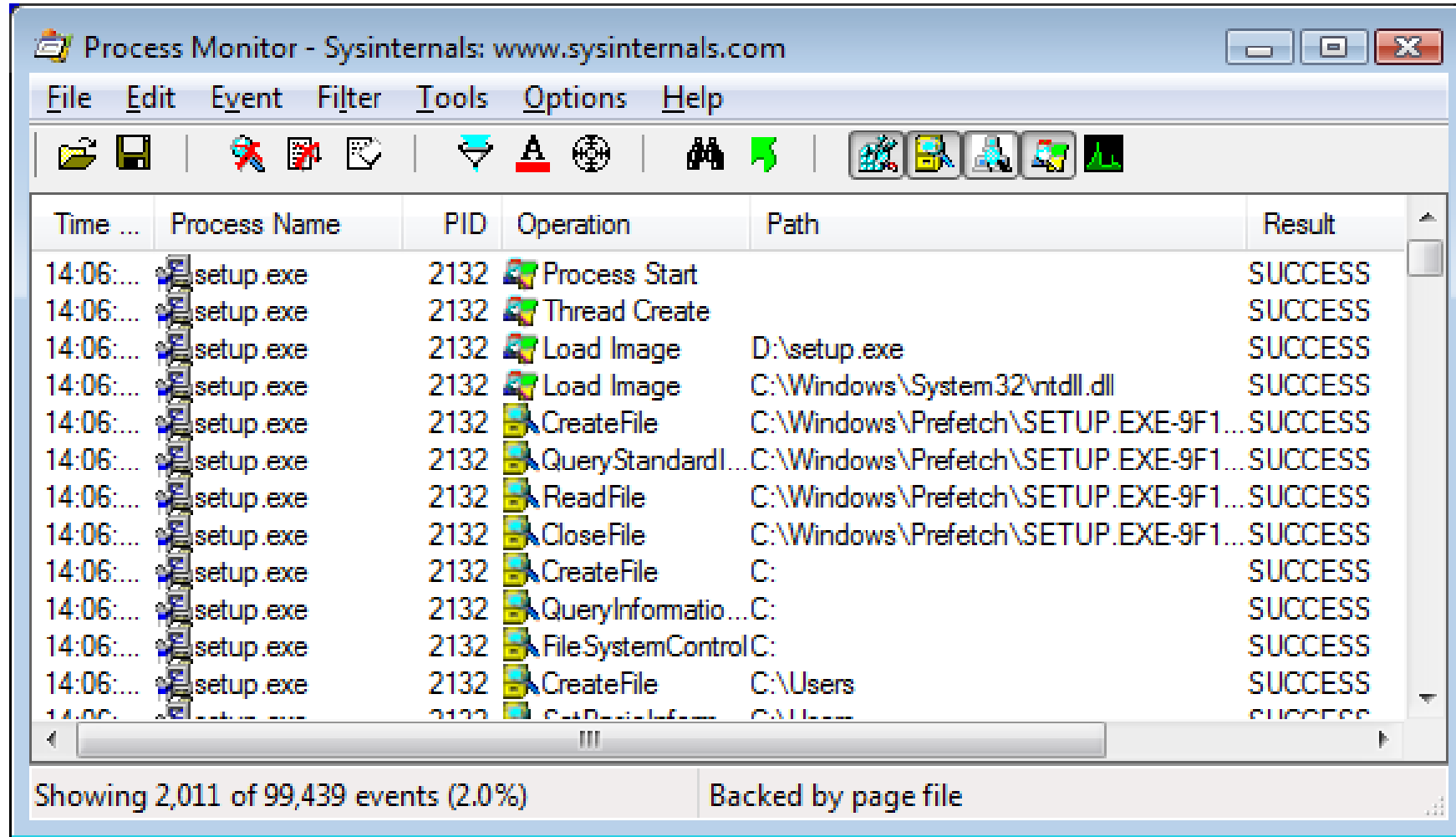
File system

- Observing **file accesses and modifications**
- Background file manipulation
- Tools
 - Procmon, Handle
- Indicators
 - File names, folder names, order of actions, compromise spread through local system
- Q&A
 - Where is malware copied after the initial infection? What filenames are used? Where is the collected data stored?

File system – What to look for

- New file names & folders
 - New created files and folders
 - Batch files (.cmd, .bat, .vbs, .ps1)
 - Known favorite malware file names (e.g., 1.exe, test.exe, new.exe)
 - Known file names in uncommon folders (e.g., C:\Temp\svchost.exe)
 - Recycler
- Modifications of system files
- Temporary storage files, encrypted archives

Example – Procmon



The screenshot displays the Process Monitor application window. The title bar reads "Process Monitor - Sysinternals: www.sysinternals.com". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "Event", "Filter", "Tools", "Options", and "Help". The toolbar contains various icons for file operations, filters, and monitoring. The main pane shows a table of events for the process "setup.exe" (PID 2132). The events are as follows:

Time ...	Process Name	PID	Operation	Path	Result
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	Process Start		SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	Thread Create		SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	Load Image	D:\setup.exe	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	Load Image	C:\Windows\System32\ntdll.dll	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	CreateFile	C:\Windows\Prefetch\SETUP.EXE-9F1...	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	QueryStandardI...	C:\Windows\Prefetch\SETUP.EXE-9F1...	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	ReadFile	C:\Windows\Prefetch\SETUP.EXE-9F1...	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	CloseFile	C:\Windows\Prefetch\SETUP.EXE-9F1...	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	CreateFile	C:	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	QueryInformatio...	C:	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	FileSystemControl	C:	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	CreateFile	C:\Users	SUCCESS
14:06:...	setup.exe	2132	SetDesktopForm...	C:\Users	SUCCESS

At the bottom of the window, it indicates "Showing 2,011 of 99,439 events (2.0%)" and "Backed by page file".

Registry

- Regedit
- RegRipper
- Autoruns

Registry – What to look for

- Well-known locations
 - Autorun locations
 - Task scheduler
- Changes tracking
- Keywords fulltext search
 - Filenames
 - Processes
 - Domain names



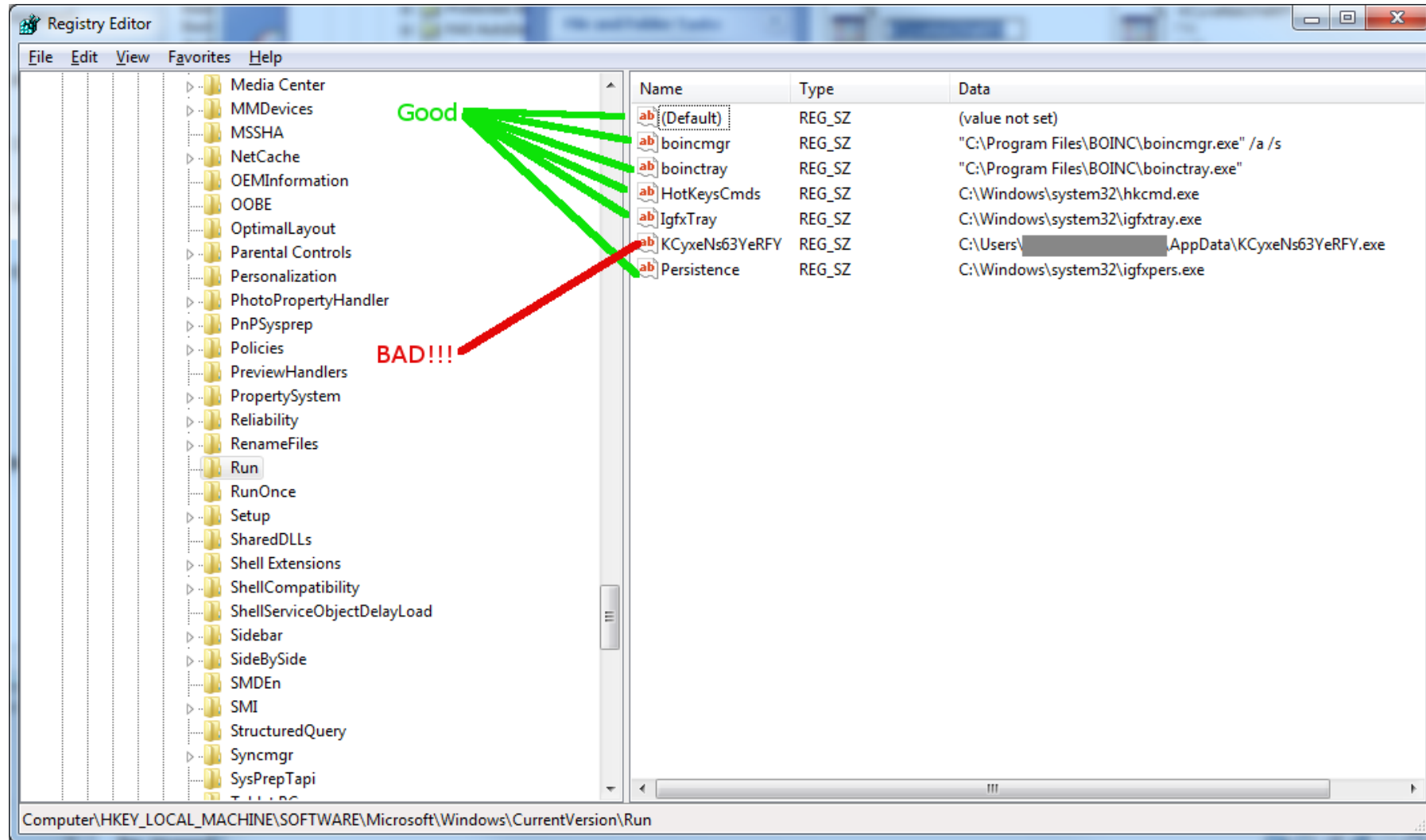
ThreatExpert

Submission Summary:

- ▣ The newly created Registry Values are:
 - [HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Security Center]
 - ┆ UacDisableNotify = 0x00000001
 - [HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Security Center\Svc]
 - ┆ AntiVirusOverride = 0x00000001
 - ┆ AntiVirusDisableNotify = 0x00000001
 - ┆ FirewallDisableNotify = 0x00000001
 - ┆ FirewallOverride = 0x00000001
 - ┆ UpdatesDisableNotify = 0x00000001
 - ┆ UacDisableNotify = 0x00000001

to disable notification of firewall, antivirus and/or update status through the Windows Security Center

Registry – Regedit



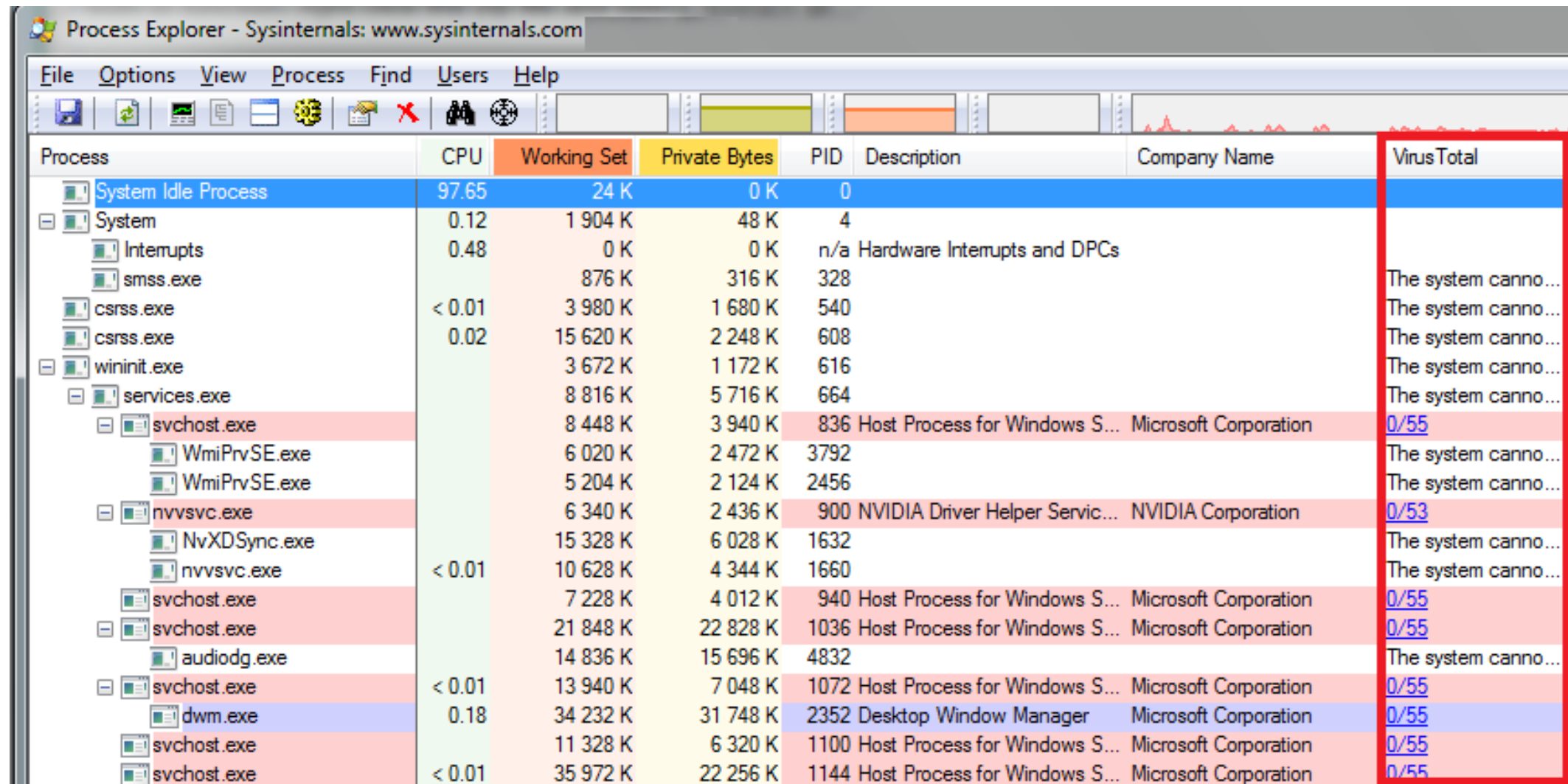
Processes

- Observing initial system compromise
- **Processes** parent/child **relationships**
- Tools
 - Process Explorer, Procmon
- Indicators
 - Process names, order of execution, dropper activity
- Q&A
 - What processes are run after malware binary is executed? Are batch files involved? Are there watcher processes?

Processes – What to look for

- Order of executables
 - Initial malware
 - Dropper/downloader
 - Persistence executable
 - Final malware
- Command line interpreters
 - cmd.exe
 - **Powershell**
 - Cscript, wscript

Example – Process Explorer



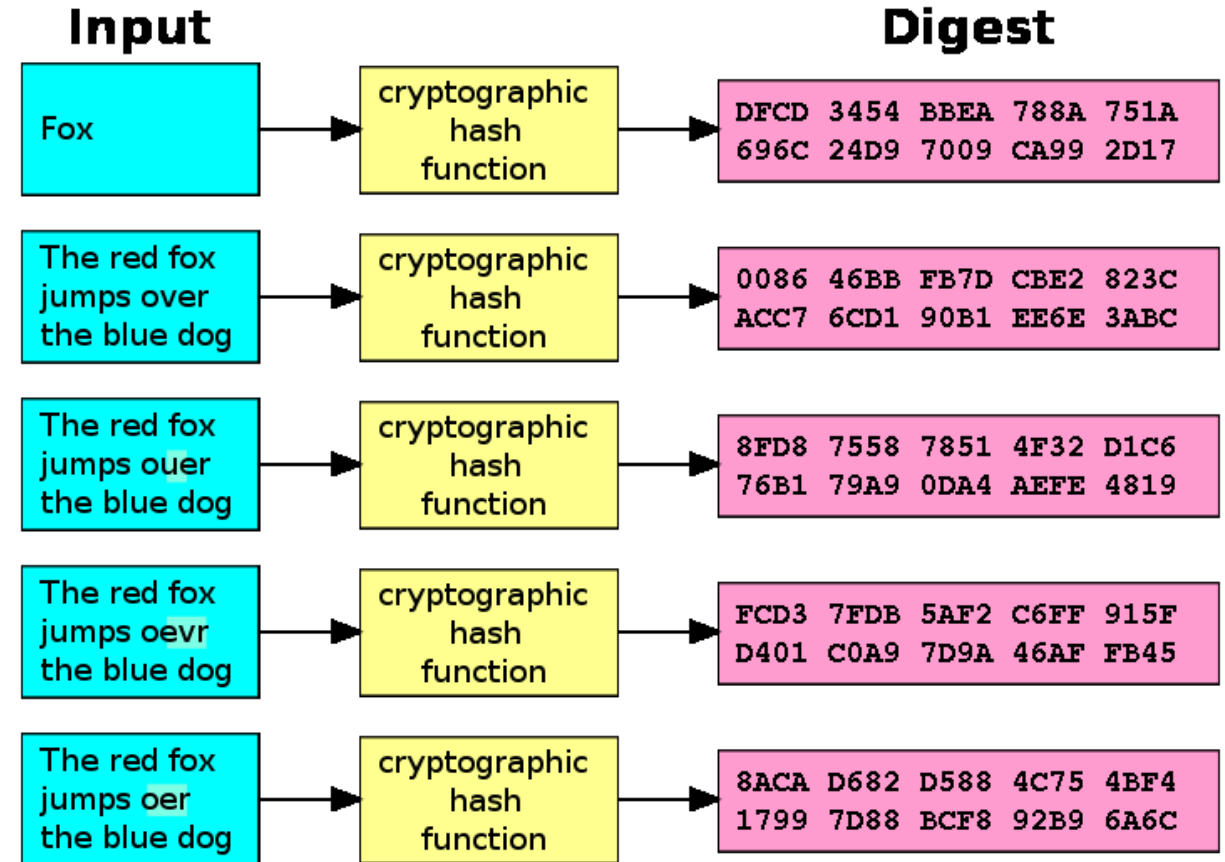
Process Explorer - Sysinternals: www.sysinternals.com

File Options View Process Find Users Help

Process	CPU	Working Set	Private Bytes	PID	Description	Company Name	Virus Total
System Idle Process	97.65	24 K	0 K	0			
System	0.12	1 904 K	48 K	4			
Interrupts	0.48	0 K	0 K	n/a	Hardware Interrupts and DPCs		
smss.exe		876 K	316 K	328			The system cannot find the file specified.
csrss.exe	< 0.01	3 980 K	1 680 K	540			The system cannot find the file specified.
csrss.exe	0.02	15 620 K	2 248 K	608			The system cannot find the file specified.
wininit.exe		3 672 K	1 172 K	616			The system cannot find the file specified.
services.exe		8 816 K	5 716 K	664			The system cannot find the file specified.
svchost.exe		8 448 K	3 940 K	836	Host Process for Windows S...	Microsoft Corporation	0/55
WmiPrvSE.exe		6 020 K	2 472 K	3792			The system cannot find the file specified.
WmiPrvSE.exe		5 204 K	2 124 K	2456			The system cannot find the file specified.
nvsvsvc.exe		6 340 K	2 436 K	900	NVIDIA Driver Helper Servic...	NVIDIA Corporation	0/53
NvXDSESync.exe		15 328 K	6 028 K	1632			The system cannot find the file specified.
nvsvsvc.exe	< 0.01	10 628 K	4 344 K	1660			The system cannot find the file specified.
svchost.exe		7 228 K	4 012 K	940	Host Process for Windows S...	Microsoft Corporation	0/55
svchost.exe		21 848 K	22 828 K	1036	Host Process for Windows S...	Microsoft Corporation	0/55
audiodg.exe		14 836 K	15 696 K	4832			The system cannot find the file specified.
svchost.exe	< 0.01	13 940 K	7 048 K	1072	Host Process for Windows S...	Microsoft Corporation	0/55
dwm.exe	0.18	34 232 K	31 748 K	2352	Desktop Window Manager	Microsoft Corporation	0/55
svchost.exe		11 328 K	6 320 K	1100	Host Process for Windows S...	Microsoft Corporation	0/55
svchost.exe	< 0.01	35 972 K	22 256 K	1144	Host Process for Windows S...	Microsoft Corporation	0/55

Executable file analysis

- Cryptographic hash
 - Hash function which is considered practically impossible to invert
 - Unique identification of file
 - Counter: Polymorphism
 - MD5, SHA1
- Fuzzy hash
 - Context triggered piecewise hash
 - Families of files
 - ssdeep
- Strings



Example – Strings

server.exe

AppData

4bcce4de98bcd4d29f66c0fe1ffe002

hackerhani.no-ip.biz **Domain name**

Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run **Persistence registry key**

Software\

yy-MM-dd

??-??-??

Microsoft

Windows

SystemDrive

netsh firewall delete allowedprogram " **Commands to be executed**

Software

cmd.exe /c ping 0 -n 2 & del "

SEE_MASK_NOZONECHECKS

netsh firewall add allowedprogram "

MD5: 5d347384ea978a96bc842ad9f29e95f2

Analysis

Black box analysis – indicator interpretation

- Network analysis – domain & IP verification, processes communicating
- Hash comparison
 - Collisions, same-hash files
- Behavior analysis
 - System processes, created processes, persistence
- File manipulation

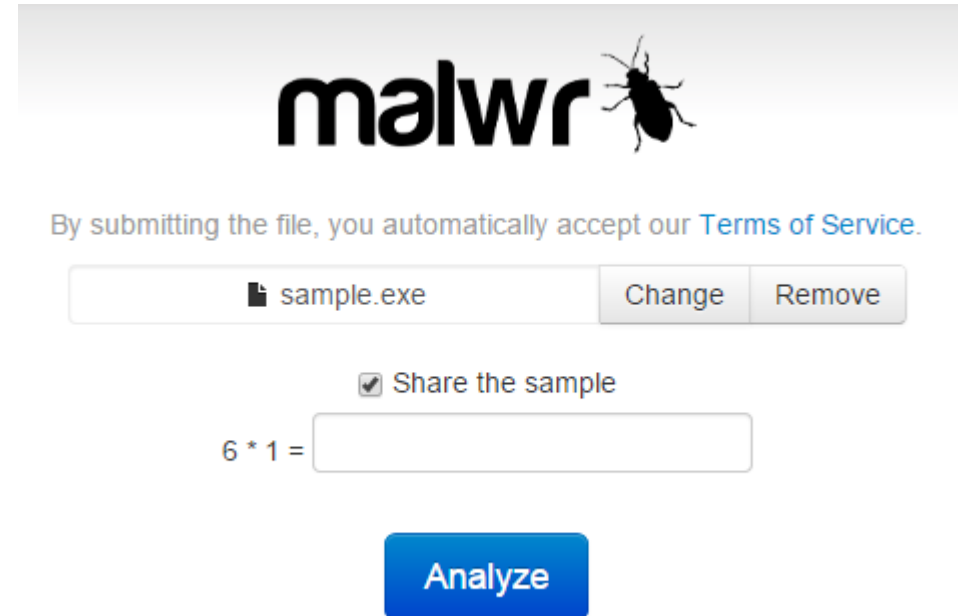
Document analysis – Quick insight

- EXIF information
- File metadata
- Document sandboxing
- Document interpretation ambiguity
- Practical examples
 - Double extensions, different content in different viewers, code block obfuscation & hiding

Automated sandbox analysis

Automated sandboxing

- Automated
 1. Execute malware in sandbox
 2. Wait a few seconds
 3. Receive summary report
 4. Investigate report
- Non-interactive
- Known tools
 - Cuckoo, Norman, Anubis etc.



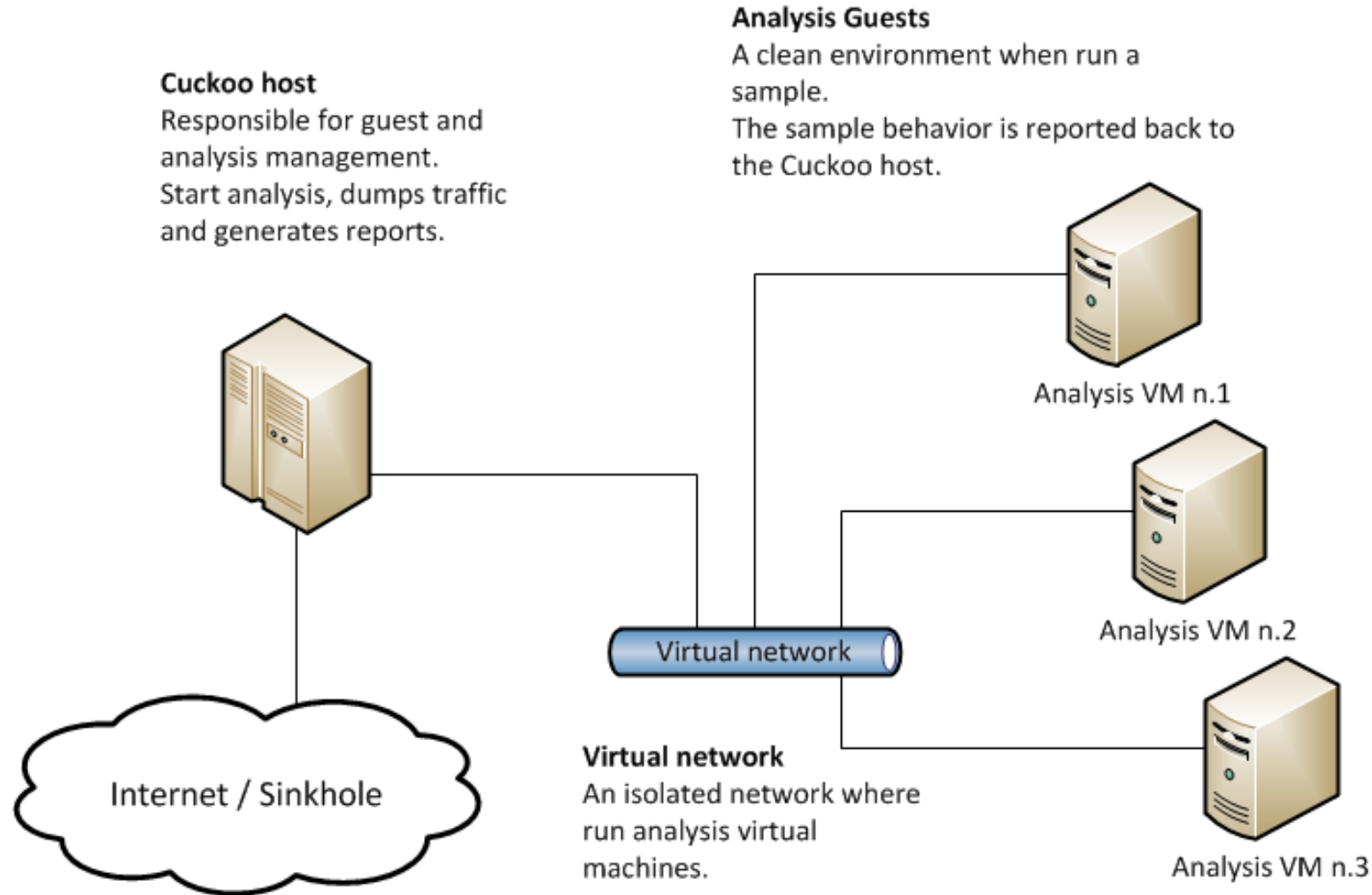
The screenshot shows the Malwr website interface. At the top, the logo "malwr" is displayed in a bold, lowercase font, followed by a black silhouette of a beetle. Below the logo, a line of text reads: "By submitting the file, you automatically accept our [Terms of Service](#)." Underneath this text is a file upload area containing a text box with "sample.exe" and a file icon, and two buttons labeled "Change" and "Remove". Below the file area is a checkbox labeled "Share the sample" which is checked. Underneath the checkbox is a CAPTCHA question "6 * 1 =" followed by an empty input box. At the bottom of the form is a prominent blue button labeled "Analyze".

Cuckoo sandbox



- Open source malware analysis system
- Can analyze
 - Windows executables, DLLs, PDF documents, URLs, HTML files, PHP scripts, Visual Basic scripts, ZIP archives, Python files, etc.
- Modular, scriptable
- Full memory dump (for Volatility Framework)
- Django web interface
- Mongo (NoSQL) database

Cuckoo – Architecture



Cuckoo – GUI

Info	File	Signatures	Screenshots	Static	Dropped	Network	Behavior
------	------	------------	-------------	--------	---------	---------	----------

Category	Started On	Completed On	Duration	Cuckoo Version
FILE	2013-05-09 20:47:13	2013-05-09 20:49:56	163 seconds	0.5

File Details file indicators

File name	7351eaaa39eb672c00c1dbe1e525a9e0
File size	303104 bytes
File type	PE32 executable (GUI) Intel 80386 Mono/.Net assembly, for MS Windows
CRC32	D45DD4BC
MD5	7351eaaa39eb672c00c1dbe1e525a9e0
SHA1	f5f06f53f270f1fd044da1da9eea5b59794bc346
SHA256	078ae46df0b431c7d423568495ee01caaf9d024aaf880061c739cfcb4dbf4490
SHA512	950a5e85b4f161578660179eb2afe95798edaebf1b2998702c1250fea613c3b95b9143e643994ebad67e08702ddab47a6accb4b25c9f2d7a3d19fa3ca1b8cbf7
Ssdeep	None
PEiD Signatures	None matched
Yara Signatures	
Antivirus Results	25/46 (collapse)

Internet sandbox services

- Public service
 - OpSEC issues
- Huge comparison database
- Exact match by hash
- Similarity search by keywords

- Malwr.com (public Cuckoo sandbox)
- VirusTotal.com
- ThreatExpert.com
- Hybrid-Analysis.com

The logo for VirusTotal, featuring a blue square icon with a white envelope-like shape and the text "virustotal" in a blue, sans-serif font.

The logo for ThreatExpert, featuring a cartoon character wearing a yellow hard hat and a brown jacket, holding a magnifying glass, next to the text "ThreatExpert" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

The logo for malwr, featuring the text "malwr" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by a black silhouette of a beetle.

The logo for Hybrid Analysis, featuring a stylized circular icon with a blue and red gradient and a white figure, next to the text "HYBRID ANALYSIS" in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

Operational security (OpSec)

- Advanced **attackers monitor** victim's actions
 - Unique indicators visible on Google?
 - Attacker host monitoring for incoming traffic
 - Keywords search in mails, PDFs...
- Basics of OpSec
 - “Think before you act” mentality
 - Limited information sharing
 - Trace removal
- PassiveTotal.org

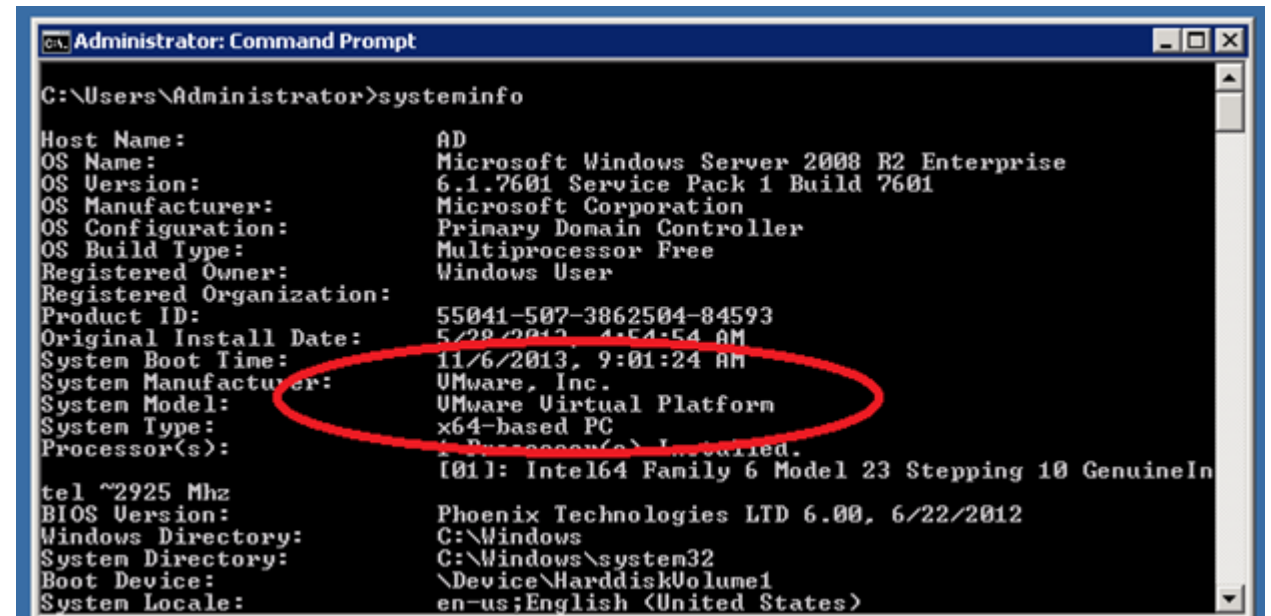


OpSec – Basic rules

- No ping
- No DNS lookup
- No accessing to suspicious domains
- No premature remediation steps (reboot, antivirus scan, OS reinstall)
- No upload of samples
- No indicator validation on external sources
- **NOT EVEN through 3rd parties**

Anti-sandbox techniques

- Continuous development – sandbox vs. anti-sandbox
- Malware inactive in analysis environment
- Tools presence detection (Wireshark, etc.)
- Virtualization detection
 - Registry (key existence, key value)
 - File system (file existence, drivers)
 - Processes (syscall response)
- Human presence detection
 - Mouse movement
 - Keyboard activity
 - File artefacts



```
Administrator: Command Prompt
C:\Users\Administrator>systeminfo
Host Name:                AD
OS Name:                  Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2 Enterprise
OS Version:               6.1.7601 Service Pack 1 Build 7601
OS Manufacturer:        Microsoft Corporation
OS Configuration:       Primary Domain Controller
OS Build Type:            Multiprocessor Free
Registered Owner:        Windows User
Registered Organization:
Product ID:                55041-507-3862504-84593
Original Install Date:    5/28/2013, 4:54:54 AM
System Boot Time:         11/6/2013, 9:01:24 AM
System Manufacturer:     VMware, Inc.
System Model:              VMware Virtual Platform
System Type:               x64-based PC
Processor(s):              1 Processor(s) Installed.
                          [01]: Intel64 Family 6 Model 23 Stepping 10 GenuineIn
tel ~2925 Mhz
BIOS Version:             Phoenix Technologies LTD 6.00, 6/22/2012
Windows Directory:       C:\Windows
System Directory:         C:\Windows\system32
Boot Device:              \Device\HarddiskVolume1
System Locale:             en-us;English (United States)
```

Lab

Lab – Overview

- Hands-on experience of manual black-box analysis
- Guided analysis of selected malware samples
- Tools
 - Wireshark – Network activity
 - Process Monitor – File system activity, process creation
 - Autoruns – Persistence
 - Regshot – Registry changes
 - Process explorer – Process map

Lab – Samples

- 2-3 samples from different malware families
 - Commodity malware – Zeus, ZeroAccess, Generic Trojans,...
- Students will execute samples in virtual environment
 - Provided simple analysis virtual machine (Windows)
 - Indicators collected – network, files, persistence
 - Discussion about interpretation of facts
- Homework
 - 2 samples for analysis independently
 - Write a cohesive report and present key information to the reader