

The Advanced Persistent Threat (or Informationized Force Operations)

Michael K. Daly November 4, 2009

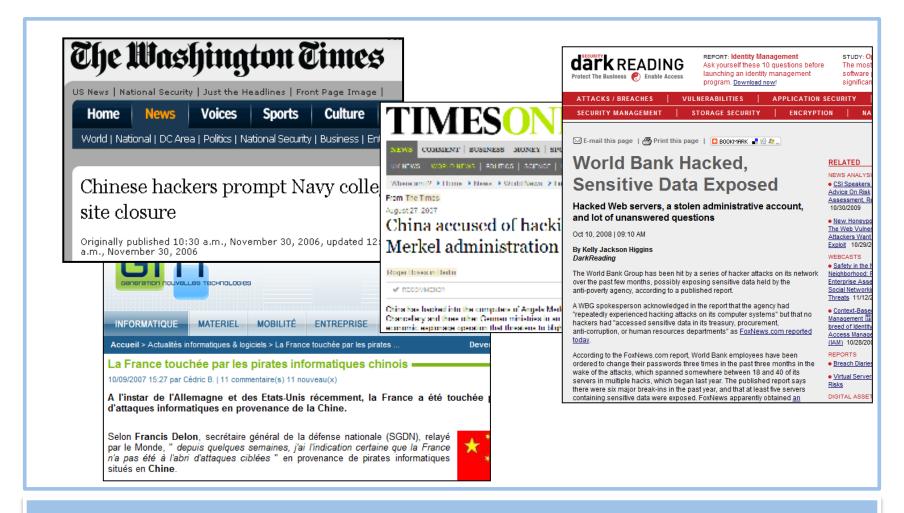


What is meant by Advanced, Persistent Threat?

- Increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks by hostile organizations with the goal of:
 - Gaining access to defense, financial and other targeted information from governments, corporations and individuals.
 - Maintaining a foothold in these environments to enable future use and control.
 - Modifying data to disrupt performance in their targets.

APT: People With Money Who Discovered That Computers Are Connected

APT in the News



A Broad Problem Affecting Many Nations and Industries

Is this a big deal? Is it new?

- Yes, this is a very big deal.
- If "it" is the broad notion of theft, spying, social engineering and bad stuff, then No, it is definitely not new.
- However, it is new (~2003) that nation states are widely leveraging the Internet to operate agents across all critical infrastructures.

APT activity is leveraging the expansion of the greater system of systems

I'm not in the military. Why do I care?



"[APT] possess the targeting competence to identify specific users in a unit or organization based on job function or presumed access to information.

[APT] can use this access for passive monitoring of network traffic for intelligence collection purposes. **Instrumenting these machines in peacetime may enable attackers to prepare a reserve of compromised machines that can be used during a crisis.**

[APT] ... possess the technical sophistication to craft and upload rootkit and covert remote access software, creating **deep persistent access** to the compromised host and making detection extremely difficult.

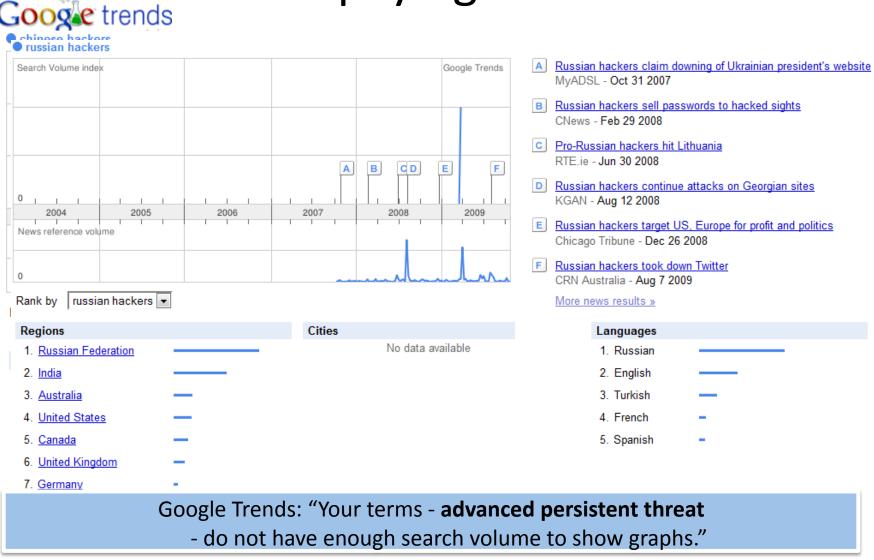
An "upstream" attack on ... civilian networks ... has potential for great impact and is potentially easier against smaller companies that often lack the resources or expertise for sophisticated network security and monitoring." **

Shipping, Finance, Energy, Water, ... The Entire Supply Chain is at Risk





Are we paying attention



LISA '09 November 4, 2009

Raytheon

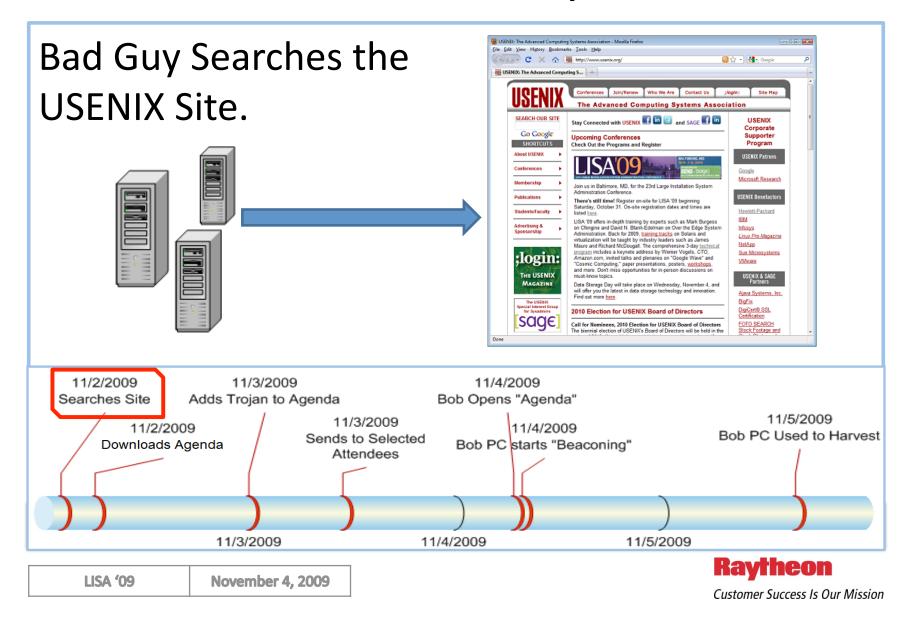
OK, give me a practical example

The "classic" case is:

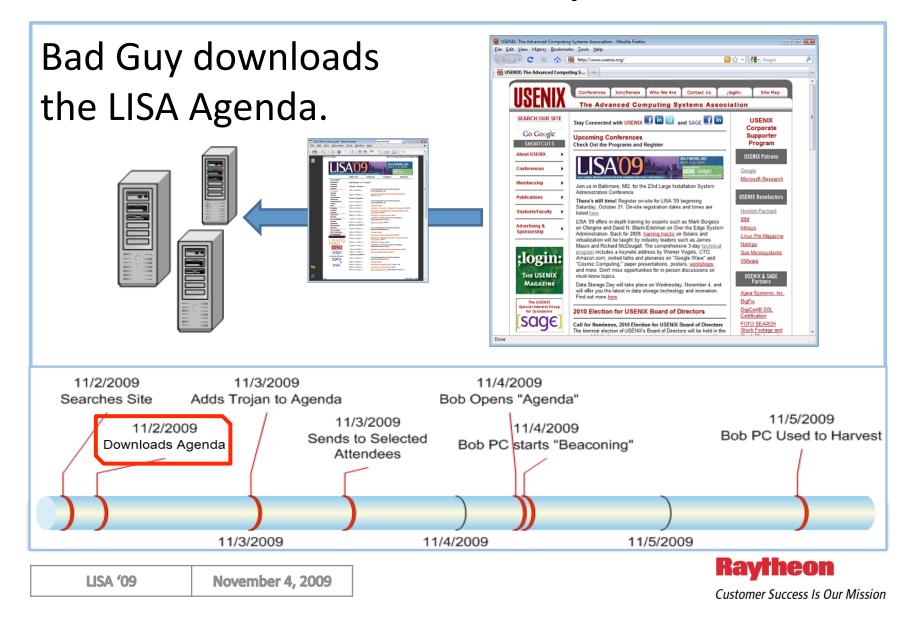
- Employee Bob gets an email with an attachment, so he opens it.
- The attachment opens, and is typically either irrelevant, or a copy of some other message he got a while back, or not even the topic of the message. Bob closes it and goes back to his coffee.
- His computer is now running a Trojan application that connects to a site on the Internet that is used by bad guys to control his computer.

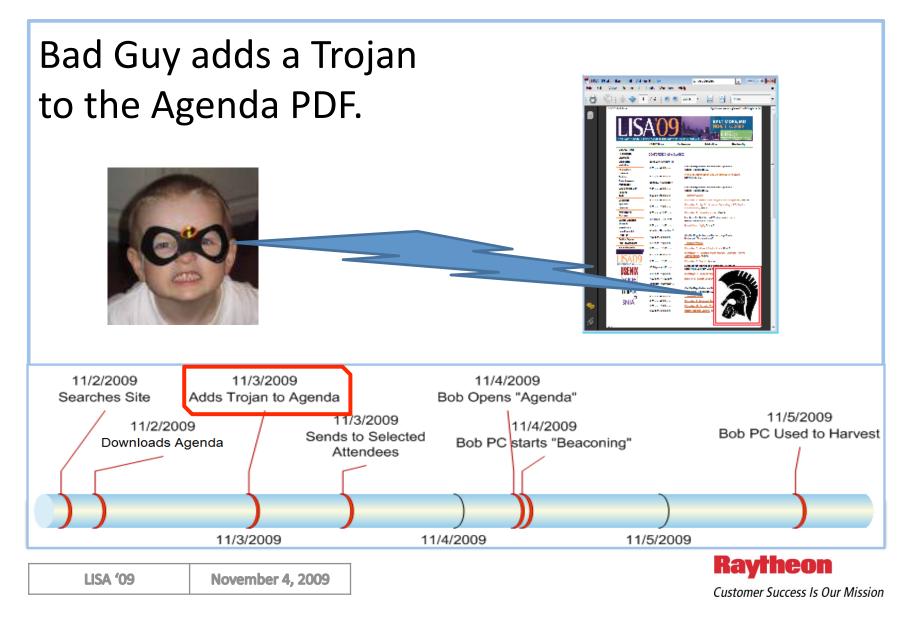
Socially Engineered Emails

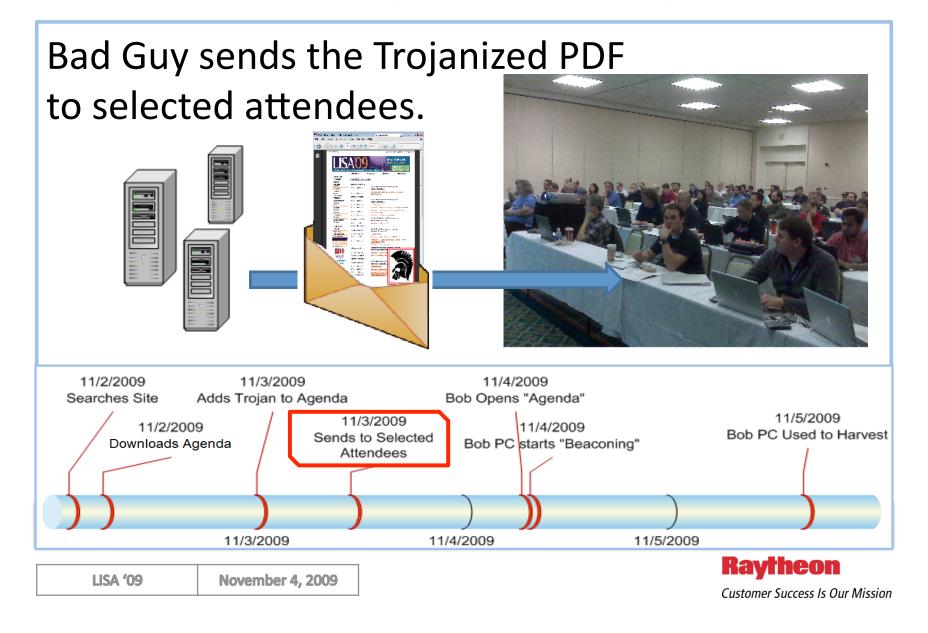
A "case study"

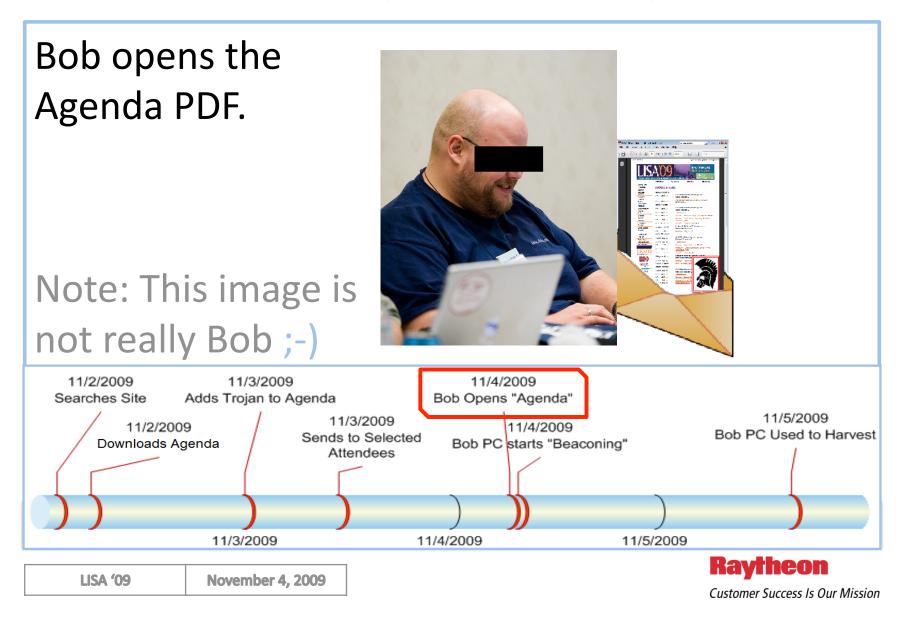


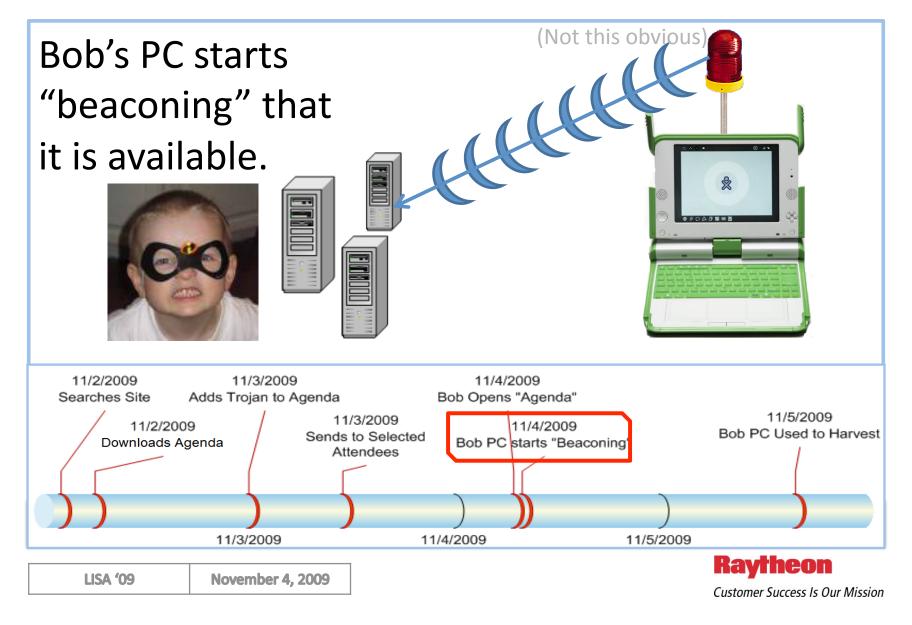
A "case study"

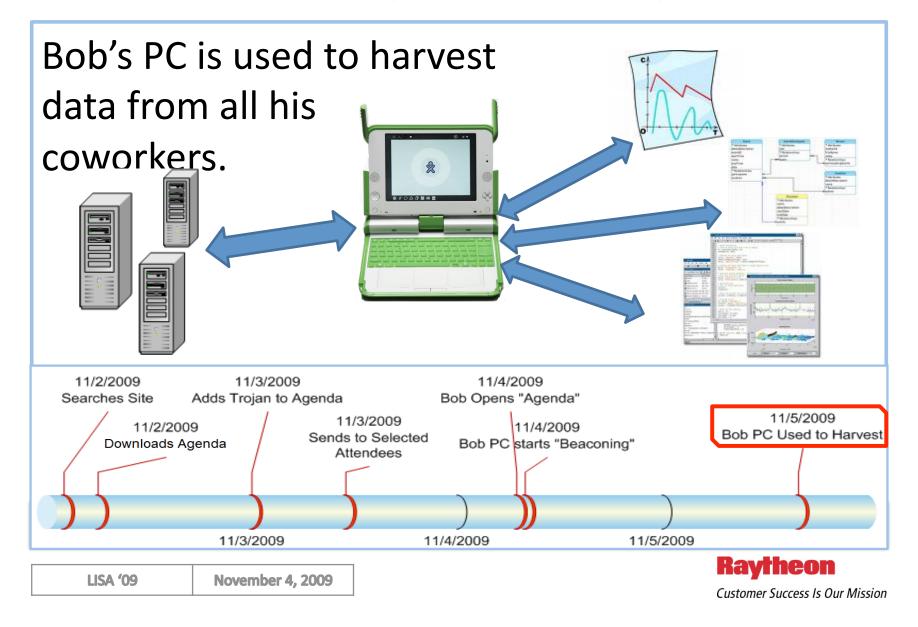




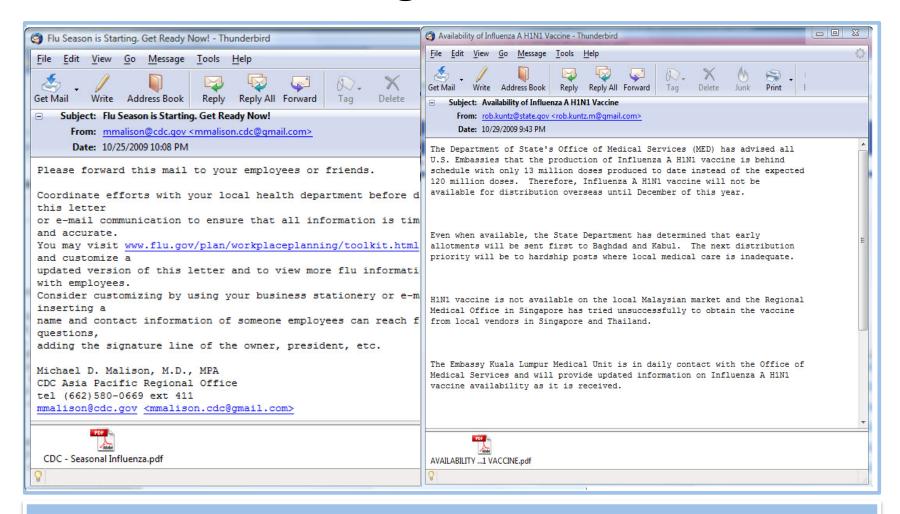






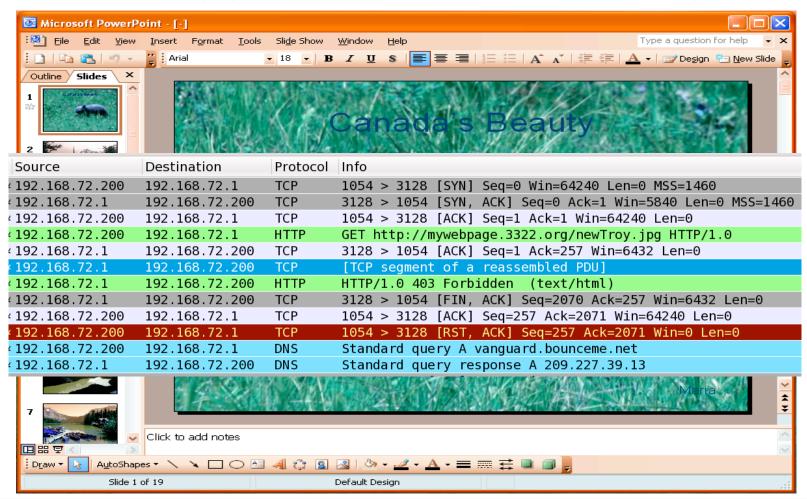


Actual messages from last week



Adobe Acrobat is by far the most targeted application this year.

What happens when they are opened



Look at the pretty bear. Don't look at your proxy logs.

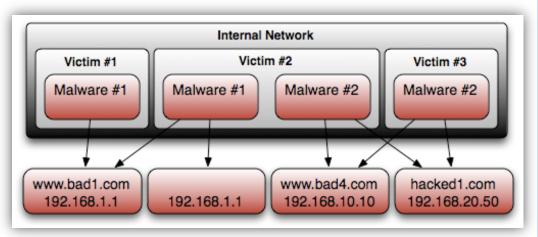
A bit more about APT Trojans

- Multiple means of command and control allow the adversary to persist even when defensive actions are taken
 - Multiple malware installations;
 - Multiple C2 destinations

Off-Net use allows adversaries to change tactics while outside your view

and control

- VPN Malware
- Off-Network updates
- O-Day Attack Vectors
- Uniquely compiled for you
 - Avoids AV detection



Attack in Depth

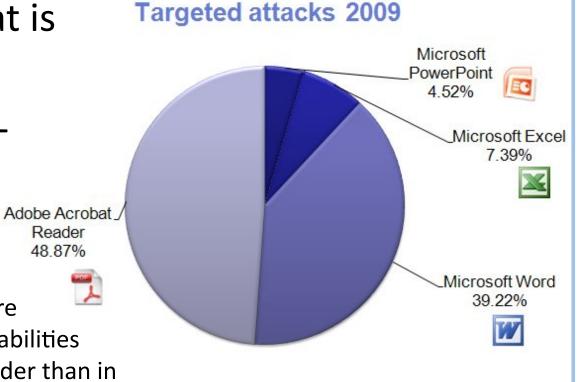
What kinds of attachments

Adobe Acrobat is increasing

 No surprises – these're the apps we use.

"Why has it changed?
Primarily because there
has been more vulnerabilities
in Adobe Acrobat/Reader than in
the Microsoft Office applications." – F-Secure

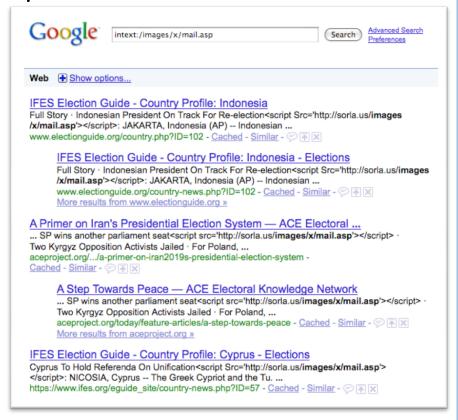




Patching Is Not Keeping Up With Current APT TTP's

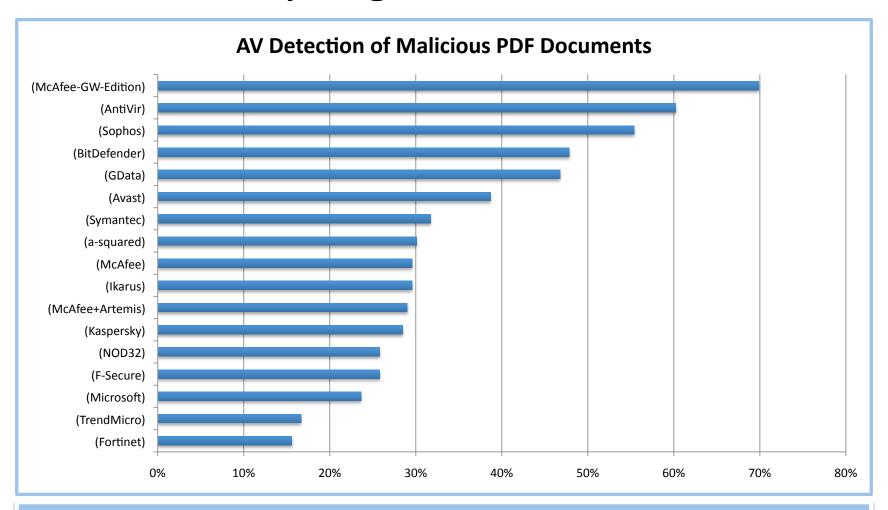
HTTP Vector

- Hacked sites redirecting to exploits
 - www.ned.org
 - www.electionguide.org
 - aceproject.org
 - www.ifes.org
- Serving 3 exploits
 - SWF on FF 0-day
 - SWF on IE 0-day
 - MSVIDCTL Vulnerability



Not All Bad Stuff Comes Via The Mail ... Sometimes we seek it out.

Analyzing Malicious PDF



AV Detection of Malicious PDFs Has Been Very Poor

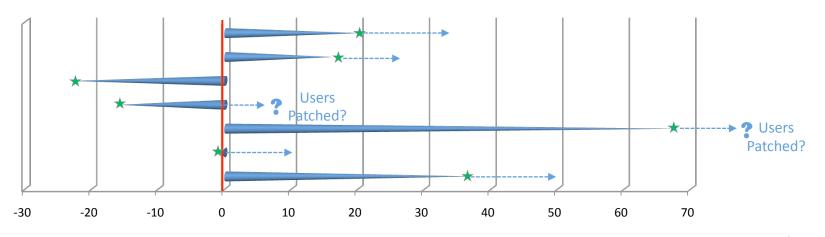
LISA '09 November 4, 2009



Common PDF Exploits

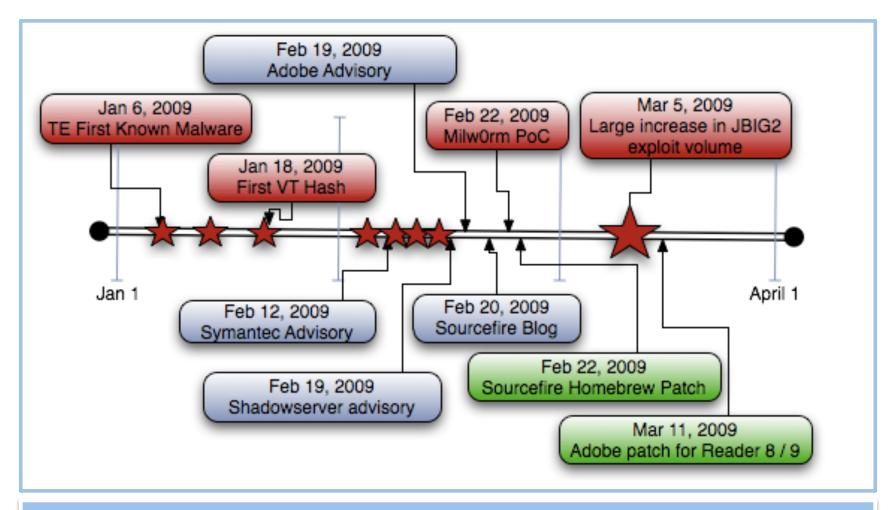
CVE	Name	First Used	Discovered	Patched	Gap
2007-5659	collectEmailInfo() (JS)	1/1/2008	2/6/2008	2/7/2008	37
2008-2992	Util.printf() (JS)	11/5/2008	11/5/2008	11/4/2008	-1
2009-0658	JBIG2*	1/15/2009	2/13/2009	3/24/2009	68
2009-0927	getIcon() (JS)	4/9/2009	4/9/2009	3/24/2009	-16
2009-1492	getAnnots() (JS)	6/4/2009	6/4/2009	5/12/2009	-23
2009-1862	SWF*	7/15/2009	7/15/2009	7/31/2009	16
2009-3459	Heap Corruption*	9/23/2009	10/1/2009	10/13/2009	20

Days Between First Use and Patch



Occasional Lag to Discovery – Consistent Lag to Remediation

JBIG2 Timeline



More Than 2 Months from First Known Offensive Use to Patch Availability

LISA '09 November 4, 2009

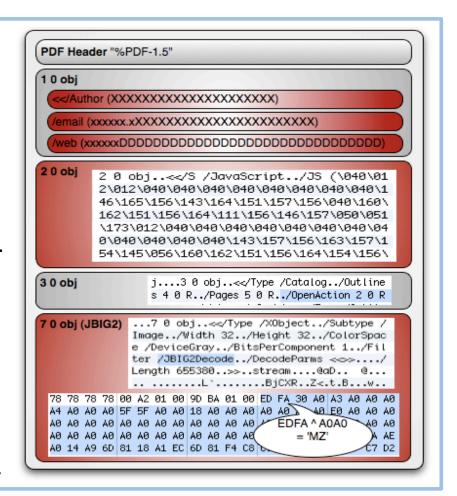


JBIG2 Dissection

What did Bad Guy do to the PDF?



- Object 3 is first to launch, in this case.
- It has an *OpenAction* to go to Object 2.
- Object 2 fills memory with code that leads to Object 7.
- Object 7 contains the executable that gives you a bad day.
- The red colored areas are indicators you can use to find similar documents.



Automated Tools Are Available To Help Our Bad Guy Insert the Executable

Cool Tool to Help Find Stuff

Yara

- Simple and correlated rules
 - Ascii, binary, regex, wildcards

```
rule HIGH_PDF_Flash_Exploit {
    strings:
    $a = "%PDF-1."
    $j = "(pop\\056swf)"
    $k = "(pushpro\\056swf)"
    $b = "(a.swf)"
    condition:
    ($a at 0) and ($j or $k or $b)
}
```

http://code.google.com/p/yara-project/

Trojans Commonly Delivered in Email

- Opening of the malicious attachment may have no visual indicators
 - Some poorly created documents will "crash" and reopen
 - Others will briefly close and reopen
 - In rare cases, the computer may "freeze"
- Attackers embed relevant content to be displayed after infection
- .WRI

LISA '09



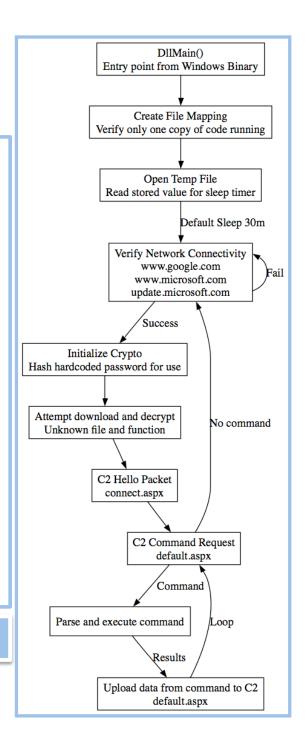
Using Your Own Content Against You

Typical malware workflow

- Checks to see if it already infected you
- Delay for a bit so you don't associate its behavior with the opening of the attachment
- Download other junk
- Keep checking back for more commands or control requests

Initiates Connection from Inside

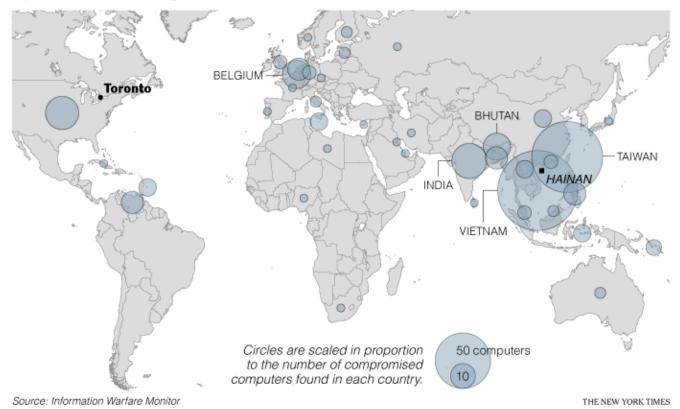
LISA '09 November 4, 2009



Gh0stNet, a good example of APT

The Vast Reach of 'GhostNet'

Researchers have detected an intelligence gathering operation involving at least 1,295 compromised computers. Below, the locations of 347 of the compromised machines, many of which were tracked to diplomatic and economic government offices of South and Southeast Asian countries.



APT with a Political Mission: Tracking the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Exiles

LISA '09 November 4, 2009

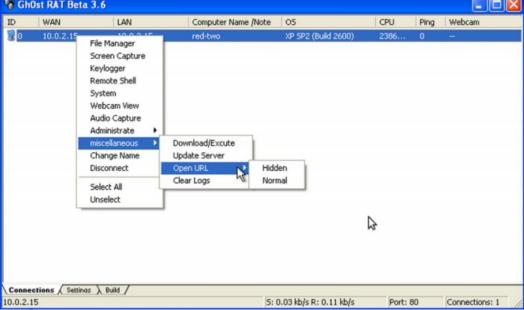


Gh0st RAT and Poison Ivy RAT

Gh0st RAT is published by Red Wolf Group

Key logger can record the information in English and Chinese
English and Chinese

- Remote Terminal Shell
- System management process manageme window management
- Video View View a remote camera, snapshot, video, compression and other functions ...
- Voice monitoring remote monitoring of voice, but also the local voice can be transmitted to the remote, voice chat, GSM610 compression
- Session management off, restart, shutdown, uninstall the server
- Specify the download URL, hide or display access to the specified URL, clear the system log
- Cluster control can simultaneously control multiple hosts at the same time



Remote Administration Tools

So, who are some of these people

- General Staff Department Fourth Department
 - □ The GSD's decision in 2000 to promote Dai Qingmin to head the 4th Department—vetting his advocacy of the integrated network-electronic warfare (INEW) strategy—likely further consolidated the organizational authority for the IW—and the CNA mission specifically—in this group. Dai's promotion to this position suggests that the GSD probably endorsed his vision of adopting INEW as the PLA's IW strategy.

Remember, China is just one country we can talk about due to Open Source

Leveraging the private sector

PLA Information Warfare Militia Units

 Since approximately 2002, the PLA has been creating IW militia units comprised of personnel from the commercial IT sector and academia, and

represents an operational nexus between PLA

Computer Network

Operations and Chinese

civilian information

security professionals.



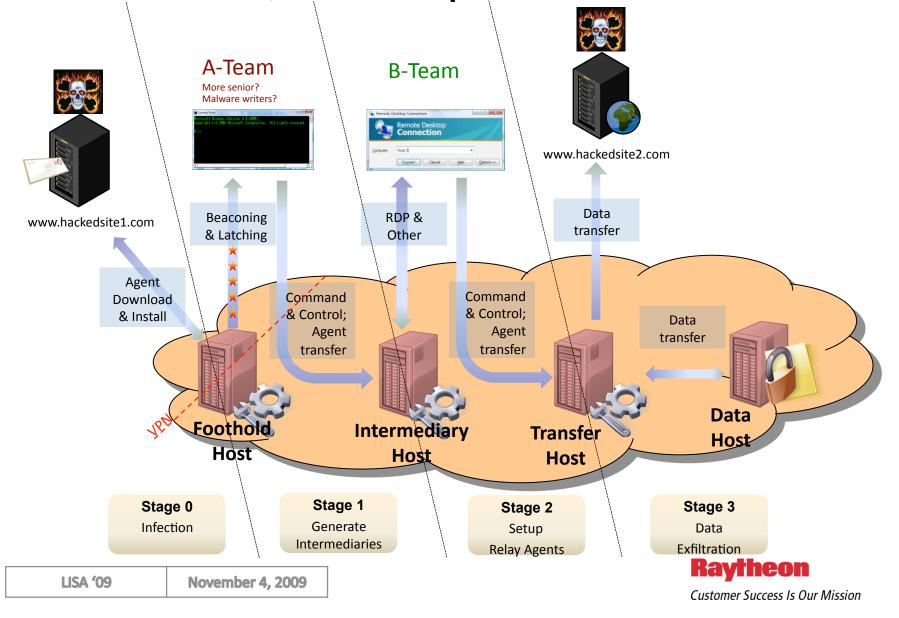
Strong organization, bolstered by internal competition

Further private sector activity

- Individuals, or possibly groups, engaged in computer network exploitation against US networks have obtained malicious software developed by Chinese underground or black hat programmers.
 - In one demonstrated instance, black hat programmers affiliated with Chinese hacker forums provided malicious software to intruders targeting a US commercial firm in early 2009. The techniques and tools employed by this group or individual are similar to those observed in previous penetration attempts against this same company in the previous year, according to their forensic analysis.
 - Forensic analysis also suggests this group is comprised of **multiple** members of varying skill levels, operating with fixed schedules and standard operating procedures and is willing to take detailed steps to mask their activities on the targeted computer.

Cross-pollination of tactics, techniques and procedures

APT Tactics, Techniques & Procedures



VPN Client Shimming

Index	File Name	Functionality
Α	netSvc32.exe	Remote Access; File Transfer; NTLAN Manager Hashing
В	00000000.exe	Packed
С	0000001.exe	Packed
D	00000002.exe	TCP Connection Filtering; Raw Packet TX to NDIS Driver & VPN Driver
E	00000003.exe	Malware Loading and Injection
F	00000004.exe	Same as specimen D without appended binaries
G	Fsvsda.dll	Unpacked specimen B; Remote Access; File TX; Remote Shell Execution
Н	Fsvsda.sys	TCP Obfuscation; Disable detection by netstat.exe

Example: Specimen A - netSvc32.exe

- Variant of a known malware family.
- Backdoor
- Generates NT LanManager hashes
- Ability to launch a remote shell
- The software will only attempt communication to its server on a periodic basis (via keep alive/beaconing).
- This variant of the malware uses a password at the command line. This parameter must be supplied at the end of the command line in order for the program to be configured.

|--|



More on TTPs

- Open Source Analysis
 - ⇒ APT will use all the information you give them against you
 - You can use their analysis to predict their actions
- Attack Phase
 - Social Engineered Email and Web Site planting
 - Awareness, Monitoring, Sharing
- Lateral Movement Phase
 - They will jump to new systems and establish new footholds
 - Monitor for lateral movement and segregate your networks
- Command & Control and Exfiltration
 - They will communicate with your systems and take what they want
 - Block unnecessary outbound traffic, monitor, and share

Move

Counter-Move



OK, so what should we do about it

- 1. Understand that the threat is real.
- Take responsibility for your own computing environments. No national force is capable of protecting the Internet ecosystem.
- 3. Start by understanding the IPO diagram.
- 4. Share, and leverage shared knowledge.
- 5. Paradoxically, think about not sharing so much.

Awareness Zoning Outbound Control Sharing

We must build secure systems-of-systems.

Awareness

- Make sure your co-workers and leadership understand APT activities.
- Communicate using many different channels:
 - Annual mandatory awareness training
 - Special events, symposia, brown-bag lunches
 - Give aways (calendars, mouse pads, shirts)
 - Web sites, portal articles
 - Advanced training for system administrators
 - Targeted training for high-risk persons
- Include your Supply Chain
- Lather, Rinse, Repeat



Awareness

Zoning

Outbound Control

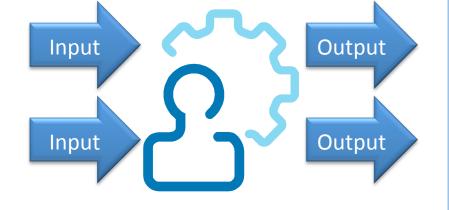
Sharing

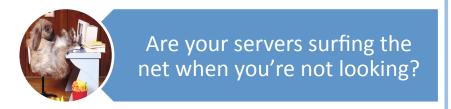
Knowledge is Power – Social Engineering Relies on Ignorance

Raytheon

Zoning: IPO Diagram

- Input, Process, Output
 - At the network level
 - At the system level
 - At the subsystem level
 - At the data level
- Good ole fashioned ACLs
- Also known as: "compartmentalization".
- Contains risk; IDs bad stuff





Awareness

Zoning

Outbound Control

Sharing

Zoning Enables Monitoring and Controls

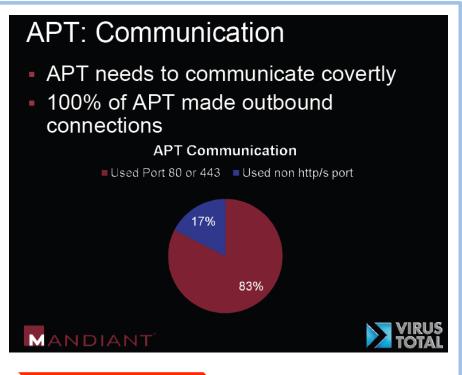
LISA '09

November 4, 2009



Outbound Control: C2 Blocking

- "Getting in" is not enough
- They must get out to fulfill their entire mission
- Goal is to drive down Dwell Time
- (We must still protect the inbound, of course, to maximize SNR)



Awareness

Zoning

Outbound Control

Sharing

Disrupt and Deny Adversary's Command and Control Traffic

** See Mandiant, Ero Carrera and Peter Silberman, "State Of malware: Explosion of the axis of Evil".



Sharing: E Pluribus Unum

- Collaboration is cheap
- You can use other people's money
- The Return on Investment is high
- You're not admitting you were compromised, just that you found something
- Share the 'known bad sites', ip-addresses, malware
- Maybe don't publish so much unnecessary info about yourself

Awareness Zoning Outbound Control Sharing

Discover and block C2 sites any way you can

Raytheon

Other Techniques

- APT uses Dynamic DNS hosting services to collect exfiltrated information and serve as C2 systems
- Also, APT is using DNS as a covert channel by transmitting data such as keystrokes within "DNS requests"
- Lessons:
 - Block "uncategorized" web sites at your proxies
 - Employ Split-DNS
 - Employ Split-Routing

Use Bastion Hosts to Screen Basic Malware Methods

Yet More Techniques

- Block common bad attachment types:
 - mp3, exe, lnk, dll, mov, com, mp4, bat, cmd, reg, rar, emf, shs, js, vb, yourcompany.com.zip, cab, mda, zip, mdb, scr, aiff, mde, cpl, msi, vbs, aif, m4p, msp, fdf, mdt, sys, wmf, hlp, hta, pif, jse, qef, scf, chm, <#>.txt, wsf, fli, vbe
- Look for MZ header (magic byte) in packet streams that indicates an executable
- Check proxy & firewall logs for such requests as port 22, 6667 (SSH, IRC)

Block the Basic Malware Methods (SNR)

What might you look for back home



F-Secure: We'd recommend you'd at least check your company's gateway logs

** See http://www.f-secure.com/weblog/archives/00000883.html



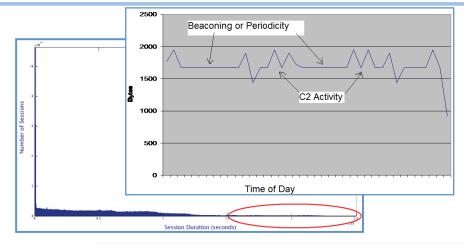
LISA '09

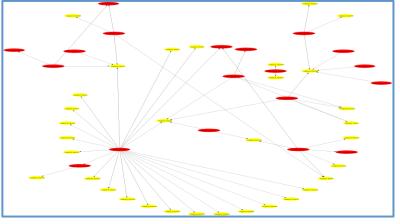
What might you look for back home

- Sessions, Durations
 - Long sessions**
 - Bytes/sec over time
- RDP Sessions & other management tools
- User-Agent-Strings in your Proxy Logs

Mozilla/4-0(compatable; MSIE6.0; Windows NT 5.2; .NET CLR 1.1.4322)

- Look for the scarce records
 - DNS rejects
 - No route to host
 - Rare web site requests



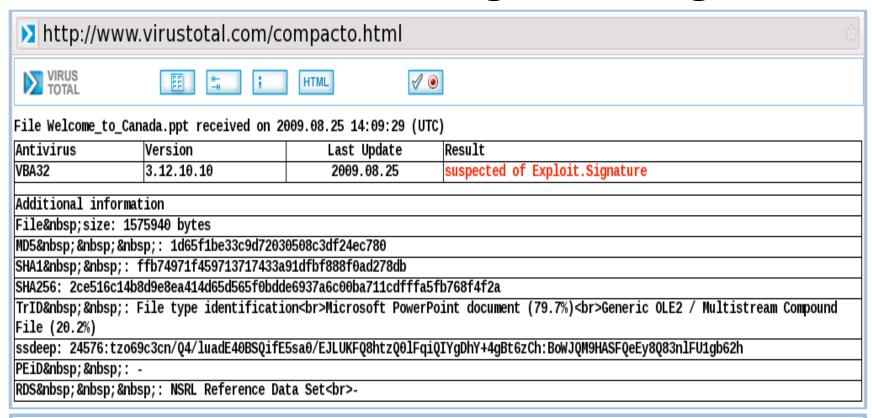


Conduct Statistical Analysis of Your Traffic

Alexander V. Barsamian.

** See http://www.ists.dartmouth.edu/library/425.pdf.

Virus Total is a good thing



See if someone else has already found this problem.

Sharing Malware Identification



Collaboration Groups

 Transglobal Secure Collaboration Program (TSCP): Large A&D companies and western gov'ts building strategic solutions

Network Security Info Exchange
 Small international exchange

Aerospace Industries Association (AIA):
 270+ A&D companies sharing ideas

Defense Industrial Base (DIB):
 US Gov/Industry classified info



InfraGard_®



Find your industry groups – The FBI's InfraGard is a great place to start.

We, the Designers & Integrators

- Design your supra-systems assuming the threat will compromise a subsystem
- Build in layers of defense and segment your subsystems
- Remember the IPO diagram
 - Monitor the interfaces and enforce validation to the specification
- Utilize logging and alerting

We, the Nations

- Share information with your critical industries
 - Critical Infrastructures cross national boundaries
- Don't leave your citizens to defend themselves
 - I still can't believe that my grandmother's computer is the national cyber boundary.



My Granny is not happy. Don't leave her to defend herself.



- All of us participate in the ecosystem of the Internet
- We are therefore targets, capable of serving as an attack agent or a data transfer agent
- We must be aware of this interconnectedness and the risk we pose to our neighbors
- We must defend our systems and advocate for defensible systems

Too much? I don't think so. Remember the Cylons.

What else?



- Tor based C2
- Malware designed to infect EnCase stations when evidence is reviewed.
- Super-light Payload Malware Just enough to establish C2.
- Intentional Worm Outbreaks to hide real attacks in worm traffic.
- Portplexd (Brandon Gilmore) described protocol-based routing of TCP streams to provide different services (port multiplexing) to different requestors
- You, the security professionals are the new targets
- Browser data theft techniques that eliminate need for key loggers
- Searching your proxy logs for sites to host malware your employees visit
- Mail header harvesting from web sites (news groups, mail-in blogs)
- Focus on minor config changes to undo security and, similarly, downgrading applications to older vulnerable versions
- Injecting subtle bugs When source code is found a minor change is made.

Themes: Use of Social Networking sites and Obfuscation





QUESTIONS?

Could You repeat everything after "good afternoon"?

Could you talk a little longer?
I have a few more e-mails to do.



About the Speaker

Michael K. Daly

- As Director of Information Technology Enterprise Security Services at Raytheon Company, Michael is globally responsible for information security policy, intelligence and analysis, the engineering and operational support of teaming partner connectivity, network and data protections, Internet connectivity, identity and access services, and incident handling, and he also provides consulting services to the business development and engineering groups.
- With headquarters in Waltham, Mass., Raytheon employs 73,000 people worldwide. Michael supports the National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee to the President of the United States and the Transglobal Secure Collaboration Program. He was the 2006 recipient of the People's Choice Award for the ISE New England Information Security Executive of the Year and the 2007 recipient of the Security 7 Award for the Manufacturing sector.

23 Years in the Security Industry, Still Intimidated by a USENIX Crowd