Chapter 23
The Bleeding Edge

Omer Green
Introduction

- We have become dependent on a variety of vulnerable online applications
- Developers usually don’t care until they get hacked
- In this lecture we will discuss 3 applications which make up the bleeding edge of security research
Lecture Contents

- Computer Games
- Web Applications
- Privacy Technology
Games were one of the first computer applications

The game development industry has grown in the last decades

Some people will try to cheat, especially in multiplayer games

We will discuss cheating in online games
There are 3 types of cheating:

- Exploiting vulnerabilities that existed in an offline game and made it into the online world
- Applying known computer-security issues to the game
- New cheating tactics that emerge because of the nature of online computer games
Unauthorized software

- A popular cheating strategy is to run your own programs – bots
- Those bots come in a variety of sophistication levels
- The developers try to prevent that by encrypting the packet stream and using antivirus-like guard software
Virtual Economies

- Bots are used for farming in multiplayer games
- As people buy the farmed goods with money, macroeconomic effects start to matter
- Exchange rates, illegal gambling
In EVE Online a single high-end ship can cost thousands of dollars.

A player’s misclick can ignite wars that cost tens or even hundreds of thousands of real dollars.
Web Applications

- More and more services are accessible through web browsers
- There are many common problems to all kinds of websites:
  - Not sanitizing input
  - Exposure of the inner structure of the website
- Securing websites is especially important nowadays
Social Networking Websites

- Social Networking Websites have taken off rapidly since 2004
- Peer pressure – everyone has a Facebook account
- Holds massive amount of personal information – excellent targeted advertisement

Credit: thoughtpurusits.com
### Social Networking Websites

- Access control is very important in these websites
- The security policy is very complex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Privacy Settings and Tools</th>
<th>Timeline and Tagging Settings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Who can see my stuff?</td>
<td>Who can post on your timeline?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Who can see your future posts?</td>
<td>- Review posts friends tag you in before they appear on your timeline?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Review all your posts and things you're tagged in</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Limit the audience for posts you've shared with friends of friends or Public?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who can contact me?</td>
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<td>- Who can send you friend requests?</td>
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<td>- Whose messages do I want filtered into my inbox?</td>
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<td>Who can lock me up?</td>
<td>How can I manage tags people add and tagging suggestions?</td>
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<td>- Who can look you up using the email address you provided?</td>
<td>- Review tags people add to your own posts before the tags appear on Facebook?</td>
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<td>- Who can look you up using the phone number you provided?</td>
<td>- When you're tagged in a post, who do you want to add to the audience if they aren't already in it?</td>
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<td>- Do you want other search engines to link to your timeline?</td>
<td>- Who sees tag suggestions when photos that look like you are uploaded?</td>
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Credit: facebook.com
Social Networking Websites

- There are subtle policy issues
  - Notifying your status changes to your friends
  - Using private information in searches
  - Authorizing third-party applications

- Facebook leaves the hard security decisions to the users

- Dealing with social issues
  - Bullying
  - Internet lynching/Social Shaming
Before the industrial revolution, most people lived in villages – zero privacy

Moving to towns gave people anonymity

Now the world is steadily becoming more documented and people have less privacy, again

Despite all the issues, social network websites have their perks
- The largest target for phishing, along with PayPal
- Has both new and old-fashioned fraud
- Uses a reputation system that can be exploited
Google uses the Pagerank algorithm

- Gets revenue by placing personalized ads (AdWords)
- Website owners can display relevant ads and get paid (AdSense)
AdWords & AdSense proved to be hugely popular and profitable, but (as you might guessed) were prone to exploits:

- Click-fraud
- Impression spam
- Google arbitrage
- Made-for-AdSense websites

Google Hacking – using Google to find vulnerable targets
Privacy Technology

- Technology is putting social conventions under strain
  - Denying past conversations
  - Anonymity
Anonymous Email

- Even if the communication is encrypted, the fact that it happened may give the game away
- The dining cryptographers problem
- For practical applications - anonymous remailer

\[ A \rightarrow C: \{D, \{B, \{M\}_{KB}\}_{KD}\}_{KC} \]

- Intelligence agencies can operate remailers as honey traps
Dining Cryptographers

None paid

A

B 1 1

C 0 (0 xor 1)

0 (1 xor 1) xor 1 xor 0 = 0

A paid

A

B 1 1

C 0 (0 xor 1)

1 xor 0 xor 0 = 1

Credit: Wikipedia.org
Tor

- The Onion Router – system for anonymous communication and web browsing
- Uses onion routing
- Vulnerabilities:
  - End-to-end communication is not encrypted
  - Malicious exit node
  - Side channels
  - Exposed to traffic analysis by capable adversaries
  - Applications can get user to identify themselves explicitly and implicitly
  - Traffic patterns can still give you away
Email Encryption

- PGP

\[ \{KS\}_{KB}, \{M, \{h(M)\}_{KA}^{-1}\}_{KS} \]

- Encrypting isn’t always enough

- Encryption has to be resistant to rubber-hose cryptoanalysis

Related xkcd
Steganography

- Steganography – hiding data in data
- Hide message in the least significant bits of an image
- Steganographic file system
- TrueCrypt
Some of the most challenging security engineering today have to do with the new online applications sweeping the world. What goes wrong is just the same as we’ve seen elsewhere – the move to online applications was accompanied by a litany of bugs and security issues. As more and more of our lives move online, the criticality and complexity of online applications grow.