Attacking Next-Generation Firewalls

Breaking PAN-OS

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Research

Application and Virtualization Security

Recent Research
  - Hypervisors (Xen)
  - Security Appliances (Fireeye, Palo Alto)

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The Target

- Palo Alto Next-Generation Firewall
- Pan-OS
  - Software stack running on Palo Alto devices
- Analyzed device is a PA-500
  - .. but bugs affect all (unpatched) devices
- Main focus lies on attacks against the device itself
  - ..not detection bypasses
Features

- "Next Gen Firewall"
- Management Interfaces
  - Web + SSH
- Signature Matching
  - IPS, Exploit Detection, Wildfire Malware Analysis
- App-ID
- User-ID
- GlobalProtect

https://www.paloaltonetworks.com
## Overview

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<td>Untrusted</td>
<td>Untrusted</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Impression</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>Seems ok from first impression</td>
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Agenda

- Breaking In
- PAN-OS Architecture
- Attack Surface
  - Management Interface
  - User-ID
  - GlobalProtect
- Conclusion
Breaking In

- Administrative Interfaces: CLI over SSH and Web Interface
  - Do not give full access to the operation system
  - „Jailbreak“ is a prerequisite for further research
Breaking In

- CLI is restricted interface for configuration, troubleshooting
- Several commands are wrappers around standard Linux utilities
- Command line injection in test scp-server-connection:

```bash
test scp-server-connection initiate hostname "-oProxyCommand = chsh -s /bin/bash ernw" password b username c
```
PAN-OS Architecture

- Linux system running on MIPS64 processor
  - Cavium Octeon+ processor
  - 2.6.32 Kernel for PanOS 6.X
- Virtual appliances run on x64
- Network processing built on top of standard Linux capabilities
- Advanced features implemented as proprietary Linux daemons
# PAN-OS Architecture

## PAN-OS Architecture Diagram

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## Linux Kernel

Linux Kernel

## Software Components

- `authd`
- `cli`
- `appweb3 + PHP`
- `openssh`
- `GNU stack`
- `cryptod`
- `sysd`
- `mgmt`
- `global-protect`
PAN-OS Architecture

- Web Interfaces are implemented on top of EmbedThis Appweb 3
  - Functionality is implemented as native PHP extensions called by small PHP wrapper scripts
- Three web server instances
  - Management Interface
  - GlobalProtect / SSL VPN
  - Captive Portal
Attack Surface

- Management Interfaces
  - Hopefully on isolated interfaces
- Content-, App-, User-ID
  - Untrusted network segments
- GlobalProtect / VPN
  - External (as in the Internet)
Management Web Interface

- Web UI for manual management
- REST API for automated access
- Implemented on top of Appweb3 + PHP environment
- Many features => Large attack surface
  - But most features require authentication
**REST API**

- REST API for automated management
- Can be reached with requests to `/api` URL
- POST requests will trigger call to native `apiWgetFilter` function
  - Unauthenticated 😊
- If request contains `client=wget`, `curl` is invoked to check authentication against internal service.
apiWgetFilter

- curl command escapes and uses following user supplied parameters:
  - “key” request parameter
  - HTTP Authentication Headers
  - Remote IP (from X-Real-Ip header if available)
- `escapeshellarg()` is used to escape values
  - Puts single quote before and after value
  - Escapes single quotes in value
Pseudo Code: apiWgetFilter

```python
if key:
    if escapeshellarg(escaped_key, 1024, key) < 0:
        abort_connection

if basic_auth:
    if escapeshellarg(escaped_auth, 1024, basic_auth) < 0:
        abort_connection

if headers['HTTP_X_REAL_IP']:
    escapeshellarg(escaped_ip, 1024, headers['HTTP_X_REAL_IP'])
else:
    escapeshellarg(escaped_ip, 1024, remote_addr)

call_curl(escaped_key, escaped_ip, escaped_auth)
```
Pseudo Code: apiWgetFilter

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if headers['HTTP_X_REAL_IP']:
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else:
    escapeshellarg(escaped_ip, 1024, remote_addr)

call_curl(escaped_key, escaped_ip, escaped_auth)
```
PreAuth RCE in Management Web Interface

- Return value of `escapeshellarg()` is not checked for X-Real-Ip header
- How can the function fail?
  - Second argument is length of the output buffer ➔ Max amount of bytes that can be written
- Overlong value: Closing single quote won’t be written
- Off-by-One in quoting allows simple command injection in other values:
  - `key=; touch /tmp/ernw_poc;'`
Demo
POST
@api/aa?client=wget&key=%3b%20%74%6f%75%63%68%20%2f%74%6d%70%2f%65%72%6e%77%5f%70%6f%63%3b%27 HTTP/1.1
Host: 192.168.75.166
X-Real-Ip:

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First Result

- Unauthenticated command execution against management web interface
  - 100% stable
- Hardened environments ➔ Management interface won’t be accessible for attackers
- Other attack surface is more interesting
User-ID

- Core selling point of Palo Alto devices
- Implement firewall policies based on user accounts (not IP addresses)
- Example:
  - User bob@corp can connect to DC on port 3389

https://www.paloaltonetworks.com
User-ID

- Firewall needs to have mapping between IP addresses and active user account.
- Five main ways:
  - Server Monitoring (agentless)
  - Server Monitoring (agent)
  - Captive Portal
  - Client Probing
  - Global Protect
Server Monitoring

- Assumption: AD based environment
- Agentless Monitoring
  - Create dedicated user for accessing domain controller (server operator permissions)
  - Store credentials on firewall
  - Firewall connects to DC / Exchange Server and reads event logs

⇒ Simple but stores credentials on device
User-ID: Server Monitoring

- Install User-ID Agent on Windows Server
  - Does not need to be the DC
- Configure domain account for agent.
- Agent connects to DC, Firewall connects to agent.
- For accepting connections from firewall User-ID Agent listens on TCP port 5007
User-ID: Captive Portal

- Addition/Alternative to server monitoring
- Hijack port 80 (+443) connections and force manual login
- Captive Portal is implemented using Appweb3 + PHP Extensions
  - Significant attack surface
Event Logs might be old, captive portal not feasible for non HTTP traffic.

Idea: Just ask the client what user is logged in!

- ... I did not say good idea

Enabled by default

Netbios and/or WMI
**R7-2014-16: Palo Alto Networks User-ID Credential Exposure**

Project Sonar tends to identify unexpected issues, especially with regards to network security products. In July of this year, we began to notice a flood of incoming SMB connections every time we launched the VxWorks WDBRPC scan. To diagnose the issue, we ran the Metasploit SMB Capture module on one of our scanning nodes and collected the results. After reviewing the data, we realized a common trend in the usernames of the incoming SMB connections.

After some digging, we traced this back to the Palo Alto Networks (PAN) User-ID feature, an optional component provided by PAN that "gives network administrators granular controls over what various users are allowed to do when filtered by a Palo Alto Networks Next-Generation Firewall". We contacted PAN and they confirmed that some of their customers must have misconfigured User-ID to enable the feature on external/untrusted zones. In summary, every time we triggered a PAN filter on a misconfigured appliance, our scanning node would receive an inbound authentication attempt by User-ID. This issue is not a vulnerability in the typical sense, but we felt that the impact was significant enough that it required notification and public disclosure.
Demo
GlobalProtect

- VPN solution with support for mobile devices
  - SSL-VPN/IPsec
  - Desktop Clients and Mobile Apps for popular platforms
- Can also be used internally
  - GlobalProtect authentication maps to Client-ID
GlobalProtect

- SSL-VPN and configuration APIs implemented on top of web interface
  - Appweb3 + PHP again 😊
- Very interesting attack surface
  - Remote (from the internet)
  - Some functionality does not require authentication
GlobalProtect: DoS

POST /global-protect/login.esp HTTP/1.1
Host: 192.168.2.1
Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded
Content-Length: 59487

prot=https%3A%2F%2Fserver=192.168.2.1%26ok=Login%26inputStr%3D&action=getsoftware&user=aa&passwd=A

[...]
GlobalProtect: DoS

- Password is passed to `unescapeStringForXml` which uses `alloca` to allocate space from stack.
- Stack size is heavily limited 😞 → Invalid memory access
- (Might be exploitable for more than DoS depending on the target system)
GlobalProtect: Static encryption keys

- GlobalProtect cookies are encrypted.
- Uses (shuffled) device master key as AES key
- By default: p1a2l3o4a5l6t7o8
  - No change enforced during installation
- Attack can create arbitrary faked cookies 😊
  - Allows for „interesting“ attacks against VPN authentication
- Not considered a security vulnerability by Palo Alto
- Recommendation: Change Device Master Key!
  - From us and admin guide!
GlobalProtect: Getting Code Execution

- Goal: Remote unauthenticated compromise of the device
- Unauthenticated attack surface is limited
  - Most code directly calls into login functions
- Code uses `escapeStringForXml` function to escape username before sending XML encoded IPC message to authentication daemon.
GlobalProtect: escapeStringForXml

- Function does not perform any length checks
- Destination is stack allocated buffer of size 1024
- To ensure that no overlong usernames are passed to function, sslvpn_field_filter_check_user is used.
split user@domain

true

is_valid_utf8 (no ASCII)

false

length check

true

valid

false

regex

invalid

sslvpn_field_filter_check_user
sslvpn_field_filter_check_user

- If username/domain consists only of UTF-8 characters (and no ASCII) length check is skipped.
- Trivial DoS: Login with a username consisting of 10000 Ä
- RCE possible?
The Way To Code Execution

- Destination buffer is fixed size stack buffer
  - No stack canaries
- Executable without PIE
  - Very small helper binary that calls into main appweb3 library
  - Libraries use ASLR
- MIPS64
  - Big Endian (no partial overwrites)
  - eXecute Inhibit
  - pointers and address Space are 32bit
  - $ra register (return address) is 64bit wide!
The Way To Code Execution

- First problem: Username can not contain any ASCII characters
- Can be partially bypassed by splitting username into user@domain
  - user is utf-8 string of arbitrary length
  - domain is alphanumeric ASCII string < 250

- Return Address overwrite?
  - $ra is 64bit, upper half needs to be zero
  - Big Endian Overwrite + Alphanumeric ASCII == :(
The Way To Code Execution

- Pointer to PHP context is stored on stack
  - Used before function return for call to `php_body_write`
- Context has pointers to pointers to function pointer (double indirection)
- Problem: New value for context pointer needs to be alphanumeric
- Solution: Heap Spray
HeapSpray

- **Appweb3 Heap Spray:**
  - Stores up to 1MB of arbitrary content until it finds "\r\n\r\n"
  - Open many connections and send payload. Keep connections alive by repeatedly sending additional single-bytes

- **Reliable allocates payload at:**
  - 0x31633130 or 1c10 in ASCII
PC Control: php_body_write

```
php_body_write:
lw   $a3, 0($a2)
lui  $a4, 0x61
addu $a4, $t9
addiu $a4, (unk_9A7)
lw   $v1, (output_)
lw   $v0, (output_)
addiu $v0, -1
sll  $v0, 2
addu $a3, $v0
lw   $v1, 0($a3)
lw   $t9, 0($v1)
jr   $t9
nop
```

$a2 == 0x31633130
$a3 == 0x31633134
$v1 == 0x3163313C
$t9 == ROP GADGET
$pc$ to Code Execution

- Problem: Cavium Octeon+ support non executable memory $\Rightarrow$ Heap spray is not executable
- ROP needed!
- MIPS64 Rop:
  - Aligned 4byte instructions $\Rightarrow$ No accidental gadgets
- Only object at constant address is appweb3
  - Contains only 10 functions mostly wrapper that directly call into (randomized) shared libraries
- $\Rightarrow$ No suitable ROP chain to get arbitrary execution of MIPS instructions discovered 😞
$pc$ to Code Execution

- But: Creation of arbitrary files possible:

```
lw     $t9, 0($s1)
addiu  $s0, 1
move   $a0, $s5
move   $a1, $s4
move   $a2, $s3
jalr   $t9
```

- Call to `maStartLogging` with arbitrary second argument

```
maStartLogging:
lui    $t7, 0x1010
lw     $t9, maStartLogging_ptr
addiu  $t8, $t7, (maStartLoggin
jr      $t9
```

- Control over $s1$ and $s4$ 

- `maStartLogging` creates a file at the path stored in the second argument
File Creation to Code Execution

- Needs another (local) bug 😊
- Includes a local privilege escalation to root.
Final Demo
Recommendations

- Isolate management interface
  - Very feature rich, hard to secure completely
- Think critically about relying on User-ID for security critical filtering
  - OK for business related policies or in combination with strong authentication (802.1X e.g.)
  - Not recommended for isolation of management interfaces
- Disable Client Probing
- Isolate User-ID Agent
- Change Master Password
- Keep System updated
Summary

- More features ➔ Bigger attack surface ➔ More vulnerabilities
- Very professional handling and response by Palo Alto
- Vulnerabilities are not great but response show right mindset ➔ Positive about future progress
Thanks for your attention!

Q&A

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