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Vulnerability Discovery: Bridging the Gap Between Analysis and Engineering

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE JAN 2006		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2006 to 00-00-2006	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Vulnerability Discovery: Bridging the Gap Between Analysis and Engineering				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Carnegie Mellon University ,Software Engineering Institute (SEI),Pittsburgh,PA,15213				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

Overture

Where are we today?

What is Vulnerability Discovery?

Problem Statement

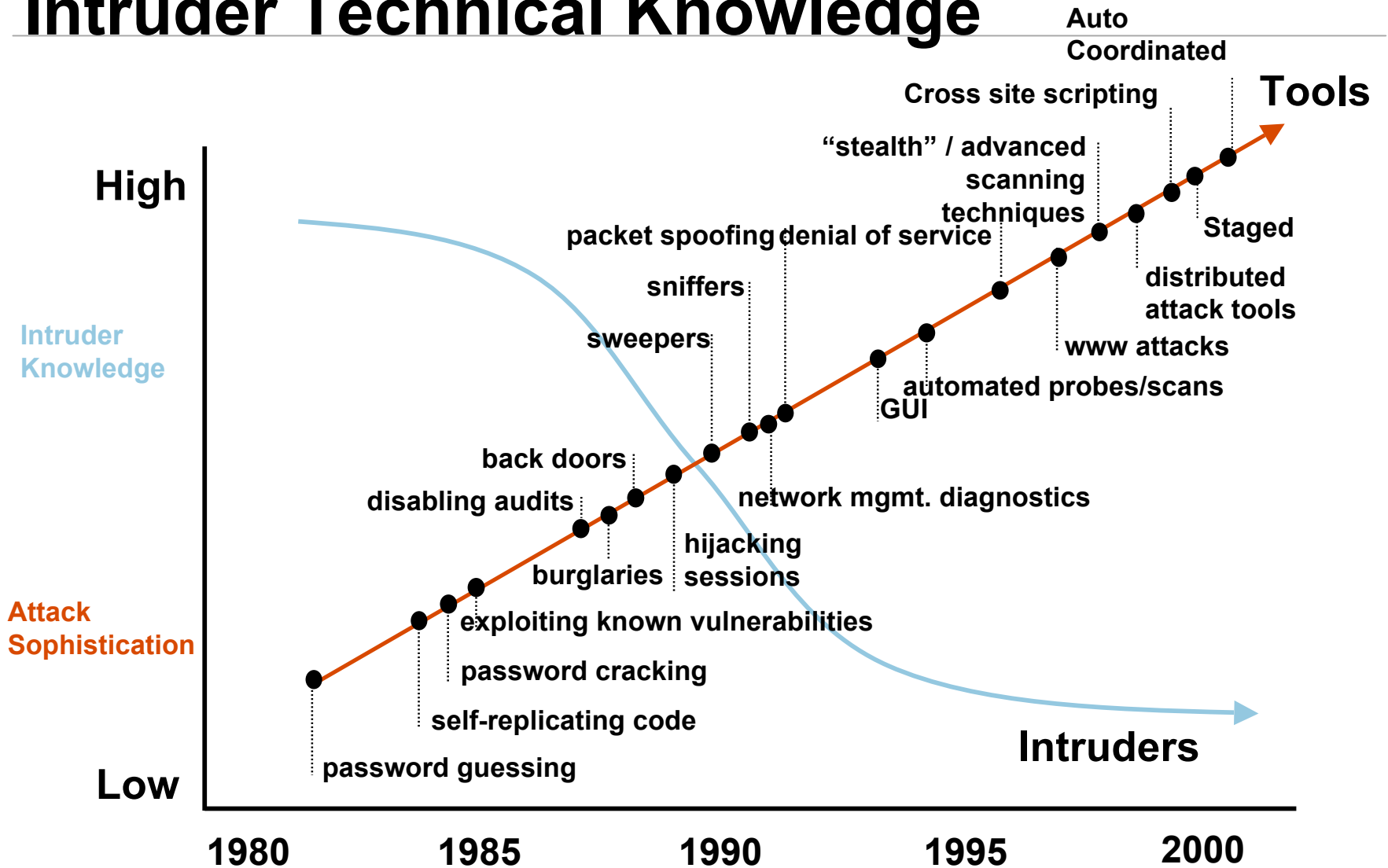
Why is this problem?

Who are we?

- Our Vision
- Our Agenda

Where are we today?

Attack Sophistication vs. Intruder Technical Knowledge



What is Vulnerability Discovery?

Vulnerability discovery is a process used to uncover and fix types of software defects with security impacts when present in information systems:

Vulnerabilities

Problem Statement (1)

Security analysts document:

- Preconditions for exploit
- Impacts of exploitation
- Remediation for system administrators

Gap: Underlying engineering causes

Problem Statement (2)

The vulnerability discovery process needs to reach a point where it can be ***systematically*** used by developers and testers to improve the practice of security engineering.

Problem Statement (3)

Today the discovery process is too *ad-hoc* for software engineers, who need:

- Root cause analysis (not just attack vectors)
- Line numbers of code, function points, data and execution path analysis,
- Tools, and the knowledge and motivation to use them in their process

Why is this a problem?

Because the security industry, by and large, is still too *reactive*

And the later a vulnerability is found, the more costly it is to fix . . .

Who are we?

Vulnerability Researchers

CERT Coordination Center

Software Engineering Institute

Carnegie Mellon University

Our Vision

Enabling informed trust and confidence in a networked world means

Zero
vulnerabilities in software

Another Perspective

Finding vulnerabilities using test tools, techniques

Translating the context for properly fixing

Provide quality assurance as early in the product lifecycle, ideally *without exploits*

Goals

- Perform discovery work in a safe environment
- Transform analytical understanding into engineering knowledge
- Reduce the amount of time and effort (cost) required to find and fix vulnerabilities

***WE DO THIS TODAY by BUILDING
DISCOVERY TOOLS for ENGINEERS***

Our Agenda

Translating our domain expertise into engineering knowledge and tools that can eliminate all known types of vulnerabilities as early in the product lifecycle as possible

Case Studies

Motivation:

To gain experience with knowledge, process, and tools useful as discovery agents

To understand potential engineering principles behind the discovery of software vulnerabilities

Results:

Targeted discovery work in selected technologies

An Easy Target: ActiveX

1995 – OLE 2 → COM → ActiveX

2000 – CERT/CC ActiveX Security Workshop

2005 – VU#680526 → New vector for exploiting COM vulnerabilities via Internet Explorer discovered

2006 – Dranzer, the COM Object Tester

Other Applications

Red teaming and Penetration Testing

Targeted Critical Infrastructure Protection

Aid intelligence, law enforcement, and military operations

Vulnerability Re-Discovery

- To help reverse engineer attack tools
- To independently validate analysis
- To bridge the gap between discovers and analysts

Summary (1)

- Finding more effective test methods to discover vulnerabilities is hard and requires knowledge about vulnerabilities and the systems they are a part of
- Developing effective test tools requires knowledge, experimentation, innovation and time

Summary (2)

- Translating vulnerability analytical products into engineering knowledge is needed to bridge the current gap between the security community and the developer community

Questions

What questions do you folks have?

Coda

Vulnerability discovery is both a journey and a destination:

It needs a stable environment to thrive

It needs to become much more disciplined to create engineering knowledge

It needs a community of like-minded folks to grow tools and techniques

For More Information

Contact CERT/CC Vulnerability Discovery Project by email:

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Visit the CERT® web site

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