Reverse Engineering and Application Development

Iowa Code Camp 2024

whoami

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Focused on firmware security

Background in Application Development

Agenda

- Why Reverse Engineering?
- Reverse Engineering Tools
- Reverse Engineering .NET
- Reverse Engineering JVM
- Reverse Engineering Native Machine Code Binaries

Why Reverse Engineering?

- To understand the internals of a given piece of software
 - Find Security Vulnerabilities
 - Analyze Malware
- To develop data integrations for proprietary software
- Modify legacy applications to fix vulnerabilities or implement new features
 - Works even when the source code or compiler toolchain is unavailable

Reverse Engineering Tools - .NET

1) dotpeek - https://www.jetbrains.com/decompiler/

2) DnSpyEx - <u>https://github.com/dnSpyEx/dnSpy</u>

3) ILSpy - <u>https://github.com/icsharpcode/ILSpy</u>

4) ildasm / ilasm

Reverse Engineering Tools - JVM

- 1) JD-GUI <u>https://java-decompiler.github.io/</u>
- 2) JADX-GUI (Android) https://github.com/skylot/jadx
- 3) Jasper / Jasmin <u>https://github.com/kohsuke/jasper</u> / <u>https://github.com/davidar/jasmin</u>

Reverse Engineering Tools - Machine Code

- 1) Ghidra https://ghidra-sre.org/
- 2) IDA Pro https://hex-rays.com/ida-pro
- 3) Binary Ninja <u>https://binary.ninja/</u>

Reverse Engineering - .NET

- For applications that compile down to byte code (JVM / CLR, primarily) there are tools that can take a compiled dll, jar, war, exe and create a near-source code quality representation of the code.
- There are ways to modify a compiled application without source code.
 Code signing helps mitigate the risk of this type of attack
- Obfuscation is usually enough of an impediment for Reverse Engineers

Why reverse engineer server-side applications? - Security

- As an attacker, often compiled applications contain secrets like keys and passwords
- As an attacker, you might want to modify an application without the source code
 - This is possible using tools like ILASM.exe/ILDASM.exe for dotnet CLR

Why reverse engineer server-side applications? - Dev

- Have you lost the source code? Data loss does happen :-(
- As a developer, you may need to integrate with a product that has no documentation (legacy code, anyone?)
- As a developer, you may want to analyze proprietary code to understand how it works
- As a developer, it is important to understand what an attacker can do with your production binaries from a security perspective

.NET

- .cs files compile down to .dll or .exe files
- Based on MSIL bytecode for server side apps
 - The equivalent of Java's JVM Bytecode / Smali Bytecode
- Compiles down to MSIL (Microsoft Intermediate Language)
 - The .NET equivalent of JVM Bytecode
- This runs on the .NET CLR (Common language runtime)
- Source files are .cs files which compile to exe or dll
 - DLL's more common for web apps

ILSpy

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Dotpeek



Client-side .NET

Jadx-gui - https://github.com/skylot/jadx

- Useful for extracting Xamarin Assemblies
- Extracts the static content (res/) from the APK and presents it in a tree view

Client-side .NET

Modifying MSIL Bytecode without Source Code

The next few slides will focus on techniques for modifying MSIL Bytecode without access to the original source code.

We'll discuss:

- Why would anyone want to do this?
- Examples
- Process
- Tooling

Why would anyone want to do this?

Development:

• Modify an application when source code is lost

Security:

• Patch an application to log out sensitive information

Examples of Patching MSIL Bytecode - Security

Server-side

• Server side: when a login request is received, log out the username and password to a file on the filesystem.

Client-side

• Client side: make an HTTP request to an unauthorized remote server with authentication tokens received from a legitimate authentication request

Process

- 1) Write out Dotnet code you wish to inject in a console application. Create a function that accepts the data you wish to operate on.
- 2) Disassemble this console application
- 3) Disassemble the source code you wish to inject code into
- 4) Modify the source code disassembly to include the console application disassembly and write integration disassembly to call the function you wrote in 1)
- 5) Reassemble source .cs file
- 6) Reassemble DLL / Drop on file system cache.

https://starkeblog.com/backdooring/dotnet/2024/04/19/backdooring-dotnet-applications.ht ml

Dotnet Disassembler / Assembler Duo

Dotnet MSIL Assembler: ILASM.exe -

https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/framework/tools/ilasm-exe-il-assembler

Dotnet MSIL Disassembler: ILDASM.exe -

https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/framework/tools/ildasm-exe-il-disasse mbler

- These two tools are built to work with each other.
- Available through Visual Studio Developer Shell

ildasm

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How to mitigate this threat

- Strong name signing https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/standard/assembly/sign-strong-na me
- Read only file system for executable code

Android implements code signing by default - consider this for your production applications even when they are server-side.

Anti-reverse engineering techniques

Obfuscation!

• Dotfuscator - https://www.preemptive.com/products/dotfuscator

Benefits:

- Makes code extremely difficult to reverse
- Makes code extremely difficult to modify

Cons:

• Server-side: usually expensive in terms of \$ cost

Goals of Obfuscation

Obfuscation can be used to deter attackers

Usually all you need to do is put up enough of a barrier to entry that it makes a potential attacker move on to the next target

Obfuscation alone is not sufficient to secure an application!

- Secrets should not be stored in source code
- Secrets should not be stored in source code
- SECRETS SHOULD NOT BE STORED IN SOURCE CODE

Resources

 Managed Code Rootkits (Book): <u>https://www.amazon.com/Managed-Code-Rootkits-Hooking-Environments/</u> <u>dp/1597495743</u>

Reverse Engineering Java / JVM

- .java files compile down to .class files
- Based on JVM bytecode for server side apps
 - The equivalent of .NET's MSIL

Server-side Java - JD-GUI

Reverse engineering tools for Server-side Java applications

- JD-GUI (https://github.com/java-decompiler/jd-gui)
- `brew install jd-gui` on MacOS
- Install from github releases on Linux
- Requires JDK 1.8 specifically
- Has sufficient decompiler output
- Can output all java files in a jar

JD-GUI Screenshot



Java - Fernflower Decompiler

Fernflower is the JetBrains Java Decompiler

- Comes bundled with IntelliJ
- Can be run from the command line directly
- Has much clearer output than JD-GUI
- No UI, outputs .java files

Client-side Java (Native Android)

Jadx-gui - https://github.com/skylot/jadx

- A lot like JD-GUI
- Does all the manual work of extracting the APK then disassembling/decompiling the SMALI bytecode into Java classes
- Extracts the static content (res/) from the APK and presents it in a tree view

JADX-GUI Screenshot

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More JADX-GUI Screenshots

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JD-GUI - Scala Decompiler Output

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import scala.Predef$;
     public final class Hello$ {
       public static final Hello$ MODULE$;
       public void main(String[] args) {
         Predef$.MODULE$.println("Hello, world");
       private Hello$() {
10
         MODULE$ = this;
11
12
13
```

Java Disassembler / Assembler Duo

Java Class Disassembler: Jasper - <u>https://github.com/kohsuke/jasper</u>

Java Class Assembler: Jasmin - https://github.com/davidar/jasmin

- These two tools are built to work with each other.
- Jasmin will not work with "javap -c"!
- Both tools were built between 2000-2004
- Modifications to source are necessary for both to compile with modern Java tooling.
- Jasper works with maven, Jasmin works with ant.

How to mitigate this threat

- Jar signing (via `jarsigner` tool)
- Read only file system for executable code

Android implements jar signing by default - consider this for your production applications even when they are server-side.

JVM: Anti-reverse engineering techniques

Obfuscation!

• Proguard - Java

Benefits:

- Makes code extremely difficult to reverse
- Makes code extremely difficult to modify

Cons:

• Server-side: usually expensive in terms of \$ cost

JVM: More Resources

Covert Java (Book): <u>https://www.amazon.com/dp/0672326388</u>

Native Machine Code

Ghidra - https://ghidra-sre.org/

- Developed by the US National Security Agency
- Open-source

Ghidra - Disassembler

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	1001e020a	90 fe ff ff 48 89 4d c0	MOV	qword ptr [RBP + local_48],RCX
	1001e020e	48 89 45 c8	MOV	qword ptr [RBP + local_40],RAX
→	1001e0212	48 8d 3d 81 81 12 00	LEA	RDI,[s_root_10030839a]
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	1001e021e	ba 01 00 00 00	MOV	EDX,0x1
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Ghidra - Patch Binary

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Ghidra - Full Screenshot

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Questions?

Thank you!