Attack Graphs
Outline

- Attack Graphs
- MulVal
- System-wide Info Flow
Towards System-Wide, Deployment-Specific MAC Policy Generation for Proactive Integrity Mediation

Sandra Rueda, Divya Muthukumaran, Hayawardh Vijayakumar, Trent Jaeger, Swarat Chaudhuri
Systems and Internet Infrastructure Security (SIIS) Lab
Computer Science and Engineering Department
Pennsylvania State University

September, 2011
Talk Outline

• Current State of Security
  ‣ Attack methods are comprehensive
  ‣ Defenses are ad hoc

• Problem: Generate proactive defense automatically
  ‣ What do we know how to do already?
  ‣ Develop a solution method built on such techniques

• How will such a method impact system design/deployment?
  ‣ Prototype to generate and test system-wide MAC policies
  ‣ Other talks: (1) integrity measurement protocol that measures such defenses and (2) process firewall that protects system call interface
Current Attacks

• Attack unprivileged processes first
  ‣ Then, escalate privilege incrementally via local exploits
  ‣ Leverage (unjustified) trust between processes_hosts to propagate attacks

• Such Attack Paths are ubiquitous in current systems
  ‣ Processes are tightly interconnected
    • Historically, all user processes have same privilege and can utilize system services
  ‣ Any control flow vulnerability can be leveraged to run any code
    • Return-oriented programming

• Claim: Adversaries will use any undefended path
Current Defenses

- We have made progress the last 10 years or so
  - Vulnerable network services galore → hardened, privilege-separated daemons (OpenSSH)
  - Default-enabled services → hardened configurations (IIS)
  - Root system processes galore → Mandatory access control (Linux, BSD)
  - Application plug-ins in same address space → Run application code in separate processes (Chrome, OP browsers)
  - Email attachments compromise system → Prevent downloaded content from modifying system (MIC, antivirus)
  - A process in one host can easily access another host → Limit open ports (host firewalls, labeled networking)
MAC Operating Systems

- Mandatory Access Control (MAC) operating systems
  - Define an immutable set of labels and assign them to every subject and object in the system
  - Define a fixed set of authorized operations based on the labels
- Now available in most commodity operating systems (Trusted Solaris, TrustedBSD, SELinux, AppArmor, Windows MIC*, etc)
MAC Enforcement Everywhere

- MAC enforcement in the OS alone is not enough

- Several applications are designed to serve users with multiple security requirements
  - OS cannot control what these applications do

- OS are not trusted to isolate computing (*reference monitor concept*)
  - But virtualization is (for now)
  - MAC at virtualization layer (VMM, hypervisor) can mediate system comprehensively

- OS MAC does not control operations between hosts
  - Labeled networking assigns labels to all network data (Labeled IPsec and Secmark Firewall)
We’ve Created a Monster

- We end up with systems consisting of
  - Complex programs
  - Complex program configurations
  - Complex MAC policies
  - Systems consisting of many, independent components

- All these are built with a particular threat model in mind
  - Which is likely different than the actual deployment

- System administrators are left to fix them
Taming a Monster

- Design components to defend threats proactively
  - Programs: protect at some interfaces; expect high integrity data at others
  - OS Distros: protect at some ports, files; expect high integrity data at others
  - Hosts: Ditto

- System administrators create systems from multiple, independent components, connecting them to external resources
  - They would like to know that the use of these components corresponds to their defenses

- The two tasks are ultimately the same conceptual problem
  - System-wide MAC policies to defend deployments proactively. We need automated tools to generate
What Do We Know How To Do?

- Compute Attack Paths (from Attack Graphs)
  - Find the sequence of steps that adversaries can take to compromise a system

- Compute Compliance
  - Find information flow and permission errors in programs and system MAC policies

- Identify Attack Surfaces
  - Find how systems and programs are accessible to adversaries

- Attack-Specific Analyses
  - E.g., input sanitization
What Do We Know How To Do?

• **Compute Attack Paths (from Attack Graphs)**
  ‣ Find the sequence of steps that adversaries can take to compromise a system

• **Compute Compliance**
  ‣ Find information flow and permission errors in programs and system MAC policies

• **Identify Attack Surfaces**
  ‣ Find how systems and programs are accessible to adversaries

• **Attack-Specific Analyses**
  ‣ E.g., input sanitization
Compliance Problem

- Evaluating whether a policy permits an adversary to have unauthorized access (i.e., contains an error) is a compliance problem:
  - **System Policy**: describes a system’s behavior
  - **Goal Policy**: describes acceptable behavior
  - **Mapping function**: relates elements from the system policy to elements in the goal policy
  - A compliant system policy is guaranteed to meet the requirements defined by the goal policy
Evaluating OS MAC Policy

- We represent a single MAC policy with an information flow graph
  - Used in analyses for SELinux by Tresys, Stoller, Li, Jaeger, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>etc_t</th>
<th>var_t</th>
<th>sbin_t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>installer_t</td>
<td>read,write</td>
<td>read,write</td>
<td>read,write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kernel_t</td>
<td>read,write</td>
<td>read,write</td>
<td>read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ftpd_t</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>read</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The policy compliance problem for a single policy is set up as follows:

- **System policy** – The policy that we are analyzing is represented as a graph.
Compliance Problem

- The policy compliance problem for a single policy is set up as follows:
  - **System policy** – The policy that we are analyzing is represented as a graph
  - **Goal** – The security goal is a lattice that defines integrity levels and rules that guarantee the integrity of the system
The policy compliance problem for a single policy is set up as follows:

- **System policy** – The policy that we are analyzing is represented as a graph

- **Goal** – The security goal is a lattice that defines integrity levels and rules that guarantee the integrity of the system

- **Mapping** - Assigns integrity levels to policy labels
The policy compliance problem for a single policy is set up as follows:

- **System policy** – The policy that we are analyzing is represented as a graph
- **Goal** – The security goal is a lattice that defines integrity levels and rules that guarantee the integrity of the system
- **Mapping** - Assigns integrity levels to policy labels

Do all flows meet the requirements defined by the goal?
Other Compliance Problems

• Information flow compliance in programs
  ‣ Data flow is determined by program data flows – security-typed languages, such as Jif, Sif, SELinks, FlowCaml

• Goal policy is not a lattice
  ‣ Illegal reachability: no path from \( u \rightarrow_{G} v \)
  ‣ Illegal sets of permissions: annotate edges with permissions

• Goals as obligations
  ‣ The presence of a node, edge, or path is required
  ‣ These are functional constraints, rather than security
Compliance Challenges

- Construct Data Flow Graph
  - Multiple independently-developed policies
    - Different policy languages
    - Different policy concepts
    - Policies may interact in multiple ways
Compliance Challenges

- Goals and mappings are manually-specified
  - Lattice policy is not specified
  - Mapping is not specified
  - Our experience indicates that the size of the goal increases with the size of the distributed system
  - Manual specification is prone to error

  Then, how do you fix errors?
Attack Surfaces

- Where are ‘vulnerabilities’?
  - A flaw, accessible to an adversary, with an ability to compromise that flaw

- Program input interfaces (e.g., read system calls) that are accessible to adversaries [Howard of Microsoft]
Attack Surface Challenges

• How to identify attack surfaces of individual programs
  ‣ All interfaces have access to all process permissions
  ‣ Some interfaces are obvious (network), but others are questionable

• Researchers have used value of data behind interface
  ‣ But this does not say anything about accessibility

• Difficult to identify attack surfaces from the program alone
  ‣ Depends on its deployment

• Goal: Use MAC policies to identify attack surfaces – defenses must be placed there
Goal Statement

Generate a compliant, system-wide MAC policy that minimizes the cost of defense (attack surfaces) mostly-automatically for distributed systems consisting of multiple, independent MAC-enforcing components.
Ideally, Approximately

- Solve as an *optimization problem*
- Find the minimum cost solution that satisfies a goal policy consisting of security and functional constraints (likely, an NP-complete problem)
  - Compliance was defined in terms of security policies only (lattice)
  - Also, need to prevent the removal of necessary function
- Could apply SMT solver or greedy algorithm to solve such a problem
- **Barrier:** While we think that we can predict a meaningful, conservative set of security constraints, little is known about what function is permissible
- **Instead:** *For a particular functional specification, find the minimum cost solution that complies with a goal policy (security only)*
Distributed Compliance Evaluation

1. Evaluate Compliance
2. Resolve Non-Compliant Systems

Component_1
...
Component_n
Optional Specification

Compliant System-Wide MAC Policy
Distributed Compliance Evaluation

Task One: Build System-Wide Data Flow Graph

Task Two: Build System-Wide Information Flow Model

Task Three: Generate System-Wide MAC Policy (DIFC-Flume)

System Components

MAC Policies

Integrity Requirements

Hierarchical Data Flow Graph

Information Flow Model

System-Wide MAC Policy (DIFC-Flume)
System Data Flows?

- **Client**
  - Some Responsibility (OS)
  - Some Responsibility (VM/OS)
  - Less Responsibility (Process)

- **Server**
  - Host Responsibility (VMM)
  - Other External
  - Network

- **VM**
  - httpd process
  - app process
  - Expr

- **Backend VM**

- **Network**
1. Construct Data Flow Graph

- We find that MAC-enforcing components in distributed systems are:
  - Encapsulated: data flows are mediated by MAC policy
  - Hierarchical: each has at most one parent
  - Reusable: same flows may appear multiple times

- We use an hierarchical graph data structure defined by Alur et al. [Alur2004] to concisely represent data flows
A **hierarchical state machine** $K$ is a tuple $(K_1, ... K_n)$ of *modules*, where each module $K_i$ has the following components:

- A finite set $V_i$ of *nodes*.
- A finite set $B_i$ of *boxes*.
- A subset $I_i$ of $V_i$, called *entry nodes*.
- A subset $O_i$ of $V_i$, called *exit nodes*.
- An *indexing function* $Y_i : B_i \to \{i + 1, ..., n\}$ that maps each box of the $i$-th module to an index greater than $i$. That is, if $Y_i(b) = j$ for box $b$ of module $K_i$, then $b$ can be viewed as a reference to the definition of module $K_j$.
- If $b$ is a box of the module $K_i$ with $j = Y_i(b)$, then pairs of the form $(b, u)$ with $u \in I_j$ are the *calls* of $K_i$ and pairs of the form $(b, v)$ with $v \in O_j$ are the *returns* of $K_i$.
- An *edge relation* $E_i$ consisting of pairs $(u, v)$, where the source $u$ is either a node or a return of $K_i$ and $v$ is either a node or a call of $K_i$. 
Secmark Host Firewall Policies:

Web VM: `iptables -t mangle -A OUTPUT -p tcp --dport 3306 -s <srcIP> -d <tgtIP> -j SECMARK --selctx system_u:object_r:db_client_port_t:s0`

DB VM: `iptables -t mangle -A INPUT -p tcp --dport 3306 -s <srcIP> -d <tgtIP> -j SECMARK --selctx system_u:object_r:db_server_port_t:s0`

Xen Security Modules Flask/sHype Policies

SELinux OS MAC Policies
Information Flow Model

System policy: \( G = (V, E) \)
Goal: \( \mathcal{L} = (L, \preceq) \)
Mapping function: \( map : V' \to L, \ V' \subseteq V \)
Compliance: \( \forall u, v \in V. \ (u \xrightarrow{G} v) \to (map(u) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} map(v)) \)

Information Flow Errors: \( \exists u, v \in V. \ u \xrightarrow{G} v \land map(u) \not\xrightarrow{\mathcal{L}} map(v) \)
2. Build the Info Flow Model

- Problem: No explicit security constraint information
- Problem: Distributed systems are too large to annotate manually
- Insight: It’s all around
Identify Integrity Levels

- Problem: No explicit security constraint information
- Problem: Distributed systems are too large to annotate manually
- Insight: It’s all around
- (1) Trusted Computing Bases: (OS) modify kernel objects and (VMM) modify VMM objects
- (2) Application Data: Deploy VMs with a particular application in mind
- (3) Apps trust TCB
- (4) Some Apps Depend on Others: E.g., Web applications depend on DB
Identify Integrity Levels

- Problem: No explicit security constraint information
- Problem: Distributed systems are too large to annotate manually
- Insight: It’s all around
- (1) Trusted Computing Bases: (OS) modify kernel objects and (VMM) modify VMM objects
- (2) Application Data: Deploy VMs with a particular application in mind
- (3) Apps trust TCB
- (4) Some Apps Depend on Others: E.g., Web applications depend on DB
Relate Integrity Levels

- Problem: No explicit security constraint information
- Problem: Distributed systems are too large to annotate manually
- Insight: It's all around
- (1) Trusted Computing Bases: (OS) modify kernel objects and (VMM) modify VMM objects
- (2) Application Data: Deploy VMs with a particular application in mind
- (3) Apps trust TCB
- (4) Some Apps Depend on Others: E.g., Web applications depend on DB
Relate Integrity Levels

- Problem: No explicit security constraint information
- Problem: Distributed systems are too large to annotate manually
- Insight: It’s all around
- (1) Trusted Computing Bases: (OS) modify kernel objects and (VMM) modify VMM objects
- (2) Application Data: Deploy VMs with a particular application in mind
- (3) Apps trust TCB
- (4) Some Apps Depend on Others: E.g., Web applications depend on DB
Expert Knowledge

- Level/Mapping inference
- Lattice inference

Examples

Level/Mapping inference:
- Resources to protect:
  map(VM, boot_t, ID), ID='k-' + VM
  map(webvm, boot_t, k-webvm)

Lattice inference:
- Order: VMs depend on the underlying VMM
  flow(H, L):- component(L, H, _)
  flow(VMM, k-webvm)
  flow(k-webvm, ext)
  order(VMM, web, ext)
  Integrity Goal
Resolve by Mediation

- We resolve a information flow errors by suggesting mediators
  - A mediator is a program expected to implement procedures to sanitize inputs so the integrity of the data raises (endorsement)
3a. Place Mediators

- [McCamant and Ernst PLDI 2008]: Solve max flow problem to quantify information leakage. Inspired us to look into min-cut.

- View *information flow constraints as a graph* between incomparable security labels.

- A *cut of the graph* should correspond to places in the code where mediation statements should be placed such that all *information flow errors* are resolved.
Finding a minimum cost set of mediation points for an arbitrary lattice is a multicut problem for directed graphs which is NP-hard.
Mediation Dominance

- Greedy approach: cut per sink and unions solutions
- We take advantage of the lattice ordering
  - if $l_i \leq l_j$ then solving a cut problem in graph G for label $l_i$ solves any overlapping cut problem for a label $l_j$
Mediation Constraints

• Not all nodes can mediate for all sinks
  ‣ We compute mediation constraints based on the hierarchical structure of the components
Mediation Resolution

- Result
  - Set of mediators that resolve all information flow errors

\[
\text{cutset}(k\text{-dom}0) = \{s\} \\
\text{cutset}(k\text{-db}) = \{\}
\]
Mediators to System-Wide Policy

- After resolution we have:
  - An integrity lattice and the corresponding mapping to MAC policies
  - A set of mediators

- Since we do not have functional requirements we do not modify the original policies (future work)
  - Use subset of operations (see Evaluation)

- We generate a system-wide MAC policy capable of expressing mediation
  - Recent “practical integrity” models – We chose the Flume policy
  - We automate generation of Flume integrity policy for a deployment
Flume

- Lattice-based integrity policy
  - Label: set of integrity tags, \( L = \{\text{kernel, appx}\} \)
  - Ordered under the subset relation

- Each process, \( p \), has an integrity label \( I_p \)
  - For every id \( t \) in \( I_p \), \( p \) has endorsed every input to satisfy \( t \)
  - Communication: sender’s integrity must be higher than receiver’s integrity
  - Some processes have capabilities so they can change their labels (add/remove tags)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Client} & : I_c = \{\text{appx}\} \\
\text{Server} & : I_s = \{\text{serverx, appx}\} \\
D_s & = \{\text{serverx}\}
\end{align*}
\]
3b. Generating Flume Policy

- Processes with capabilities correspond to our mediators
- We want to generate Flume labels and capabilities
  - Mediator m:
    - $L_m$: GLB of the integrity levels that reach the node
    - $D_m$: integrity levels that may reach m
  - Non-mediator n:
    - $L_n$: GLB of the integrity levels that reach the node
    - $D_n$: {}
- Convert from levels to Flume tags
  - Flume label == levels dominated

\[
L_s = k\text{-dom}0 \\
D_s = \{k\text{-dom}0, db, ext\}
\]
Modeling Mediation Cost

- We want to minimize the **cost of mediation**
  - The cost of mediators making information flow decisions correctly
- How is this determined?
  - Cuts identify the set of programs that must enforce information flow requirements
- What is mediation in programs?
Mediation Cost Options

- Per program
  - The mediation requirements of each program are the same
    - Implies reusing same programs in multiple mediation cases

- Per level transformation
  - Each mediation decision is the same
    - Implies that the number of Flume capabilities is the cost (default solution for multicut)

- Per program entry point
  - Adversaries may access the program in multiple ways (attack surface)
    - Implies program has subset of interfaces that may require mediation
    - How do we know which interfaces are accessible?
Attack Surface Cost

- Minimize attack surface size per cut problem
  - Result is the number of security decisions X number of entry points accessible to adversaries
  - Reuse same interfaces in subsequent cuts (may require multiple mediations at same interface)
  - Estimate from runtime analysis (like MAC policies themselves)
The Goal

- How should systems be built and deployed to achieve compliance?
- **Build Software**
  - Define mediated interfaces for programs
  - Which system calls are allowed to receive adversary data?
- **Build OS Distributions**
  - Create OS distribution deployment by specifying: (1) packages and network/VMM policies; (2) MAC policy; and (3) information flow model (semi-automated)
  - Generate MAC policy for deployment that complies with information flow model using program mediation (or revise model or MAC policy)
- **Deploy Systems**
  - Select OS distributions, choose program configurations, define network policy
  - Verify automatically that the deployment satisfies information flow model – can use in remote attestations also (for tomorrow’s talk)
Experimental Testbed

• Distributed system with
  ‣ XSM/Flask at the VMM layer
  ‣ SELinux in the guest VMs
  ‣ iptables with the Secmark extension governing network communications

• We customized the SELinux policies according to the applications the VMs would run:
  ‣ Dom0
  ‣ Database server
  ‣ Web server
  ‣ User VM
Questions

- We use our tool to explore different configurations for a distributed system

1. How many interfaces do developers need to mediate to make this deployment compliant?

2. How do changes to functional requirements affect the mediation results?
Question 1

1. How many interfaces do developers need to adjust to make this deployment compliant?

- Summarizing mediators (cut set)

- Unique subjects: some subjects are repeatedly picked as mediators across different VMs (insmod_t for kernel_dom0, kernel_dbsrv, etc.)

- The size of the cut represents the effort to implement filtering interfaces where needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sink</th>
<th>Sub</th>
<th>Int</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kernel-dom0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kernel-dbsrv</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dbdata</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kernel-uservm</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kernel-websrv</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>webdata</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Sub: Subjects
- Int: Interfaces
2. How do changes to functional requirements affect the mediation results?

- Runtime: permissions that are actually exercised at run time
- The main difference between static and runtime data is caused by definition of attributes in the MAC policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sink</th>
<th>Static policy</th>
<th>Runtime data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub</td>
<td>Int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kernel-dom0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kernel-dbsrv</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dbdata</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kernel-usersv</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kernel-websrv</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>webdata</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reduction. Runtime could guide policy tightening!
## Execution Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Configurations</th>
<th>Time (sec)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **HSM**: Parse policies and generate HSM model
- **GCM**: Generate graph-cut model
- **Cuts**: Compute system-wide cuts
- **DIFC**: Generate DIFC policy
Project Tasks

- Collect and represent policies in OpenStack cloud system
  - Can we generate data flow graphs and compliance models for MAC and other relevant policies in OpenStack cloud system?

- Formalize definitions for cut problem, including cost functions and solution composition, for cloud systems
  - Can we resolve realistic system-wide compliance problems with minimum cost (approximately)?

- Explore methods to produce reasonable functional options to explore
  - Can we generate options/constraints for the policy designer that enables them to determine which permissions to authorize?

- Extend the research system to support solving such problems and testing on real cloud deployments
  - Can we produce cloud deployments that proactively protect themselves?
Summary

- We have made a lot of progress improve host security over the last ten years, but we are still reactive.
- To defend systems proactively, we must design security defenses for the deployment.
- We define a methodology to generate system-wide MAC policies that comply with information flow requirements automatically.
- Such a methodology enables OS distributors to create compliant systems that system administrators and remote parties can verify automatically – proactive evaluation end-to-end.

![Diagram showing the process of generating system-wide MAC policies.](image)
Questions