Security I: Introduction & Threat Model

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*some slides are borrowed from Vitaly Shmatikov and Ari Juels
Course goals

• Understand the fundamental principles of security
  – What are the common security mechanisms? Why they often go wrong?
  – What are the underlying principles behind building secure systems?
  – Why building secure systems is hard?
The art of adversarial thinking
What’s adversarial thinking?

“What’s adversarial thinking?”

“Security requires a particular mindset. Security professionals -- at least the good ones -- see the world differently. They can't walk into a store without noticing how they might shoplift. They can't use a computer without wondering about the security vulnerabilities. They can't vote without trying to figure out how to vote twice. They just can't help it.”

- Bruce Schneier
Adversarial thinking disclaimer

Hopefully, you will learn to think like a criminal mastermind but behave like a gentleman/woman!
Adversarial thinking: key questions

• Security goal: what security policy to enforce?

• Threat model: who is the adversary? What actions can the adversary perform?

• Mechanisms: What security mechanisms can be used to achieve the security goals given the adversarial model
Key security goals

- Confidentiality: Data not leaked
- Integrity: Data not modified
- Availability: Data is accessible when needed
- Authenticity: Data origin cannot be spoofed
You can apply adversarial thinking anywhere

• Columbia ID cards
  – Can you fake an ID card?

• ATM machine
  – How does the service person gets access to refill it with cash?

• MTA metrocard
  – Can you increase the card balance without paying?
Example: air travel

Print boarding pass at home → ID check by TSA → Boarding pass check at the gate
Adversarial thinking example: air travel

• Security goal: Ensure that each person getting inside an airport has a valid boarding pass and is authorized to fly (i.e., not on the no-fly list)

• Mechanisms
  – TSA checks validity of the ID (e.g., driver’s license) and the boarding pass  How?
  – TSA matches name in the ID against the name in the boarding pass
  – TSA ensures that the name is not on the no-fly list
  – Gate agent checks whether the boarding pass is valid and has been checked by TSA  How?
Can an attacker who is on the no-fly list fly?
What is the threat model?

• Can an attacker create a fake boarding pass?

• Can an attacker fake a driver’s license?
Security under different threat models

• Security goal: Ensure that each person getting inside an airport has a valid boarding pass and is authorized to fly (i.e., not on the no-fly list)
  – What are the minimum requirements for someone to violate this goal in the current TSA system?
  – The current TSA system is secure under which threat models?
Not all threat models are equal

• Which one is harder and why?
  – Creating a fake boarding pass
  – Creating a fake driver’s license
Security measures in a driver’s license?
Security measures in a boarding pass?

Can the barcode be faked?
Air travel revisited: a different security goal

Print boarding pass at home → ID check by TSA → Boarding pass check at the gate

Security goal: everybody boarding an aircraft must pass through TSA security check
Everybody must go through TSA checks

• How does the current TSA system ensure this?
• What is an example threat model where this goal can be violated by an attacker?
Yet another security goal

- Only authorized travelers should be allowed to enter premium lounges
  - How will the receptionist at the lounge know who is authorized?
What is the threat model for this attack?

As the head of Poland’s Computer Emergency Response Team, Przemek Jaroszewski flies 50 to 80 times a year, and so has become something of a connoisseur of airlines’ premium status lounges. (He’s a particular fan of the Turkish Airlines lounge in

How will you fix it?
What about TSA Pre-Check?

• How does TSA Pre-Check work?
  – Passengers apply for Pre-Check
  – TSA decide whether the passenger is eligible for Pre-Check or not and sends the information back to the Airline.
  – The Airline encodes that information in a barcode that is on the issued boarding pass.
Hacking TSA Pre-Check

No encryption

1 means no Pre-Check and 3 means Pre-Check

Unintended side-effects of the boarding-pass design

• What happens if someone else gets hold of your boarding pass?

All this information is in the boarding pass in cleartext
A different setting: money

- Counting tokens must be kept in a safe place to prevent tampering
  - In a temple or in clay envelopes on shipping routes

- How to make counting tokens completely portable for trade?
A different setting: money

• Security goals
  – Tokens can only be created by a trusted authority
  – Authenticity of tokens should be easily verifiable by anyone

• Threat model
  – Attackers can forge or modify tokens

• Clay tokens can be easily forged!
A different setting: money

• Coins were introduced around 6/7\textsuperscript{th} century BCE
  – Make tokens out of scarce resources (gold and silvers)
  – Apply a signature that is hard to copy (depends on the skills of the engravers)
  – Harsh penalty for forgers
Modern crypto-currencies

• Same principles!
  – Scarce resource: computation
  – Hard-to-forge data: cryptography
Who is the adversary?
depends on who you are
Hackers

• Evgeniy Mikhailovich Bogachev
  – Gameover Zeus botnet: banking fraud and ransomware distribution
Chinese government

- Censorship of materials critical to the current regime
- Monitoring dissidents
National Security Agency (NSA)