Security of Server-Side Web Applications

Introduction

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Outline

PHP-security information on the web

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"You can use HTTP_REFERER to make sure that your site can only be accessed from your web form."

All you need to connect to a database with PHP is something like this:

```
<?php
$db = pg_pconnect(‘‘host=localhost,dbname=a,user=b’’);
pg_exec($db,’’select * from $table’’;);
?>
```

To send an email with PHP back to a user, you'll need something like this:

```
<?php
$body = ‘‘Hi, How are you?’’;
mail($user, ‘‘Subject’’, $body)
?>
```

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→ For PHP: only trust the official manual!!!

Server-side applications

- client-server separation
- end-users and content providers have different security requirements
- web space is often hosted externally and shared with other users
- limitations of the HTTP-protocol

Software testing

Traditional approaches for software testing
(functional testing, user testing, ...)
are useless for security validation.

Security validation:

- no “debugging”, no immediate feedback
- no clear testing protocols
- different types of problems are possible:
  requires lateral thinking

General security risks

- physical security
- social engineering and human error (e.g. insecure passwords)
- eavesdropping, "man-in-the-middle" attacks
- software flaws (buffer overflows)
- installation of malicious software:
  Trojan horses, backdoors, viruses, worms
- denial of service (DoS) attacks

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The most common security risk for scripting languages ("user submitted data") is not in this list!

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- detection
  monitor webserver logs, system activity, detection software
- response
  script-level, webserver, institutional policies

Apache error log:

66.147.118.70-[7/7/06] “GET /phpadmin/main.php HTTP/1.1” 404
66.147.118.70-[7/7/06] “GET /phpmyadmin1/main.php HTTP/1.1” 404
66.147.118.70-[7/7/06] “GET /phpAdmin-2/main.php HTTP/1.1” 404

Debian Security Advisory - phpmyadmin (DSA 1207-2)

```
-----BEGIN PGP SIGNED MESSAGE-----
Hash: SHA1

- ------------------------------------------------
Debian Security Advisory DSA 1207-2
http://www.debian.org/security/
November 19th, 2006                          http://www
- ------------------------------------------------

Package         : phpmyadmin
Vulnerability   : several
Problem-Type    : remote
Debian-specific: no
CVE ID          : CVE-2006-1678 CVE-2006-2418 CVE-2
CVE-2006-5116
Debian Bug      : 339437 340438 362567 368082 39109

The phpmyadmin update in DSA 1207 introduced a reg
corrects this flaw. For completeness, the original
```