Oct 30 2023

NETMANAGEIT

Intelligence Report

CloudKeys in the Air: Tracking Malicious Operations of Exposed IAM Keys

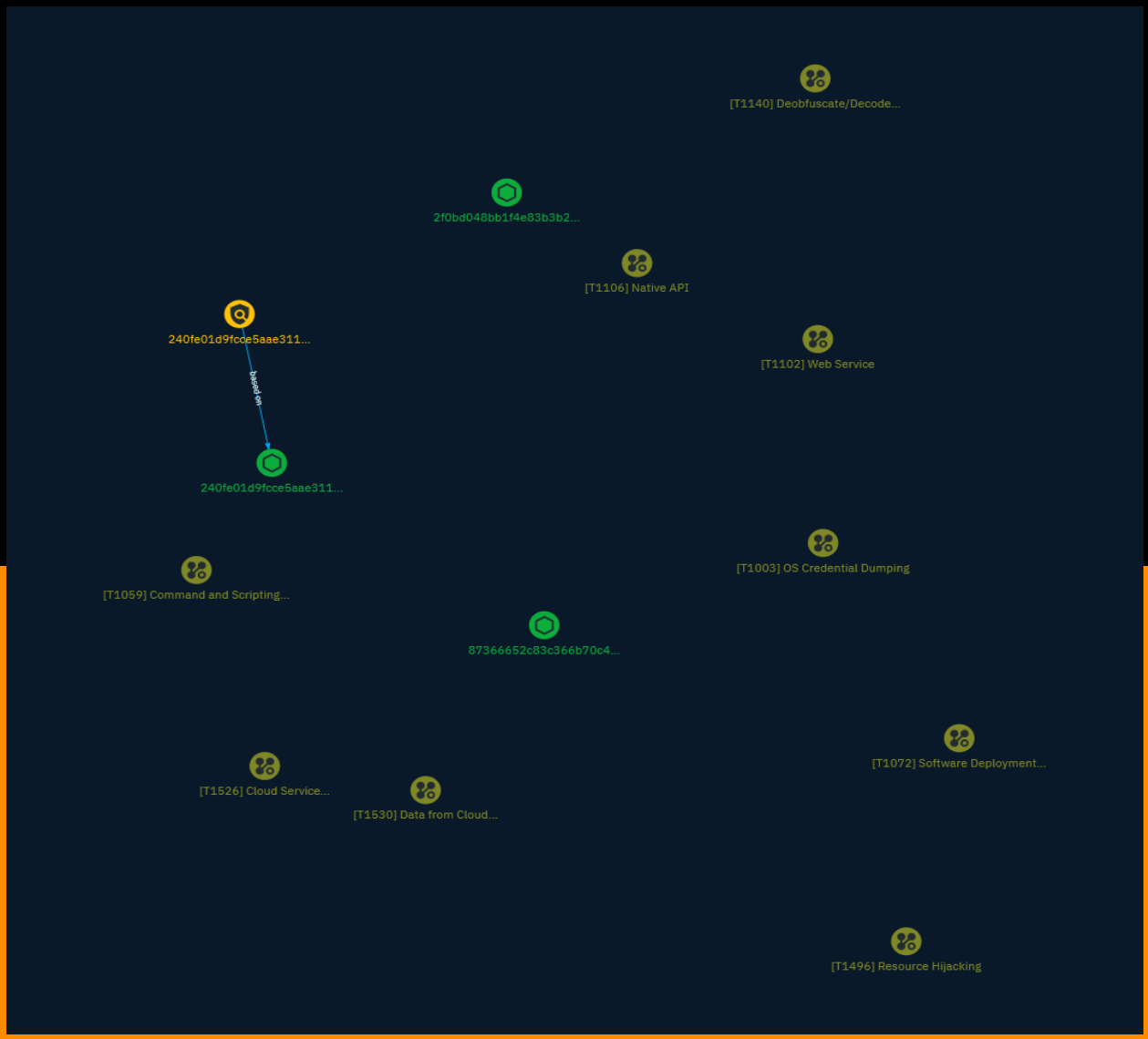

Table of contents

Overview

- Description 3
- Confidence 3
- Content 4

Entities

- Attack-Pattern 5
- Indicator 12

Observables

- StixFile 13

External References

- External References 14

Overview

Description

Unit 42 researchers have identified an active campaign we are calling EleKtra-Leak, which performs automated targeting of exposed identity and access management (IAM) credentials within public GitHub repositories. As a result of this, the threat actor associated with the campaign was able to create multiple AWS Elastic Compute (EC2) instances that they used for wide-ranging and long-lasting cryptojacking operations. We believe these operations have been active for at least two years and are still active today.

Confidence

This value represents the confidence in the correctness of the data contained within this report.

15 / 100

Content

N/A

Attack-Pattern

Name
OS Credential Dumping
ID
T1003
Description
Adversaries may attempt to dump credentials to obtain account login and credential material, normally in the form of a hash or a clear text password, from the operating system and software. Credentials can then be used to perform [Lateral Movement](https://attack.mitre.org/tactics/TA0008) and access restricted information. Several of the tools mentioned in associated sub-techniques may be used by both adversaries and professional security testers. Additional custom tools likely exist as well.
Name
Data from Cloud Storage
ID
T1530
Description
Adversaries may access data from improperly secured cloud storage. Many cloud service providers offer solutions for online data object storage such as Amazon S3, Azure Storage,

and Google Cloud Storage. These solutions differ from other storage solutions (such as SQL or Elasticsearch) in that there is no overarching application. Data from these solutions can be retrieved directly using the cloud provider's APIs. In other cases, SaaS application providers such as Slack, Confluence, and Salesforce also provide cloud storage solutions as a peripheral use case of their platform. These cloud objects can be extracted directly from their associated application.(Citation: EA Hacked via Slack - June 2021)(Citation: SecureWorld - How Secure Is Your Slack Channel - Dec 2021)(Citation: HackerNews - 3 SaaS App Cyber Attacks - April 2022)(Citation: Dark Clouds_Usenix_Mulazzani_08_2011) Adversaries may collect sensitive data from these cloud storage solutions. Providers typically offer security guides to help end users configure systems, though misconfigurations are a common problem.(Citation: Amazon S3 Security, 2019)(Citation: Microsoft Azure Storage Security, 2019)(Citation: Google Cloud Storage Best Practices, 2019) There have been numerous incidents where cloud storage has been improperly secured, typically by unintentionally allowing public access to unauthenticated users, overly-broad access by all users, or even access for any anonymous person outside the control of the Identity Access Management system without even needing basic user permissions. This open access may expose various types of sensitive data, such as credit cards, personally identifiable information, or medical records.(Citation: Trend Micro S3 Exposed PII, 2017) (Citation: Wired Magecart S3 Buckets, 2019)(Citation: HIPAA Journal S3 Breach, 2017) (Citation: Rclone-mega-extortion_05_2021) Adversaries may also obtain then abuse leaked credentials from source repositories, logs, or other means as a way to gain access to cloud storage objects.

Name

Native API

ID

T1106

Description

Adversaries may interact with the native OS application programming interface (API) to execute behaviors. Native APIs provide a controlled means of calling low-level OS services within the kernel, such as those involving hardware/devices, memory, and processes. (Citation: NT API Windows)(Citation: Linux Kernel API) These native APIs are leveraged by the OS during system boot (when other system components are not yet initialized) as well as carrying out tasks and requests during routine operations. Native API functions (such as `NtCreateProcess`) may be directed invoked via system calls / syscalls, but these features are also often exposed to user-mode applications via interfaces and libraries.(Citation:

OutFlank System Calls)(Citation: CyberBit System Calls)(Citation: MDSec System Calls) For example, functions such as the Windows API `CreateProcess()` or GNU `fork()` will allow programs and scripts to start other processes.(Citation: Microsoft CreateProcess)(Citation: GNU Fork) This may allow API callers to execute a binary, run a CLI command, load modules, etc. as thousands of similar API functions exist for various system operations. (Citation: Microsoft Win32)(Citation: LIBC)(Citation: GLIBC) Higher level software frameworks, such as Microsoft .NET and macOS Cocoa, are also available to interact with native APIs. These frameworks typically provide language wrappers/abstractions to API functionalities and are designed for ease-of-use/portability of code.(Citation: Microsoft NET)(Citation: Apple Core Services)(Citation: MACOS Cocoa)(Citation: macOS Foundation) Adversaries may abuse these OS API functions as a means of executing behaviors. Similar to [Command and Scripting Interpreter](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1059), the native API and its hierarchy of interfaces provide mechanisms to interact with and utilize various components of a victimized system. While invoking API functions, adversaries may also attempt to bypass defensive tools (ex: unhooking monitored functions via [Disable or Modify Tools](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1562/001)).

Name

Resource Hijacking

ID

T1496

Description

Adversaries may leverage the resources of co-opted systems in order to solve resource intensive problems, which may impact system and/or hosted service availability. One common purpose for Resource Hijacking is to validate transactions of cryptocurrency networks and earn virtual currency. Adversaries may consume enough system resources to negatively impact and/or cause affected machines to become unresponsive.(Citation: Kaspersky Lazarus Under The Hood Blog 2017) Servers and cloud-based systems are common targets because of the high potential for available resources, but user endpoint systems may also be compromised and used for Resource Hijacking and cryptocurrency mining.(Citation: CloudSploit - Unused AWS Regions) Containerized environments may also be targeted due to the ease of deployment via exposed APIs and the potential for scaling mining activities by deploying or compromising multiple containers within an environment or cluster.(Citation: Unit 42 Hildegard Malware)(Citation: Trend Micro Exposed Docker APIs) Additionally, some cryptocurrency mining malware identify then kill off processes for competing malware to ensure it’s not competing for resources.(Citation: Trend Micro War

of Crypto Miners) Adversaries may also use malware that leverages a system's network bandwidth as part of a botnet in order to facilitate [Network Denial of Service](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1498) campaigns and/or to seed malicious torrents.(Citation: GoBotKR)

Name

Command and Scripting Interpreter

ID

T1059

Description

Adversaries may abuse command and script interpreters to execute commands, scripts, or binaries. These interfaces and languages provide ways of interacting with computer systems and are a common feature across many different platforms. Most systems come with some built-in command-line interface and scripting capabilities, for example, macOS and Linux distributions include some flavor of [Unix Shell](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1059/004) while Windows installations include the [Windows Command Shell](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1059/003) and [PowerShell](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1059/001). There are also cross-platform interpreters such as [Python](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1059/006), as well as those commonly associated with client applications such as [JavaScript](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1059/007) and [Visual Basic](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1059/005). Adversaries may abuse these technologies in various ways as a means of executing arbitrary commands. Commands and scripts can be embedded in [Initial Access](https://attack.mitre.org/tactics/TA0001) payloads delivered to victims as lure documents or as secondary payloads downloaded from an existing C2. Adversaries may also execute commands through interactive terminals/shells, as well as utilize various [Remote Services](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1021) in order to achieve remote Execution. (Citation: Powershell Remote Commands)(Citation: Cisco IOS Software Integrity Assurance - Command History)(Citation: Remote Shell Execution in Python)

Name

Web Service

ID

T1102

Description

Adversaries may use an existing, legitimate external Web service as a means for relaying data to/from a compromised system. Popular websites and social media acting as a mechanism for C2 may give a significant amount of cover due to the likelihood that hosts within a network are already communicating with them prior to a compromise. Using common services, such as those offered by Google or Twitter, makes it easier for adversaries to hide in expected noise. Web service providers commonly use SSL/TLS encryption, giving adversaries an added level of protection. Use of Web services may also protect back-end C2 infrastructure from discovery through malware binary analysis while also enabling operational resiliency (since this infrastructure may be dynamically changed).

Name

Cloud Service Discovery

ID

T1526

Description

An adversary may attempt to enumerate the cloud services running on a system after gaining access. These methods can differ from platform-as-a-service (PaaS), to infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS), or software-as-a-service (SaaS). Many services exist throughout the various cloud providers and can include Continuous Integration and Continuous Delivery (CI/CD), Lambda Functions, Azure AD, etc. They may also include security services, such as AWS GuardDuty and Microsoft Defender for Cloud, and logging services, such as AWS CloudTrail and Google Cloud Audit Logs. Adversaries may attempt to discover information about the services enabled throughout the environment. Azure tools and APIs, such as the Azure AD Graph API and Azure Resource Manager API, can enumerate resources and services, including applications, management groups, resources and policy definitions, and their relationships that are accessible by an identity.(Citation: Azure - Resource Manager API)(Citation: Azure AD Graph API) For example, Stormspotter is an open

source tool for enumerating and constructing a graph for Azure resources and services, and Pacu is an open source AWS exploitation framework that supports several methods for discovering cloud services.(Citation: Azure - Stormspotter)(Citation: GitHub Pacu) Adversaries may use the information gained to shape follow-on behaviors, such as targeting data or credentials from enumerated services or evading identified defenses through [Disable or Modify Tools](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1562/001) or [Disable Cloud Logs](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1562/008).

Name

Deobfuscate/Decode Files or Information

ID

T1140

Description

Adversaries may use [Obfuscated Files or Information](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1027) to hide artifacts of an intrusion from analysis. They may require separate mechanisms to decode or deobfuscate that information depending on how they intend to use it. Methods for doing that include built-in functionality of malware or by using utilities present on the system. One such example is the use of [certutil](https://attack.mitre.org/software/S0160) to decode a remote access tool portable executable file that has been hidden inside a certificate file.(Citation: Malwarebytes Targeted Attack against Saudi Arabia) Another example is using the Windows `copy /b` command to reassemble binary fragments into a malicious payload.(Citation: Carbon Black Obfuscation Sept 2016) Sometimes a user's action may be required to open it for deobfuscation or decryption as part of [User Execution](https://attack.mitre.org/techniques/T1204). The user may also be required to input a password to open a password protected compressed/encrypted file that was provided by the adversary. (Citation: Volexity PowerDuke November 2016)

Name

Software Deployment Tools

ID

T1072

Description

Adversaries may gain access to and use third-party software suites installed within an enterprise network, such as administration, monitoring, and deployment systems, to move laterally through the network. Third-party applications and software deployment systems may be in use in the network environment for administration purposes (e.g., SCCM, HBSS, Altiris, etc.). Access to a third-party network-wide or enterprise-wide software system may enable an adversary to have remote code execution on all systems that are connected to such a system. The access may be used to laterally move to other systems, gather information, or cause a specific effect, such as wiping the hard drives on all endpoints. The permissions required for this action vary by system configuration; local credentials may be sufficient with direct access to the third-party system, or specific domain credentials may be required. However, the system may require an administrative account to log in or to perform it's intended purpose.

Indicator

Name
240fe01d9fcce5aae311e906b8311a1975f8c1431b83618f3d11aeaff10aede3
Description
Multios.Coinminer.Miner-6781728-2 SHA256 of 555332faa336ed0e06e9b04d998cd53c5e192f1f
Pattern Type
stix
Pattern
[file:hashes.'SHA-256' = '240fe01d9fcce5aae311e906b8311a1975f8c1431b83618f3d11aeaff10aede3']

StixFile

Value
240fe01d9fcce5aae311e906b8311a1975f8c1431b83618f3d11aeaff10aede3
2f0bd048bb1f4e83b3b214b24cc2b5f2fd04ae51a15aa3e301c8b9e5e187f2bb
87366652c83c366b70c4485e60594e7f40fd26bcc221a2db7a06debbebd25845

External References

- https://otx.alienvault.com/pulse/653ffa0ed6bb4326d20c0f7e
- https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/malicious-operations-of-exposed-iam-keys-cryptojacking/