# Electronic Attack on Computer Interfaces

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### HW versus SW Security Disparity

- experience to perform a risk analysis meaningfully – hence, it is usually not performed at all
  - 802.1X with or without integrity protection on L2?
  - DMA attacks "This is a problem of unattended computers only, isn't it?"
  - better each day
  - PCIe through thunderbolt DMA attacks and SSD hot plug is just the beginning
  - complications
  - Digital video signals "They are too complex to be attacked, right?"

When it comes to an assessment of physical or hardware-based attack vectors, there is often a lack of

- USB 2.0 – a bit dated and will hardly improve anymore, but its exploitations are recent and getting

- USB-C – confusing even for its developers; USB 4.0 meant to clean up, but it actually brings further

## Ongoing Evaluation – Popular Red Team Toolbox Gadgets

					ع	LOGIN	Ä
PRODUCTS ~		SHOWS PAYLOADS	Har	COMMUNITY	SUPPORT		
WIFI PENTESTING		HOTPLUG ATTACKS	IMPLANTS & REMOTE ACCESS	FIELD KITS	MERCH		
WiFi Pineapple Mark VII		USB Rubber Ducky	Key Croc	Elite Series	T-Shirts		
WiFi Pineapple Enterprise		Bash Bunny	Packet Squirrel	Essential Series	Accessories		
REMOTE COMMAND & CONTROL		Shark Jack	Screen Crab	EDUCATIONAL KITS	Stickers		
		Plunder Bug LAN Tap	LAN Turtle				
Cloud C <sup>2</sup>		O.MG Plug	O.MG Cable	Demonseed EDO			





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## Debriefing Analysis Report Viewpoint

- Plausibility of the suggested scenarios
- 2. Technology limits
- 3. Detection
- 4. Countermeasures



PRODUCTS ~ S	HOWS PAYLOADS	Нак	COMMUNITY	은 LOGIN SUPPORT
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#### Display Data

#### Preview: Screen Crab

Screen grabber for HDMI, based on Lontium chipset for signal bridging and conversion

Captures either single frames or video, results stored locally on SD card and possibly also at C2 cloud

Remote management via C2 cloud

#### **Debriefing Analys**

- 1. Plausible with small operational issues
- 2. HDMI signal is generally unprotected, certain limits are imposed by available chipsets
- 3. Can be detected as LONTIUM adapter
- 4. Consider encrypted video links for highly sensitive areas. Regular physical inspection of highly exposed links. *Sealed ports*?











•••• Hak5 Cloud C <sup>2</sup> × + $\leftarrow \rightarrow C$ = rflab-cbcc.com/#/sites/1/crab/1/overview			∽ ů ☆ 스 ★ 🗆 🐳 :	
Hak5 Cloud C <sup>2</sup> Version 3.1.2 Community Edition				
★ ↓ Screen#1 ×				
🗇 Overview 🏂 Configuration 🔏 Loot				
Uptime Offline	Total Rx/Tx 400.53 MB	Online Clients		
Description	Uptime History			
Screen#1	<ul> <li>● ● ● ③ Hak5 Cloud C<sup>2</sup> × +</li> <li>← → ○ ■ rflab-cbcc.com/#/sites/1/crab/1/loot</li> </ul>		en 🖒	<b>À</b>
Screen Crab         Firmware Version: 1.0.6         7C:A7:B0:1E:71:BC         RFLAB screen grabber HDMI         Setup         Edit         Remove		INSPIRATION Cryptology and Biometrics Competence Centre	No Notes.	
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Notifications		( Slide 13 of 13 )		
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#### The World of USB



#### Connector Stacking - USB 3.0/3.1 Example



# **USB Type-C<sup>®</sup> – Functional Model**

- USB 3.2 / USB4<sup>™</sup> data bus
  - Two sets of TX/RX pin pairs, supports x1 and x2 operation
- USB 2.0 data bus
  - Two pin sets on host, one set on device – strapped together within the host and device
- Two power buses
  - VBUS and VCONN
- Two sideband pins (SBU1/SBU2)
  - SBTX / SBRX for USB4
- CC Configuration Channel
  - Two CC pins in connector
  - One CC wire in cable



B12







Looking into the product receptacle:

	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12
)	TX1+	TX1-	VEUS	CC1	D+	D-	SBU1	VBUS	RX2-	RX2+	GND
)	RX1+	RX1-	VBUS	SBU2	D-	D+	CC2	VBUS	TX2-	TX2+	GND
	B11	B10	B9	B8	B7	B6	B5	B4	B3	B2	B1



Looking into the cable or product plug:



### Seeing Through the Mist (Total Phase Portfolio Example)







### O.MG Cables

"The O.MG Cable is a hand made USB cable with an advanced implant hidden inside. It is designed to allow your Red Team to emulate attack scenarios of sophisticated adversaries..."

USB HID sniffing and data injection

Remote control through embedded WiFI

Low-Speed device with certain Full-Speed sniffing capability, HID typing of 125 characters per second

#### **Debriefing Analys**

- 1. Plausible, both attended and unattended scenarios
- 2. Low-speed bus profile is quite slow for today, however, HID is a rich terrain for exploitations; especially for a combined sniffer/injector
- 3. Detectable heuristically; there is an original forensic detector available (discerns active vs. passive cables); can stay totally quiet and show up for very a precise amount of time
- Besides detection, there is no robust prevention on the USB data layer, needs to be solved by a system security policy that will limit HID devices impact fundamentally







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		,
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	bcdUSB	1.10 (0x0110)
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	bDeviceSubClass	Defined in Interface (0
	bDeviceProtocol	Defined in Interface (0
	bMaxPacketSize0	8
	idVendor	0xd3c0
	idProduct	0xd34d
	bcdDevice	0.02 (0x0002)
	iManufacturer	PIVO.MG (1)
	iProduct	PIVO.MG (2)
	iSerialNumber	998 (3)
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Protocol Lens: USB 🔻 🧔 🔻		
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	Bus LiveFilter	Info



### O.MG Cable Detector

"...The Malicious Cable Detector by O.MG allows you to detect malicious cables and also block data while charging. ... plug just the cable into the detector, then the detector into your computer's USB port. LED activity indicates signs of life!"

Designed to discern active vs. passive cables based on power analysis on USB 2.0 power supply lines

Uses allowlists not to alarm on original active cables by Apple, etc.

#### **Debriefing Analys**

- 1. Plausible, worked well with several different cables and devices
- 2. Its focus on power analysis is both the main strength and weakness; it can detect chips in dormant mode that would be unseen through data lines; on the other hand, it is just for cables it cannot go deeper to e.g. distinguish malicious vs. original keyboard or mouse
- 3. Challenging to do similar thing for USB-C, power management/noise injections hardens this task, and yet there are those allowlists
- 4. From the malicious device designer viewpoint: move to USB-C, try to use a clever power management, or try to mimic those predefined original accessories templates to suppress alarms



### Bash Bunny

"By emulating combinations of trusted USB devices — like gigabit Ethernet, serial, ... and keyboards — the Bash Bunny tricks computers into divulging data, exfiltrating documents, installing backdoors and many more exploits."

Payloads and exfiltration results stored locally on SD card

Remote connection possible via network tethering

High-Speed quad-core multi device, HID typing 570 chars/second

#### **Debriefing Analys**

- 1. Plausible, both attended and unattended scenarios
- 2. USB 2.0 is old, but its exploitations are new and still evolving; big potential due to the **multiple profiles coherently acting together**
- 3. Detectable heuristically on a device layer due to its somewhat exotic nature; O.MG cable detector does not apply it can only tell this is an active device, but this is obvious; can stay totally quiet and show up for a very precise amount of time
- 4. Besides (theoretical) detection, there is no robust prevention on the USB device layer, needs to be coped with at upper levels USB function layer and higher



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## Should everything else fail - USBKill



# USB D+ and D-, vertical scale 101 V/div









## Contactless Micro-EMP Variant (NFCKill)



### NFCKill Near-Field Magnetic Pulse (35 mm axial distance)



- Roughly 30-times higher peak value than for a regular NFC terminal (ACR122) in the same setup
- Will further raise sharply when approaching a closer distance
- Static discharge-like sensing observed at < 1 cm distance, their cause and effect remains unknown

 Probably, there is a high-voltage generator discharged instantly into a primary coil, producing typical highenergy transients



#### Electromagnetic Environments



• **HPEM** ~ High-Power Electromagnetic, general attribute defined in IEC 61000

• **HEMP** ~ High-altitude EM Pulse, i.e. a nuclear variant of the general HPEM attack

• **EMP** ~ EM Pulse, popular term mainly for HEMP, **NNEMP** then denotes non-nuclear EMP

• HPRF DE ~ High-Power RF Directed Energy, also known as HPM (High-Power Microwave)

• **IEMI** ~ Intentional EM Interference, an academic term, also covers jamming

#### In 2017, EMP (as Nuclear-sourced HPEM) "Exploded" in Newsrooms



[ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpQ8tj0aVRc ]



Figure 2-2. General basis of the E1 HEMP generation process. Gammas from the nuclear burst interact with the upper atmosphere – generating Compton electrons, which are turned in the Earth's geomagnetic field, and produce a transverse current that radiates an EM pulse towards the Earth.

#### Plasma dipole antenna



### Research papers are rare, especially those from the Soviet region

#### Response of Long Lines to Nuclear High-Altitude Electromagnetic Pulse (HEMP)

Vasily N. Greetsai, Andrey H. Kozlovsky, Vadim M. Kuvshinnikov, Vladimir M. Loborev, Yuri V. Parfenov, Oleg A. Tarasov, and Leonid N. Zdoukhov

Abstract – During high-altitude nuclear testing in 1962 over Kazakhstan, several system effects were noted due to the highaltitude electromagnetic pulse (HEMP). In particular a 500-kmlong aerial communications line experienced a failure due to the damage of its protective devices. In this paper, this failure is examined in detail beginning with the calculation of the incident HEMP environments, including those from the early- and latetime portions of the HEMP. In addition, the currents and voltages induced on the line are computed and the measured electrical characteristics of the protection devices are presented. With this information it is possible to determine which portions of the HEMP environment were responsible for particular protection failures. The paper concludes with recommendations for further work required to understand the best ways to protect power lines from HEMP in the future.

early-time HEMP. MHD EMP forms due to the interaction between the disturbed region of the burst and the geomagnetic field. The electrical current systems arising during the motion of the ionized medium lead to an entire or partial pushing of the geomagnetic field out of the boundaries of the burstperturbed region. The range of this geomagnetic effect and, hence, the intensity of the MHD EMP generation are defined by the extent of the gas-dynamic and ionized perturbation of the atmosphere following the nuclear burst.

In this paper, an example case of an aerial communication line is provided to consider the currents and voltages induced due to the different HEMP components for the specific physical avaniment In addition the contribution of each LIEMD

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Vasily N. Greetsai was born in Melitopol. Ukraine. on July 29, 1961. He received the Dipl. of nuclear physics from Kharkov State University, Kharkov, lkraine, in 1984, and the Ph.D. degree from the Central Institute of Physics and Technology (CIPT), Serfiev Posed, Russia, in 1995. In 1987, he joined the CIPT where he conducts research in palsed electromagnetic fields.



Andrey H. Kozlovsky was been in Vologda, Russia on May 11, 1960. He received the Dipl. of Engineer a serodynamics and thermodynamics from Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, Moscow, Russia, in 1983 and Ph.D. degree from the Central Institute of Physics and Technology (CIPT), Serfiev Posad, Russin, in 1992.

In 1933, he joined the CIPT where he is currently engaged in research on man-made electromagnetic



Vadim M. Kuvshinnikov was been on April 11, 1943, in Ufa, Russia. He received the Dipl. of Engineer-Physicist from the Moscow Physical Engineering Institute, Russia, in 1966, and the Ph.D. degree from the Central Institute of Physics and Technology (CIPT). Serfiev Posad, Russia, in

From 1969 to 1972, he was a Postgraduate and worked on improving his skills in theoretical physics. In 1987 he became a Professor at CIPT. where he is currently a Leading Scientist. He is the

author of more than 200 scientific papers devoted to quantitative descriptions of neutron-media interaction processes, investigations of the physics of the EMP evolution from surface and magnetospheric nuclear explosions, and mathematical simulations of EMP effects on various objects



Vladimir M. Loborev was born on November 23. 1937 in Novusibirsk, Russin. He received the Dipl. of Engineer-Chemist from the High Military Naval College, St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1960, and the Ph.D. degree from the Central Institute of Physics and Technology (CIPT), Serfey Posad, Russia, in

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Yuri V. Farfenov was born on February 16 1947, in Dmittoy, Russia. He received the Dipl of Engineer-Physicist from the Moscow Physical Engineering Institute, Moseew, Russia, in 1971, the Ph.D. degree from the Central Institute of Physics and Technology (CIPT), Serfey Posal, Russia, in

He has worked at CIPT since 1975. He became Professor there in 1992. He is now the Deputy Director of CIPT. He is the author of more than 200 scientific papers on ealculation methods to investigate EMP effects on cables and methods and simulators to reproduce

these effects, calculation methods of SGEMP and experimental methods to study SGEMP effects, simulators for reproducing combined effects of SREMP and ionizing radiation, and applications of EMP simulators for nonmilitary (conversion) purposes.





radiophysics from the Leningrad State University St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1972, and the Ph.D. degree from the Central Institute of Physics and Technology Since 1975 he has worked at CIPT of the Russian

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Oleg A. Tarasov was born in Keerjach, Russia, on In 1987, he joined CIPT. His research interests

Leonid N. Zdoukhov was born on January 15, 1949, in Tallim, Estonia. He received Dipl. of



# Just a... cigarette lighter, 1 m line of sight distance 200 mV/div vertical, 2 ns/div horizontal, untuned wire antenna



#### Tactical NNEMP Generators





[ https://vojenskerozhledy.cz/kategorie/zbrane-se-smerovou-energii ]











# Do not underestimate electronic geeks with internet gadgets

320,000 V Marx Generator







### History (year-month-day format)

• 2023-03-27, created as a PIVO briefings merge