# NexusLogger: A New Cloud-based Keylogger Enters the Market

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This post is also available in: <u>日本語 (Japanese)</u>

Unit 42 has recently discovered a new keylogger, named NexusLogger, being used in attempted unsuccessful attacks against Palo Alto Networks customers. NexusLogger is a cloud-based keylogger that uses the Microsoft .NET Framework and has a low level of sophistication. NexusLogger collects keystrokes, system information, stored passwords and will take screenshots. It also specifically seeks to harvest game credentials for UPlay, Minecraft, Steam, and Origin.

To date, we have identified 134 unique samples of the malware, with only 400 unique attacks observed. NexusLogger is primarily distributed via phishing e-mails, but we have observed a small number of download requests over HTTP. Based on our analysis in AutoFocus, we can

say that multiple industries have been affected by this threat, including Wholesale, High Tech, and Aerospace and Defense. The domain that NexusLogger uses to function domain has been flagged as malicious and blocked by Palo Alto Networks.

#### Infiltration

We first observed NexusLogger attacks in AutoFocus in the beginning of 2017. As shown in the following timeline graph, the attacks increased in late January. This may be due to adoption of the malware family by criminals, as the malware was likely originally released in late December 2016/early January 2017. Further evidence of this may be found within the Distribution section of this post.

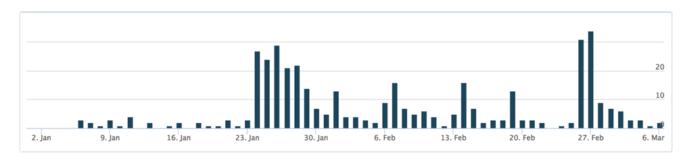


Figure 1 Timeline of NexusLogger attacks viewed within AutoFocus

The total number of attacks witnessed using NexusLogger is quite low when compared with other commodity malware families. Again, this is likely due to slow adoption by criminals. The keylogging market is quite saturated with numerous malware families, and it can be difficult for new players to enter the market.

To date, 94% of the observed attacks were delivered via either SMTP or POP3. Statistics regarding the top encountered email subjects and filenames may be seen below.

## **Top Email Subjects**

- 1. Needed Products List
- 2. Re: DCE STATMENT as at 27 FEB 2017 NS ALYANCE
- 3. Re: TOP URGENT Editing remittance form (2/26/2017)
- 4. Re: Revise Shipping Sample FW17 At00129 PI
- 5. Revise Shipping Sample FW17 At00129 PI
- 6. TOP URGENT Editing remittance form (2/26/2017)
- 7. Returned Msg: NEW ORDER
- 8. RECONFIRM YOUR BANK DETAILS FOR PAYMENT
- 9. NEW ORDER

### **Top Filenames**

1. Needed Products4453487doc?gpj.exe

- 2. DCE STATMENT.doc
- 3. Scan 09892.doc
- 4. PO938272.doc
- 5. PO BK0214017.exe
- 6. scan\_2371\_001.doc
- 7. Shipping details.exe
- 8. NEW ORDER BK150217.exe
- 9. 20170256477867667557.exe
- 10. Purchase Order No. LP 68321.doc

The remaining 6% of NexusLogger attacks were found to be supplied via a web download request. The following file paths were found to be used for downloading NexusLogger:

- hxxp://coscon-vm[.]com/wire5/yours.exe
- hxxp://www.coscon-vm[.]com/wire3/wiire3.exe
- hxxp://cdn.che[.]moe/ruchar.exe
- hxxp://zarketh[.]com/Zarketh%2010.5.1.zip
- hxxp://www.nonoise[.]cn/.js/secure/NewOrder2333.zip

#### Distribution

NexusLogger is touted as a cloud-based keylogging solution and provides a number of features for its user-based. This particular keylogger, like others encountered in the past, claims to be a "parental monitoring software solution." While a parent may use the tool, NexusLogger also provides features such as anti-vm/anti-debug, custom icons, and other features that are primarily witnessed in malware families and unlikely to be used by most parents.

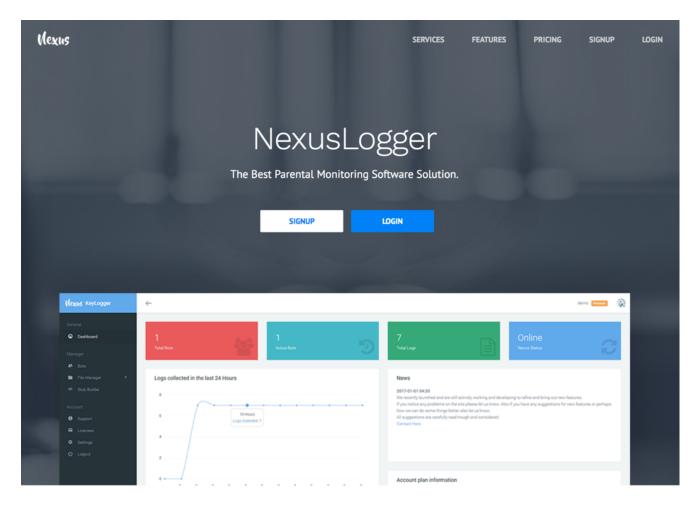


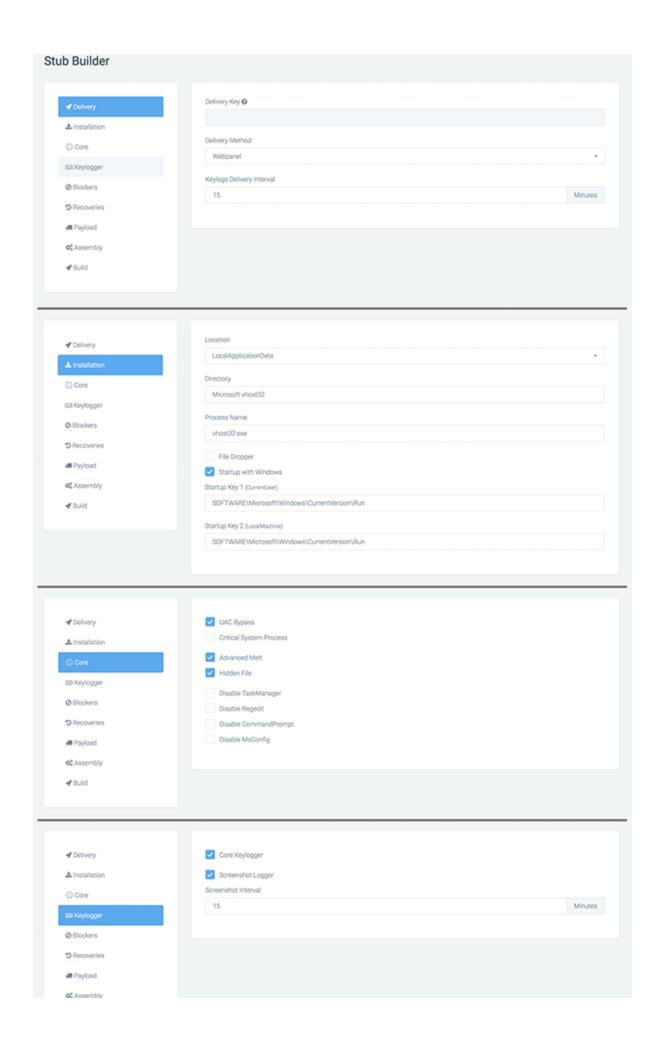
Figure 2 NexusLogger website

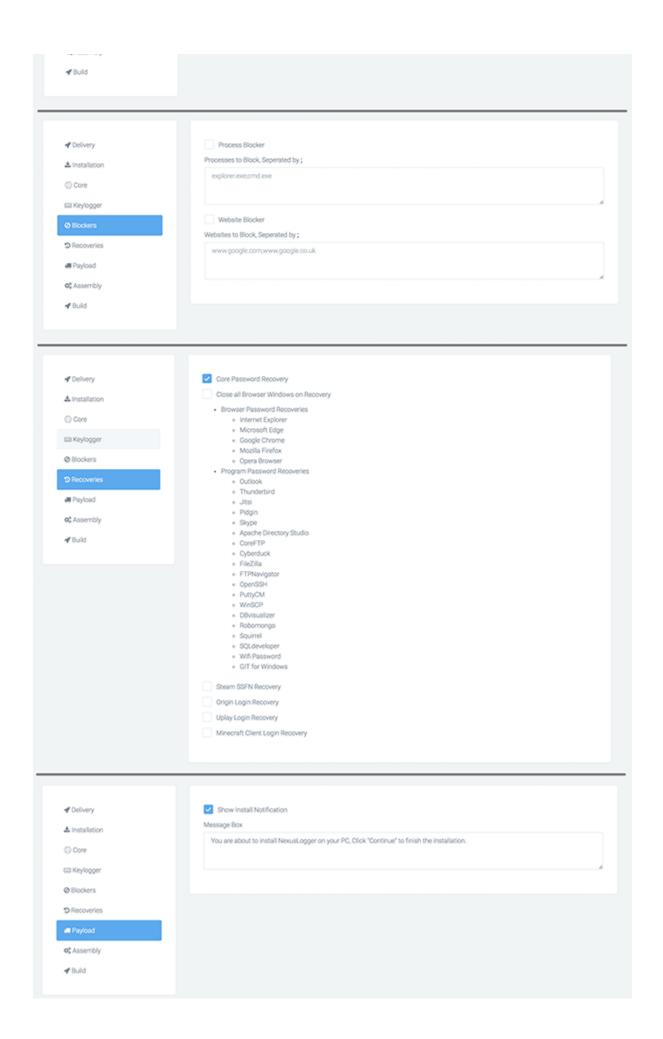
Because NexusLogger is cloud-based, all samples are built within the web panel, and all data is stored on the same host by default. The nexuslogger[.]com domain was first registered on December 18, 2016. The domain original resolved to the 162.255.119[.]17 IP address, which is owned by Namecheap, but was quickly transitioned to OVH with an IP address of 176.31.252[.]15, which is where it resides as of this posting.

All NexusLogger samples require communications with the nexuslogger[.]com domain via HTTPS, which makes it trivial for defenders to block. This domain has been flagged as malicious by Palo Alto Networks.

NexusLogger is sold in three tiers based on how long an attacker wishes to use it—7 days, 1 month, or 1 year. Costs vary from \$7 to \$199 based on the tier chosen. The author of NexusLogger uses <u>rocketr.net</u> for transactions, and accepts both PayPal and bitcoin for payment. Additionally, customer service is provided via email or Skype, with account names of nexuslogger.com@gmail[.]com and live:nexuslogger respectively.

The portal provides a dashboard of infected hosts, as well as a configuration-rich builder for NexusLogger samples. All configuration options for the NexusLogger builder may be seen below.





# Delivery	Assembly Title
	fame
Linstallation	Assembly Description
O Core	Windows Command Processor
IB Keylogger	
8 Blockers	Assembly Company
Recoveries	Microsoft
# Payload	Assembly Product
	Microsoft® Windows® Operating System
X Assembly	Assembly Copyright
<b>₹</b> Build	© Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
	Assembly Trademark
	Assembly Version
	1,000
	Assembly FileVersion
	1.0.0
<b>♥</b> Delivery	Build Process Name (process name)
& Installation	flame.exe
O Core	Custom Icon
	Choose File No file chosen
III Keylogger	Source Version
3 Blockers	public_ver1.4.1
Recoveries	Build Arguments (optional)
# Payload	-ignore
0¢ Assembly	Build your stub

Figure 3 NexusLogger builder configuration options

## **Malware Analysis**

NexusLogger's author obfuscates the .NET Framework compiled code via the <u>ConfuserEx 1.0.0 open-source project</u>. As there are no anti-debug or anti-vm routines within the malware itself, I'm lead to believe that using ConfuserEx is what handles these particular features. Deobfuscating ConfuserEx allows us to better understand what the malware is doing at a low level.

As stated earlier, when the malware originally executes, it will make two calls via HTTPS to the following URLs. The malware includes an embedded identifier, token, and key.

- hxxps://www.nexuslogger[.]com/API/plan.php?id=[attackerID]&token=[attackerToken]
- hxxps://www.nexuslogger[.]com/API/delivery.php?id=[attackerID]&key=[attackerKey]

NexusLogger simply looks for a response of '1' in both instances in order to continue.

It should be noted that the attackerID looks to be an incrementing number for each new user. Using this information, we can conclude that roughly 275 unique users have purchased NexusLogger since it was originally created.

```
private static void Main(string[] Param_383)
{

string a = new WebClient().DownloadString("https://www.nexuslogger.com/API/plan.php?id=" + Settings.attackerID + "&token=" + Settings.attackerToken);

if (a != "1")

Environment.Exit(0);

string a 2 = new WebClient().DownloadString("https://www.nexuslogger.com/API/delivery.php?id=" + Settings.attackerID + "&key=" + Settings.attackerKey);

if (a2 != "1")

Environment.Exit(0);

Private static void Main(string[] Param_383)

{

Environment.Exit(0);

Private static void Main(string[] Param_383)

Environment.Exit(0);

Private static void Main(string[
```

Figure 4 Decompiled main function of NexusLogger

After these initial checks, NexusLogger will enter its installation routine. It's files are installed in a subdirectory of either the %localappdata% or %appdata% paths, depending on the option chosen by the attacker. After the malware copies itself, it will then delete the original file, if specified in the configuration, by providing an argument of 'delFile [original\_path]'.

After NexusLogger installs itself, it has the option of performing a UAC bypass, as specified in the malware features by the author. In order to perform this bypass, the author uses a technique that I previously discussed being used by a <u>unique Microsoft Office loader</u>. It simply involves setting a specific registry key and executing the built-in 'eventvwr.exe' process. More information about this bypass technique may be found <u>here</u>.

Figure 5 UAC bypass function

Additionally, NexusLogger may persist by setting a Run registry key, as specified within the malware's configuration.

The malware proceeds to spawn additional threads that perform the following operations:

- Log keystrokes and clipboard data
- Collect system information
- Aggregate stored passwords from the victim
- Perform screenshots of the victim machine
- Kill processes

- · Recovery of video game-related credentials:
  - UPlay
  - Minecraft
  - Steam
  - Origin

It should be noted that in addition to collecting system information, NexusLogger will make a request to the following (non-malicious) URL in order to identify the system's external IP address:

hxxps://ipinfo[.]io/ip

Additionally, the author does not implement functionality to collect stored passwords, but rather downloads and uses the <u>Python-based open-source LaZagne project</u>. This executable is downloaded from the following location, and subsequently spawned in a new process. The download of this executable is performed via the following HTTPS request:

hxxps://www.nexuslogger[.]com/API/lazagne.php

NexusLogger is configured to upload collected data via FTP. Unless otherwise specified by the attacker, NexusLogger will upload to the IP address associated with nexuslogger[.]com (176.31.252[.]15) using a username and password specific to a given user. Attackers also have the option of specifying their own FTP information for data upload.

#### Conclusion

Overall, NexusLogger certainly isn't a terribly sophisticated threat. A number of shortcuts were made by the author to increase the number of features it touts. Additionally, adoption of this malware family is relatively low, and it is being distributed to victims using very common channels.

Palo Alto Networks customers are protected against this threat in the following ways:

- WildFire and Traps identify all NexusLogger samples as malicious
- All associated domains have been flagged as malicious
- An AutoFocus tag has been created to track and identify this threat

Additionally, organizations and security vendors are encouraged to block the nexuslogger[.]com domain to stifle this threat.

## **Appendix**

#### SHA256 Hashes

e98b417a8ecf464e113a18cf3f3269fa70f55e40d4228b08840efe61dee064c6 7fa743e2ce8eaa12f9c3e2aedd1f095ae5a50b5af34a202f1f92c0c414cb73c4 0f50c82e9c62eab992b33e4de93baf634d7ce2405cd4fe993b1532d2c775dc21 7153c18bc0a43c4902a6ebb0a7eedf94b3bc4d778295793035998c374cf607a9 bf6d2e3e097317404e57b194cbd8e50a6779603b828aa1b25364e6d81687e6af 6ae054a553120a1b5ffdfbf343ba1e258b188eef448c6474e22d148f7391afaa 7f5eee5c12ac89ab2604655cc7204723100e3ee6a2b6edb327c7c41a289de4f5 38d0d48685148ee070caaf82539083c8b62c8fe048ae6b0c0b3f43a6fe10a25d ac03db9b52d9fb8ab268160bd4b496b7702df5ccc0cb4eb7b8bcd8e0d2c00873 2ce74bdf2b2488710a334e6638be4b47bc077740744b48652e3cb1d367202bc1 158030e14e011efa21c992fa69ebb0da0608b1b4d2e5edf3bf423314c11c5552 3d43ccdf338c2be33e32fc3eff49eae55ce0580a3273112d7b68a641f30ff1c3 0f1d36188a81cc4d04d695e7d24e052d3b8b67908b2bb74cd018c8337d5f60ef 89d5be72d58fbc4e5d008804939aa5440532ad02b6f56bcb7969412b1faceae3 e1243f5b3d1044f5fe4bd4560166c832fe447516c5ac7d3e71e368f8a5304ea4 7918e3763af17b6330d8044e211baead54d3da85e8d9e048dfd2482195876534 1b32d1e02e94b1d359730844fb5febb9ec812bc1da5883932dbc171f5682c732 69f11628448806ef6ab893ba760c01945de102b77ea883633036e5a05dfa6e97 d6695ea939a7e3655a7d3844a7a05b49e1d37e5bd9d9826aaae97bd3afe31471 017df7d1e2c45a615932a080c3984e46480102c9ae6b0a35597c2d18c5edfaa4 22715a7f7e758d99c017910e80aa1b6348e804b2f0dd3339e8a27d3800578a4c d5e2d6727af7ad829c08f48c6ffec9d6e459ff8a8d8d457aac3638902b38ae0b 0d38a2f46d37de538dd1f65802af5c22960f253be059e93eb15631ed4ada315d 5513db12980bb60e7ec0fad3a5b45e2a3bf9c58d5f31b80c49ed2d304a41a384 0d064174b6689ce3934b4dbeaca3b2b6301f06a7440a83f4eb02954cb0ebcbcc 5ddb442ef2c97b77aa6cc4e1a54e59a3a340283b2bda112a21d46a15beba858f 212f1f3a139a12760beb8411833c535a5b7f0ae0b146f6d152178e273ac0e9bf ca9ff7e8f2f25e21ab114fbccee3c62e84f37a4b8730c5370f36f3e5f71b0333 40de580e4ace02b5b5925278b7e73cf65e68dc171c65ba6a4f136a622e6b4e2c 5d17b7a43e2da6ec56ff859b0f200e044db62f32f068a4aee208c5accf8abee6 20076d984a2afe7417cc82d55dae0b41a8ae1f723b8096d4a4ca23f5b0a1f1a3 da151794c501fb86e1d170f76db6ddff98ac84d427495b5fc051b535e133188a f00aff38ab2b1e3db07169b6fcad04ee5640a77ebc0170684728e92a1a56addc 52b22d2bde7563db3fa817e1b648c46218089605431def4abfe273e6c12f445c b9fa0c3c2fb59f48e06a4be7f1aaee249ac0a0b04f49a14bc615fdc270372b39 e101c326dfd258bb94cb358fe5caf2cf6fcc121c1454d9d64e6c96523877fae8 dfdfe4120bbf2fcc24cae2b5d0b9e3e3d93bef1a467ada397aa7722618ae3c4c 3254c17775a8271caf7ec3e4a027b66ed46a2290fd8290d098d869e965d8460d 5e3beaa920083423a7f4bfa8cb8c19302e9b5a188292c031b266d1dac4b686c5 8fd98922ce985e864458e7b3e46ed540f81e54430787079db157bdaece34cc29 a5593f1486b260cccb9643581edfdfa95339712b126ba3c7028a530d7201c19d 0c186f1bfdb02d71a4903f9c739bb21a708d0008af5b3015406d3d20eabea3fe

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