Is upatre downloader coming back ?

marcoramilli.com/2020/06/24/is-upatre-downloader-coming-back/

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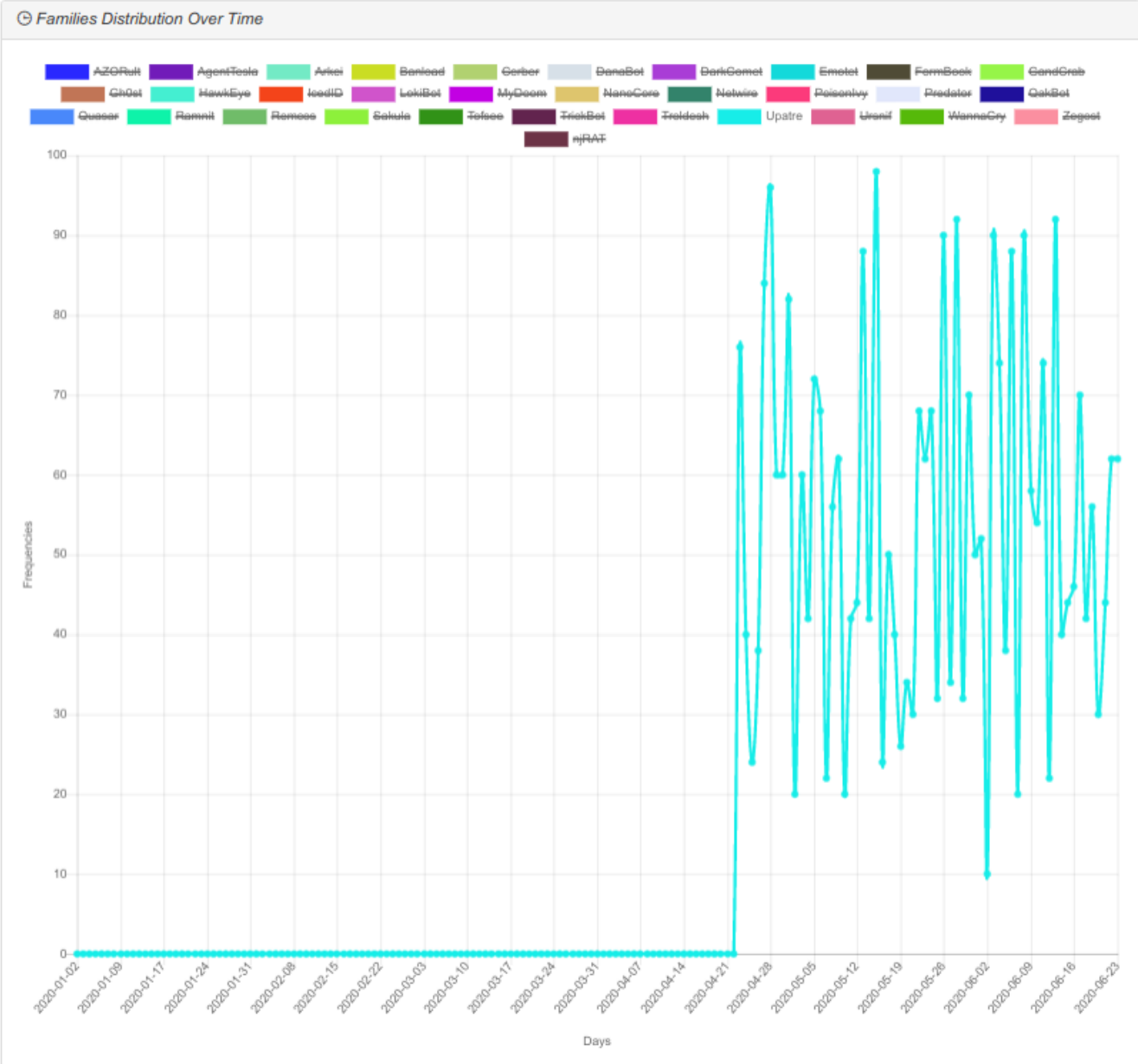
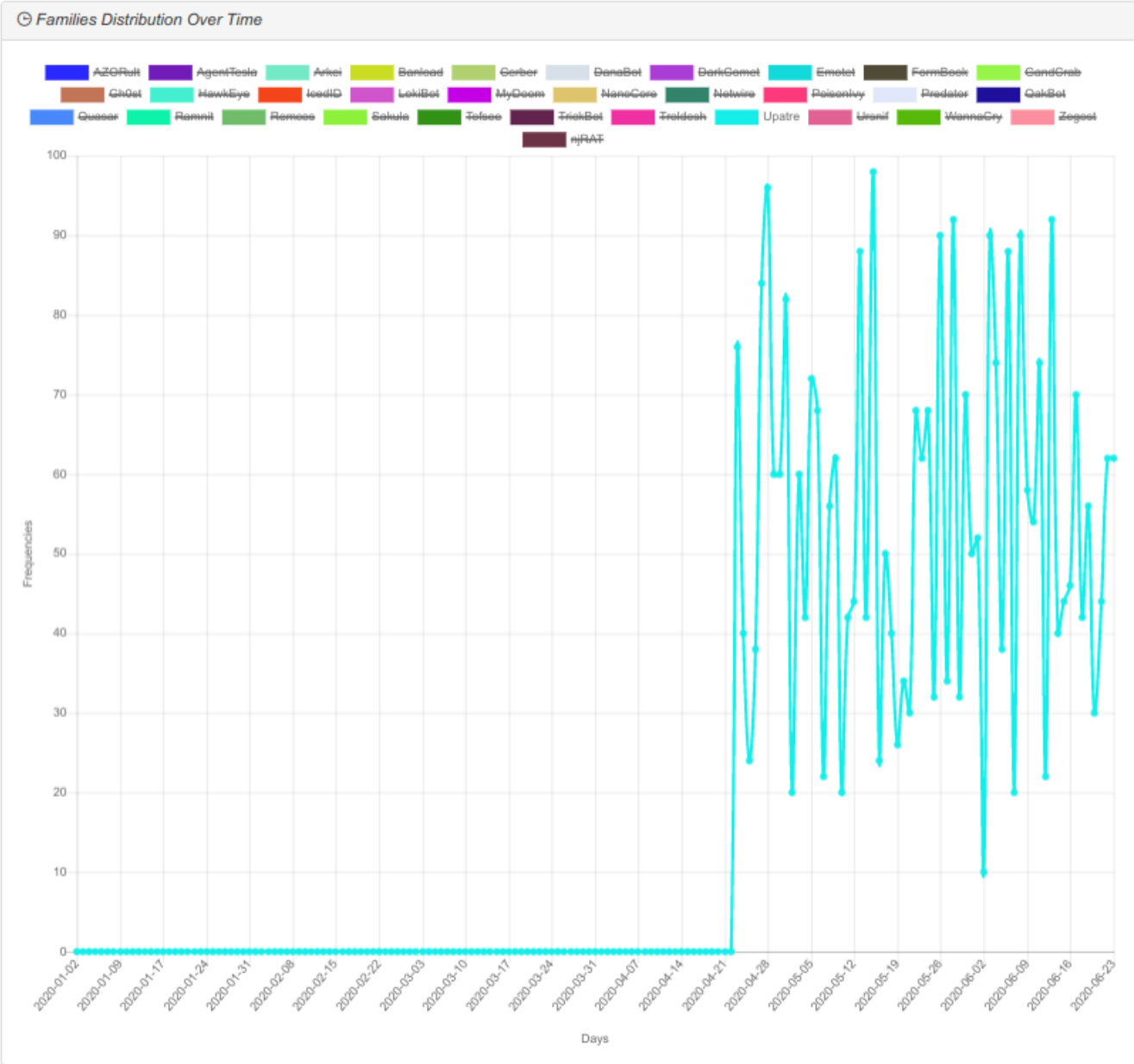


Hi Folks, today I want to share a quantitative analysis on a weird return-match by **Upatre**. According to Unit42 Upatre is an ancient downloader firstly spotted in 2013 used to inoculate banking trojans and active up to 2016.

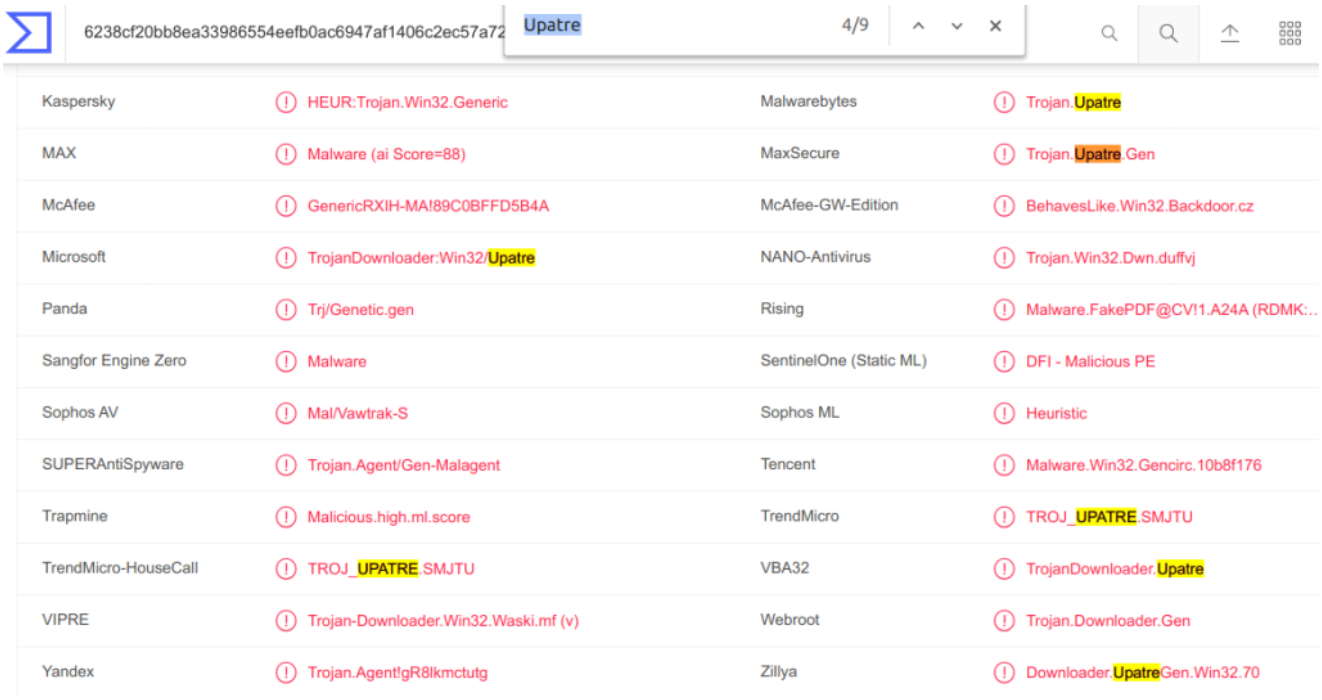
> *First discovered in 2013, Upatre is primarily a downloader tool responsible for delivering additional trojans onto the victim host. It is most well-known for being tied with the Dyre banking trojan, with a peak of over 250,000 Upatre infections per month delivering Dyre back in July 2015. In November 2015 however, an organization thought to be associated with the Dyre operation was raided, and subsequently the usage of Upatre delivering Dyre dropped dramatically, to less than 600 per month by January 2016.*
>
> *From PaloAlto Unit42*

From 2016 until today I've never experienced a new Upatre campaign, or something like that, but something looks to be changed. Analyzing the Cyber Threats Trends findings (for an upcoming post) I spotted an interesting revival of the **Upatre** downloader starting from **April 2020**. The following image shows what I mean. Zero Upatre findings until April 21 2020 and almost 50 single detections per day since that date. Those statistics are so strange to me, that I need to doubt about that. So let's take a closer look to it and see if there is some misclassification around.



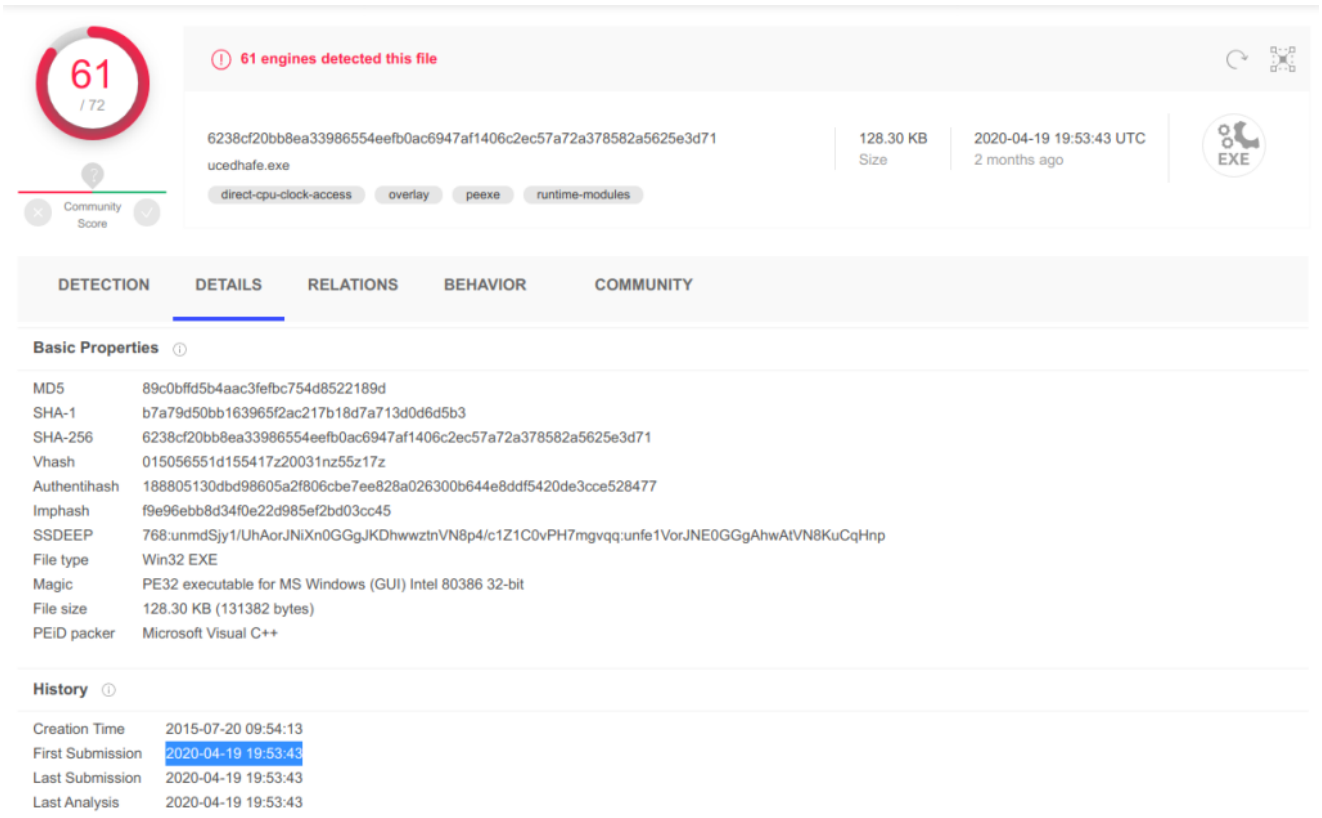
Upatre Time Distribution

Digging a little bit on that samples by asking a second opinion to VirusTotal it looks like matches are genuine. In order to verify that “revival”, I firstly have taken some random samples (with Upatre classification tag) and then verified on VirusTotal the malware classification and the first submission date. Following an example of the performed checks. As you might see from the following picture, 9 AV classified that sample as Upatre, so we might consider not a “false positive” or a “miss-classificated” sample.



Upatre Correct Classification

The following image shows the “First Submission Date” which is aligned to what I’ve seen on Cyber Threats Trends. If you take some more samples from the following list (IoC Section) you will probably see much more cases similar to that one. I did many checks and I wasn’t able to find mismatches at all, so I decided to write up this post about it.



Upatre First Submission

Conclusion

It’s something very interesting, at least to my understanding, to see an ancient downloader be resumed in such a specific period. Many people starting from April up to today are stuck at home performing what has been called “quarantine” due to COVID pandemic. Curiously during the same time, while people are working from home and potentially have much more free time (since they can’t get out home), this older downloader reappears. Maybe somebody took advantage from this bad situation to resurrect some old tools stored in dusty external hard-drive ?

IoC (3384)

For the complete IoC list check it out: HERE