avatar²

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- 1. Binary firmware analysis
- 2. Tooling landscape
- 3. The $avatar^2$ framework
- 4. Examples
- 5. Conclusion

Binary Firmware Analysis

- Amount of embedded devices steadily increasing
- Misconfigurations, bugs, and vulnerabilities are common
- A lot of reported vulnerabilities are "low-hanging fruits"
- Discovery of more complex bugs benefits from sophisticated tooling

- Variety of platforms
 - Memory layout
 - Peripherals
- Often no OS-level abstractions
- Many devices use monolithic firmware
- Hardware interactions are embedded in firmware code
 - Memory Mapped I/O
 - Interrupts
- Variety of architectures

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ARM_microarchitectures#Designed_by_ARM

- Instrumentation
- Emulation
- Fault detection
- Interrupt handling
- Microarchitecture dependent instructions

Tooling Landscape

- A lot of binary analysis tools for desktop software
- Way less for embedded devices software
 - Especially when considering open source tools
- Often, challenges for embedded devices exceed capabilities of static analysis tools
 - Assumuption about environment may not hold true
 - Difficult to infer peripheral behaviour and interrupts

- Based on KLEE
- Targets MSP430 firmware
- Symbolic Execution
- Uses explicit analysis, memory and interrupt specifications

Davidson, Drew, et al. "FIE on Firmware: Finding Vulnerabilities in Embedded Systems Using Symbolic Execution." USENIX Security Symposium 2013.

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- Uses explicit analysis, memory and interrupt specifications
- Requires source code of firmware

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- Based on Qemu
- Targets ARM & MIPS firmware
- Instrumented Linux kernel
- Automated analysis of web pages and SNMP implementations
- Automated testing with known exploits

Chen, Daming D., et al. "Towards Automated Dynamic Analysis for Linux-based Embedded Firmware." NDSS 2016.

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- Targets ARM & MIPS firmware
- Instrumented Linux kernel
- Automated analysis of web pages and SNMP implementations
- Automated testing with known exploits
- Works only for Linux based firmware with no too specific kernel modules

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- Based on instrumented QEMU
- Work in progress
- Example targets BCM4358 firmware
- Prototyping of Boards with LUA
- Instrumentation capabilities

https://github.com/Comsecuris/luaqemu

- Based on instrumented QEMU
- Work in progress
- Example targets BCM4358 firmware
- Prototyping of Boards with LUA
- Instrumentation capabilities
- Requires a significant amount of modeling and trial & error

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Avatar

- Based on S²E (QEMU+KLEE) and OpenOCD/GDB
- Targets ARM firmware
- Partial emulation together with real hardware
- I/O forwarding
- Orchestration
- Symbolic Execution

Zaddach, Jonas, et al. "AVATAR: A Framework to Support Dynamic Security Analysis of Embedded Systems' Firmwares." NDSS 2014.

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- Based on S²E (QEMU+KLEE) and OpenOCD/GDB
- Targets ARM firmware
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- Heavily tied to the S²E infrastructure
- Requires the presence of the physical device

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- A lot of focus on ARM
- QEMU's emulation capabilities are a common building block
- Frameworks are heavily bound to underlying components

The avatar² framework

- Dynamic Multi-Target Orchestration and Instrumentation Framework
- Focus on firmware analysis
- Python based framework
- Re-designed and re-implemented from scratch
- Open source: https://github.com/avatartwo
 - Research project
 - Released in June 2017

- Developed by the Software and System Security Group at Eurecom
- Specifically:
 - Marius Muench
 - Dario Nisi
 - Aurélien Francillon
 - Davide Balzarotti

- Target orchestration
 - Abstraction of debuggers, emulators and other frameworks
 - Easy addition of new targets
- Separation of execution and memory
 - Enables I/O forwarding/remote memory
- State transfer and synchronization
 - Don't keep the state of analysed software local to single targets

avatar²- components

- avatar² core
- Targets
- Endpoints
- Protocols

avatar²- architecture overview













¹Still under development

Avatar² provides a costomized QEMU

- All located in a single subfolder: hw/avatar
- New board: Configurable Machine
 - Already present in the first avatar
 - Allows flexible configuration of emulated hardware
- New peripheral: avatar-peripheral
 - Communicates with avatar² via posix message queues
 - Utilizes custom remote-memory protocol

- Architecture independent design
- Internal memory layout representation
- Legacy python support
- Peripheral modeling
- Plugin System
 - Assembler/Disassembler
 - Orchestrator
 - Instruction Forwarder

Examples

An avatar² scripts needs to:

- 1. Create the Avatar-object
- 2. Define a set of targets
- 3. Optionally define memory layout
- 4. Specify an execution plan

Demo

- Let's move on to a real target!
- Proof of concept implementation of HARVEY²
 - Malware for a COTS PLC
 - The plc utilizes multiple boards
 - Code injection via JTAG

²Garcia, Luis, et al. "Hey, My Malware Knows Physics Attacking PLCs with Physical Model Aware Rootkit." NDSS 2016.

Binary Instrumentation

(Fragile) Demo
Demo backup ;)



- Part of WYCINWYC³
 - Joint work with SIEMENS
- Investigates challenges specific to fuzz testing embedded devices
 - Fault detection
 - Instrumentation
 - Scalability
- Evaluates different strategies to aid fuzz-testing
 - $\bullet\,$ Uses avatar^2 for partial and full emulation of the firmware

³Muench, Marius, et.al. "What you corrupt is not what you crash: Challenges in Fuzzing Embedded Devices" To be presented at NDSS 2018

The setup

- Two Targets
 - STM32I152re
 - PANDA
- Target Software
 - expat, a popular XML-parser
 - Artificially inserted vulnerabilities
- Orchestration
 - Board initilization on physical device
 - Emulation of main-loop inside PANDA
- Analysis
 - 5 PANDA plugins to detect different types of vulnerabilities
 - Mimicry of existing techniques for desktop software
 - Doesn't require modification of the firmware

Evaluation

- 100 Fuzzing sessions in different setups
 - Native
 - Partial emulation with I/O forwarding
 - Partial emulation with avatar²-peripherals
 - Full emulation
- Plugins could detect previously undetected faults
- Full emulation provided better performance than native fuzzing
- More details in the paper: http://s3.eurecom.fr/docs/ndss18_muench.pdf

- Dynamic binary analysis of firmware requires often the device
- PANDA allows to record and replay execution
- Allows exchange of executions fur further analysis without the device

Demo

- Firefox with inserted bug
 - Executed concretely inside gdb until function of interest
 - Analysis of only one thread
- Automated memory layout extraction from gdb
- Transfer of layout into angr
- Copy-On-Read
- Symbolic function arguments

Preliminary Results:

- Approximatly 10 minutes of runtime
- 36 executed basic blocks
- 21 uniquely accessed pages
- Found the bug

- 5 Examples:
 - Dynamic Instrumentation of GDB
 - Dynamic Instrumentation of a plc
 - Fault Detection with an development board and PANDA
 - Record and Replay with an development board and PANDA
 - Symbolic Execution with firefox and gdb

Conclusion

- Dynamic firmware analysis is still a challenging topic
- Avatar² aims to tackle some of the challenges
- Multi-target orchestration is not limited to firmware

- Move main development to github
- Introduce proper versioning
- More, exciting targets

Get in touch with us:

- #avatar2@freenode
- avatar2@lists.eurecom.fr
- Talk to me

We may be looking for people to join our group in the near future

- S3@Eurecom
- jzaddach
- Subwire & domenukk
- Zardus & ccm
- Tasteless

Thank you!