Abstract—Email spoofing is referred to as malicious activity in which the origin details have been altered so as to make it to appear to origin from a different source. Sending fake emails is usually used to convince the receiver so that he stays unaware of the real sender. Email spoofing may be effectively used to launch phishing attacks on the receivers. The attacker may also use the attack with some amplification and in addition use mass mailer to spam mail users. Infections may be propagated by the means of spoofed emails to attack victims. There are a variety of attackers who do email spoofing. The list starts from people trying to just have fun by sending spoofed messages to users. Other serious attacks are done by wrong doers to make damages to the systems.

Index Terms—DKIM, DMARC, Email spoofing, SMTP server, SPF

I. INTRODUCTION

Spoofing is when an e-mail message appears to come from a legitimate source but in fact is from an impostor. E-mail spoofing can be used for malicious purposes such as spreading viruses, trawling for sensitive business data and other industrial espionage activities. If you are receiving bounced (returned) emails for messages that you never sent and that use as the return address your domain and addresses you never created, then this could be a case of spoofing.

Spoofing is possibly the most frustrating abuse issue to deal with, simply because it cannot be stopped. Spoofing is similar to hand-writing many letters, and signing someone else’s name to it. You can imagine how difficult that would be to trace.

II. HOW SPOOFING OCCURS

There are different ways through which spoofing occurs:

A. A spammer finds an email address or a valid domain.

B. A spammer sends a large email campaign with this domain in the From address, using various email tools that prohibit easy tracing of the origin. These tools cloak, scramble or remove the header entirely. Most people assume an email came from the address it was sent from, just as they do with the return address on snail mail they receive.

C. A spammer can configure his own SMTP server

Configuration of SMTP Server can be done in the following way:
1. Go to Control Panel → Administrative Tools → Internet Information Services (IIS)
2. Open Properties of SMTP Server → Access tab
   → Click on relay button → Click on Add button → add the IP address of localhost.
3. Code to send the email without password of Sender’s Email ID
   System.Net.Mail.SmtpClient c = new SmtpClient("localhost", 25);
   MailMessage m = new MailMessage(new MailAddress("Sender’s emailid"), new MailAddress("Receiver’s emailid"));
   m.Subject = "subject";
   m.Body = "body";
   c.Send(m);

   • Create an object of SMTPclient
   • Create an object of mail message for sending mail.
   • Send the mail to the specified email id.

4. The following mail will be generated:

   ![Image of a generated fake mail]

Fig 1: Generation of fake mail
Identification of Spoofed E-mail

III. IDENTIFYING FAKE MAILS

To identify fake mails we can use any online mail tracker websites or we can do it manually.

A. Online mail tracking websites:

B. Manual method:

1. Bounced email alerts sometimes contain details within their message headers (in email’s show original) that can help identify the messages’ true origin.
   If you can see in the headers the IP address for the computer that sent the spam, you may be able to determine where the messages came from. You can then contact that PC’s Internet service provider and have that IP address blocked. In the short term, that may stop the email spoofing and the bounced messages. The ISP may not help you; and even if it does, there’s nothing to stop the spammer from simply spoofing your email account from a compromised PC that has a different IP address.

2. The following is the way to identify the fake mail:

   Here we have used one of the online emails tracking website like www.cyberforensics.in to track the fake mail. We have to go to the message headers in that select show original option then we have to copy the mail header and paste it to mail tracking website www.cyberforensics.in, then the following screen will be opened:

![Fig 3: Path traced by the mail](image)

Header of Actual Mail

Authentication-Results: mx.google.com;
spf=pass (google.com: domain of chirag.darji@ahduni.edu.in designates 2607:f8b0:400c:c01::233 as permitted sender)
smtplib=chirag.darji@ahduni.edu.in;
dkim=pass header.i=@gmail.com;
dmarc=pass (p=NONE dis=NONE)
header.from=gmail.com
Received: by mail-ve0-f179.google.com with SMTP id db12so10088658veb.10 for <chirag.darji@ahduni.edu.in>; Tue, 22 Apr 2014 09:22:29 -0700 (PDT)
DKIM-Signature: v=1; a=rsa-sha256;
c=relaxed/relaxed;

Header of mail sent by SMTP

Received-SPF: neutral (google.com: 118.102.172.202 is neither permitted nor denied by best guess record for domain of hiral.vegda@ahduni.edu.in)
client-ip=118.102.172.202;
Authentication-Results: mx.google.com;
spf=neutral (google.com: 118.102.172.202 is neither permitted nor denied by best guess record for domain of hiral.vegda@ahduni.edu.in)
smtplib=hiral.vegda@ahduni.edu.in

- We have to check the received-SPF(Sender Policy Framework). So, if spf = pass then it is a permitted sender). and if spf = neutral then sender is neither permitted nor denied.
- Sender Policy Framework (SPF) is an email validation system designed to prevent email spam by detecting email spoofing, a common vulnerability, by verifying sender IP addresses. SPF allows administrators to specify which hosts are allowed to send mail from a given domain by creating a specific TXT record in the Domain Name System (DNS). Mail exchangers use the DNS to check that mail from a given domain is being sent.
IV. Conclusion

We can identify the spammer or the sender of fake mails using their IP address by checking the show original option of the message. And also using online mail tracker websites, we can identify the email server of the sender. Each email service providers are having their own authentication by reporting as phishing or spamming and they can block such kind of IP address of sender trying to send fake mails. We can also identify and report scams by reporting to the free online services.

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References


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