

# Breaking the Sandbox

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## Introduction

In this paper, I would like to discuss various existing and interesting techniques which are used to evade the detection of a virus in Sandbox. We will also look at ways a sandbox can be hardened to prevent such evasion techniques.

This paper is targeted towards those who have an experience with Windows OS internals, reverse engineering viruses as well as those who are interested in developing detection mechanisms for viruses in a Sandboxed environment.

A deep understanding of the evasion techniques used by viruses in the wild helps us in implementing better detection mechanisms.

## Purpose

New offensive techniques give rise to innovative detection mechanisms, as has always been the case in cyber security.

Nowadays, it is becoming increasingly common for malware analysts to leverage sandboxes for automation of malware analysis. However, most techniques used in viruses to evade such sandboxes are targeted towards commercial and well-known VMs like VMWare Workstation, VMWare Fusion, Virtual Box, Virtual PC, Qemu and some sandboxes like CWSandbox, Anubis and so on. These techniques can prevent analysis in a sandbox based only on known information.

However, there is a lot of scope for improvement in the techniques used by viruses to detect and evade a Virtualized Environment. This encourages the development of more hardened sandboxes which are as close to VMM transparency as possible.

## Anti VM techniques

Before we discuss some new ways of preventing analysis in sandboxes, let us discuss some of the commonly used anti sandbox/anti vm techniques.

**Process Names:** Till date, viruses rely on looking for known process names running on the machine to identify the presence of a virtual machine. By enumerating the process names using Process32First()/Process32Next(), they look for running process such as vmsvc.exe,

vmusrvc.exe, vboxtray.exe, vmttoolsd.exe, df5serv.exe, vboxservice.exe and so on. These are known values of process names that may be running in a sandbox used by malware analysts.

**Registry Artifacts:** It is also common for viruses to access specific registry entries to check for presence of sandboxes. One of the most common registry entry accessed for this purpose is:

```
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Services\Disk\Enum
```

Subkey: "0"

Then the value of above subkey is parsed for the presence of substrings like vmware, qemu, xen and so on.

This is again based on known values.

**Module Names:** Sandboxes inject modules in a process to log the activities performed by it. Since some of the module names used by security sandboxes are known publicly, they are used by the virus to detect the presence of sandbox the following way:

Call GetModuleHandleA() on the module name. If the handle returned is Non Null, this indicates the module is loaded. It is unloaded by calling FreeLibrary(). Once this is done, the sandbox will not log any activity performed by the malware. Common module names often searched by the viruses are **dbghelp.dll**, **sbiedll.dll** and so on.

**Backdoor Detection:** In most virtual machine softwares like VMWare Workstation, VMWare Fusion, Virtual PC, Parallels and so on, Hypervisor uses a backdoor to communicate with the guest operating system.

We can detect the presence of virtualization software and also identify its type using this backdoor technique.

For instance, to detect the presence of VMWare there is a known documented technique which checks for the presence of VMX backdoor used by Hypervisor to communicate with the guest operating system:

```
mov eax,0x564d5868  
mov ecx, 0xa  
mov dx, 0x5658  
in eax, dx  
cmp ebx, 0x564d5868
```

While these techniques are good, they are again directed towards specific virtualization softwares.

**Long Opcode Instructions:** This technique was documented by jaelanicu in 2009. It is not used so often in viruses, however it is a unique technique. It is based on the fact that virtualized CPU does not have a limitation on the length of an instruction unlike a real x86 CPU. When an instruction of length greater than 0x15 bytes is executed on a real CPU, it will trigger an exception however in a virtual CPU it will not trigger an exception. This difference in the result is used to detect the presence of virtualization.

It was observed that Qakbot uses this technique as shown in the screenshot below:

70005100	9C	PUSH ESP	
7000510E	8BEC	MOV EBP,ESP	
70005110	6A FF	PUSH -1	
70005112	68 88920070	PUSH 9c2ffb4f.70009288	
70005117	68 48870070	PUSH 9c2ffb4f.70008748	
7000511C	64:A1 00000000	MOV EAX,DWORD PTR FS:[0]	JMP to msvcrt._except_handler3
70005122	50	PUSH EAX	
70005123	64:8925 00000000	MOV DWORD PTR FS:[0],ESP	
7000512A	8BEC 0C	SUB ESP,0C	
7000512D	53	PUSH EBX	
7000512E	54	PUSH ESI	
7000512F	57	PUSH EDI	
70005130	8965 E8	MOV DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-18],ESP	
70005133	6A 01	PUSH 1	
70005135	58	POP EAX	
70005136	8365 FC 00	AND DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4],0	
7000513A	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
7000513B	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
7000513C	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
7000513D	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
7000513E	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
7000513F	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005140	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005141	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005142	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005143	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005144	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005145	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005146	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005147	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005148	3E:	PREFIX DS:	Superfluous prefix
70005149	3E:EB 09	JMP SHORT 9c2ffb4f.70005155	
7000514C	6A 01	PUSH 1	
7000514E	58	POP EAX	
7000514F	C3	RETN	
70005150	8B65 E8	MOV ESP,DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-18]	
70005153	33C0	XOR EAX,EAX	
70005155	834D FC FF	OR DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4],FFFFFFFF	
70005159	8B4D F0	MOV ECX,DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-10]	

Please note that this technique may not work reliably on recent versions of Virtualization Softwares.

**Number of Cores:** It is common for malware analysts to allocate a single processor core to the sandbox. However, in a real world case today, most processors will have multiple cores.

Malwares can use several techniques to find the number of CPU cores and then decide if they are running inside a virtual machine on the basis of the result. One of the easiest ways of doing this is by checking the Process Environment Block:

```
Mov eax, dword ptr fs:[0x30]
Mov eax, dword ptr ds:[eax+0x64]
Cmp eax, 0x1
Je vm_detected
```

This technique may appear to be trivial but it can be effective in some cases.

**Data structures:** There are certain structures like IDT, GDT and LDT, which are at different locations between Host and Guest OS. This concept was used in techniques such as Red Pill to detect the presence of virtualization software. Since SIDT is a sensitive unprivileged instruction, VMM performs binary translation for it to return a different result than the host OS. Credits for Red Pill to Joanna Rutkowska.

Please note that on a multi processor machine the behavior of SIDT is not consistent. I will be testing this on various virtualization softwares/processor configurations and including a consistent code in my VM Buster program (Appendix I).

**Device Information:** It is also possible to detect the presence of virtualization software by enumerating the device details using APIs like SetupDiGetClassDevsA, SetupDiEnumDeviceInfo and SetupDiGetDeviceRegistryPropertyA. After enumerating, it can be compared with known values used in Sandboxes like VMware Pointing, VMware Accelerated, VMware SCSI, VMware SVGA, VMware Replay, VMware server memory, CWSandbox, Virtual HD, QEMU and so on.

**File System Artifacts:** There are some system drivers specific to the virtualization software, which can be located in the path: %windir%\system32\drivers\. It was observed that there are a few viruses, which check for the presence of these files as well.

Some of the driver names to look for: vmci.sys, vmhgfs.sys, vmmouse.sys, vm SCSI.sys, vmusbmouse.sys, vmx\_svgasys, vmxnet.sys, VBoxMouse.sys.

**Network Adapter MAC Address:** The vendor of Network Adapter can be identified from the first 3 bytes of a Mac Address.

Example: 00-0C-29-B4-0A-15

00-0c-29 is specific to VMWare.

**Sensitive Instructions:** We know that the x86 processor architecture cannot be completely virtualized. VMWare introduced the concept of full virtualization using binary translation for sensitive unprivileged instructions like SIDT, SLDT, SGDT, VERR, VERW and others. Fortunately, these instructions exhibit a different behavior for a Guest OS and the Host OS due to this binary translation performed by the VMM.

Malwares in the past have used instructions such as VERR/VERW to detect the presence of virtualization softwares like VMWare.

Please note that the newer versions of VMWare are not impacted by it. Also, you can harden your Virtual Environment from these techniques by disabling the Acceleration option provided by your VMM software.

I have written a C program, which will use almost all of the above methods for various virtualization softwares to detect their presence. It is scalable and can be modified to support more virtualization softwares by adding more artifacts information.

The program can be found in Appendix I.

As can be seen, it is really easy to detect the presence of Virtual Environment for a virus. One must harden their sandbox by modifying the default configuration of a Guest Operating System to protect themselves from such Anti VM techniques.

### **Drawbacks of Common Anti VM techniques**

We looked at some of the commonly used techniques for detecting the presence of a sandbox. While these techniques are effective against few virtualization softwares, they rely on known data.

As the usage of sandboxes for detecting the malicious binaries is increasing and security organizations are leveraging these sandboxes for detection mechanisms, attackers will explore new evasion techniques.

If we have a sandbox which has an unknown list of running processes, unknown file system and registry artifacts, no guest VM tools, multiple processor cores, unknown injected module name, unknown hypervisor port, then almost all of the above commonly used anti vm/anti sandbox techniques are rendered ineffective.

### **Essentials of Sandbox Based Detection**

A sandbox, which is used to automatically analyze the behavior of a binary and conclude its maliciousness, has to monitor the activities performed by the binary. After studying closely various sandboxes used for automation of malware analysis, it was found that almost all these sandboxes have below common attributes:

1. They inject a module into the process address space of the binary being analyzed.
2. The injected module will perform API hooking in user mode to log the API calls and the parameters passed.

### **Detect and Unload**

We know that a module is injected into the address space of our malicious binary to log the activities.

How do we detect its presence?

As a malware author, we are aware of the modules that will be loaded by our binary during the course of its execution. We can enumerate over the list of loaded modules and identify the injected DLL. Below is an example code to do this.

Let us consider a binary, which loads only ntdll.dll and kernel32.dll by default. For the purpose of demonstration, I have used LoadLibrary() to load an extra module, gdi32.dll. In a real world scenario, the extra module would be injected by an external entity like a kernel mode driver.

```
#include <windows.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <TlHelp32.h>

/*
Author: Sudeep Singh
*/

int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
HANDLE psnap;
HMODULE hModule;
MODULEENTRY32 me;
me.dwSize = sizeof(MODULEENTRY32);

psnap = CreateToolhelp32Snapshot(TH32CS_SNAPMODULE, 0);

if(!Module32First(psnap, &me))
{
printf("There was an error in retrieving the module information\n");
exit(0);
}

while(Module32Next(psnap, &me))
{
if(strcmp(me.szModule, "kernel32.dll") != 0)
{
if(strcmp(me.szModule, "ntdll.dll") != 0)
{
hModule = GetModuleHandle(me.szModule);
if(FreeLibrary(hModule) != 0)
{
printf("successfully unloaded injected module, %s\n",
me.szModule);
}
}
}
}

return 0;
}
```

We are enumerating over the modules using `Module32First()/Module32Next()` and doing a basic string comparison to identify the extra loaded modules. Once we find the injected DLL, we can unload it using a call to `FreeLibrary()`.

Please note that even though this technique might appear to be easy, it can render the entire sandbox analysis mechanism ineffective once the injected DLL is unloaded.

What happens if the module is unloaded?

You might ask, what is the impact of unloading the injected DLL? Since all the API hooks are applied by your injected DLL as soon as the module is loaded into the address space of virus.

While the API hooks remain intact, their functionality is rendered ineffective. As an example, consider an inline hook placed by your injected DLL on an API, `Sleep()` imported from `kernel32.dll`

The function prolog of `Sleep()` after inline hook looks like:

```
jmp <into_module_address_space>
push 0
push dword ptr ds:[ebp+0x8]
```

After the module is unloaded, when `Sleep()` API is invoked by the virus, it will try to follow the inline hook into the module address space. However, since the module is unloaded, this would result in a crash (since it does not point to a valid memory address range). As a result of this, the binary would not be analyzed in the sandbox.

## **Protect from Unload**

If the above technique is used by a virus to identify the extra loaded module and unload it using `FreeLibrary()`, we can protect from this using several methods.

**Reference Count of DLL:** We know that `FreeLibrary()` will unload a module from the process address space only if the reference count is 0.

Also, the reference count of a loaded module can be incremented by calling `LoadLibrary()`. Each time we call `LoadLibrary()`, it increments the reference count of loaded module and each time we call `FreeLibrary()`, it decrements the reference count.

As an example, let us consider the code mentioned above. We compile it into a binary and run it inside a debugger.

Set a breakpoint at a call to FreeLibrary() and run the program. When FreeLibrary() is called the first time, it is trying to unload the module, gdi32.dll

0040107B	. 51	PUSH ECX	
0040107C	. E8 6F000000	CALL module_e.004010F0	
00401081	. 83C4 08	ADD ESP,8	
00401084	. 85C0	TEST EAX,EAX	
00401086	√74 4A	JE SHORT module_e.004010D2	
00401088	. 68 58B04000	PUSH module_e.0040B058	ASCII "ntdll.dll"
0040108D	. 8D95 E8FDFFFF	LEA EDX,DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-218]	
00401093	. 52	PUSH EDX	
00401094	. E8 57000000	CALL module_e.004010F0	
00401099	. 83C4 08	ADD ESP,8	
0040109C	. 85C0	TEST EAX,EAX	
0040109E	√74 32	JE SHORT module_e.004010D2	
004010A0	. 8D85 E8FDFFFF	LEA EAX,DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-218]	
004010A6	. 50	PUSH EAX	pModule GetModuleHandleA
004010A7	. FF15 04804000	CALL DWORD PTR DS:[<&KERNEL32.GetModuleH	
004010AD	. 8945 FC	MOV DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4],EAX	
004010B0	. 8B4D FC	MOV ECX,DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4]	
004010B3	. 51	PUSH ECX	hLibModule FreeLibrary
004010B4	. FF15 00804000	CALL DWORD PTR DS:[<&KERNEL32.FreeLibr	<--- Set a Breakpoint Here
004010BA	. 85C0	TEST EAX,EAX	
004010BC	√74 14	JE SHORT module_e.004010D2	
004010BE	. 8D95 E8FDFFFF	LEA EDX,DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-218]	
004010C4	. 52	PUSH EDX	
004010C5	. 68 64B04000	PUSH module_e.0040B064	ASCII "successfully unloaded injected module, %s"
004010CA	. E8 94030000	CALL module_e.00401463	

Before executing this call instruction, let us view the loaded modules in Olly Debugger. We can see that both, gdi32.dll and user32.dll are loaded in the process address space.



Address	Size	Owner	Section	Contains	Type	Access	Initial	Mapped as
00010000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
00020000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
00120000	00001000				Priv	RW	Gua	RW
0012E000	00002000			stack of ma	Priv	RW	Gua	RW
00130000	00003000				Map	R	R	
00140000	00003000				Priv	RW	RW	
00240000	00006000				Priv	RW	RW	
00250000	00003000				Map	RW	RW	
00260000	00016000				Map	R	R	\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\unicode.nls
00280000	00041000				Map	R	R	\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\locale.nls
002D0000	00041000				Map	R	R	\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\sortkey.nls
00320000	00006000				Map	R	R	\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\sorttbls.nls
00330000	00004000				Priv	RW	RW	
00340000	00003000				Map	R	R	
00350000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
00360000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
00400000	00001000	module_e		PE header	Imag	R	RWE	
00401000	00007000	module_e	.text	code	Imag	R	RWE	
00408000	00003000	module_e	.rdata	imports	Imag	R	RWE	
00409000	00003000	module_e	.data	data	Imag	R	RWE	
0040E000	00001000	module_e	.reloc	relocations	Imag	R	RWE	
00410000	00004000				Map	R E	R E	
004D0000	00002000				Map	R E	R E	
004E0000	00103000				Map	R	R	
005F0000	00092000				Map	R E	R E	
77F10000	00001000	gdi32		PE header	Imag	R	RWE	
77F11000	00043000	gdi32	.text	code, import	Imag	R	RWE	<--- gdi32.dll is loaded
77F54000	00002000	gdi32	.data	data	Imag	R	RWE	
77F56000	00001000	gdi32	.rsrc	resources	Imag	R	RWE	
77F57000	00002000	gdi32	.reloc	relocations	Imag	R	RWE	
7C800000	00001000	kernel32		PE header	Imag	R	RWE	
7C801000	00084000	kernel32	.text	code, import	Imag	R	RWE	
7C885000	00005000	kernel32	.data	data	Imag	R	RWE	
7C88A000	00006000	kernel32	.rsrc	resources	Imag	R	RWE	
7C8F0000	00006000	kernel32	.reloc	relocations	Imag	R	RWE	
7C900000	00001000	ntdll		PE header	Imag	R	RWE	
7C901000	00078000	ntdll	.text	code, export	Imag	R	RWE	
7C978000	00005000	ntdll	.data	data	Imag	R	RWE	
7C980000	0002C000	ntdll	.rsrc	resources	Imag	R	RWE	
7C9AC000	00003000	ntdll	.reloc	relocations	Imag	R	RWE	
7E410000	00001000	USER32		PE header	Imag	R	RWE	
7E411000	00006000	USER32	.text	code, import	Imag	R	RWE	
7E471000	00002000	USER32	.data	data	Imag	R	RWE	<--- user32.dll is loaded along with gdi32.dll
7E473000	0002B000	USER32	.rsrc	resources	Imag	R	RWE	
7E49E000	00003000	USER32	.reloc	relocations	Imag	R	RWE	
7F6F0000	00007000				Map	R E	R E	
7FF80000	00024000				Map	R	R	
7FFDE000	00001000			data block	Priv	RW	RW	
7FFDF000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
7FFE0000	00001000				Priv	R	R	

Now, we execute the call and notice that these modules are unloaded. This can be confirmed by viewing the Memory Window in Olly Debugger once again as shown below:

Address	Size	Owner	Section	Contains	Type	Access	Initial	Mapped as
00010000	00001000	00010000			Priv	RW	RW	
00020000	00001000	00020000			Priv	RW	RW	
00120000	00001000	00030000			Priv	RW	Gua	RW
0012E000	00002000	00030000		stack of ma	Priv	RW	Gua	RW
00130000	00003000	00130000			Map	R	R	
00140000	00003000	00140000			Priv	RW	RW	
00240000	00005000	00240000			Priv	RW	RW	
00250000	00003000	00250000			Map	RW	RW	
00260000	00016000	00260000			Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\unicode.nls
00280000	00041000	00280000			Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\locale.nls
002D0000	00041000	002D0000			Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\sortkey.nls
00320000	00006000	00320000			Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\sorttbls.nls
00330000	00004000	00330000			Priv	RW	RW	
00340000	00003000	00340000			Priv	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\ctype.nls
00350000	00001000	00350000			Priv	RW	RW	
00360000	00001000	00360000			Priv	RW	RW	
00400000	00001000	module_e 00400000		PE header	Inag	R	RWE	
00401000	00007000	module_e 00400000	.text	code	Inag	R	RWE	
00408000	00003000	module_e 00400000	.rdata	imports	Inag	R	RWE	
0040B000	00003000	module_e 00400000	.data	data	Inag	R	RWE	
0040E000	00001000	module_e 00400000	.reloc	relocations	Inag	R	RWE	
00410000	00004000	00410000			Map	R E	R E	
00400000	00002000	00410000			Map	R E	R E	
004E0000	00103000	004E0000			Map	R	R	
005F0000	00092000	005F0000			Map	R E	R E	
7C800000	00001000	kernel32 7C800000		PE header	Inag	R	RWE	
7C801000	00094000	kernel32 7C800000	.text	code,import	Inag	R	RWE	
7C805000	00005000	kernel32 7C800000	.data	data	Inag	R	RWE	
7C80A000	00066000	kernel32 7C800000	.rsrc	resources	Inag	R	RWE	
7C80F000	00006000	kernel32 7C800000	.reloc	relocations	Inag	R	RWE	
7C900000	00001000	ntdll 7C900000		PE header	Inag	R	RWE	
7C901000	00078000	ntdll 7C900000	.text	code,export	Inag	R	RWE	
7C970000	00005000	ntdll 7C900000	.data	data	Inag	R	RWE	
7C980000	0002C000	ntdll 7C900000	.rsrc	resources	Inag	R	RWE	
7C9AC000	00003000	ntdll 7C900000	.reloc	relocations	Inag	R	RWE	
7F6F0000	00007000	7F6F0000			Map	R E	R E	
7FFB0000	00024000	7FFB0000			Map	R	R	
7FFDE000	00001000	7FFDE000		data block	Priv	RW	RW	
7FFDF000	00001000	7FFDF000			Priv	RW	RW	
7FFFE000	00001000	7FFFE000			Priv	R	R	

Let us modify the previous code by calling LoadLibrary() more than 1 time as shown below:

```
int i=0;
while(i<0x2)
{
    LoadLibraryA("gdi32.dll");
    i++;
}
```

After compiling this into a binary and attaching the debugger, we once again check the Memory Window after executing the call to FreeLibrary(). This time, we observe that even though FreeLibrary() returns a non zero value, the module is still loaded in the address space.

This is a very trivial method to prevent your module from being unloaded. A virus author could check the reference count of a module before calling FreeLibrary().

I wrote the following inline assembly, which can be used to find the reference count of any loaded module. We could then modify the reference count using inline assembly and call FreeLibrary().

```
__asm
{
    pushad
    mov ebx, hModule
```

```

mov eax, dword ptr fs:[0x18]
mov eax, dword ptr ds:[eax+0x30]
mov eax, dword ptr ds:[eax+0xc] ; _PEB_LDR_DATA
add eax, 0xc
mov ecx, dword ptr ds:[eax] ; pointer to InLoadOrderModuleList
repeat:
mov edx, ecx
cmp dword ptr ds:[edx+0x8], 0
mov ecx, dword ptr ds:[ecx]
je repeat
cmp ebx, dword ptr ds:[edx+0x18]
jnz repeat
mov eax, dword ptr ds:[edx+0x38]
mov ref_count, eax
popad
}

```

Above code will find the reference count (LoadCount) of the module that we want to unload. We find the LoadCount by parsing the Process Environment Block.

This will allow the attacker to unload the injected module even if the reference count was modified by calling LoadLibrary() multiple times.

**Prevent Enumeration of Modules:** If a sandbox is relying on DLL injection to analyze the behavior of a binary, it is essential to hook APIs such as **Module32First()/Module32Next()** which could be used to enumerate the loaded modules. However, based on the study of some sandboxes, it was found that these APIs are not hooked in the user mode.

**Hiding the module in PEB:** It is possible to hide the injected module in the Process Environment Block. This way, it would not show up in the list of loaded modules. Such techniques are encouraged and should be used by sandboxes.

When a process loads a module, information specific to the DLL is stored in the Process Environment Block. Below are some structures specific to PEB, which allow us to access DLL information:

```

0:001> dt nt!_PEB @$peb
ntdll!_PEB
+0x000 InheritedAddressSpace : 0 ""
+0x001 ReadImageFileExecOptions : 0 ""
+0x002 BeingDebugged : 0x1 ""
+0x003 SpareBool : 0 ""
+0x004 Mutant : 0xffffffff Void
+0x008 ImageBaseAddress : 0x01000000 Void
+0x00c Ldr : 0x001a1e90 _PEB_LDR_DATA

```

**PEB\_LDR\_DATA** structure has 3 linked lists, which store information about all the loaded modules.

```
0:001> dt nt!_PEB_LDR_DATA 0x001a1e90
ntdll!_PEB_LDR_DATA
+0x000 Length      : 0x28
+0x004 Initialized  : 0x1 "
+0x008 SsHandle    : (null)
+0x00c InLoadOrderModuleList : _LIST_ENTRY [ 0x1a1ec0 - 0x1a2bc0 ]
+0x014 InMemoryOrderModuleList : _LIST_ENTRY [ 0x1a1ec8 - 0x1a2bc8 ]
+0x01c InInitializationOrderModuleList : _LIST_ENTRY [ 0x1a1f28 - 0x1a2bd0 ]
```

The 3 linked lists are highlighted above. If we can unlink the information of our injected module from these 3 linked lists, our module will be hidden.

This means,

GetModuleHandle() would return NULL for our module name. As a result of this, the FreeLibrary() trick for unloading our module will not work.

Module32First()/Module32Next() will not show our DLL in the list of loaded modules. This is because these Windows APIs also use the information stored in PEB to enumerate the loaded modules.

What code we need to add to our DLL?

In order to unlink our module from the PEB, we need to add a function which will be called when the reason code, **DLL\_PROCESS\_ATTACH** is passed to our **DllMain()** as shown below:

```
BOOL WINAPI DllMain(HMODULE hModule, DWORD ul_reason_for_call, LPVOID lpReserved)
{
    if(ul_reason_for_call == DLL_PROCESS_ATTACH)
    {
        HideDll((ULONG_PTR)hModule);
        MessageBoxA(NULL, "DLL Hidden", "Hide the DLL", MB_OK);
    }
    return 1;
}
```

The complete code for unlinking the DLL from PEB can be found in Appendix III. Credits to Pnluck from OpenRCE for this.

When LoadLibrary() is called, it invokes the DllMain() function of DLL which in turn will call HideDll() function that unlinks the module from PEB.

In order to confirm that our method works, let us use the program discussed previously to enumerate the modules using Module32First()/Module32Next() to load our new modified module.

We will set a breakpoint at a call to LoadLibrary().

When we return from LoadLibrary(), we can see the base address of our module as 0x10000000 in eax.

Let us view the list of loaded modules in Memory Window of Olly Debugger. We can see that a memory region is mapped at address 0x10000000 however no module name is shown.

Address	Size	Owner	Section	Contains	Type	Access	Initial	Mapped as
00010000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
00020000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
00120000	00001000				Priv	RW	Guar	
00120000	00003000			stack of ma	Priv	RW	Guar	
00130000	00003000				Map	R	R	
00140000	00006000				Priv	RW	RW	
00240000	00006000				Priv	RW	RW	
00250000	00003000				Map	RW	RW	
00260000	00016000				Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\unicode.nls
00280000	00041000				Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\locale.nls
002D0000	00041000				Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\sortkey.nls
00320000	00006000				Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\sorttbls.nls
00330000	00004000				Priv	RW	RW	
00340000	00003000				Map	R	R	\\Device\HarddiskVolume1\WINDOWS\system32\ctype.nls
00350000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
00360000	00001000				Priv	RW	RW	
00370000	00004000				Priv	RW	RW	
00380000	00005000				Priv	RW	RW	
00390000	00050000				Map	R	R	
00400000	00001000	module_e		PE header	Image	R	RWE	
00401000	00007000	module_e	.text	code	Image	R	RWE	
00408000	00003000	module_e	.rdata	imports	Image	R	RWE	
0040B000	00003000	module_e	.data	data	Image	R	RWE	
0040E000	00001000	module_e	.reloc	relocations	Image	R	RWE	
00410000	00004000				Map	R E	R E	
004D0000	00002000				Map	R E	R E	
004E0000	00103000				Map	R	R	
005F0000	00092000				Map	R E	R E	
10000000	00000000				Image	R	RWE	<--- This memory region corresponds to our hidden DLL
5AD70000	00001000	uxtheme		PE header	Image	R	RWE	
5AD71000	00003000	uxtheme	.text	code,import	Image	R	RWE	
5ADA1000	00001000	uxtheme	.data	data	Image	R	RWE	
5ADA2000	00004000	uxtheme	.rsrc	resources	Image	R	RWE	
5ADA6000	00002000	uxtheme	.reloc	relocations	Image	R	RWE	
77C10000	00001000	nsvcrt		PE header	Image	R	RWE	
77C11000	0004C000	nsvcrt	.text	code,import	Image	R	RWE	
77C50000	00007000	nsvcrt	.data	data	Image	R	RWE	
77C64000	00001000	nsvcrt	.rsrc	resources	Image	R	RWE	
77C65000	00003000	nsvcrt	.reloc	relocations	Image	R	RWE	
77D00000	00001000	ADVAPI32		PE header	Image	R	RWE	
77D01000	00075000	ADVAPI32	.text	code,import	Image	R	RWE	
77E46000	00005000	ADVAPI32	.data	data	Image	R	RWE	
77E4B000	0001B000	ADVAPI32	.rsrc	resources	Image	R	RWE	
77E66000	00005000	ADVAPI32	.reloc	relocations	Image	R	RWE	

This means, it is possible to hide our injected module from the Debugger as well.

## API Hooking

So far we looked at methods of detecting the injected DLL and how one can prevent that DLL from being unloaded by a virus.

Now, let us target another essential functionality of an automated malware analysis sandbox. In order to log the activities performed by the virus, there are API hooks placed by the injected DLL. It is becoming increasingly common these days for malwares to detect the API hooks in a sandbox. However, it was observed that most malwares only check for inline API hooks.

We will look at some of the viruses found in the wild and understand the API hook detection techniques used by them.

## Detect and Skip

As we know, in Windows, some APIs when invoked will in turn invoke other low level APIs. A good example of this is APIs imported from kernel32.dll. These APIs in turn invoke functions from ntdll.dll

For instance,

**Sleep()** from kernel32.dll calls **SleepEx()** from kernel32.dll

**SleepEx()** in turn calls **NtDelayExecution()** from ntdll.dll

We also know that in Microsoft Windows, most of the wrapper APIs have a 0x5 byte stub at function prolog which looks like shown below:

```
mov edi, edi
push ebp
mov ebp, esp
```

This stub has a size of 0x5 bytes and since we require 0x5 bytes to place an inline API hook, it makes it very convenient for sandboxes to apply an inline API hook for such APIs.

An inline hook for Sleep() API would look like:

```
jmp <into module address space>
push 0
push dword ptr ds:[ebp+0x8]
call kernel32!SleepEx
```

Since an API hook on wrapper API can be bypassed by a virus by calling lower level APIs, an API hook is placed on SleepEx() as well which has a different function prolog.

Options for inline API hook:

1. Short jmp - opcode 0xeb
2. Near jmp - opcode 0xe9
3. Call - opcode 0xe8

As there is only a limited number of ways in which a sandbox can apply an inline hook, it is trivial to bypass them by checking the first byte of the API.

If the malware calls the APIs through a stub which first checks the API prolog and then skips it if an inline hook is detected, the sandbox would not be able to log any activity of the malware.

Example stub:

```
api_address = GetProcAddress(hModule, api_name);

__asm
{
    mov     eax, api_address
    cmp     byte ptr [eax], 0E8h
    je     dest1
    cmp     byte ptr [eax], 0E9h
    je     dest1
    cmp     byte ptr [eax], 0EBh
    jne    dest2
dest1:
    cmp     dword ptr [eax+5], 90909090h
    je     dest2
    mov     edi, edi
    push   ebp
    mov     ebp, esp
    lea    eax, [eax+5]
dest2:
    jmp     eax
}
```

In the above stub, we check if the first byte of the API prolog is 0xe8 or 0xe9. If so, then we jump to the location, dest1. At dest1, we check if the inline hook is followed by 4 NOP instructions. This check is to ensure that the inline hook is not a default hook placed by OS since from Windows 7 onwards; the calls from kernel32.dll are redirected to kernelbase.dll as shown below:

```

0:001> u kernel32!Sleep
kernel32!Sleep:
00000000`773e28e8 ff25b2ae0700 jmp qword ptr [kernel32!_imp_Sleep (00000000`7745d7a0)]
00000000`773e28ee 90 nop
00000000`773e28ef 90 nop
00000000`773e28f0 90 nop
00000000`773e28f1 90 nop
00000000`773e28f2 90 nop
00000000`773e28f3 90 nop
kernel32!Wow64DisableWow64FsRedirection:
00000000`773e28f4 90 nop

```

If we detect an inline API hook, then we execute the standard prolog instructions stored in our stub (0x5 byte stub). This is followed by adding 0x5 to the API address to skip over the function prolog and resume execution from the 4th instruction.

This way, we do not affect the functionality of the API and also bypass any user mode inline hook applied on an API with a standard prolog.

Now, one might ask, what if the first instruction of an API is a jmp or a call instruction by default in the OS. We have included a check for Win 7 OS in our API hook checking stub above, when a jmp instruction is followed by 4 NOP instructions.

However, there are also some APIs imported from kernel32.dll, ntdll.dll and user32.dll, which have the first instruction as a jmp/call.

In order to find out the API names, I have written a C Program which enumerates all the APIs in the export directory of a module, calculates its address and checks the function prolog for control transfer instruction opcodes (0xe8, 0xe9 and 0xeb).

Based on the results for Win XP SP3, we have:

```

kernel32.dll - 4
ntdll.dll - 8
advapi32.dll - 0
user32.dll - 1
ws2_32.dll - 0

```

Let us check which functions in these modules have the first instruction as jmp/call by default in the OS:

#### **kernel32.dll:**

```

CloseProfileUserMapping
DebugBreak
GetUserDefaultLangID
UnregisterConsoleIME

```



### **ntdll.dll:**

\_Cllog  
\_Clpow  
atan  
ceil  
floor  
log  
pow

### **user32.dll:**

AnyPopup

As you can see in the list above, fortunately a virus rarely uses these APIs and we don't need to check for an inline API hook for these.

The API hook checking stub mentioned above works good for the purpose of virus.

Also, please note that, this API hook checking stub can also be utilized in a shellcode. The importance of using this in a shellcode is:

Some security products like **EMET** detect **ROP** payload execution by checking for stack pivot. These checks are done by monitoring a specific set of APIs, which are often called by ROP payloads like VirtualAlloc, VirtualProtect, CreateFile and so on.

Once, they detect a call to these APIs, they perform a check on the stack pointer to ensure that it is within the limits as mentioned in the TIB.

**TIB->StackLimit < esp < TIB->StackBase**

If a ROP payload calls all the above APIs through an API hook checking stub as mentioned above, it can bypass the exploit code detections such as stack pivot as used in some security products like EMET.

## Function Prolog Analysis

So far, we have discussed APIs, which have the default function prolog with a size of 0x5 bytes, which makes it very convenient for the sandboxes to apply an API hook without altering the functionality of the API.

I modified my previous C Program to calculate the number of APIs imported from various modules on Windows XP SP3 which have a non standard prolog (First 0x5 bytes are not equal to 0x8b, 0xff, 0x55, 0x8b, 0xec).

The code for this can be found in Appendix II.

Below are the results:

Module Name	Non Standard Prolog	Default Inline Hook by OS	Total Number of Exported Functions
kernel32.dll	215	4	953
ntdll.dll	767	8	1315
advapi32.dll	243	0	676
user32.dll	204	1	732
ws2_32.dll	33	0	117

Which are the other types of function prologs?

### **Prolog #1:**

```
0:002> u kernel32!SleepEx
kernel32!SleepEx:
7c8023a0 6a2c          push  2Ch
7c8023a2 686024807c     push  7c802460
7c8023a7 e82a010000     call  kernel32!_SEH_prolog (7c8024d6)
```

The size of first 2 instructions is 0x7 bytes followed by a CALL instruction.

### **Prolog #2:**

```
0:002> u kernel32!CreateRemoteThread
kernel32!CreateRemoteThread:
7c8104bc 6810040000     push  410h
7c8104c1 689806817c     push  7c810698
7c8104c6 e80b20ffff     call  kernel32!_SEH_prolog (7c8024d6)
```

The size of first 2 instructions is 0xa bytes followed by a CALL instruction.

### Prolog #3:

```
0:002> u ntdll!ZwDelayExecution
ntdll!ZwDelayExecution:
7c90d1f0 b83b000000    mov    eax,3Bh
7c90d1f5 ba0003fe7f    mov    edx,7ffe0300
7c90d1fa ff12        call   dword ptr [edx]
```

The size of first instruction is 0x5 bytes.

### Prolog #4:

```
0:002> u kernel32!CloseProfileUserMapping
kernel32!CloseProfileUserMapping:
7c82c865 e80efdfeff    call   7c81c578
7c82c86a 833dd450887c00  cmp   dword ptr [7c8850d4],0
```

The size of first instruction is 0x5 bytes, which is a CALL instruction by default by the OS.

What do we conclude from the above Prologs?

We saw previously that Prolog #4 is uncommon and it is present only for few APIs, which are rarely used by the virus.

Regarding the other 3 API prologs, we can see that it is still convenient for a sandbox to place an inline hook.

Let us discuss each type of prolog one by one:

**Prolog #1:** Besides the standard prolog of 0x5 byte stub, the second most common prolog in Windows is this type of prolog.

Here, two parameters are passed to **\_SEH\_prolog** function. Since these parameters are constants for a specific API, we can easily copy them to our buffer and redirect the control flow to the third instruction in the prolog after our hook has completed the logging activity.

Taking the example of SleepEx() above, our hook would now look like:

```
jmp <into_module_address_space>
nop
nop
call kernel32!_SEH_Prolog    <-- sandbox API hook will return here.
```

Note the addition of 2 NOP instructions since in this case we have a 0x7 byte prolog.

**Prolog #2:** This prolog is similar to the above, however here both the first 2 instructions have a size of 0x5 bytes. So, we need to copy 0xa bytes to our buffer.

Taking the example of CreateRemoteThread above, our hook would look like:

```
jmp <into_module_address_space>
nop
nop
nop
nop
nop
nop
call kernel32!_SEH_Prolog    << sandbox API hook will return here.
```

**Prolog #3:** This type of function prolog is specific to Native APIs imported from ntdll.dll. As we know, APIs from kernel32.dll will call the native APIs from ntdll.dll, a sandbox might place an inline hook at a native API as well.

All these Native APIs have a similar function prolog. They place the system service number in eax, move the pointer to **SystemCallStub** in edx and call it.

The size of first instruction in this prolog is 0x5 bytes, which makes it convenient to place an inline hook. Also, the first instruction in this prolog is a constant specific to the API, so we can copy it to our buffer without affecting the functionality of the API.

Taking the example of **ZwDelayExecution** above, our hook would look like:

```
jmp <into_module_address_space>
mov edx, 0x7ffe0300 <-- sandbox API hook would return here.
call dword ptr [edx]
```

As we can see from the above function prolog analysis, the method of detecting an inline hook remains consistent. Also, it is highly likely that a sandbox would place an inline hook at any one of these stages.

## Detect and Exit

In some cases, if a virus detects an API hook placed by a sandbox, it might exit or crash to prevent analysis in a sandbox.

However, these days, viruses would not want to exit, as there is a high likelihood that such API hooks are also present on a real world endpoint due to endpoint security protection mechanisms. This makes it necessary for the virus to bypass the hooks in addition to detecting them.

## Detect and Patch

There are some viruses in the wild which will detect the API hook and instead of skipping it, they will patch it. As an example, let us analyze the algorithm used by a virus found in the wild to patch the API hooks.

The main hook checking algorithm works as follows:

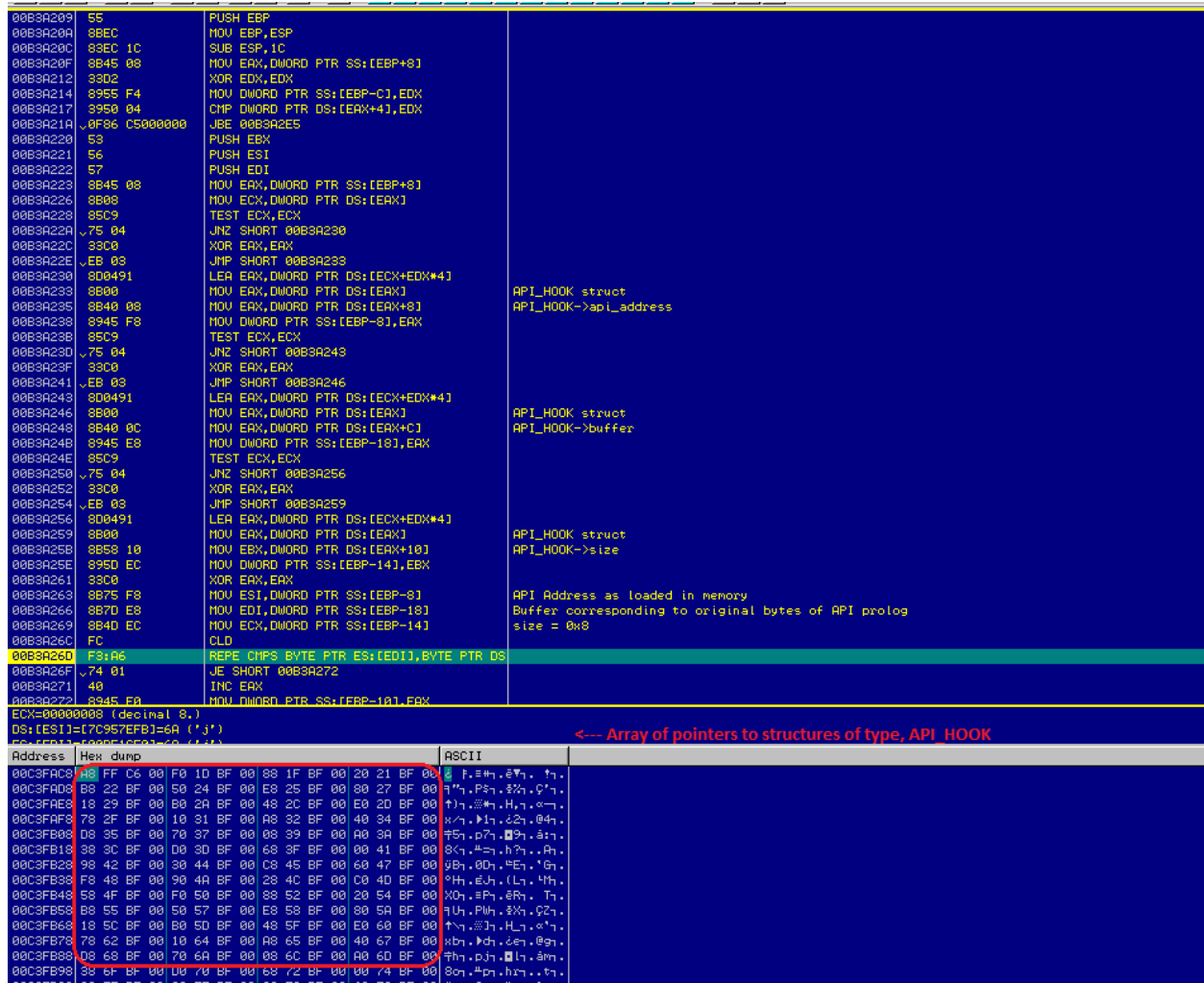
1. It opens the system DLLs like ntdll.dll, kernel32.dll and advapi32.dll from the path, %windir%\system32 using CreateFileA.
2. It maps these DLLs to memory by parsing their PE Header. It loads each section (.text, .data, .rsrc and .reloc) manually into memory. It uses multiple calls to SetFilePointer and ReadFile to perform these functions.
3. After loading the module in memory, it then locates and parses the **Export Data Directory**. Using the **AddressOfOrdinals**, **AddressOfFunctions** and **AddressOfNames** arrays in the Export Directory, it forms a structure for each of the exported API as shown below:

```
struct API_HOOK
{
    DWORD APIOrdinal;
    char *api_name;
    void *api_address;
    BYTE *buffer;
    int size;
} *API_HOOK
```

This structure stores the API ordinal, pointer to API name, the actual API address (as loaded in the memory) and pointer to a buffer which contains the first 0x8 bytes of the API prolog for the API. The size member of the above structure is always set to 0x8.

4. It then calls the function for checking any differences in the API prolog of APIs imported from the corresponding module.

Below screenshot shows the function used for this purpose. The first parameter of this function is a pointer to a pointer to an array of pointers to structures of type **API\_HOOK** as mentioned above.



For instance, we can see the array of pointers to structures of type, **API\_HOOK** at address, 0x00C3FAC8

Each of these structures correspond to an API imported from ntdll.dll

Let us check the structure at 0x00C6FFA8

Address	Hex dump	ASCII
00C6FFA8	01 00 00 00 98 1C BF 00 FB 7E 95 7C F0 1C BF 00	0...ÿL7.√°ò!≡L7.
00C6FFB8	08 00 00 00 64 00 00 00 70 1D BF 00 06 00 00 00	...d...p#7.♣...
00C6FFC8	64 00 00 00 0B 0B AB AB AB AB AB AB AB EE FE EE FE	d...♣♣♣♣♣♣♣♣
00C6FFD8	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 04 00 08 00 EE 14 EE 00	.....♣.♣.♣
00C6FFE8	68 F6 BE 00 98 01 B7 00 EE FE EE FE EE FE EE FE	h÷.ÿ0η.♣♣♣♣♣♣
00C6FFF8	EE FE EE FE EE FE EE FE	♣♣♣♣♣♣

5. Now, it compares the first 0x8 bytes of the API prolog (as loaded in memory) with the original first 0x8 bytes.

If it finds a difference, then it concludes that there was an API hook placed in the function prolog. It proceeds to mark the first 0x8 bytes of the function prolog as **PAGE\_EXECUTE\_READWRITE** using **VirtualProtect**, copies the original bytes from the buffer to `api_address` and restores the protection of the memory region to **PAGE\_EXECUTE\_READ**.

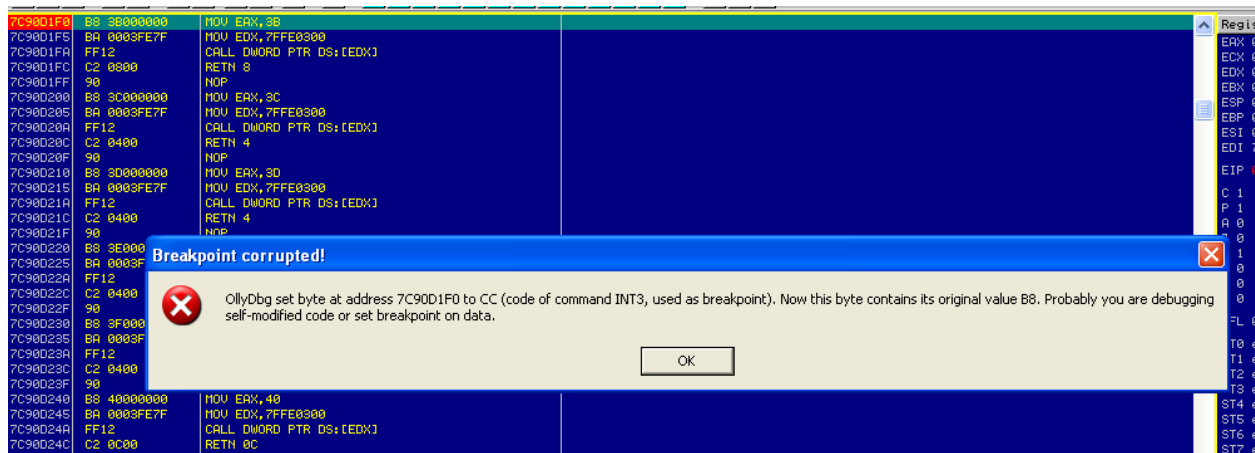
00B3A263	8B75 F8	MOV ESI, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	API Address as loaded in memory
00B3A266	8B7D E8	MOV EDI, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-18]	Buffer corresponding to original bytes of API prolog
00B3A269	8B4D EC	MOV ECX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-14]	size = 0x8
00B3A26C	FC	CLD	
00B3A26D	F3A6	REPE CMPS BYTE PTR ES:[EDI], BYTE PTR DS:[ESI]	<-- compare the first 0x8 bytes of API prolog with the buffer
00B3A26F	74 01	JE SHORT 00B3A272	
00B3A271	40	INC EAX	
00B3A272	8945 F0	MOV DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-10], EAX	
00B3A275	837D F0 00	CMF DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-10], 0	
00B3A279	74 57	JE SHORT 00B3A2D2	
00B3A27B	8365 E4 00	AND DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-1C], 0	
00B3A27F	53	PUSH EBX	
00B3A280	FF75 F8	PUSH DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	
00B3A283	E8 DCD20000	CALL <IsBadWritePtr_stub>	
00B3A288	33F6	XOR ESI, ESI	
00B3A28A	46	INC ESI	
00B3A28B	59	POP ECX	
00B3A28C	59	POP ECX	
00B3A28D	38C6	CMF EAX, ESI	
00B3A28F	75 19	JNZ SHORT 00B3A29A	
00B3A291	8D45 FC	LEA EAX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4]	
00B3A294	50	PUSH EAX	
00B3A295	6A 40	PUSH 40	
00B3A297	53	PUSH EBX	
00B3A298	FF75 F8	PUSH DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	
00B3A29B	E8 0ACF0000	CALL <VirtualProtect_stub>	<-- patch the API prolog if a hook was found
00B3A2A0	83C4 10	ADD ESP, 10	
00B3A2A3	85C0	TEST EAX, EAX	
00B3A2A5	74 3B	JE SHORT 00B3A2E2	
00B3A2A7	8975 E4	MOV DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-1C], ESI	
00B3A2AA	8B7D F8	MOV EDI, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	
00B3A2AD	8B75 E8	MOV ESI, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-18]	
00B3A2B0	8B4D EC	MOV ECX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-14]	
00B3A2B3	FC	CLD	
00B3A2B4	F3A4	REP MOVS BYTE PTR ES:[EDI], BYTE PTR DS:[ESI]	copy 0x8 bytes from the buffer to api_address
00B3A2B5	837D E4 01	CMF DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-1C], 1	
00B3A2B9	75 13	JNZ SHORT 00B3A2CF	
00B3A2BC	8D45 FC	LEA EAX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4]	
00B3A2BF	50	PUSH EAX	
00B3A2C0	FF75 FC	PUSH DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4]	
00B3A2C3	53	PUSH EBX	
00B3A2C4	FF75 F8	PUSH DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	
00B3A2C7	E8 DECE0000	CALL <VirtualProtect_stub>	

In order to test this algorithm, let us set a breakpoint (INT3) at a native API like `ZwDelayExecution`.

When the above hook checking algorithm detects a difference in the API prolog, it copies the original 0x8 bytes to `ZwDelayExecution`.

Now, let us go to the API `ZwDelayExecution` in Olly Debugger. It still shows us the breakpoint. However, this breakpoint has already been corrupted since the byte 0xCC was overwritten by 0xB8 by our algorithm.

We can confirm this by trying to set a breakpoint at `ZwDelayExecution` once again. Olly Debugger lets us know that the breakpoint was corrupted.



How can we detect the Hook Patching activity?

Since the virus needs to modify the protection of memory region corresponding to API prolog prior to patching the hook, the sandbox can hook **VirtualProtect()** and monitor calls to it. If a binary is attempting to call **VirtualProtect()** on an API imported from system DLL, it is a good indicator that this binary is malicious.

This is also the reason a virus should prefer to skip the hooks rather than patch them. The hook checking algorithm mentioned above could be modified to call APIs through a stub which contains the first N instructions of the API prolog (if a hook is detected). It can use an x86 generic disassembler to calculate the length of instructions.

## Real World Examples

Now that we have discussed the various points at which a sandbox can apply inline hooks, let us look at a virus, which was found in the wild, and see how it attempts to detect the API hooks and bypass them.

Below is the algorithm used by the virus:

1. Gets the Function Pointer and passes it to a Generic x86 Disassembler which calculates the length of the first instruction.
2. If the length of the first instruction is 0x2 bytes, then it checks whether the first opcode is **0xeb** (corresponding to a short jmp). If it finds a short jmp, it follows the short jmp and once again calculates the length of first instruction.

If the length of the first instruction is 0x5 bytes, then it checks whether the first opcode is **0xe9** (corresponding to a near jmp). If it finds a near jmp, it follows the near jmp and once again calculates the length of the first instruction.



It keeps repeating the above steps till it finds that the first opcode is not 0xeb or 0xe9 depending upon the length of the first instruction.

3. After this, it copies the first X bytes of the API prolog to a buffer. Here X refers to the length of the first instruction. It then calculates the address of instruction after X bytes in the API prolog and writes that into the buffer prefixed by a near jmp opcode (0xE9)

The jmp\_buffer looks like:

**[first X bytes of the API prolog][E9][offset to instruction after API prolog].**

It repeats these steps for all the APIs it calls to perform malicious activities.

Below screenshot shows the Algorithm along with relevant comments.

0040148E	50	PUSH EAX	
0040148F	56	PUSH ESI	
00401490	E8 6FFDFFFF	CALL <Ivoice_6.GetFunctionPointer>	
00401495	8BF0	MOV ESI, EAX	
00401497	85F6	TEST ESI, ESI	
00401499	0F84 9A000000	JE Ivoice_6.00401539	
0040149F	56	PUSH ESI	Pass the Function Pointer
004014A0	E8 FE040000	CALL <Ivoice_6.InstructionLengthCalculator>	
004014A5	8BC8	MOV ECX, EAX	Length of instruction is returned in eax
004014A7	49	DEC ECX	
004014A8	49	DEC ECX	
004014A9	8945 FC	MOV DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4], EAX	
004014AC	74 13	JE SHORT Ivoice_6.004014C1	if length(instruction) == 0x2
004014AE	83E9 03	SUB ECX, 3	
004014B1	75 26	JNZ SHORT Ivoice_6.004014D9	if length(instruction) == 0x5
004014B3	803E E9	CMP BYTE PTR DS:[ESI], 0E9	Check for inline hook
004014B6	75 21	JNZ SHORT Ivoice_6.004014D9	
004014B8	8B46 01	MOV EAX, DWORD PTR DS:[ESI+1]	
004014BB	807406 05	LEA ESI, DWORD PTR DS:[ESI+EAX+5]	Calculate the destination address of inline hook
004014BF	EB DE	JMP SHORT Ivoice_6.0040149F	
004014C1	803E EB	CMP BYTE PTR DS:[ESI], 0EB	Check if first instruction is a short jmp
004014C4	75 13	JNZ SHORT Ivoice_6.004014D9	
004014C6	0FB646 01	MOUZX EAX, BYTE PTR DS:[ESI+1]	
004014CA	84C0	TEST AL, AL	
004014CC	79 05	JNS SHORT Ivoice_6.004014D3	
004014CE	0D 00FFFFFF	OR EAX, 0FFFFFFF	
004014D3	807406 02	LEA ESI, DWORD PTR DS:[ESI+EAX+2]	Calculate destination address of inline hook
004014D7	EB C6	JMP SHORT Ivoice_6.0040149F	
004014D9	FF75 F8	PUSH DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	
004014DC	50	PUSH EAX	
004014DD	56	PUSH ESI	
004014DE	E8 C7010000	CALL <Ivoice_6.copybuffer>	copybuffer(function_pointer, size_of_first_instruction, jmp_buffer)
004014E3	8B45 F8	MOV EAX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	
004014E6	8B4D FC	MOV ECX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4]	
004014E9	C68408 E9	MOV BYTE PTR DS:[EAX+ECX], 0E9	This will allow the jmp_buffer to jmp back to API
004014ED	8B45 F8	MOV EAX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	
004014F0	8B4D FC	MOV ECX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4]	
004014F3	2BF0	SUB ESI, EAX	
004014F5	83EE 05	SUB ESI, 5	
004014F8	897408 01	MOV DWORD PTR DS:[EAX+ECX+1], ESI	Calculate return address and write it to jmp_buffer
004014FC	8B45 F8	MOV EAX, DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-8]	

Below is an example of `jmp_buffer` stub for an API with 0x2 bytes as the length of the first instruction:

### RtlComputeCrc32:

7FF80060	8BFF	MOV EDI,EDI	← This stub will redirect the execution to second instruction of
7FF80062	E9 4409EFC	JMP ntdll.7C9600AB	RtlComputeCrc32()
7FF80067	AE	SCAS BYTE PTR ES:[EDI]	
7FF80068	0D 692F1910	OR EAX,1D192F69	
7FF8006D	^75 BD	JNZ SHORT 7FF8002C	
7FF8006F	33E6	XOR ESP,ESI	
7FF80071	^E3 FF	JECXZ SHORT 7FF80072	
7FF80073	CD 85	INT 85	
7FF80075	43	INC EBX	
7FF80076	^78 66	JS SHORT 7FF800DE	
7FF80078	AD	LODS DWORD PTR DS:[ESI]	
7FF80079	4E	DEC ESI	
7FF8007A	61	POPAD	
7FF8007B	C7	???	Unknown command
7FF8007C	67:95	XCHG EAX,EBP	Superfluous prefix
7FF8007E	40	INC EAX	
7FF8007F	1C E9	SBB AL,0E9	
7FF80081	A9 1EB43BC4	TEST EAX,C43BB41E	
7FF80086	AC	LODS BYTE PTR DS:[ESI]	
7FF80087	54	PUSH ESP	
7FF80088	40	INC EAX	
7FF80089	62FF	BOUND EDI,EDI	Illegal use of register
7FF8008B	4A	DEC EDX	
7FF8008C	4F	DEC EDI	
7FF8008D	DC60 4B	FSUB QWORD PTR DS:[EAX+4B]	I/O command
7FF80090	EC	IN AL,DX	
7FF80091	C9	LEAVE	
7FF80092	D6	SALC	
7FF80093	^72 8B	JB SHORT 7FF80020	
7FF80095	60	PUSHAD	
7FF80096	B1 98	MOV CL,98	
7FF80098	030B	ADD EBX,EBX	
7FF8009A	68DE CD	IMUL EBX,ESI,-33	
7FF8009D	90	NOP	
7FF8009E	A0 975BC07A	MOV AL,BYTE PTR DS:[7AC05B97]	
7FF800A3	36:66:68 EBE8	PUSH 0E8EB	Superfluous prefix
7FF800A8	0D AF4E60B0	OR EAX,B0604EAF	
7FF800AD	AE	SCAS BYTE PTR ES:[EDI]	
7FF800AE	C085 82A83119 B	ROL BYTE PTR SS:[EBP+1931A882],0BC	Shift constant out of range 1..31
7FF800B5	92	XCHG EAX,EDX	
7FF800B6	53	PUSH EBX	
7FF800B7	A2 D8BA3344	MOV BYTE PTR DS:[4433BAD8],AL	
7FF800BC	B8 97CC4A17	MOV EAX,174ACC97	

The highlighted region in the memory window below corresponds to `jmp_buffer` for `RtlComputeCrc32`

Address	Hex dump	ASCII
7FF80060	8B FF E9 44 0D 09 EFC	i 0D.R^u, i/4#u#3
7FF80070	E6 E3 FF CD 85 43 78 66 AD 4E 61 C7 67 95 40 1C	µπ =aCxf+NaltgòeL

Below is an example of `jmp_buffer` stub for an API with 0x5 bytes as the length of the first instruction:

### ZwUnmapViewOfSection:

The highlighted region in memory window below corresponds to the `jmp_buffer` for `ZwUnmapViewOfSection`

Address	Hex_dump	ASCII
7FF80026	B8 0B 01 00 00 E9 CB DE 98 FC BF 1A 12 35 EE CC	0B 01 00 00 E9 CB DE 98 FC BF 1A 12 35 EE CC
7FF80030	AF 64 BE DC 2A B6 82 35 C7 83 3F 57 83 7A CC A4	64 BE DC 2A B6 82 35 C7 83 3F 57 83 7A CC A4
7FF80040	35 64 8F 57 BC 73 81 41 60 62 05 32 9E 13 0F D0	35 64 8F 57 BC 73 81 41 60 62 05 32 9E 13 0F D0
7FF80050	A6 6E 39 22 79 BE 58 59 8B 5A 67 F5 EC 54 CE 56	A6 6E 39 22 79 BE 58 59 8B 5A 67 F5 EC 54 CE 56
7FF80060	A6 BD 8F A6 63 51 AF AE 0D 69 2F 19 1D 75 BD 33	A6 BD 8F A6 63 51 AF AE 0D 69 2F 19 1D 75 BD 33

Flaws in this algorithm:

At first the above algorithm looks convincing at bypassing the API hooks of a sandbox. However, if you look closely at the algorithm, there are several shortcomings, which would result in the virus not being able to bypass the API hooks.

1. It does not check for all the possible control transfer instruction opcodes (there is no check for 0xe8).

2. When it finds an opcode 0xeb or 0xe9 at the start of API prolog, it follows the hooked routine address. Even if it now skips the first instruction of hooked routine address, the execution will still be redirected to API hook of the sandbox.

Example:

Let's consider, **ZwDelayExecution** with an inline hook from the Sandbox:

```
jmp <hooked_routine>
mov edx, 0x7ffe0300
call dword ptr [edx]
```

hooked\_routine:

```
push ebp
mov ebp, esp
```

- a) It detects the inline hook and calculates the address of hooked\_routine.
- b) It follows the hooked\_routine and now calculates the length of first instruction of hooked\_routine which is 0x1 in this case.
- c) Now the length of first instruction is neither 0x2 nor 0x5, so it proceeds to copy the first byte from hooked\_routine to its jmp\_buffer and calculate address of second instruction of hooked\_routine.

The next time, virus calls ZwDelayExecution() through its jmp\_buffer, the execution would still be redirected to the hooked\_routine of the sandbox.

As a result of this, the API hook checking algorithm used above is ineffective in bypassing the Sandbox API hooks.

Surprisingly, this algorithm was used in a large number of viruses recently. This shows that the algorithms used for evading sandbox API hooks still need improvement.

## **KiFastSystemCall Hook**

This virus also used another API hook checking algorithm for **KiFastSystemCall** stub. Interestingly, this algorithm is correct and also used not so often in viruses.

Below is the algorithm:

1. Calculate address of KiFastSystemCall.
2. Check for a short jmp (opcode: 0xeb) at KiFastSystemCall. We will see later in more detail the reason why it checks only for 0xeb and not 0xe9 or 0xe8.

3. Once it finds a short jmp, it follows the short jmp and checks for a push instruction (opcode: 0x68).
4. If it finds a push instruction, it marks memory region pointed to by the argument of push instruction as PAGE\_EXECUTE\_READWRITE.
5. Now, it copies the 0x5 bytes corresponding to KiFastSystemCall stub to the above memory region.

As a result of this, even though the KiFastSystemCall hook remains intact, the execution would still be redirected to code specific to KiFastSystemCall.

Below is the screenshot specific to the algorithm mentioned above with relevant comments:

7FF90EDC	55	PUSH EBP	
7FF90EDD	8BEC	MOV EBP,ESP	
7FF90EDF	51	PUSH ECX	
7FF90EE0	68 A805F97F	PUSH 7FF905A8	ASCII "KiFastSystemCall"
7FF90EE5	68 2805F97F	PUSH 7FF90528	ASCII "ntdll.dll"
7FF90EEA	FF15 DC00F97F	CALL DWORD PTR DS:[7FF9000C]	Call to GetModuleHandleA through stub
7FF90EF0	50	PUSH EAX	
7FF90EF1	FF15 7800F97F	CALL DWORD PTR DS:[7FF90078]	Call to GetProcAddress through Stub
7FF90EF7	85C0	TEST EAX,EAX	
7FF90EF9	74 48	JE SHORT 7FF90F43	
7FF90EFB	8038 EB	CMPL BYTE PTR DS:[EAX],0EB	Check for a short jmp at KiFastSystemCall
7FF90EFE	75 43	JNZ SHORT 7FF90F43	
7FF90F00	0FB648 01	MOUZ ECX,BYTE PTR DS:[EAX+1]	
7FF90F04	894D FC	MOV DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4],ECX	
7FF90F07	84C9	TEST CL,CL	
7FF90F09	79 09	JNS SHORT 7FF90F14	
7FF90F0B	81C9 00FFFFFF	OR ECX,FFFFFFFF	
7FF90F11	894D FC	MOV DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4],ECX	
7FF90F14	8D4408 02	LEA EAX,DWORD PTR DS:[EAX+ECX+2]	Follow the short jmp
7FF90F18	8038 68	CMPL BYTE PTR DS:[EAX],68	Check for a Push Instruction
7FF90F1B	75 21	JNZ SHORT 7FF90F3E	
7FF90F1D	56	PUSH ESI	
7FF90F1E	8B70 01	MOV ESI,DWORD PTR DS:[EAX+1]	Read the argument of Push instruction
7FF90F21	8D45 FC	LEA EAX,DWORD PTR SS:[EBP-4]	
7FF90F24	50	PUSH EAX	
7FF90F25	6A 40	PUSH 40	
7FF90F27	6A 05	PUSH 5	
7FF90F29	56	PUSH ESI	
7FF90F2A	FF15 9C00F97F	CALL DWORD PTR DS:[7FF9009C]	Call to VirtualProtect through Stub
7FF90F30	56	PUSH ESI	
7FF90F31	6A 05	PUSH 5	
7FF90F33	68 A805F97F	PUSH 7FF905A8	
7FF90F38	E3 5D0C0000	CALL <CopyBuffer>	Copy the original bytes of KiFastSystemCall to buffer
7FF90F3D	5E	POP ESI	
7FF90F3E	33C0	XOR EAX,EAX	
7FF90F40	40	INC EAX	
7FF90F41	C9	LEAVE	
7FF90F42	C3	RETN	
7FF90F43	33C0	XOR EAX,EAX	ntdll.KiFastSystemCall
7FF90F45	C9	LEAVE	
7FF90F46	C3	RETN	

## Betabot Hook

Now, let us discuss why the previous **KiFastSystemCall** hook checking algorithm was only checking for a short jmp at KiFastSystemCall.

To understand this better, let us first analyze the SystemCallStub.

On Windows XP SP3, the SystemCallStub looks like:

```
mov edx, esp
```

```
sysenter
retn
```

This has a size of 0x5 bytes. Now, you might ask why we cannot apply a simple inline hook?

The reason being, if we overwrite the above SystemCallStub with an inline hook, we would end up overwriting the **KiFastSystemCallRet** as well.

What is the consequence of overwriting **KiFastSystemCallRet**?

When the program enters kernel mode after execution of sysenter, it finds the address of **KiFastCallEntry** using the **SYSENTER\_EIP\_MSR** (0x176).

This part of user mode to kernel mode transition is not impacted even if we overwrite **KiFastSystemCallRet** instruction in user mode.

However, after completing the execution in kernel mode, when the control is returned to user mode, sysexit is triggered.

Kernel mode knows where to return in the user mode based on the value of **SystemCallRet** member of the **\_KUSER\_SHARED\_DATA** structure.

The address of **KiFastSystemCallRet** is stored at offset 0x304 in the **\_KUSER\_SHARED\_DATA** structure. Also, this structure is not writable in the user mode, so it is not possible to modify it.

```
0:007> dt nt!_KUSER_SHARED_DATA 0x7ffe0000
ntdll!_KUSER_SHARED_DATA
.....
+0x300 SystemCall      : 0x7c90e4f0
+0x304 SystemCallReturn : 0x7c90e4f4
```

So, how can we hook the KiFastSystemCall stub?

To understand this better, let us look at the method used by Betabot to apply this hook.

7C90E4F0	EB 03	JMP SHORT ntdll.7C90E4F5	
7C90E4F2	0F34	SYSENTER	
7C90E4F4	C3	RETN	
7C90E4F5	68 24F5F37F	PUSH 7FF3F524	<--- This redirects execution to Betabot's SystemCall checking subroutine
7C90E4FA	C3	RETN	
7C90E4FB	90	NOP	
7C90E4FC	8D6424 00	LEA ESP, DWORD PTR SS:[ESP]	
7C90E500	8D5424 08	LEA EDI, DWORD PTR SS:[ESP+8]	
7C90E504	CD 2E	INT 2E	
7C90E506	C3	RETN	

As shown in the screenshot above, it places a short jmp at the first instruction of KiFastSystemCall which redirects the control to KiFastSystemCall + 0x5.

Here, it places a sequence of push and ret instruction to simulate a jmp instruction to redirect the control flow to its system call checking subroutine.

We were able to place a short jmp at the start of KiFastSystemCall conveniently because what follows a SystemCallStub is the old mechanism of user mode to kernel mode transition, which is not used in modern operating systems.

This is a good method of applying hooks at the System Call level. While in this case, this method was used by Betabot, it is also possible for a Sandbox to use similar technique for API hooking.

The KiFastSystemCall hook detection routine we discussed previously can easily bypass such System Call hooks.

## Conclusion

After reading this paper, the reader should be able to comprehend the various evasion techniques which are being used by viruses in the wild as well as methods which can be used to prevent such evasion techniques.

As can be seen from the various topics we discussed in this paper, the usage of evasion techniques in viruses are still improving and the importance of evading automated sandbox analysis is increasing.

## Appendix I

The code below can be used to detect the presence of virtualization software and also identify its type. I will be maintaining this code on github here:

<https://gist.github.com/c0d3inj3cT/c68a203c2c1224df55b3>.

Methods for detecting more virtualization softwares like Virtual PC and Virtual Box need to be added.

```
#include <windows.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <TlHelp32.h>
#include <Setupapi.h>
#include <string.h>

/*
VM Buster
Author: Sudeep Singh
*/
```

```

void vmx_check();
void process_name_check();
void class_name_check();
void cpuid_check();
void cpu_cores_check();
void registry_check();
void devices_check();
void drivers_check();

int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
process_name_check();
class_name_check();
vmx_check();
cpuid_check();
cpu_cores_check();
registry_check();
devices_check();
drivers_check();
return 0;
}

void process_name_check()
{
HANDLE psnap;
PROCESSENTRY32 pe;
int i=0;
char *process_name[] = {"regshot.exe", "wireshark.exe", "vmttoolsd.exe",
"vboxtray.exe", "vboxservice.exe", "filemon.exe", "procmon.exe",
"vmacthlp.exe"};
pe.dwSize = sizeof(PROCESSENTRY32);

psnap = CreateToolhelp32Snapshot(TH32CS_SNAPPROCESS, 0);

if(!Process32First(psnap, &pe))
{
printf("There was an error in retrieving the process information\n");
return;
}

while(Process32Next(psnap, &pe))
{
i=0;
while(i != 8)
{
if(lstrcmpi(process_name[i], pe.szExeFile) == 0)
{
printf("Found process: %s\n", pe.szExeFile);
}
i++;
}
}

return;
}

```



```

void cpu_cores_check()
{
    int i=0;

    __asm
    {
        pushad
        mov eax, dword ptr fs:[0x18];
        mov eax, dword ptr ds:[eax+0x30]
        mov eax, dword ptr ds:[eax+0x64];
        cmp eax, 0x1
        jnz done
        xor eax, eax
        inc eax
        mov i, eax
        done:
        popad
    }

    if(i==1)
    {
        printf("Only 1 CPU core assigned to the VM\n");
    }

    return;
}

void cpuid_check()
{
    int i=0;

    __asm
    {
        pushad
        mov eax, 0x1
        cpuid
        and ecx, 0x1
        cmp ecx, 0x1
        jnz done
        xor eax, eax
        inc eax
        mov i, eax
        done:
        popad
    }

    if(i == 1)
    {
        printf("Hypervisor found\n");
    }

    return;
}

void class_name_check()
{

```

```

    char *window_names[] = {"VMDisplayChangeControlClass",
"VMwareDragDetWndClass", "vmtoolsdControlWndClass", "VMwareTrayIcon"};
    int i=0;

    while(i < 5)
    {
        if(FindWindow(window_names[i], NULL) != NULL)
        {
            printf("Found window name: %s\n", window_names[i]);
        }
        i++;
    }

    return;
}

void registry_check()
{
    HKEY hkey;
    char *buffer;
    int i=0,j=0;
    int size = 256;
    char *vm_names[] = {"vmware", "qemu", "xen"};
    buffer = (char *) malloc(sizeof(char) * size);

    RegOpenKeyEx(HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE,
"SYSTEM\\ControlSet001\\Services\\Disk\\Enum", 0, KEY_READ, &hkey);
    RegQueryValueEx(hkey, "0", NULL, NULL, buffer, &size);

    while(*(buffer+i))
    {
        *(buffer+i) = (char) tolower(*(buffer+i));
        i++;
    }

    while(j < 3)
    {
        if(strstr(buffer, vm_names[j]) != NULL)
        {
            printf("Found string %s in Registry\n", vm_names[j]);
        }
        j++;
    }

    return;
}

void vmx_check()
{
    int i=0;

    __asm
    {
        pushad
        mov eax, 0x564d5868
        mov edx, 0x5658
        mov ecx, 0xa
    }
}

```

```

        in eax, dx
        cmp ebx, 0x564d5868
        jnz done
        xor eax, eax
        inc eax
        mov i, eax
        done:
        popad
    }

    if(i == 1)
    {
        printf("Found VMX backdoor\n");
    }

    return;
}

void devices_check()
{
    HDEVINFO devinfo;
    DWORD size;
    char *buffer;
    char *vm_names[] = {"vmware", "qemu", "xen"};
    int i=0,j=0,k=0;
    SP_DEVINFO_DATA DeviceInfoData;
    DeviceInfoData.cbSize = sizeof(SP_DEVINFO_DATA);

    devinfo = SetupDiGetClassDevs(0,0,0,6);
    while(SetupDiEnumDeviceInfo(devinfo, i, &DeviceInfoData) != 0)
    {
        j=k=0;
        SetupDiGetDeviceRegistryProperty(devinfo, &DeviceInfoData, 0, 0, 0,
0, &size);
        buffer = (char *) calloc(0x40, size);
        SetupDiGetDeviceRegistryProperty(devinfo, &DeviceInfoData, 0, 0,
buffer, size, 0);
        while(*(buffer+j))
        {
            *(buffer+j) = (char) tolower(*(buffer+j));
            j++;
        }

        while(k < 3)
        {
            if(strstr(buffer, vm_names[k]) != NULL)
            {
                printf("Found Device Name: %s\n", buffer);
            }
            k++;
        }

        i++;
    }

    return;
}

```

```

void drivers_check()
{
    char buffer[256];
    char *basedir="c:\\windows\\system32\\drivers\\";
    char
*driver_names[]={ "vmci.sys", "vmhgfs.sys", "vmmouse.sys", "vm SCSI.sys", "vmusbmou
se.sys", "vmx_svga.sys", "vmxnet.sys", "VBoxMouse.sys" };
    int i=0;

    while(i < 8)
    {
        memset(buffer, '\\0', 256);
        strcpy(buffer, basedir);
        strcat(buffer, driver_names[i]);

        if(GetFileAttributes(buffer) != INVALID_FILE_ATTRIBUTES)
        {
            printf("Found driver: %s\\n", driver_names[i]);
        }

        i++;
    }

    return;
}

```

## Appendix II

The code below can be used to parse the export directory of a module, enumerate all the exported functions and find their addresses. For each function, we could perform some operations like check the function prolog and identify if it has a standard prolog. This code could also be modified to identify any API which has been hooked by checking for presence of opcodes 0xe8, 0xe9 or 0xeb at API prolog.

```

#include <windows.h>
#include <stdio.h>

/*
Export Directory Parser
Author: Sudeep Singh
*/

int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
    HANDLE hModule;
    DWORD address;
    char prolog[] = {0x8b, 0xff, 0x55, 0x8b, 0xec};
    char *prolog_address = prolog;
    BYTE *buffer;
    int i=0, j=0, num=0, result=0;
    char *api_name="";

```

```

buffer = (BYTE *) malloc(sizeof(BYTE) * 5);

if(argc < 2)
{
    printf("usage: export_parser.exe <module_name>\n");
    exit(0);
}

hModule = LoadLibraryA(argv[1]);

__asm
{
    pushad
    mov eax, hModule
    mov ebx, dword ptr ds:[eax+0x3c]
    add ebx, eax
    add eax, dword ptr ds:[ebx+0x78]
    mov edx, dword ptr ds:[eax+0x18]
    mov num, edx
    popad
}

printf("Total number of functions imported from %s are %x\n", argv[1],
num);

while(i < num)
{
    __asm
    {
        pushad
        mov edx, i
        mov eax, hModule
        mov ecx, eax
        mov ebx, dword ptr ds:[eax+0x3c]
        add ebx, eax
        add eax, dword ptr ds:[ebx+0x78]
        mov ebx, dword ptr ds:[eax+0x20]
        mov eax, ecx
        add ebx, eax
        add eax, dword ptr ds:[ebx+edx*4]
        mov api_name, eax
        popad
    }

    address = (DWORD) GetProcAddress(hModule, api_name);

    memcpy(buffer, (BYTE *)address, 5);

    result = 0;

    __asm
    {
        pushad
        mov eax, buffer
        mov ebx, prolog_address
        xor ecx, ecx
        xor edx, edx
    }
}

```

```

        xor esi, esi
        repeat:
        mov cl, byte ptr ds:[eax+esi]
        mov dl, byte ptr ds:[ebx+esi]
        cmp cl, dl
        jnz done
        inc esi
        cmp esi, 0x5
        jnz repeat
        xor esi, esi
        inc esi
        mov result, esi
        done:
        popad
    }

    if(result == 1)
    {
        j++;
        printf("%s | %x\n", api_name, address);
    }

    i++;
}

printf("Number of functions with a standard prolog: %x\n", j);

return 0;
}

```

## Appendix III

The code below can be used to unlink any module from Process Environment Block. This would result in the module not showing up in the list of loaded modules in a Debugger, as well as Window APIs such as Module32First()/Module32Next() and GetModuleHandle() will not be able to find the module.

Credit for this code goes to Pnluck from OpenRCE.

```

#include <windows.h>

#ifndef UNICODE_STRING
typedef struct _UNICODE_STRING {
    USHORT Length;
    USHORT MaximumLength;
    PWSTR Buffer;
} UNICODE_STRING, *PUNICODE_STRING;
#endif

#ifndef LDR_MODULE
typedef struct _LDR_MODULE {
    LIST_ENTRY InLoadOrderModuleList;
    LIST_ENTRY InMemoryOrderModuleList;

```

```

LIST_ENTRY InInitializationOrderModuleList;
PVOID BaseAddress;
PVOID EntryPoint;
ULONG SizeOfImage;
UNICODE_STRING FullDllName;
UNICODE_STRING BaseDllName;
ULONG Flags;
SHORT LoadCount;
SHORT TlsIndex;
LIST_ENTRY HashTableEntry;
ULONG TimeDateStamp;
} LDR_MODULE, *PLDR_MODULE;
#endif

#ifdef PEB_LDR_DATA
typedef struct _PEB_LDR_DATA
{
    ULONG Length;
    UCHAR Initialized;
    PVOID SsHandle;
    LIST_ENTRY InLoadOrderModuleList;
    LIST_ENTRY InMemoryOrderModuleList;
    LIST_ENTRY InInitializationOrderModuleList;
    PVOID EntryInProgress;
} PEB_LDR_DATA, *PPEB_LDR_DATA;
#endif

BOOL WINAPI DllMain(HMODULE hModule, DWORD ul_reason_for_call, LPVOID
lpReserved)
{
    if(ul_reason_for_call == DLL_PROCESS_ATTACH)
    {
        HideDll((ULONG_PTR)hModule);
        MessageBoxA(NULL, "DLL Hidden", "Hide the DLL", MB_OK);
    }
    return 1;
}

BOOL HideDll(ULONG_PTR DllHandle)
{
    ULONG_PTR ldr_addr;
    PEB_LDR_DATA* ldr_data;
    LDR_MODULE *module, *prec, *next;

    __try
    {
        __asm
        {
            mov eax, fs:[0x30]
            add eax, 0xc
            mov eax, [eax]
            mov ldr_addr, eax
        }

        ldr_data = (PEB_LDR_DATA*)ldr_addr;

```

```

modulo = (LDR_MODULE*)ldr_data->InLoadOrderModuleList.Flink;

while(modulo->BaseAddress != 0)
{
    if( (ULONG_PTR)modulo->BaseAddress == DllHandle)
    {
        if(modulo->InInitializationOrderModuleList.Blink == NULL)
        {
            return 0;
        }

        prec = (LDR_MODULE*) (ULONG_PTR) ((ULONG_PTR)modulo->
InInitializationOrderModuleList.Blink - 16);
        next = (LDR_MODULE*) (ULONG_PTR) ((ULONG_PTR)modulo->
InInitializationOrderModuleList.Flink - 16);

        prec->InInitializationOrderModuleList.Flink = modulo->
InInitializationOrderModuleList.Flink;
        next->InInitializationOrderModuleList.Blink = modulo->
InInitializationOrderModuleList.Blink;

        prec = (LDR_MODULE*)modulo->InLoadOrderModuleList.Blink;
        next = (LDR_MODULE*)modulo->InLoadOrderModuleList.Flink;

        prec->InLoadOrderModuleList.Flink = modulo->
InLoadOrderModuleList.Flink;
        prec->InMemoryOrderModuleList.Flink = modulo->
InMemoryOrderModuleList.Flink;

        next->InLoadOrderModuleList.Blink = modulo->
InLoadOrderModuleList.Blink;
        next->InMemoryOrderModuleList.Blink = modulo->
InMemoryOrderModuleList.Blink;

        return 1;
    }
    modulo = (LDR_MODULE*)modulo->InLoadOrderModuleList.Flink;
}

}

__except (EXCEPTION_EXECUTE_HANDLER)
{
    return 0;
}
}

```