Practical OWASP

Dissecting OWASP API Top Ten



About me

- I've been working in security for 10 years now
- held different roles: AppSec, pentester
- besides increasing my technical skills, I like to focus also on operational and management part of security

Socials:

Linkedin

Discord Hackout:

- @akun
- Will write stuff occasionally on https://hacknet.cafe/

Agenda



Introductory concepts



OWASP API Top Ten



Sprinkled with some demos

HTTP intro



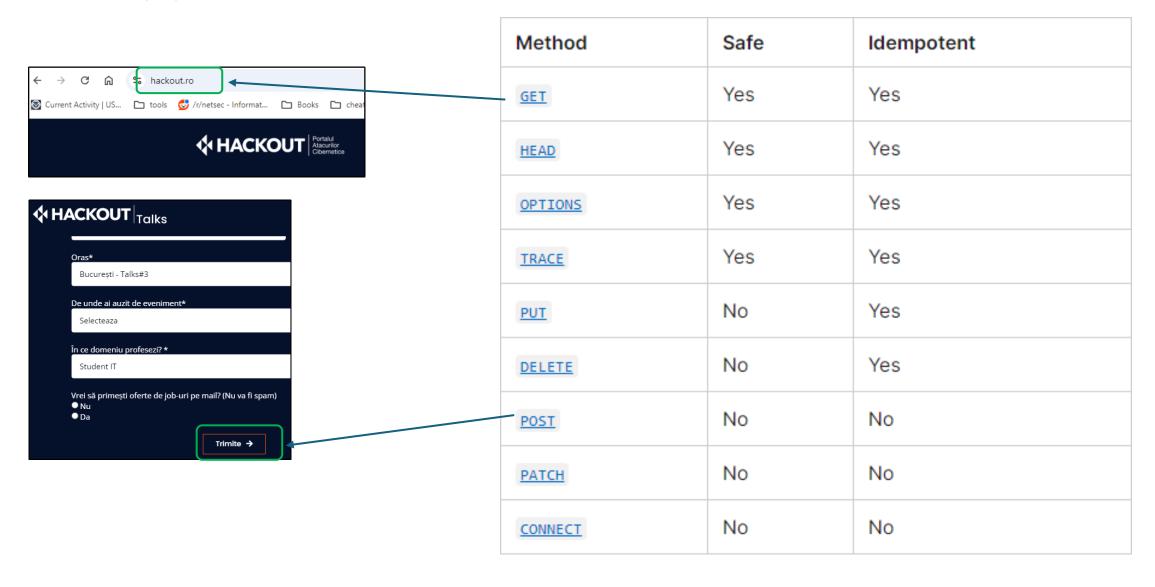
Plaintext protocol





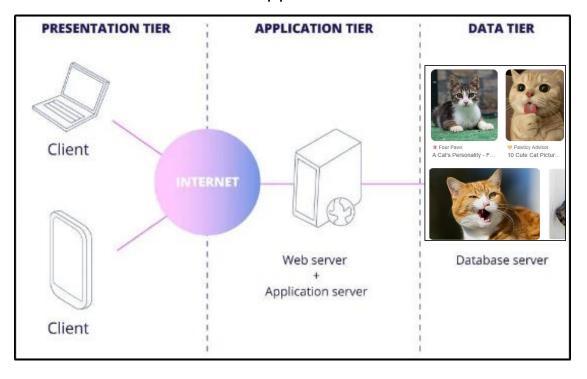
Man-in-the-middle

HTTP Verbs

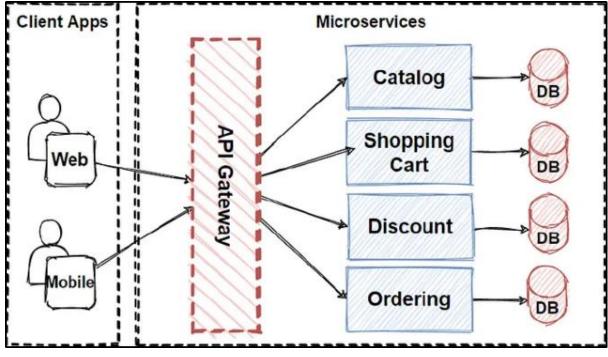


Architecture intro

What are classical web apps?



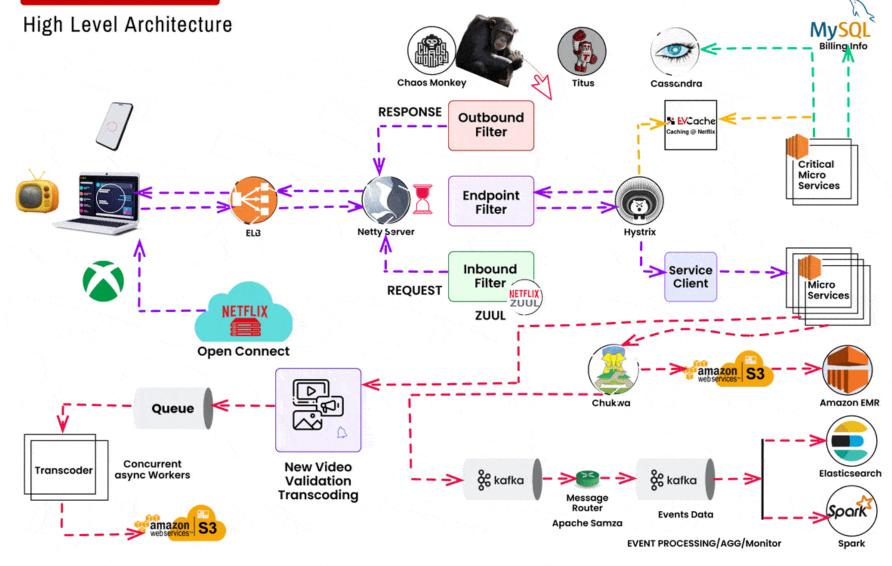
What are APIs?







NETFLIX SYSTEM DESIGN



Classic web app

- HTTP communication
- Request/response
- Requires a client
- Response is an HTML page
- Requires a HTML renderer (browser) to easily understand responses
- Bigger network footprint (responses are bulky as they carry HTML code each time)
- Bigger impact on device performance (i.e. smart devices)
- Fewer architecture components
- Most of the time uses GET and POST
- Has security vulnerabilities

API

- HTTP communication
- Request/response
- Requires a client
- Response is JSON (text)
- JSON responses can be easily understood (text) with any tool (Burp, Postman, cURL)
- Lower network footprint (responses are light)
- Lower impact on device performance
- More components, especially an independent UI component
- Usually uses all HTTP verbs
- Has security vulnerabilities

```
GET /get user data?user id=1 HTTP/1.1
Host: 127.0.0.1:5000
sec-ch-ua: "Not; A=Brand"; v="24", "Chromium"; v="128"
sec-ch-ua-mobile: 20
sec-ch-ua-platform: "Windows"
Accept-Language: en-US, en; q=0.9
Upgrade-Insecure-Requests: 1
User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like
Gecko) Chrome/128.0.6613.120 Safari/537.36
Accept:
text/html,application/xhtml+xml,application/xml;q=0.9,image/avif,image/webp,image/apng,*/*;
q=0.8, application/signed-exchange; v=b3; q=0.7
Sec-Fetch-Site: none
Sec-Fetch-Mode: navigate
Sec-Fetch-User: ?1
Sec-Fetch-Dest: document
Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate, br
Connection: keep-alive
```

Classic web app

HTTP Request

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Server: Werkzeug/3.0.3 Python/3.12.7
Date: Fri, 04 Oct 2024 11:58:35 GMT
Content-Type: text/html: charset=utf-8
Content-Length: 1098
Connection: close
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
  <head>
    <meta charset="UTF-8">
    <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0">
    <title>
     User Data Result
    </title>
    <style>
      body{
        font-family: Arial, sans-serif;
        background-color: #f4f4f4;
        display:flex;
        justify-content:center;
        align-items:center;
        height: 100vh;
      .result-container{
        background-color:white;
        padding:20px;
        border-radius:8px;
        box-shadow:02px10pxrgba(0,0,0,0.1);
        text-align:center;
```

API

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Server: Werkzeug/3.0.3 Python/3.12.7
Date: Fri, 04 Oct 2024 11:57:46 GMT
Content-Type: application/json
Content-Length: 76
Connection: close
{
    "data":"Alice's sensitive data",
    "name":"Alice",
    "role":"user"
}
```

OWASP intro

- Open Worldwide Application Security Project (OWASP)
- Home of Top Ten Projects:
 - o OWASP Top 10 (Web)
 - o OWASP API Top 10
 - o OWASP Mobile Top 10
 - o OWASP Desktop App Security Top 10
 - o OWASP Top 10 Risks for Open Source Software

0 ...

Organized around local chapters

OWASP projects and initiatives

- OWASP Top 10
- Cheatsheet series
- OWASP Web Security Testing Guide
- OWASP Top 10 Proactive Controls
- OWASP Application Security Verification Standard (ASVS)

Tools

- OWASP ZAP
- OWASP Dependency-Check
- OWASP Modsecurity

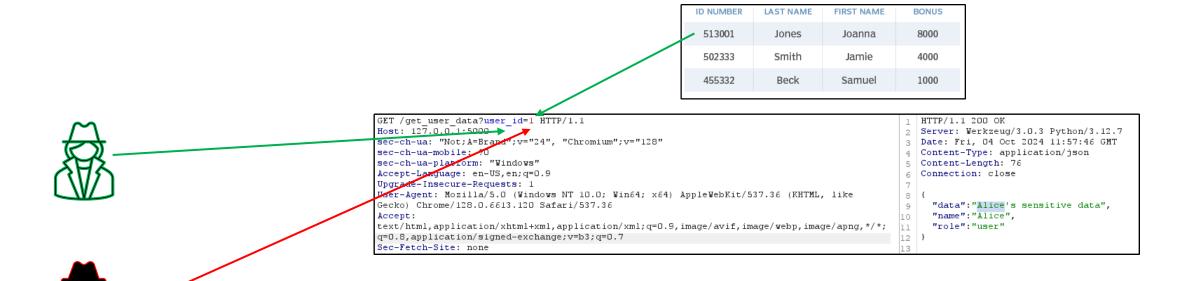
OWASP API Top Ten

Access control issues

API1:2023 - Broken Object Level Authorization	APIs tend to expose endpoints that handle object identifiers, creating a wide attack surface of Object Level Access Control issues. Object level authorization checks should be considered in every function that accesses a data source using an ID from the user.
API2:2023 - Broken Authentication	Authentication mechanisms are often implemented incorrectly, allowing attackers to compromise authentication tokens or to exploit implementation flaws to assume other user's identities temporarily or permanently. Compromising a system's ability to identify the client/user, compromises API security overall.
API3:2023 - Broken Object Property Level - Authorization	This category combines API3:2019 Excessive Data Exposure and API6:2019 - Mass Assignment, focusing on the root cause: the lack of or improper authorization validation at the object property level. This leads to information exposure or manipulation by unauthorized parties.
API4:2023 - Unrestricted Resource Consumption	Satisfying API requests requires resources such as network bandwidth, CPU, memory, and storage. Other resources such as emails/SMS/phone calls or biometrics validation are made available by service providers via API integrations, and paid for per request. Successful attacks can lead to Denial of Service or an increase of operational costs.
API5:2023 - Broken Function Level Authorization	Complex access control policies with different hierarchies, groups, and roles, and an unclear separation between administrative and regular functions, tend to lead to authorization flaws. By exploiting these issues, attackers can gain access to other users' resources and/or administrative functions.
API6:2023 - Unrestricted Access to Sensitive Business Flows	APIs vulnerable to this risk expose a business flow - such as buying a ticket, or posting a comment - without compensating for how the functionality could harm the business if used excessively in an automated manner. This doesn't necessarily come from implementation bugs.
API7:2023 - Server Side Request Forgery	Server-Side Request Forgery (SSRF) flaws can occur when an API is fetching a remote resource without validating the user-supplied URI. This enables an attacker to coerce the application to send a crafted request to an unexpected destination, even when protected by a firewall or a VPN.
API8:2023 - Security Misconfiguration	APIs and the systems supporting them typically contain complex configurations, meant to make the APIs more customizable. Software and DevOps engineers can miss these configurations, or don't follow security best practices when it comes to configuration, opening the door for different types of attacks.
API9:2023 - Improper Inventory Management	APIs tend to expose more endpoints than traditional web applications, making proper and updated documentation highly important. A proper inventory of hosts and deployed API versions also are important to mitigate issues such as deprecated API versions and exposed debug endpoints.
API10:2023 - Unsafe Consumption of APIs	Developers tend to trust data received from third-party APIs more than user input, and so tend to adopt weaker security standards. In order to compromise APIs, attackers go after integrated third-party

API1:2023 - Broken Object Level Authorization

a very specific case of Broken Access Control (IDOR)



GET /get_user_data?user_id=1 HTTP/1.1 POST /get_user_data?user_id=1 HTTP/1.1 PUT /get_user_data?user_id=1 HTTP/1.1 DELETE /get_user_data?user_id=1 HTTP/1.1

. . .

API1:2023 - Broken Object Level Authorization

Demo time

```
# Simulated user database
users data = {
    1: {"name": "Alice", "role": "user", "data": "Alice's sensitive data"},
    2: {"name": "Bob", "role": "user", "data": "Bob's sensitive data"}
# Simulated logged-in user (Alice)
logged in user id = 1 # Assume Alice is logged in
# Insecure function to get user data from an HTTP request
@app.route('/get user data', methods=['GET'])
def get user data():
    # Get the requested user id from the query parameters (e.g., /get user data?user id=2)
    requested user id = int(request.args.get('user id'))
    # No proper access control to check if the logged-in user is requesting their own data
    if requested user id in users data:
        user info = users data[requested user id]["data"]
        return render template('result.html', user info=user info)
    else:
        return render template('result.html', user info="User not found")
```

API1:2023 - Broken Object Level Authorization

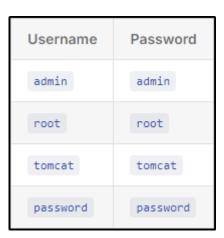
Code fix

```
# Simulated user database
users data = {
    1: {"name": "Alice", "role": "user", "data": "Alice's sensitive data"},
    2: {"name": "Bob", "role": "user", "data": "Bob's sensitive data"}
# Simulated logged-in user (Alice)
logged in user id = 1 # Assume Alice is logged in
# Secure function to get user data from an HTTP request
@app.route('/get_user_data_secure', methods=['GET'])
def get user data secure():
    # Get the requested user id from the query parameters (e.g., /get user data secure?user id=2)
    requested user id = int(request.args.get('user id'))
   # Ensure the logged-in user can only access their own data
   if logged in user id == requested user id:
       return jsonify(users data[requested user id])
    else:
       return "Access Denied", 403
```

API2:2023 - Broken Authentication

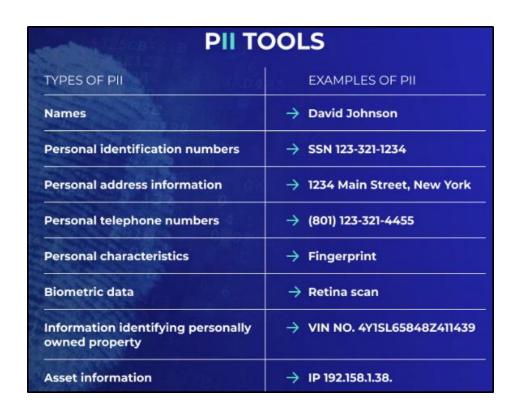
"assume other user's identities temporarily or permanently" = account takeover

- Credential vulnerabilities
 - Default creds
 - Weak passwords
 - Bruteforce login
- Session management vulnerabilities
- Password reset vulnerabilities
- Everything related to authentication that can be abused by attackers

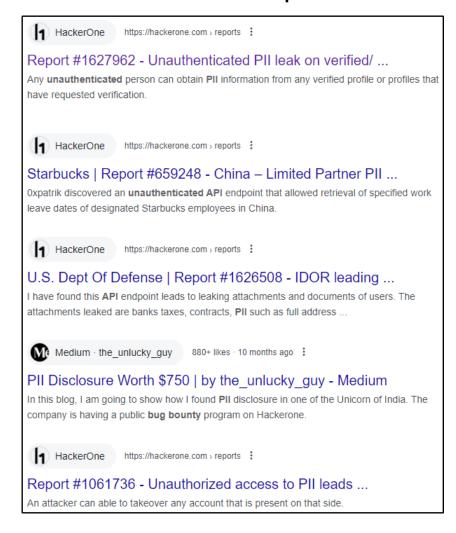


API3:2023 - Broken Object Property Level Authorization

Mass Assignment



Excessive Data Exposure



API3:2023 - Broken Object Property Level Authorization

Mass Assignment

Demo time

```
# In-memory storage to simulate user data
users = []
@app.route('/signup', methods=['GET'])
def show signup():
    # Render the signup.html page when the user visits /signup.html
    return render template('signup.html')
@app.route('/signup', methods=['POST'])
def signup():
    # Manually assign only allowed fields (no isAdmin field exposed)
    user = {
        'username': request.form.get('username'),
        'email': request.form.get('email'),
        'password': request.form.get('password'),
        'isAdmin': request.form.get('isAdmin', 'false')
```

API3:2023 - Broken Object Property Level Authorization

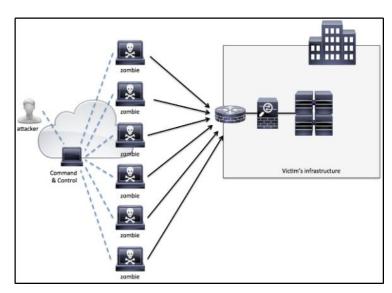
API6:2019 - Mass Assignment

Code fix

```
@app.route('/signup', methods=['POST'])
def signup():
    # Manually assign only allowed fields
    user = {
        'username': request.form['username'],
        'email': request.form['email'],
        'password': request.form['password'],
        'isAdmin': False  # Always default to False
}
```

API4:2023 - Unrestricted Resource Consumption

- Denial of Service
- Infrastructure Denial of Service
 - Harder to achieve
 - Resource starvation (CPU, bandwidth, memory, disk space)
 - Attacker usually go for DDoS



attacks and/or fixes can cause direct financial loss

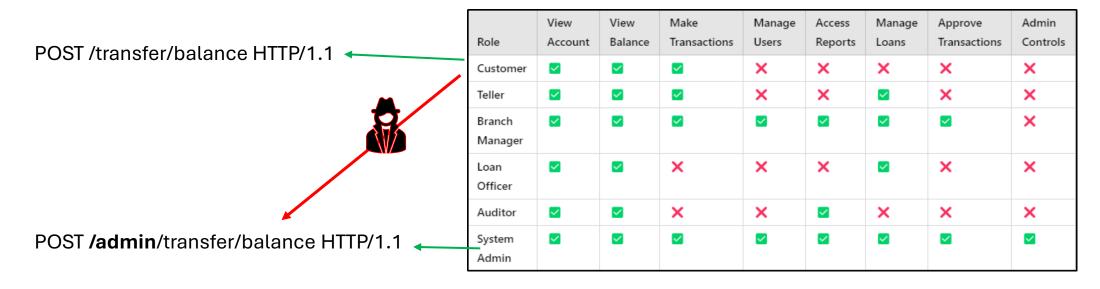
- Application Denial of Service
 - Improper coding
 - Amplification attacks
 - Application timeouts

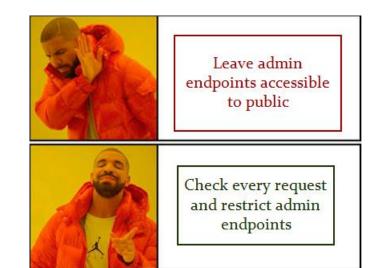
- Fix:
 - Custom code requires custom security fix; no unique solution

- Fixed by using:
 - Vertical scaling
 - Exporting risk (3rd party WAF)

API5:2023 - Broken Function Level Authorization

Privilege escalation



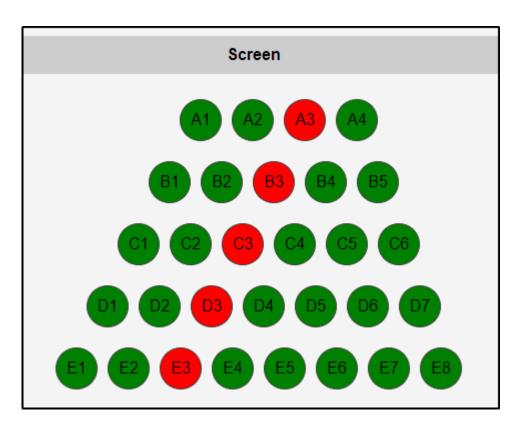


Prevention

API6:2023 - Unrestricted Access to Sensitive Business Flows

Business Logic vulnerabilities

```
Request
               Hex
  POST /api/reserve HTTP/1.1
  Host: cinema-reservations.com
 Content-Type: application/json
  Authorization: Bearer <your_access_token>
      "user id": 12345,
      "cinema room id": 100,
      "selected seats": [
              "row": "C",
              "seat number": 5
              "row": "C",
              "seat number": 6
      "payment method": {
          "type": "Pay at the desk"
      "total price": 25.00
```



API6:2023 - Unrestricted Access to Sensitive Business Flows

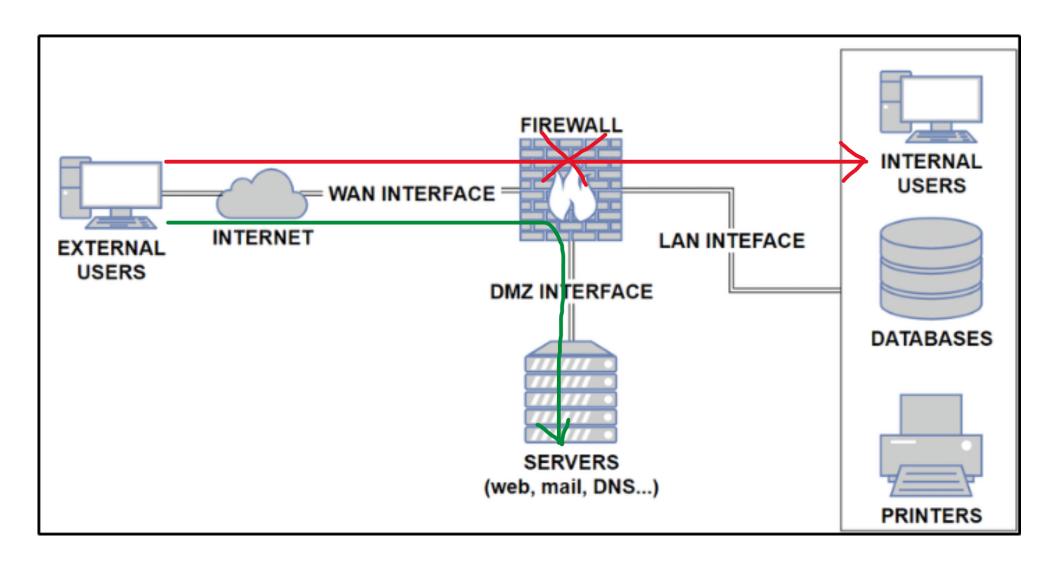
Exploitation

```
cinema_layout = {
    "rows": ["A", "B", "C", "D", "E"],
# Payment details set to "Pay at the desk"
payment_details = {
    "type": "Pay at the desk"
for row in cinema_layout["rows"]:
    for seat_number in range(1, cinema_layout["seats_per_row"] + 1):
        # Define the payload for each reservation
        payload = {
            "user_id": 12345, # Replace with actual user ID
            "cinema room id": cinema room id,
            "selected_seats": [
                    "row": row,
                    "seat_number": seat_number
            "show time": show time,
            "payment_method": payment_details,
            "total price": 12.50 # Adjust ticket price accordingly
```

• Fix:

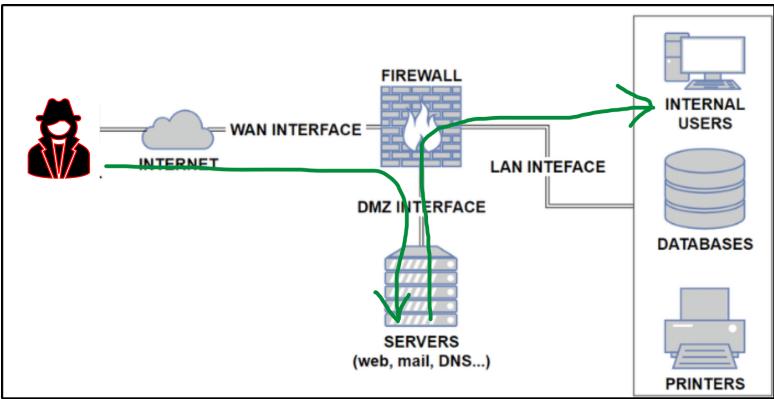
- Custom code requires custom security fix; no unique solution
- o Rate limiting on requests
- Think on abuse cases from design/implementation

API7:2023 - Server Side Request Forgery



API7:2023 - Server Side Request Forgery





API7:2023 - Server Side Request Forgery

Demo time

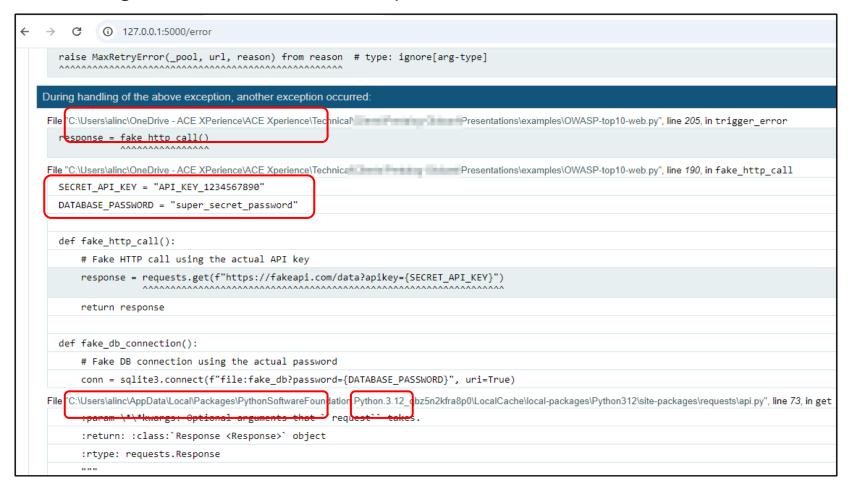
```
@app.route('/secrets', methods=['GET'])
def secrets():
    # Check if the 'Secret' header is present and its value is 'HackoutTalks#3'
    secret_header = request.headers.get('Secret')

if secret_header == 'HackoutTalks#3':
    # Return a secret message if the header is correct
    return jsonify({"secret": "You have accessed the secret area!"})
else:
    # Return 403 Forbidden if the header is missing or incorrect
    return jsonify({"error": "Forbidden: Public access is denied!"}), 403
```

```
@app.route('/fetch-url', methods=['GET'])
def fetch url():
    # Get the 'url' parameter from the query string
    target url = request.args.get('url')
    # If no URL is provided, return an error message
    if not target url:
       return jsonify({"error": "Please provide a URL using the 'url' parameter."}), 400
    try:
        parsed url = urlparse(target url)
       if not parsed url.scheme:
            return jsonify({"error": "Invalid URL format."}), 400
        # Remove scheme and prepare the host header (e.g., www.example.com)
       host_header = parsed_url.netloc
        # Make a GET request to the URL with the custom Host header
       headers = {
            'Host': host header, # Set Host header to the netloc (host without the scheme)
        # Fetch the content of the URL
        response = requests.get(target url, headers=headers)
        return response.text
```

API8:2023 - Security Misconfiguration

- missing security hardening
- security patches are missing
- unnecessary features are enabled (e.g. HTTP verbs, logging features)
- transport Layer Security (TLS) is missing (no HTTPS)
- Error messages include stack traces, or expose other sensitive information



app.run(debug=True)

API9:2023 - Improper Inventory Management

Documentation blindspot:

- Which environment is the API running in (e.g. production, staging, test, development)?
- Who should have network access to the API (e.g. public, internal, partners)?
- Which API version is running?
- There is no documentation, or the existing documentation is not updated.
- There is no retirement plan for each API version.
- Missing 3rd party dependency inventory and their up-to-date status

```
pycparser [required: Any, installed: 2.22]
delegator.py==0.1.1
   pexpect [required: >=4.1.0, installed: 4.9.0]
       ptyprocess [required: >=0.5, installed: 0.7.0]
flask-sock==0.7.0
  - Flask [required: >=2, installed: 3.0.3]
      - blinker [required: >=1.6.2, installed: 1.8.2]
       click [required: >=8.1.3, installed: 8.1.7]
       — colorama [required: Any, installed: 0.4.6]
       itsdangerous [required: >=2.1.2, installed: 2.2.0]
       Jinja2 [required: >=3.1.2, installed: 3.1.4]
       MarkupSafe [required: >=2.0, installed: 2.1.5]
      - Werkzeug [required: >=3.0.0, installed: 3.0.3]
       simple-websocket [required: >=0.5.1, installed: 1.0.0]
      - wsproto [required: Any, installed: 1.2.0]
       frida==16.4.8
litecli==1.11.0
  - cli_helpers [required: >=2.2.1, installed: 2.3.1]
      - configobj [required: >=5.0.5, installed: 5.0.8]
       └─ six [required: Any, installed: 1.16.0]
     - tabulate [required: >=0.9.0, installed: 0.9.0]
   click [required: >=4.1, installed: 8.1.7]
     - colorama [required: Any, installed: 0.4.6]
   configobj [required: >=5.0.5, installed: 5.0.8]

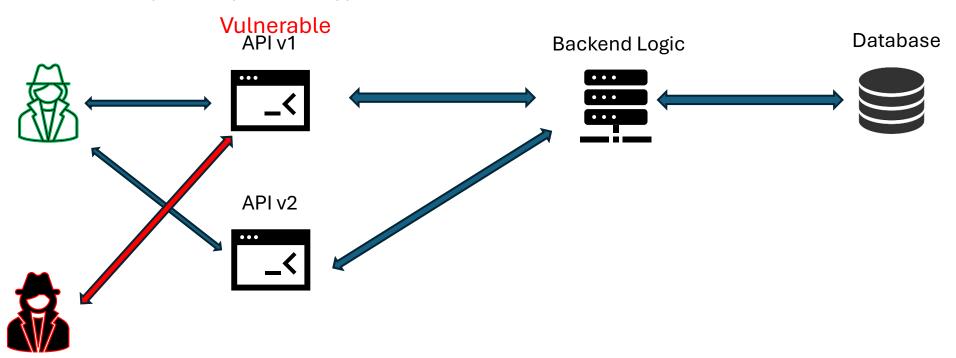
    □ six [required: Any, installed: 1.16.0]

   prompt_toolkit [required: >=3.0.3,<4.0.0, installed: 3.0.47]</pre>
     wcwidth [required: Any, installed: 0.2.13]
   Pygments [required: >=1.6, installed: 2.18.0]
   sqlparse [required: Any, installed: 0.5.1]
lxml = 5.3.0
pipdeptree==2.23.4
   packaging [required: >=24.1, installed: 24.1]
   pip [required: >=24.2, installed: 24.2]
pyftpdlib==1.5.10
```

API9:2023 - Improper Inventory Management

Data flow blindspot:

- There is a "sensitive data flow" where the API shares sensitive data with a third party and
- There is not a business justification or approval of the flow
- There is no inventory or visibility of the flow
- There is not deep visibility of which type of sensitive data is shared



API10:2023 - Unsafe Consumption of APIs

Denial of Service

The API might be vulnerable if:

- Interacts with other APIs over an unencrypted channel;
- Does not properly validate and sanitize data gathered from other APIs prior to processing it or passing it to downstream components;
- Blindly follows redirections;
- Does not limit the number of resources available to process third-party services responses;
- Does not implement timeouts for interactions with third-party services;



Sounds familiar?



OWASP Top Ten in 1 minute

OWASP Top Ten

A01:2021-Broken Access Control

A02:2021-Cryptographic Failures

A03:2021-Injection

A04:2021-Insecure Design

A05:2021-Security Misconfiguration

A06:2021-Vulnerable and Outdated Components

A07:2021-Identification and Authentication

Failures

A08:2021-Software and Data Integrity Failures

A09:2021-Security Logging and Monitoring Failures

A10:2021-Server-Side Request Forgery

OWASP API Top Ten

API1:2023 - Broken Object Level Authorization

API2:2023 - Broken Authentication

API3:2023 - Broken Object Property Level

Authorization

API4:2023 - Unrestricted Resource Consumption

API5:2023 - Broken Function Level Authorization

API6:2023 - Unrestricted Access to Sensitive

Business Flows

API7:2023 - Server Side Request Forgery

API8:2023 - Security Misconfiguration

API9:2023 - Improper Inventory Management

API10:2023 - Unsafe Consumption of APIs

A03:2021-Injection

Vulnerable when:

- User supplied data is not validated or sanitized
- Malicious user supplied data is used directly in code constructs

```
user_controlled_injection_point = request.args.get('user_input')
retrieved_data = "syntax " + user_controlled_injection_point + "syntax"
```

SQL Injection

```
user_controlled_injection_point = request.args.get('user_input')
retrieved_data = "SELECT * FROM users WHERE username = '" +
user_controlled_injection_point + "';"
```

```
user_input = 'OR'1'='1

user_controlled_injection_point = request.args.get('user_input')
retrieved_data = "SELECT * FROM users WHERE username = '' OR '1'='1';"
```

XSS

```
user_controlled_injection_point = request.args.get('user_input')
retrieved_data = "Welcome, " + user_controlled_injection_point + "!"
```

Demo time?

malicious credential stealer

What next?

- OWASP resources are good starting points
- Treat every user input as malicious (unfortunately)
- Security should be discussed from the beginning of the project
- Never test sites without permission. It's called "breaking the law", not pentesting
- Build your own examples
- Play security games!