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D. Harkins
Aruba Networks

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Adding Support for Salted Password Databases to EAP-pwd
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Abstract

EAP-pwd is an EAP method that uses a shared password for authentication using a technique that is resistant to dictionary attack. It included support for raw keys and RFC2751-style double hashing of a password but did include support for salted passwords. There are many existing databases of salted passwords and it is desirable to allow their use with EAP-pwd.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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This Internet-Draft will expire on July 12, 2015.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Databases of stored passwords present an attractive target for attack-- get access to the database, learn the passwords. To confound such attacks a random "salt" is hashed with the password and the resulting digest is stored, along with the salt, instead of the raw password. This has the effect of randomizing the password so if two distinct users have chosen the same password the stored, and salted, password will be different. It also requires an adversary who has compromized the security of the stored database to launch a dictionary attack per entry to recover passwords.

The popularity of password salting means there are a large number of such databases deployed and EAP-pwd needs to be able to support them. EAP-pwd imposes an additional security requirement on a database of salted passwords that otherwise would not exist, see Section 5.

1.2. Keyword Definition

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in RFC 2119 [RFC2119].

2. Salted Passwords in EAP-pwd

2.1. Password Pre-Processing

EAP-pwd requires that each party to the protocol obtain an identical representation of a processed password (see Section 5). Salting of a password is therefore treated as additional password pre-processing techniques of EAP-pwd. The salt and digest to use is conveyed to the peer by the server and the password is processed prior to fixing the password element (see Section 2.8.3 of [RFC5931]).

This memo defines eight (8) new password pre-processing techniques for EAP-pwd:

- TBD1: a random salt with SHA-1 ([SHS])
- TBD2: a random salt with SHA-256 ([SHS])
- TBD3: a random salt with SHA-512 ([SHS])
- TBD4: UNIX crypt() ([CRY])
- TBD5: SASLprep and a random salt with SHA-1 ([SHS])
- TBD6: SASLprep and a random salt with SHA-256 ([SHS])
- TBD7: SASLprep and a random salt with SHA-512 ([SHS])
- TBD8: SASLprep and a UNIX crypt() ([CRY])

When passing salt, the size of the salt SHOULD be at least as long as the message digest of the hash algorithm used. There is no guarantee that deployed salted databases have followed this rule, and in the interest of interoperability, an EAP peer SHOULD NOT abort an EAP-pwd exchange if the salt conveyed during the exchange is less than the message digest of the indicated hash algorithm.

When performing one of TBD5-TBD8 the password SHALL be processed according to the SASLprep rules in [RFC5931] prior to hashing with the indidicated algorithm.

2.2. The Salting of a Password

For both parties to derive the same salted password there needs to be a canonical method of salting a password. When using EAP-pwd, a password SHALL be salted by hashing the password followed by the salt using the designated hash function:

salted-password = Hash(password | salt)

The server stores the salted-password, and the salt, in its database and the client derives the salted-password on-the-fly.

2.3. Using UNIX crypt

Different algorithms are supported with the UNIX crypt() function. The particular algorithm used is indicated by prepending an encoding of "setting" to the passed salt. The specific algorithm used is opaque to EAP-pwd as the entire salt, including the encoded "setting", is passed as an opaque string for interpretation by crypt(). The salted password used for EAP-pwd SHALL be the output of crypt():

salted-password = crypt(password, salt)

The server stores the salted-password, and the encoded algorithm plus salt, in its database and the client derives the salted-password on-the-fly.

2.4. Protocol Modifications

Like all EAP methods, EAP-pwd is server initiated. The server is required to indicate its intentions, including the password pre-processing it wishes to use, before it knows the identity of the client. Because of this the server is forced to select the format of the database, including how it has been salted, through the routable portion of the client identity in the EAP-Identity/response. This limits the ability of the server to support multiple salt digests in a single password database. To support multiple salt digests, or to transition from one to another, it is necessary to maintain multiple password databases and use the routable portion of the client identity to select one when initiating EAP-pwd.

The server uses the EAP-pwd-ID/Request to indicate the password pre-processing technique. The client indicates its acceptance of the password pre-processing technique and identifies itself in the EAP-pwd-ID/Response. Upon receipt of the EAP-pwd-ID/Response, the server knows the identity of the client and can look up the client's salted password and the salt from the database. The server adds the length of the salt and the salt itself to the EAP-pwd-Commit/Request message (see Section 2.5).

The server can fix the password element (Section 2.8.3 of [RFC5931]) as soon as the salted password has been looked up in the database. The client, though, is required to wait until receipt of the server's EAP-pwd-Commit/Request before it begins fixing the password element.

2.5. Payload Modifications

When a salted password pre-processing technique is agreed upon during the EAP-pwd-ID exchange the EAP-pwd-Commit payload is modified to include the salt and salt length (see Figure 1). The server passes the salt and salt length in the EAP-pwd-Commit/Request; the client's EAP-pwd-Commit/Response is unchanged and it MUST NOT echo the salt length and salt in its EAP-pwd-Commit/Response.

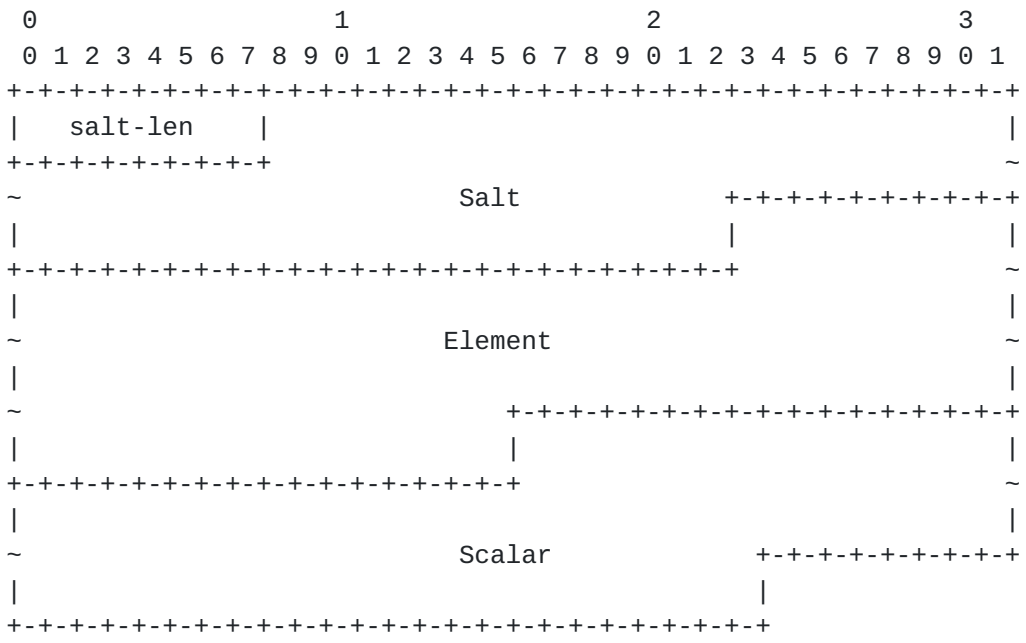

Figure 1: Salted EAP-pwd-Commit/Request

The "salt-len" SHALL be non-zero and indicates the length, in octets, of the salt that follows. When using UNIX crypt for salting, the salt SHALL be an unterminated ASCII string. For all other salting algorithms, the salt SHALL be a binary string with no additional encoding. The Element and Scalar are encoded according to Section 3.3 of [RFC5931].

Note: when a non-salted password pre-processing method is used, for example, any of the methods from [RFC5931] the EAP-pwd-Commit payload MUST NOT be modified to include the salt and salt length.

3. Acknowledgements

Thanks to the eduroam project for its continued interest in using EAP-pwd.

4. IANA Considerations

IANA is instructed to allocate eight (8) values from the "password preprocessing method registry" established by [RFC5931] and replace TBD1, TBD2, TBD3, TBD4, TBD5, TBD6, TBD7, and TBD8 above with the values assigned.

5. Security Considerations

EAP-pwd requires each side to produce an identical representation of the (processed) password before the password element can be fixed. This symmetry undercuts one of the benefits to salting a password database because the salted password from a compromised database can be used directly to impersonate the client-- there is no dictionary attack needed to recover the plaintext password. Salted password databases used with EAP-pwd MUST be afforded the same level of protection as databases of plaintext passwords.

6. Normative References

[CRY] "crypt(3) man page", <http://man7.org/linux/man-pages/man3/crypt.3.html>.

[RFC2119] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", BCP 14, RFC 2119, March 1997.

[RFC5931] Harkins, D. and G. Zorn, "Extensible Authentication Protocol (EAP) Authentication Using Only a Password", RFC 5931, August 2010.

[SHS] National Institute of Standards and Technology, , "Federal Information Processing Standard Publication 180-4: Secure Hash Standard (SHS)", March 2012, <http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/fips/fips180-4/fips-180-4.pdf>.

Author's Address

Dan Harkins
Aruba Networks
1322 Crossman Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94089-1113
United States of America

Email: dharkins@arubanetworks.com