

Network Working Group
Internet Draft
Updates: [5246](#) (once approved)
Intended Status: Standards Track
Expires: February 23, 2011

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August 23, 2010

Prohibiting SSL Version 2.0
draft-ietf-tls-ssl2-must-not-00.txt

Abstract

This document requires that when TLS clients and servers establish connections that they never negotiate the use of Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) version 2.0. This document updates the backward compatibility sections found in the Transport Security Layer (TLS) Protocol, [RFC 5246](#).

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Internet-Draft

Prohibiting SSL 2.0

August 2010

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[1](#). Introduction

Many protocols specified in the IETF rely on Transport Layer Security (TLS) [[TLS](#)] for security services. This is a good thing, but some TLS clients and servers also support negotiating the use of SSL version 2.0 [[SSL2](#)]; however, this version does not provide the expected level of security. SSL version 2.0 has known deficiencies. This document describes those deficiencies, and it requires TLS clients and servers never negotiate the use of SSL version 2.0.

This document updates the backward compatibility sections found in the Transport Security Layer (TLS) Protocol [[TLS](#)] and earlier versions.

[1.1](#). Requirements Terminology

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

[2](#). SSL 2.0

SSL version 2.0 [[SSL2](#)] deficiencies include:

- o Message authentication uses MD5 [[MD5](#)]. Most security-aware users have already moved away from any of MD5 [[I-D.turner-md5-secon-update](#)].
- o Handshake messages are not protected. This permits a man-in-the-middle to trick the client into picking a weaker cipher suite than they would normally choose.

- o Message integrity and message encryption use the same key, which is a problem if the client and server negotiate a weak encryption algorithm.

- o Sessions can be easily terminated. A man-in-the-middle can easily insert a TCP FIN to close the session and the peer is unable to determine whether or not it was a legitimate end of the session.

[3.](#) Changes to TLS

Because of the deficiencies noted in the previous sections, TLS implementations MUST NOT support SSL 2.0. The specific changes to [\[TLS\]](#), including earlier versions, are as follows:

- o TLS clients MUST NOT use SSL 2.0 ClientHello messages.
- o TLS servers MUST NOT accept SSL 2.0 ClientHello messages.

[4.](#) IANA Considerations

None.

[5.](#) Security Considerations

This entire document is about security considerations.

[6.](#) Acknowledgements

The idea for this document was inspired by discussions between Peter Saint Andre, Simon Josefsson, and others on the XMPP mailing list. We would also like to thank Paul Hoffman, Yaron Sheffer, and Nikos Mavrogiannopoulos, Yngve Pettersen, Marsh Ray, and Martin Rex for reviews and comments on earlier versions of this document.

[7.](#) References

[7.1.](#) Normative References

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