Smart Phones Dumb Apps

How Bad Guys View Your Mobile Apps

Dan Cornell
CTO, Denim Group
@danielcornell

Denim Group Background

- Professional services firm that builds & secures enterprise applications
  - *External application assessments*
    - Web, mobile, and cloud
  - *Software development lifecycle development (SDLC) consulting*
- Classroom and e-Learning for PCI compliance
- Secure development services:
  - *Secure .NET and Java application development*
  - *Post-assessment remediation*
- Deep penetration in Energy, Financial Services, Banking, Insurance, Healthcare and Defense market sectors
- Customer base spans Fortune 500
- Contributes to industry best practices through the Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP)

Dan Cornell

- Dan Cornell, founder and CTO of Denim Group
- Software developer by background (Java, .NET, etc..)
- OWASP San Antonio
- 15 years experience in software architecture, development and security
- Heads Denim Group's application security team

Agenda

- Generic Smartphone Threat Model
- Sample Application
- What an Attacker Sees (Android Edition)
- What About iPhones/iPads?
- Special Topic: Browser URL handling
- Closing Thoughts
- Questions

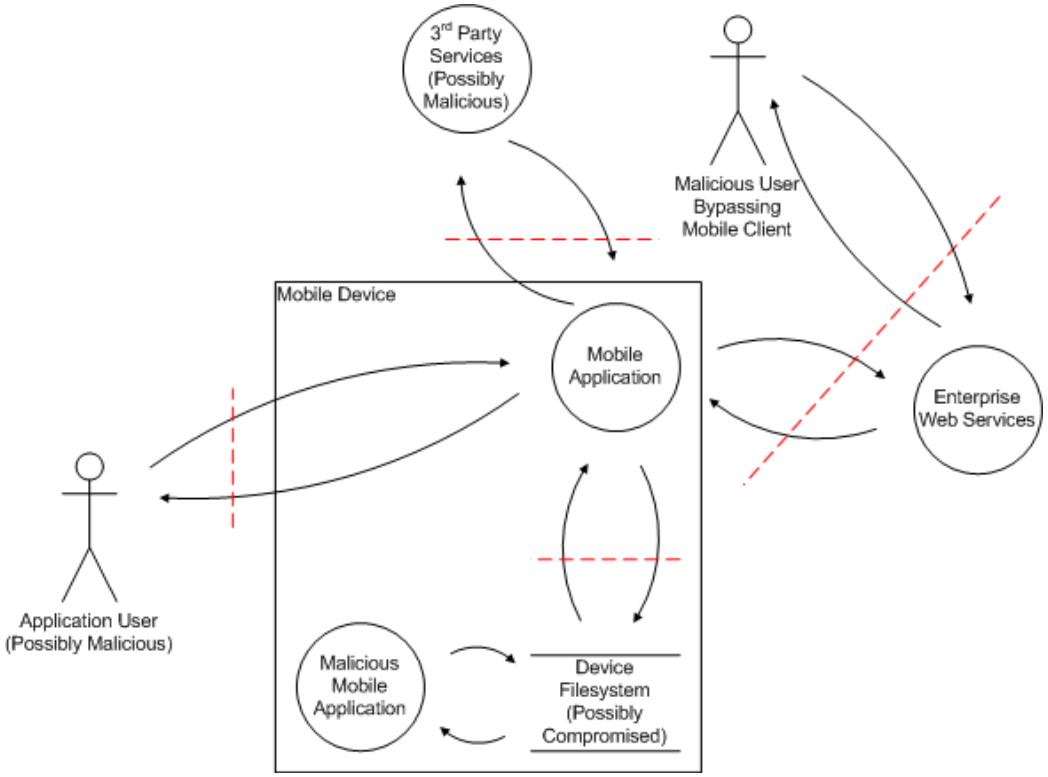
Tradeoffs: Value versus Risk

- Mobile applications can create tremendous value for organizations
  - *New classes of applications utilizing mobile capabilities: GPS, camera, etc..*
  - *Innovating applications for employees and customers*
- Mobile devices and mobile applications can create tremendous risks
  - *Sensitive data inevitably stored on the device (email, contacts)*
  - *Connect to a lot of untrusted networks (carrier, WiFi)*
- Most developers are not trained to develop secure applications
  - *Fact of life, but slowing getting better*
- Most developers are new to creating mobile applications
  - *Different platforms have different security characteristics and capabilities*

Smart Phones, Dumb Apps

- Lots of media focus on device and platform security
  - *Important because successful attacks give tremendous attacker leverage*
- Most organizations:
  - *Accept realities of device and platform security*
  - *Concerned about the security of their custom applications*
  - *Concerned about sensitive data on the device because of their apps*
  - *Concerned about network-available resources that support their apps*
- Who has smartphone application deployed for customers?
- Who has had smartphone applications deployed without their knowledge?
  - **$!%$# marketing department…*

Generic Mobile Application Threat Model



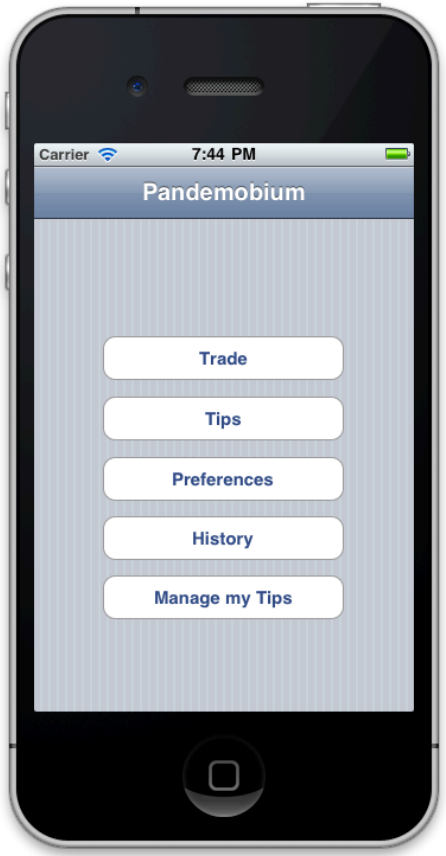
Some Assumptions for Developers

- Smartphone applications are essentially thick-client applications
  - *That people carry in their pockets*
  - *And drop in toilets*
  - *And put on eBay when the new iPhone comes out*
  - *And leave on airplanes*
  - *And so on…*
- Attackers will be able to access:
  - *Target user (victim) devices*
  - *Your application binaries*
- What else should you assume they know or will find out?

Let's Take Apart Some Apps

- Pandemobium Stock Trader Application
- Android and iOS versions

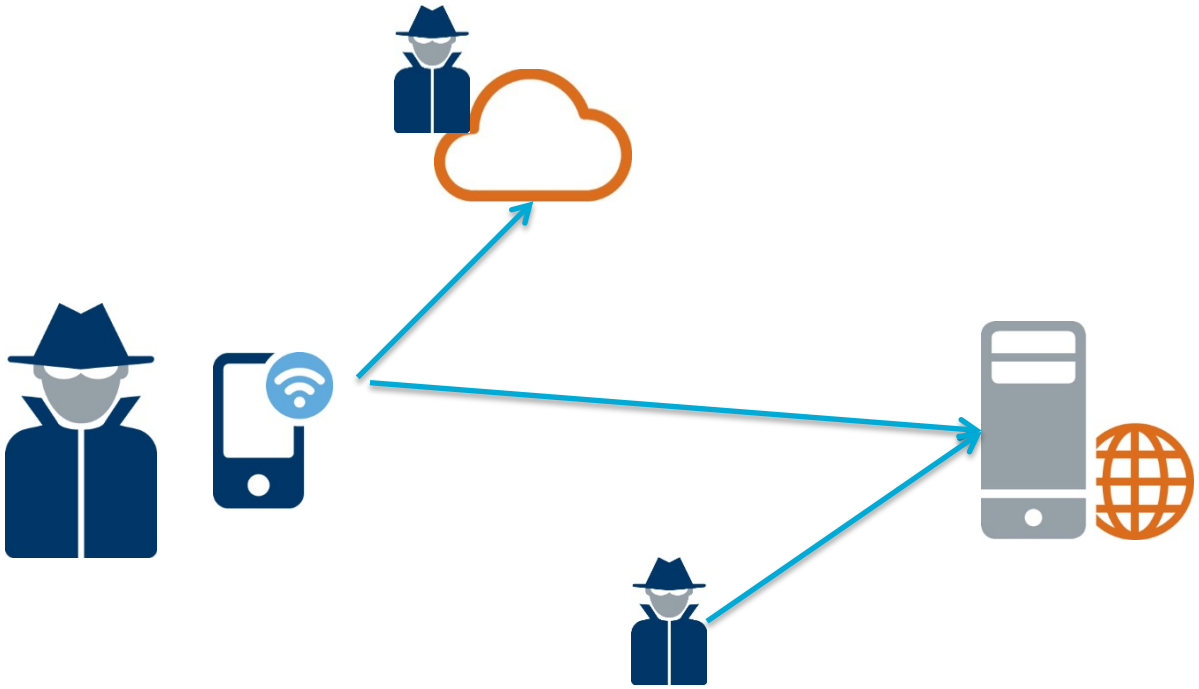
- Functionality
  - *Log in*
  - *Track stock tips*
  - *Make stock trades*
  - *Get stock tips*
  - *Share stock tips*



Pandemobium Stock Trader Application

- We will use as an example through the class
- Available for free online
  - *https://code.google.com/p/pandemobium/*
  - *Look for updates! Share with your friends!*
- Components:
  - *iPhone application*
  - *Android application*
  - *Supporting web services (Java/JSP web application)*
  - *User manual (HTML)*
  - *Vulnerability list (HTML)*

Pandemobium Stock Trader Application

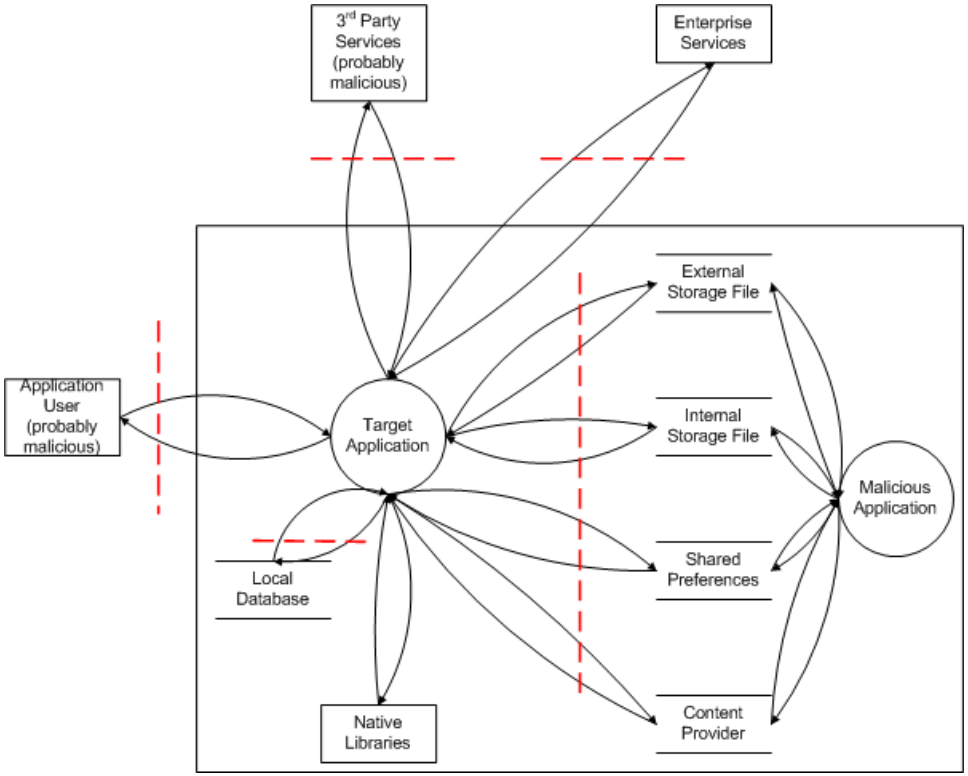


So What Does a Bad Guy See? (Android Edition)

- Install the application onto a device
- Root the device
- Pull the application's APK file onto a workstation for analysis

- APK files are ZIP files
- They contain:
  - *AndroidManifest.xml*
  - *Other binary XML files in res/*
  - *classes.dex DEX binary code*

Generic Android Application Threat Model



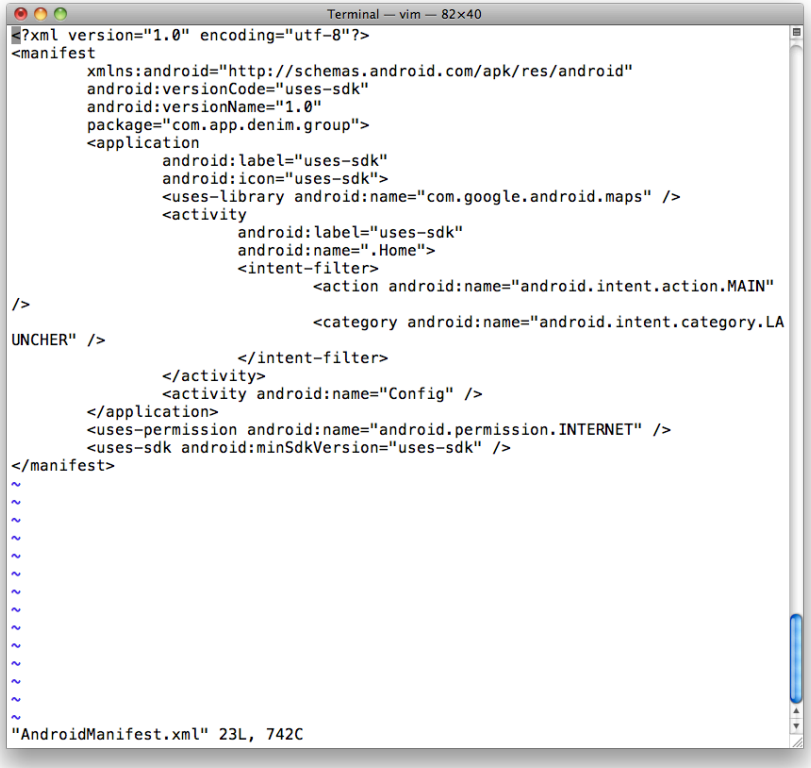
What's Up With My XML Files?

- Binary encoding
- Use axml2xml.pl to convert them to text

http://code.google.com/p/android-random/downloads/detail?name=axml2xml.pl

Much Better

- Now we see:
  - *Screens in application*
  - *Permissions required by the application*
  - *Intents applications is registered to consume*
  - *And so on*



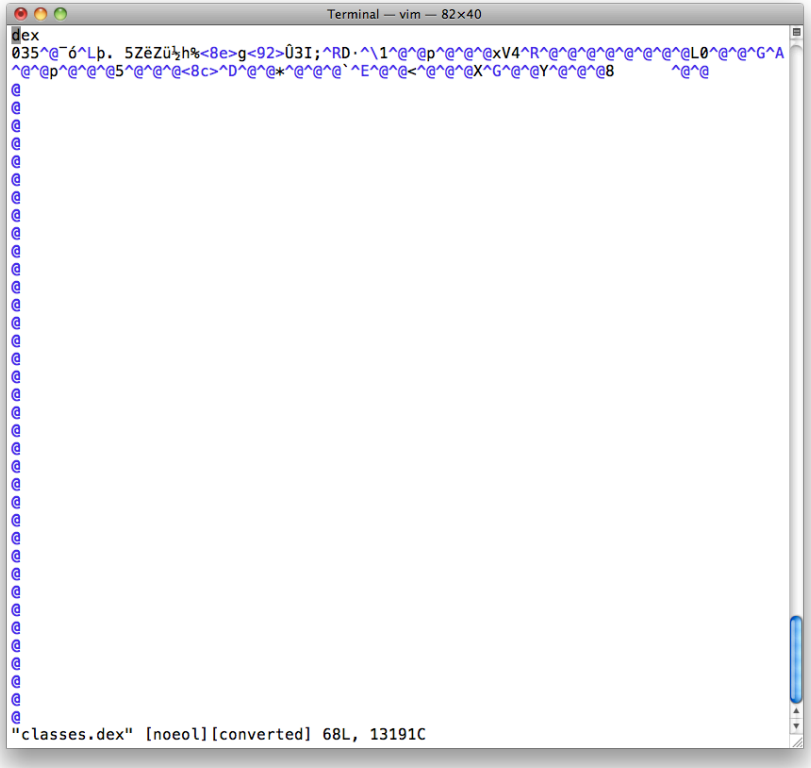
Do the Same Thing With the Rest of Them

- Recurse through the res/ subdirectory
- UI layouts, other resources

What About the Code?

- All of it is stuffed in classes.dex
- Android phones use DEX rather than Java bytecodes
  - *Register-based virtual machine rather than stack-based virtual machine*
- Options:
  - *Look at DEX assembly via de-dexing*
  - *Convert to Java bytecode and then to Java source code*

De-Dex to See DEX Assembly

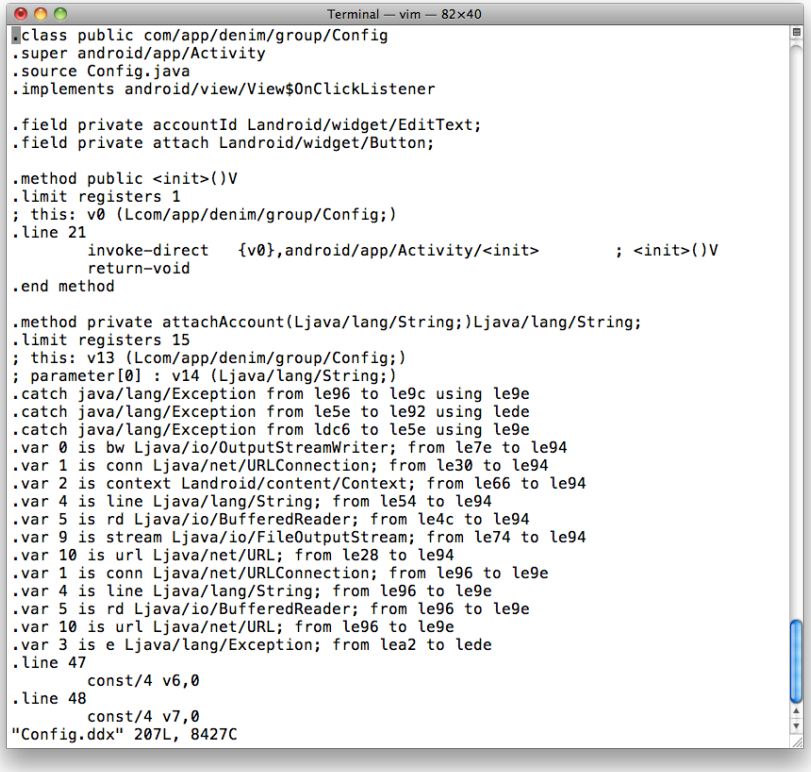


- DEX bytecode ~= Java bytecode
- All code goes in one file
- Disassemble to DEX assembly with dedexer

http://dedexer.sourceforge.net/

Lots of Information

- Like the fun-fun world of Java disassembly and decompilation
  - *(We'll get to the DEX decompilation in a moment)*
- LOTS of information available



But Can I Decompile to Java?

- Yes
- We
- Can

- Convert to Java bytecodes with dex2jar
  - *http://code.google.com/p/dex2jar/*
  - *(Now you can run static analysis tools like Findbugs)*

- Convert to Java source code with your favorite Java decompiler
  - *Everyone has a favorite Java decompiler, right?*

DEX Assembly Versus Java Source Code

- De-DEXing works pretty reliably
- DEX assembly is easy to parse with grep
- DEX assembly is reasonably easy to manually analyze

- Java decompilation works most of the time
- Java source code can be tricky to parse with grep
- Java source code is very easy to manually analyze

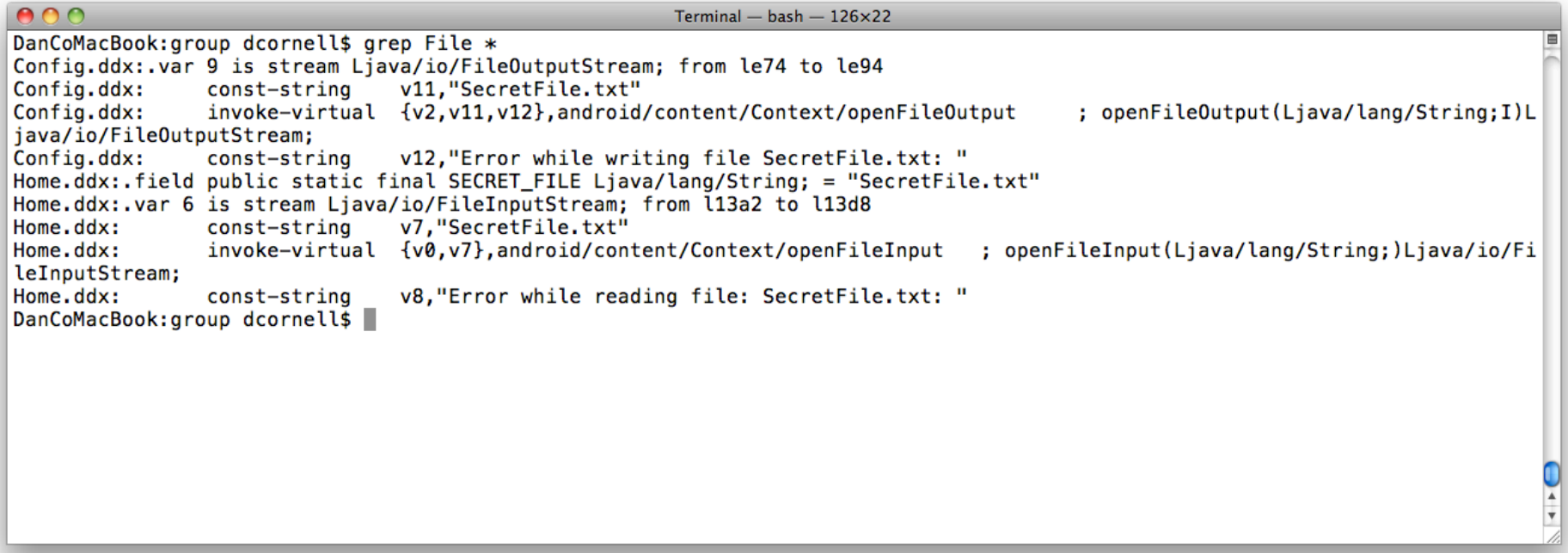
- Verdict:
  - *Do both!*
  - *Grep through DEX assembly to identify starting points for analysis*
  - *Analyze Java source in detail*

So What Did We Learn?

- Look at the string constants
  - *URLs, hostnames, web paths*
- Look at the de-DEXed assembly
  - *Method calls*
  - *Data flow*
- Developers: BAD NEWS
  - *The bad guys have all your code*
  - *They might understand your app better than you*
  - *How much sensitive intellectual property do you want to embed in your mobile application now?*

Is There Sensitive Data On the Device?

- Look at the disassemled DEX code
- Grep for “File”

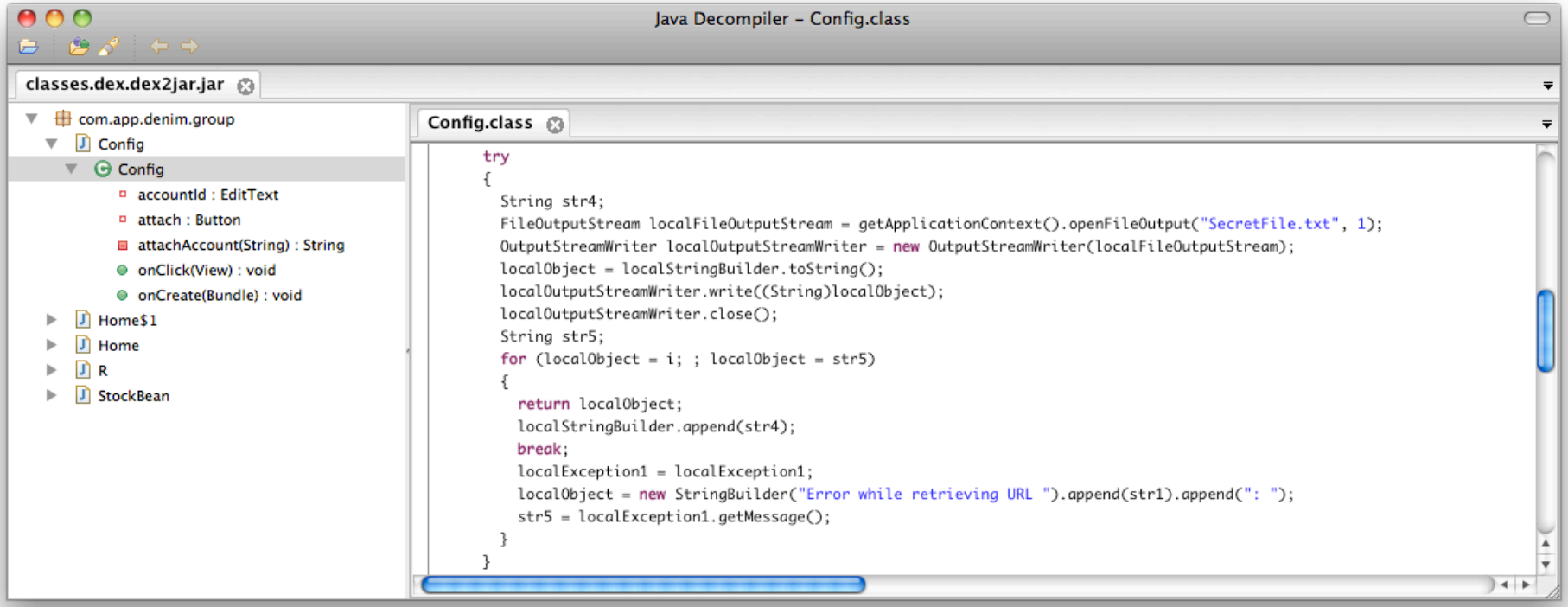


What About Java Source Code?

- Get the source code with JD-Gui
  - *http://java.decompiler.free.fr/*

Look for Files With Bad Permissions

- Look for file open operations using
  - *Context.MODE_WORLD_READABLE*
  - *(translates to "1")*



Next: What Is On the Server-Side

- To access sensitive data on a device:
  - *Steal a device*
  - *Want more data?*
  - *Steal another device*
- To access sensitive data from web services
  - *Attack the web service*
- String constants for URLs, hostnames, paths
- Examples:
  - *3rd party web services*
  - *Enterprise web services*

So Now What?

- 3rd Party Web Services
  - *Is data being treated as untrusted?*
  - *Google promised to "not be evil"*
    - For everyone else…
- Enterprise Web Services
  - *Did you know these were deployed?*
  - *Have these been tested for possible security flaws?*
  - *Stealing records en-masse is preferable to stealing them one-at-a-time*

Web Services Example

- Trumped up example, but based on real life
- Given a web services endpoint, what will a bad guy do?
- Sequence:
  - *Request a junk method "abcd"*
  - *Get a "No method 'abcd' available"*
  - *Request a method "<script>alert('hi');</script>"*
  - *Hilarity ensues…*

What Is Wrong With the Example Application?

- Sensitive data stored on the device unprotected
- Trusts data from 3rd party web services
- Exposes enterprise web services to attackers
- Enterprise web services vulnerable to reflected XSS attacks
- And so on…

- This is a trumped-up example with concentrated vulnerabilities, but…

- All of these reflect real-world examples of vulnerabilities
  - *Public breaches*
  - *Application assessments*

What About iPhones/iPads?

- Objective-C compiled to ARMv6, ARMv7 machine code
  - *Not as fun (easy) as Java compiled to DEX bytecode*
  - *But … subject to buffer overflows, memory handling issues, other native code fun*

- Apps from iTunes Store
  - *Encrypted*
  - *Used to be "easy" (well, mechanical) to break encryption with a jailbroken phone and a debugger*
  - *Now trickier (but likely not insurmountable)*
  - *And the default apps are not encrypted…*

Run "strings" on the Binary

- Web services endpoints: URLs, hostnames, paths
- Objective-C calling conventions:

```
[myThing doStuff:a second:b third:c];
```

becomes

```
obj_msgsend(myThing, "doStuff:second:third:", a, b, c);
```

Run "otool" on the Binary

- otool –l <MyApp>
  - View the load commands
  - Segment info, encryption info, libraries in use
- otool –t –v <MyApp>
  - Disassemble the text segment to ARM assembly
  - If run on an encrypted application you get garbage
- otool –o <MyApp>
  - Print the Objective-C segment
- And so on…

Net Result for iPhone/iPad

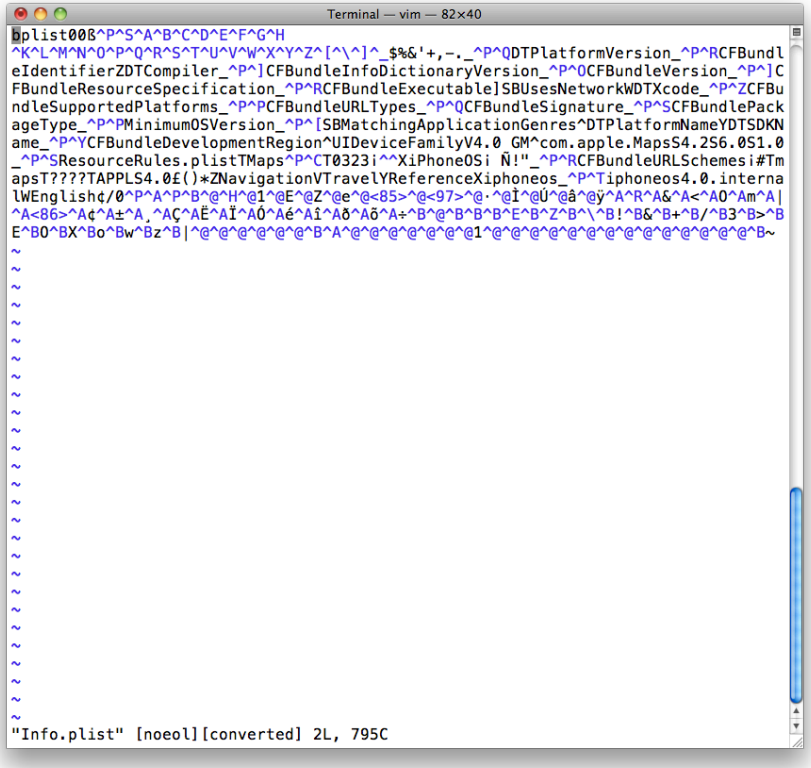
- More obscure
  - *But does that mean more secure?*
- Can still retrieve a tremendous amount of information
- Can still observe a running application
- "Security" based on obscurity is not durable

Mobile Browser Content Handling

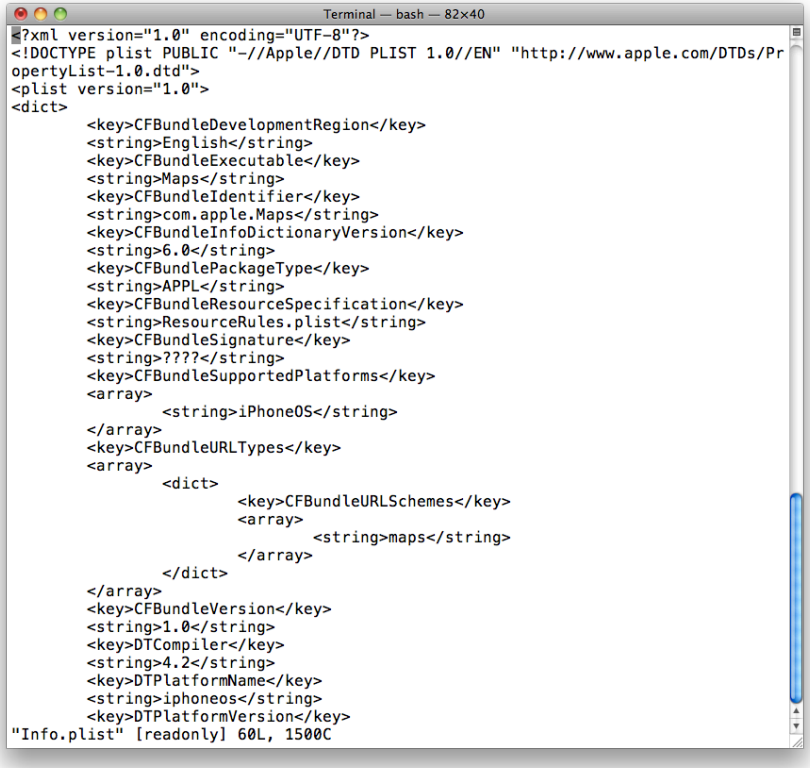
- Many mobile platforms allow you to designate applications to handle content found in web pages
  - *By URI protocol*
  - *By content type*
- Provide a "premium" experience for users who have the target app installed
- Examples:
  - *tel:// URLs initiating phone calls*
  - *maps:// URLs to display maps*

iPhone/iPad URL Schemes

- iOS applications can be set up to "handle" certain URL schemes
- Defined in the application's Info.plist
- Binary format: ***annoying***



Decoding plist Files



- plutil -convert xml1 Info.plist
- Much nicer

iOS URL Handlers

- XPath: Look for:

/plist/dict/array/dict[key='CFBundleURLSchemes']/array/string

- Now you know the URL Schemes the app handles

- SANS blog post on this issue in iOS:
  - http://software-security.sans.org/blog/2010/11/08/insecure-handling-url-schemes-apples-ios/?utm_source%253Drss%2526utm_medium%253Drss%2526utm_campaign%253Dinsecure-handling-url-schemes-apples-ios
  - Too long to type? http://bit.ly/ezqdK9

Android Intents

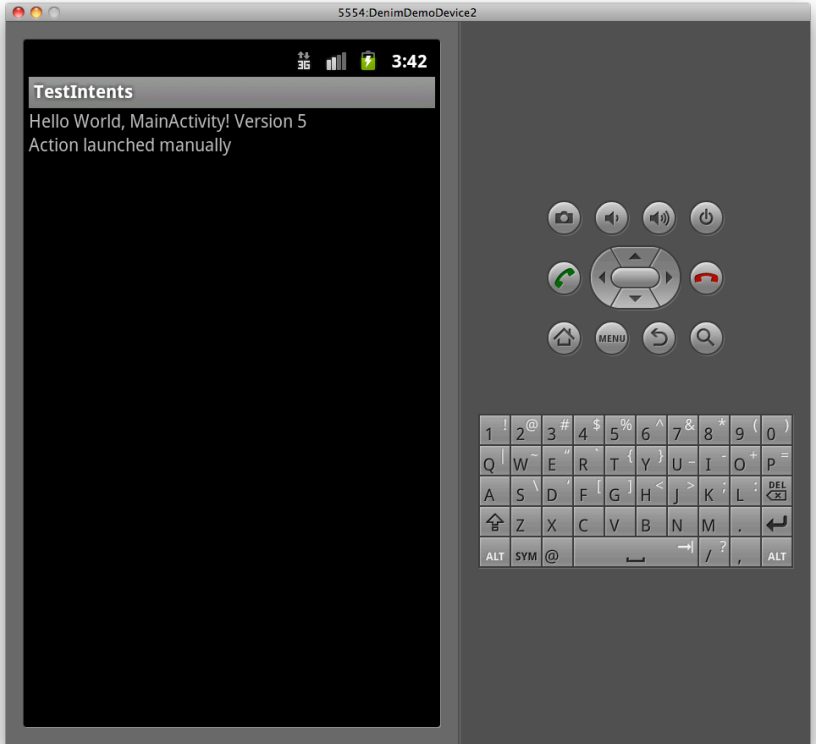
- Intents are facilities for late-binding messaging between applications
  - *http://developer.android.com/guide/topics/intents/intents-filters.html*
- One use is to allow applications to register to receive messages from the Browser when certain types of content are received
  - *Like iOS URL Schemes but an even more comprehensive IPC mechanism*

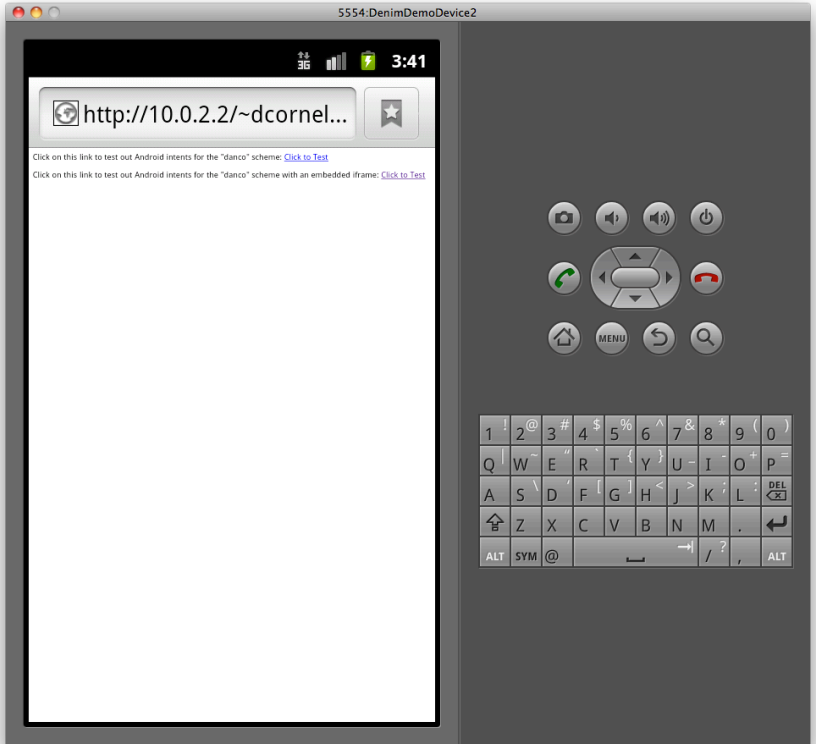
Intent Filter Example

```
<intent-filter>
   <action android:name="android.intent.action.VIEW" />
   <category
   android:name="android.intent.category.DEFAULT" />
   <category
   android:name="android.intent.category.BROWSABLE" />
   <data android:scheme="danco" />
</intent-filter>
```

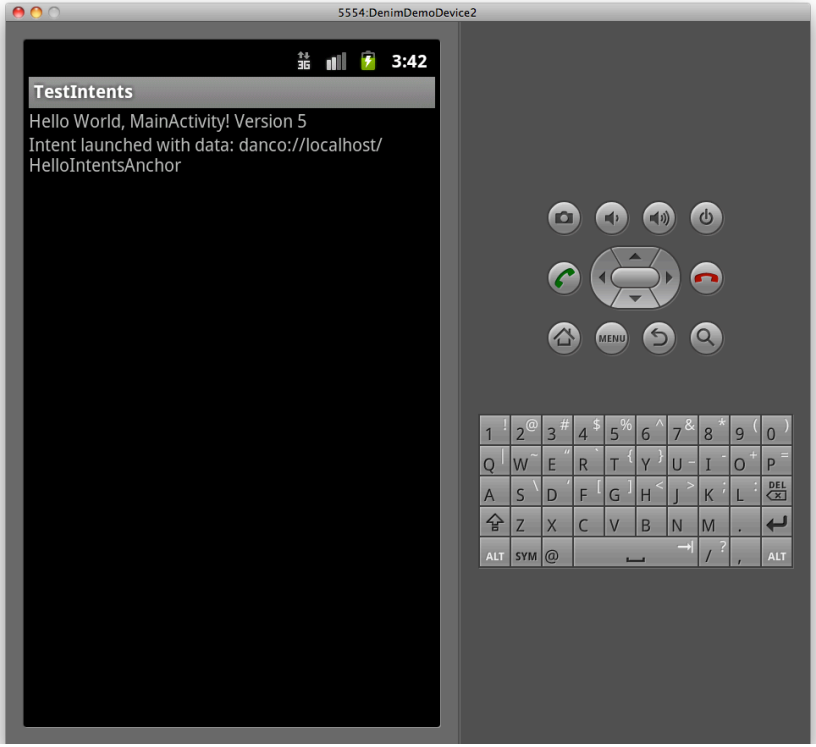
- Action: What to do?
- Data: Scheme is URI “protocol” to handle
- Category BROWSABLE: Allow this Action to be initiated by the browser

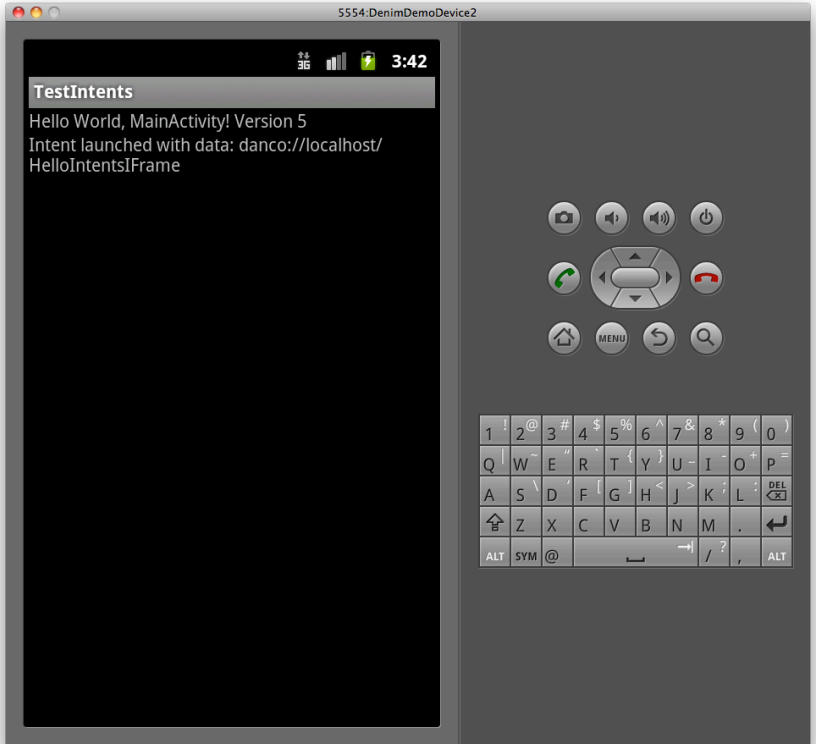
Intent Filter Demo – Manual Launch, HTML Page





Intent Filter Demo – Anchor Launch, IFrame Launch





I'm a Security Tester. Why Do I Care?

- URL handlers are remotely-accessible attack surface
- This is a way for you to "reach out and touch" applications installed on a device if you can get a user to navigate to a malicious page
- Send in arbitrary URLs via links or (easier) embedded IFRAMEs
- Example: iOS Skype application used to automatically launch the Skype application and initiate a call when it encountered a skype:// URL
  - *Apple's native Phone handle for tel:// URLs would confirm before a call was made*

I'm a Developer. Why Do I Care?

- See the previous slide. Bad guys care. So should you. Please.

- Content passed in via these handlers must be treated as untrusted
  - *Positively validate*
  - *Enforce proper logic restrictions*

- All:
  - *Should a malicious web page be able to cause this behavior?*
    - Make phone call, transmit location, take photo, start audio recording, etc.
- iOS:
  - *Validate inputs to `handleOpenURL:` message*
- Android:
  - *Validate data brought in from `Action.getIntent()` method*

So What Should Developers Do?

- Threat model your smartphone applications
  - *More complicated architectures -> more opportunities for problems*
- Watch what you store on the device
  - *May have PCI, HIPAA implications*
- Be careful consuming 3rd party services
  - *Who do you love? Who do you trust?*
- Be careful deploying enterprise web services
  - *Very attractive target for bad guys*
  - *Often deployed "under the radar"*

Secure Mobile Development Reference

- Platform-specific recommendations
- Key topic areas

- Provide specific, proscriptive guidance to developers building mobile applications

Specific Platforms

- iOS (iPhone, iPad)
- Android
- Blackberry (in progress)
- Windows Phone 7 (in progress)
  - Windows Mobile 6.5 (?)
- Symbian (?)
- Others (?)

- Will be guided by demand, which is focused by new development activity

Topics Areas

- Topic Areas
  - *Overview of Application Development*
  - *Overview of Secure Development*
  - *Defeating Platform Environment Restrictions*
  - *Installing Applications*
  - *Application Permissions Model*
  - *Local Storage*
  - *Encryption APIs*
  - *Network Communications*
  - *Protecting Network Communications*
  - *Native Code Execution*
  - *Application Licensing and Payments*
  - *Browser URL Handling*

So What Should Security People Do?

- Find out about smartphone projects
  - *Not always done by your usual development teams*
  - *R&D, "Office of the CTO," Marketing*
- Assess the security implications of smartphone applications
  - *What data is stored on the device?*
  - *What services are you consuming?*
  - *Are new enterprise services being deployed to support the application?*

Resources

- axml2xml.pl (Convert Android XML files to normal XML)
  - http://code.google.com/p/android-random/downloads/detail?name=axml2xml.pl
- Dedexer (Convert DEX bytecodes into DEX assembler)
  - http://dedexer.sourceforge.net/
- Dex2jar (Convert DEX bytecode in Java bytecode)
  - http://code.google.com/p/dex2jar/
- JD-GUI (Convert Java bytecode to Java source code)
  - http://java.decompiler.free.fr/
- otool (Get information about iPhone binaries)
  - http://developer.apple.com/library/mac/#documentation/Darwin/Reference/ManPages/man1/otool.1.html

Online

- Code, slides and videos online:

www.smartphonesdumbapps.com

Questions?

Dan Cornell
dan@denimgroup.com
Twitter: @danielcornell

www.denimgroup.com
blog.denimgroup.com
(210) 572-4400